

## Moderating Role of Dispositional Traits on Work-family Interface (WFI) and Marital Adjustment among Pakistani Employees

Sahira Zaman  
Gender Studies Department  
Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi

Anis-ul-Haque  
National Institute of Psychology  
Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad

Personality has an important function in shaping responses towards marital life while managing work and family issues simultaneously. This research explores two personality dimensions: neuroticism and agreeableness as moderators in relation to both positive and negative aspects of the work-family interface and marital adjustment amongst industrial sector employees in Pakistan. Quantitative data were obtained from 345 (172 women and 173 men) dual-income, married employees, who were living with their dependent children and working in different manufacturing firms of Karachi city (Pakistan). This research put forward that agreeableness buffered and neuroticism exacerbated the impact of work-family interface on marital adjustment. Findings revealed that inter-role conflict negatively and inter-role integration positively envisaged marital adjustment of employees. Moreover, the employees who possess high degree of agreeableness were better in making adjustments in their marital life by integrating their work and family life together. The current study contributes towards the understanding of personal attributes as moderators between both aspects of work-family interface and marital adjustment among industrial employees in Pakistan. Gender-role identity denotes a major limitation for this research.

**Keywords:** inter-role conflict, inter-role integration, neuroticism, agreeableness, marital adjustment.

The phenomenon of Work Family Interface (WFI) has gained attention in collectivist cultures and developing economies in the first decade of this century (Aycan, 2005). Pakistan is a collectivist developing country with an emerging economy. The institution of family has a very strong basis here. Like other collectivist cultures, the core area for man's life is work and homemaking for woman. However, changes in the demographics of workforce are leading to more dual-earner families in the country (Federal ministry of man power Pakistan, 2015). Though, Pakistan is a patriarchal society but necessity of two incomes in one household; ever increasing inflation and compelling demands to maintain a certain level of social-class have convinced women to participate in economic activity, which underscores the significance of addressing the family and work issues in local context.

Organizing family and work roles together are difficult but important tasks (Ayree, Sirvinas, & Ran, 2005) because time and energy are needed separately to manage both domains. Active involvement in these roles benefit individuals for gathering material resources but add a high cost due to constant struggle for individual's time and energy. Scarcity perspective proposes that dual earning families face more distress by managing between two domains and it adversely impacts marital relationships (Greenhouse & Beutell, 1985). Contrary to this paradigm, role expansionist perspective signifies that multiple roles of dual earners with their double incomes enable them to better use their assets by obtaining a balance between resources and demands through purchasing goods and services (Voydanoff, 2005).

However, in collectivist societies like Pakistan, women of dual income families have no decrease at household work; they handle multiple responsibilities at home along with work responsibilities. There is scarcity of investigations to address both negative and positive aspects of WFI and marital adjustment in the local perspective. This highlighted the importance of deliberating WFI and marital adjustment among dual earners in the local context.

The theoretical structure of present research is based on work family border theory (Clark, 2000) which includes both negative and positive aspects of WFI. It demonstrates that work and family exist on a continuum of segmentation (negative perception) and integration (positive perception) in which segmentation leads to conflict and integration leads to facilitation (Clark, 2000). The negative standpoint has been defined as a form of "inter-role conflict in which role pressures from work and family are mutually incompatible" (Greenhouse & Beutell, 1985, p. 76). The integration standpoint of WFI is generally termed facilitation (Greenhouse & Powell, 2003), positive spillover (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grazywacz, 2006), and enrichment (Carlson, Grazywacz & Zivnuska, 2009) by elucidating an "individual's activities in one role support, facilitate or enhance activity in the other role" (Crouter, 1984, p. 425) and produce positive outcomes on individual's marital relationships (Chait, & Shibley 2001). Thus, both domains of WFI have influence on individual's marital life (Poelmans, Stepanova, & Masuda, 2008).

Marital adjustment is a global indicator of the state of one's marriage or current long-term romantic relationship (it is only a state of one's marriage in Pakistani context). It is a reflection of couple's happiness in their marriages, or a composite of several aspects of marital satisfaction i.e., cohesion, consensus, satisfaction and affectionate expression (Spanier, 1976). Many facets of dyadic relationships contribute to the overall well-being of a marital

relationship (Spanier, 1976). As multiple roles influence the marital relationship, so inter-role conflict and integration are essential parts of an individual's married life (Chait & Shibley, 2001).

Whilst considering the association between WFI and marital relationship, personality is an important variable for investigation. The dispositional differences play a significant role in determining an individual's responses in different situations, though personality factors have been extensively studied in relation with work family domain (Michel & Clark, 2012). However, it can possibly be argued that dispositional variables can impact WFI and outcomes more than situational variables, because personality attributes are important in shaping responses towards work and family interactions (Allen, et al., 2012). There is a dearth of studies focusing on the interplay of dispositional factors between WFI and outcomes (Allen, 2013). However, a meta-analysis by Allen and her colleagues (2012) revealed that agreeableness and neuroticism are strong predictors of negative aspect of WFI. By taking the perspective of differential exposure and differential reactivity (Allen et al., 2012), some individuals are more vulnerable to drift into highly stressed situations, whereas some individuals dealt better to these situation by relying on the environment they created for themselves. This theoretical base highlights the need to address the moderation of these personal attributes (in present research Neuroticism and Agreeableness) related to both aspects of WFI and its outcomes in our local milieu.

Neuroticism also known as emotional instability is determined by anxious, depressed, angry, embarrassed, worried, unsecured behaviors and poor emotional adjustment (Costa & McCrae, 1991) and positively connected to inter-role conflict (Balnch & Aluja 2009; Wayne, et al. 2004). Thus, the current research will help to understand a moderating link between these emotionally unstable attributes, WFI and marital adjustment.

By looking at the other side of picture, individuals possessing high agreeable characteristics are deemed flexible, good-natured, trusting, cooperative, soft-hearted forgiving, and tolerant. Costa, and McCrae (1991) stated that agreeableness is associated with positive interpersonal relations. It dealt conflict in constructive ways (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). Thereby, it improves the association between work-family situations and their outcomes. Though, there is still fewer clarity that how agreeable traits will interact between the both aspects of WFI and its outcomes and it needs to be addressed. Kinnunen, Vermulst, Gerris, and Makikangas (2003) found out that lower levels of work interference with family (WIF) or family interference with work (FIW) along with high levels of agreeable traits predicted high marital satisfaction amongst fathers only which means the significant interaction between FIW, agreeable traits protected fathers from negative effects.

By summing up the above mentioned theoretical framework the current research assumes that employees high on agreeable traits will better manage conflict and enhance integration within work-family spheres resultant high marital adjustment.

The present research speculates following hypotheses:

- H1: 1a. Inter-role conflict negatively relate to marital adjustment  
1b. Inter-role integration positively relate to marital adjustment  
H2: 2a Neuroticism negatively associate with marital adjustment  
2b. Agreeableness positively associate with marital adjustment  
H3: 3a. Neuroticism exacerbates the association between inter-role conflict and marital adjustment

3b. Neuroticism aggravates the association between inter-role integration and marital adjustment

H4: 4a. Agreeableness buffer the association between inter-role conflict and marital adjustment

4b. agreeableness enhances the association between inter-role integration and marital adjustment

## Method

### Participants

The sample of study consisted of 345 employees (172 women & 173 men) working in manufacturing industrial sector of Karachi (Pakistan). Survey forms were distributed to 410 employees with response rate of almost 86 percent. The sampling approach was purposive; respondents were represented of dual-income families, married and living with dependent children. The data were collected from managers (49 percent) and non-managers (51 percent), age range 21 years to 59 years ( $M=34.20$  &  $SD=6.10$ ), total working hours of respondents per week (36 hours - 60 hours), ( $M = 50.43$  &  $SD = 8.88$ ). Sixty-one percent of respondents had secondary or higher secondary education while remaining 39 percent were graduates and had higher education. Ninety-one percent respondents had up to five children and nine percent had more than five dependent children.

### Instruments

Following instruments used for information collection in present research.

1. An adapted Urdu version of Work Family Interface Scale (WIFS) by (Zaman, 2014) was used in this study. The scale consisted of two sub scales: i) inter-role conflict (15 items) and ii) inter-role integration (13 items). Scoring criteria were 5-point rating scale ranging from 1(*never*) to 5 (*always*). The alpha reliabilities of the inter-role conflict and inter-role integration in present sample were = .89, .91 respectively. Higher scores on the sub-scales showed higher levels of inter-role conflict and inter-role integration.
2. An adapted (Urdu) version (Naseer, 2000) of Marital Adjustment Scale (32 items), originally developed by Spainer, (1976) was used in the present study. This scale is a composite measure of marital adjustment. The alpha reliability of marital adjustment scale for the current sample was ( $\alpha = .88$ ). Higher scores on the scale showed high marital adjustment and lower scores showed lower marital adjustment of respondents.
3. An adapted (Urdu) version of NEO-PI-R by Chishti, and Kamal (2002) used to measure the two personality traits i.e., agreeableness (45 items) and neuroticism (48 items). The alpha scores for agreeableness and neuroticism in present sample were ( $\alpha = .81$ ) and ( $\alpha = .70$ ) respectively. Higher scores on these personality dimensions demonstrated higher traits of either aspect and lower scores demonstrated lower levels of trait amongst respondents.

### Procedure

The present study was a part of PhD research work. Thus, ethical approval for it acquired from Advance Studies and Research Board

(AS&RB) of Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. Permissions to use NEO-PI-R (Chishti & Kamal 2002) and MA-S (Naseer, 2000) were obtained from National Institute of Psychology Test and Resource center Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. Principle researcher contacted many administration and human resource personnel's of industrial organizations. The organizational personnel's who volunteered for the research activity were briefed about the nature and purpose of the study and requested their cooperation and support. Participants approached by the principle researcher, requested their voluntary participation in this research. Informed consent obtained from each participant. The anonymity of their responses was assured at every stage of conducting and reporting the research. Data collected through self-report questionnaires. The separation of measurement method by Podsakoff and Organ (1986) was employed to deal with the problem of common method variance (CMV). Data were analyzed through a SPSS software. The relationship between both aspects of WFI and marital adjustment were analyzed by bivariate correlations. The WFI, personality dimensions and moderating role of agreeableness and neuroticism between independent and dependent variables were examined through hierarchical regression analysis.

## Results

Table 1  
Mean, Standard Deviations, Zero-Order Correlations and Alpha Reliability Coefficient of Main Study Variables (N=345).

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	A
1 IRC	44.16	10.94	.10	-.26**	.33**	-.29**	.89	
2 IRI	43.26	10.45		.03	.35**	-.30**	.91	
3 MA	133.04	18.74			-.32**	.18**	.88	
4 N	140.30	13.82				-.49**	.70	
5 A	151.79	17.11					.81	

Table 1 shows that inter-role conflict significantly negatively correlates to agreeableness and marital adjustment. Inter-role integration negatively correlated with agreeableness and positively correlates with neuroticism. Marital adjustment positively correlates

to agreeableness and negatively correlates to neuroticism. The magnitude of correlation between the study variables ranges from low to moderate. The alpha reliabilities for the present sample in the study ranges from .70 to .91, which considered as satisfactory.

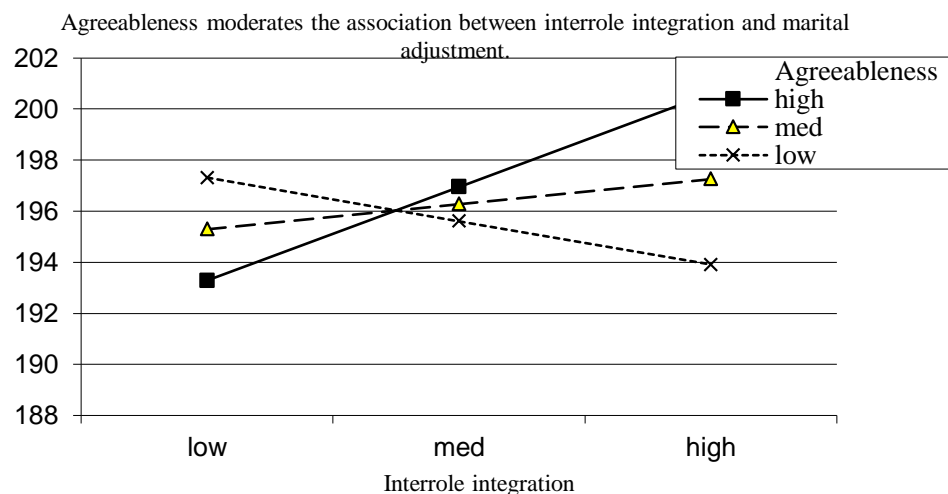
Table 2

*Hierarchical Regression Results for Neuroticism and Agreeableness as Moderator of Inter-Role Conflict, Inter-Role Integration and Marital Adjustment Relationship (N = 345)*

		Marital Adjustment	
Predictors		$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Step 1	Inter-role conflict	.15***	-.17***
	Inter-role integration		.16**
	Neuroticism		-.30***
	Agreeableness		.03
Step 2		.02*	
	Inter-role conflict x neuroticism		.02
	Inter-role integration x neuroticism		.01
	Inter-role conflict x agreeableness		-.07
	Inter-role integration x agreeableness		.18*
Total R <sup>2</sup>		.17*	

Predictors of the study in step 1 shows significant amount of variance  $F(4, 340) = 15.31, p \leq .001$ . Results indicates that two predictors; inter-role integration ( $\beta = .16, t = 2.99, p \leq .003$ ), inter-role conflict ( $\beta = -.17, t = 3.21, p \leq .001$ ), agreeableness ( $\beta = .05, t = .54, p = .588$ ) and neuroticism ( $\beta = -.30, t = 4.98, p \leq .001$ ) accounts for significant variance in step 1 ( $R^2 = .15, p \leq .001$ ). The predictors shows a significant increase in the variance  $F(8, 336) = 8.99, p \leq .001$  in step 2 ( $\Delta R^2 = .024, p \leq .05$ ). Interaction terms; inter-role conflict x neuroticism ( $\beta = .02, t = .34, p \leq .731$ ), inter-role integration x neuroticism ( $\beta = .01, t = .08, p \leq .986$ ) and inter-role conflict x agreeableness ( $\beta = -.07, t = 1.27, p \leq .203$ ) does not explain any significant moderating impact on dependent variable (marital adjustment). The interaction term inter-role integration x agreeableness ( $\beta = .18, t = 2.3, p \leq .05$ ) moderates the association amongst inter-role integration and marital adjustment and explained above and beyond variance which shows in step 1.

Figure 1



Interaction terms created after mean centering of independent variables (WFI, neuroticism and agreeableness) is recommended as (Aiken & West, 1991). The figure of moderation analysis (Mod-Graph) sketched by using the software of Jose (2008). Mod-Graph illustrated that marital adjustment was likely to be high under the condition of high agreeableness and high inter-role integration.

## Discussion

This study focused to observe the arbitrating role of personality dispositions (neuroticism and agreeableness) amongst work-family interface [inter-role conflict (IRC) and inter-role integration (IRI)] and marital adjustment of industrial-sector workforces in Pakistan. Findings of hierarchical regression analysis (see Table 2) indicated that IRC negatively and IRI positively associated with marital adjustment (MA); henceforth, supported hypothesis 1. Neuroticism negatively connected to marital adjustment and agreeableness had a non-significant association with marital adjustment (MA), thus these findings partially supported hypothesis 2. Neuroticism did not demonstrate significant effects when interacted with both aspects of work-family interface. Nevertheless, agreeableness significantly improved the association of IRI and marital adjustment.

IRC negatively predicted marital adjustment in this study. These results supported the findings of Kinnunen and his colleagues (2003) who already had reported that IRC had negative connection with marital satisfaction. Though, marital satisfaction is only one aspect of marital adjustment construct (Spanier, 1976), but IRC showed influence on the other composites of marital adjustment (i.e., dyadic-cohesion, dyadic-consensus and dyadic-affection expression). The physical, psychological and social demands of these domains (work and family) interfered with each other and stressed out individuals consequently contributing towards poor marital adjustment of respondents of this research. The negative events remain salient in the memory and are often recalled (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001), resulted in poor management of relationships. It is profound to understand that this research was conducted in a collectivist culture where family demands are considered more important as compared to any other duties of life. Therefore efforts to keep both work and family domains separate, create pressure and stress subsequently resulting in poor marital adjustment. Results of present research also indicated that IRI positively associated to marital adjustment, thus supporting the hypothesis 1b. Role expansionist philosophers suggest that multiple roles assist individuals to enrich relationships and produce positive outcomes (Chait & Shibley 2001). Pertaining to the explanation, present findings that employees who integrated their work-family roles were better able to accomplish their family lives resulting in increased marital adjustment.

Personality interplay with situations (Blanch & Aluja, 2009). The results of the present study indicate that neuroticism significantly negatively predicted marital adjustment thus supported hypothesis 2a. Neuroticism characterized by low emotional stability and individuals demonstrating behaviors high within this trait cannot make good strategies to deal with conflicting situations. Thus it is found out that employees high on neuroticism had lower marital adjustment. Similar findings were also found in studies of Wang et al. (2011), Wayne et al. (2004), and Kinnunen and colleagues (2003). Interpersonal relationships are related with high emotional investments. Individuals with low emotional stability cannot cope with stressful situations and unable to make effective strategies for dealing different life situations. Adhering to this explanation fairly

increase validity of current findings.

The relationship between agreeableness and marital adjustment were found non-significant in the present study (see Table 2). Thus, these results did not support hypothesis 2b and contrary to findings of previous literature (see Kinnunen & colleagues, 2003; Wayne et al., 2004). Though agreeable traits were positively associated with interpersonal interactions (Barrick & Mount, 1991) and are helping for individuals to garner supportive social network, whereas the current finding for the present result can be explained in view of characteristics of compliance and flexibility. These traits help employees to get more supportive network at work settings only and may not be helpful at maintaining household responsibilities. This finding needs further investigations also as the present study only focuses on industrial sector employees where nature of work discourages team work and employees interaction. Further studies involving other professions and different work-family dynamics may have resulted differently.

Neuroticism had not moderated the association between WFI and marital adjustment, thus findings did not support hypothesis 3. The primary mechanism for these non-significant associations are not clear thus needs further investigation. However, results of present research showed that IRC and marital adjustment had a negative relationship and neuroticism also had a negative association with marital adjustment. Wang and colleagues (2011) reported that low emotional stability moderated family social behavior for men only. Present research included data from both genders which can be a possible reason for this non-significant moderating effect of neurotic traits on marital adjustment while interacting the either aspect of WFI. Additionally, this research revealed that agreeable traits positively interact with IRI by enhancing marital adjustment of respondents. Agreeable traits usually associate with positive and pro-social behaviors and deal conflict in a constructive way

(Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001). Agreeableness emerged as moderator between IRI and marital adjustment, but not between IRC and marital adjustment. Flexible nature, positive attitude towards work -family life, integrating work-family together enabled high agreeable people to garner success in their marital life by successfully integrating work-family life together.

## Conclusion

The present study sought to assess the moderating role of personality dispositions in managing work-family interface and its outcomes in the local context. The findings illustrated that agreeable personalities interacted in different situation and had strong impact on outcomes of WFI i.e., marital adjustment. However, neuroticism did not come up as a significant moderator between WFI and marital adjustment of employees. We suggest to explore the impact of neuroticism on other family relationships (parent-child etc.) in context of WFI. This study has contributed towards the understanding of individual personality differences in shaping the situational behaviors in work -family settings and focused on dyadic relationships. However, by looking at small variance elucidated by personality variables as moderators we concluded that personality is not the only variable to influence these relationships. Other variables, e.g., cultural values, family-systems, demands and expectations from individuals towards family can also play an important role to influence the link of WFI and marital adjustment. Addressing the culture and gender role ideology between these associations of WFI and marital adjustment for individuals is important. Moreover, the salience of roles may have an important

value when focusing on the WFI and its family related outcomes.

## Implications

Present study has implications to address the issue of WFI in organizations because employees with better marital adjustment may perform more efficiently at work in the local context. Agreeableness has emerged as one of the important moderator between WFI and marital adjustment. It provides a useful basis for designing trainings for organizational interventions to help in mitigating the negative impact of WFI on employee's family life and enhance the positively influence marital relationships. Present study also sets a base line for work-family researchers to investigate the differential effects of variables other than personality which may influence the relationship of WFI and marital adjustment for example, role salience of employees, and cultural context etc.

## Limitations

Findings of present study should be interpreted with few margins. We used self-reported survey methodology for information collection. The use of non-random data is a limitation for the present study. Although separation of measurement method (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) was employed for controlling common method variance but self-report methodology might have influenced results of the present research. The use of other methodologies of data collection (e.g. interview, observations, case history etc.) for studying the dynamics of WFI and marital adjustment; the interplay of personal traits whilst managing the impacts of WFI on outcomes may provide more in-depth knowledge. Cross-over data and dyadic analysis are needed to further validate the phenomenon in local context. Further researches should also analyze different aspects of marital adjustment separately. Present study only focused the industrial sector workforce where nature of tasks are very mechanical, so future researches should replicate these findings in other occupational settings to see whether these findings are a function of specialized occupational environment or applicable to other work settings.

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