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COVID-19 AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

COVID-19 AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT: A GENDERED LENS REQUIRED FOR
DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS AND PROGRAMS

by

Qendresa Isniqu

Alternate Plan Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

In

Sociology: Human Services Planning and Administration

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

July 01, 2021

COVID-19 AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I dwell in possibility – Emily Dickenson.

I dedicate the success and the hard work of my journey to my guardian angel on earth, mom. For all the sacrifice, the hard work, and the unconditional love to give me a fulfilled life. You taught me that the world is made of women as I watched you take on the world fighting for our future. I dedicate the opportunity to be alive to finish this paper to God. For keeping me alive and walking me through my darkest year. I dedicate this paper to my guardian angel on heaven, dad. To my siblings, my host families, and my friends who walked through it all with me. I could not have done this without your love and support. I thank you from the bottom of my soul.

I would also like to thank Dr. Islam for his patience as life kept throwing me walls. Thank you for your mentorship and support through it all. You have challenged me in ways that will follow me throughout my career, and I thank you for the kindness you showed me through your lessons. Dr. Lassiter for being a mentor for the past few years and always coming to my aid whenever I needed it. You have taught me so much and if I grow to be a small part of the educator/mentor that you are, I will have succeeded in life. Dr. Mollenkopf-Pigsley for being so willing to be part of my committee and your support about my paper. I wish to have had the opportunity to have worked more with you. To Killian Clink for helping me understand ASA step by step and for her willingness to always help and support me. Killian, thank you for the numerous years of support.

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted people's work and family lives. The work-family conflict has seen an increase with the onset of the pandemic as families have found themselves in complex roles such as family sustainers, teachers for their children, and family caregivers while quarantined with the same individuals for months. Concurrently there have been expectations grown from the employers to introduce effective programs or services to support employees so that an expected amount of productivity is maintained while also maintaining a sense of care for their employees. Some of the strategies suggested in the literature include flexible scheduling, leadership communication, and team-building mechanisms. This paper aimed to suggest strategies to study the work-family conflict issues to understand better what is needed to effectively support and accommodate their employees during the pandemic as they transition to working-from-home. Some recommendations to study this issue would be to develop surveys that would aid organizations in understanding what is lacking to help support their employees. In addition, limitations and challenges were reviewed from present surveys from the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalition and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Neither looked at the support that employees received to help balance their work-family duties as they transitioned to working-from-home. These secondary data sources should include questions regarding the issues, that regardless of employer efforts, that the pandemic exacerbated are the result of customary societal norms-- women's role as primary childcare minders, their role as at-home teachers, and the continued lack of equity in home-related tasks such as grocery shopping, cleaning, and other tasks commonly given into the care of women. Women's perspectives need to be emphasized. Looking from a gendered perspective would provide a more comprehensive review of worker's responses to the pandemic, significantly how women employees were impacted, and how the work-family conflict changed in terms of complexities.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Study Background

COVID-19 has impacted all the spheres, including people's work and family activities in our communities. Especially as everybody returned to working from home, the pressure and work increased for women. There has been an increase in reports of the work-family conflict (WFC) for women. COVID-19 changed how organizations function, giving them a new way of managing their staff and redesigning the benefits and programs that employees are provided with when hired. Therefore, COVID-19 gave companies a chance to revisit the benefits and programs they offered to their employees.

This Alternate Plan Paper (APP) will explore effectively conducting studies to understand better the implications of increased work-family conflict resulting from working-from-home during the COVID-19. A particular emphasis of this paper has been to develop future research to look at work-family conflict through a gendered lens. There have been significant questions raised on this issue from an organizational and employee support perspective, including (1) What could be effective strategies that organizations develop to help support employees with the issue of work-family conflict? (2) What supportive activities have been available for employees? Moreover, (3) How are women being affected and supported by the situation brought on by the pandemic? The present paper examines available literature on these issues aiming to develop a research project to understand better the efforts that organizations are taking to develop new organizational strategies (e.g., daycare, wage raises, COVID relief, paid time off, an opportunity to work away from home, or other). The paper will contribute to the existing literature by identifying missing links on the effects of the pandemic on working mothers compared to fathers while exploring the organizational changes happening due to the

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pandemic. Literature supports that parents who worked during the pandemic had it more problematic when working from home due to the interruptions and the added chores such as stepping in as teachers for their children (Igielnik, 2021).

Some strategies that workplaces presently offer include flexible scheduling, leadership training, and communication, along with team building mechanisms (Felstead, Jewson, and Phizacklea 2002; He, Mao, Morrison, and Coca-Stefaniak 2021; Hammer, Kossek, Anger, Bodner, and Zimmerman 2010; Stemmler and Hampton, 2020; Carnevale and Hatak 2020). Regardless of employer efforts, several issues continuously impact women. They are often the primary caregivers, childcare minders, at-home teachers, and a continued lack of equity in home-related tasks such as grocery shopping, cleaning, and other tasks identified as women's work (Grout 2017). More so, along with identified issues that will be explored in this paper, it is essential to note that domestic violence is another factor of the increased levels of work-family conflict. This paper will not explore domestic violence as one of the identified points for this study. However, this study explores the issues women, more so than men, have endured during this pandemic concerning the work-family conflict due to childcare responsibilities. Daycare facilities, grade schools, high schools, universities, work, and more paused and moved to remote work (from home and online learning), opposed to before the pandemic.

Goals and Objectives

This chapter extends by first providing an understanding of the study background, which describes the issue of the work-family conflict during the pandemic while organizations transitioned to working-from-home. Working from home became the new normal. However, this paper extends on what efforts organizations made to help with the transition. Support and flexible scheduling will be among the organizational efforts discussed throughout the literature.

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Second, clarification of significant goals and objectives will be discussed, such as the importance of providing flexible schedules, supervisor support, mental health support, and family-friendly policies to help reduce the work-family conflict. Finally, this paper will expand on the rationale for conducting a study on the work-family conflict, how it affected women, and the effects of the pandemic on the conflict. The importance of this study lies within the need for more research on the work-family conflict from a gendered lens. There is also a need to cross-examine the work-family conflict and how it affected women. This study is essential as there is a lack of research on how the pandemic affected individual employees. There is a gap in the literature supporting that the pandemic has affected women more so than men. Therefore, this study will attempt to provide future research suggestions to help fill the gaps in the literature.

Study Rationale

Research on organizational behavior focuses on work-family conflict (WFC) and what leads to it. It has been argued that flexibility at work improves the work-family balance of the worker (Blair-Loy and Wharton 2004). Work-family conflict refers to the available time and other factors that work-life tends to affect an employee's personal life. Studies show that flexibility helps decrease stress levels among workers, increases productivity and job satisfaction (Golden and Veiga, 2005; Kurland and Bailey, 1999). "Work-life conflicts are seen to have a potentially detrimental impact on productivity, personal effectiveness, marital relations, child-parent relationships, and even child development" (Russell, O'Connell, and McGinnity, 2008). Furthermore, both work and home pressures create conflict. The inability to balance both potentially creates stress that will cause distress within a family.

Research on job satisfaction and organizational social psychology has aided with creating plans on how to decrease work-family conflicts by reengineering their companies from within by

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providing benefit packets that support their employee's mental health and offer flexibility to working parents. Such flexibility is seen more now during the pandemic than previously, and yet many working mothers have had to quit their job or go part-time to a greater extent than working fathers (Heggeness 2020; Felstead et al. 2002; Aaronson, Hu, and Rajan, 2021). Emerging research indicates that mothers are more impacted by the pandemic when looking at a gendered lens regarding having to leave the workforce and taking caregiving roles than fathers (Aaronson et al., 2021).

Many organizations have decreased burnout by creating more flexible schedules (Grzywacz, Carlson, and Shulkin 2008); however, work-family conflict and burnout can continue happening, especially for women (mothers), even when one has a flexible schedule. It is important to note that no study indicates or proves that having a flexible schedule will decrease work-family conflict. The global pandemic necessitated companies shuttering their work locations and working from home (WFH) to continue their operations. Working from home has impacted both single and coupled people.

Employers employ different strategies to aid employees in negotiating the work-family issue. A fascinating part of this pandemic includes how different industries have adapted to different forms of WFH. Given the nature of specific roles in organizations, such as surgeons, WFH is nearly impossible. However, in other work roles like sales, IT, and many technology-related industries, it has been possible for employees to work from home. Studies show that working from home was increasingly common even before the pandemic (Henson, Felstead and Jewson 2002; Felstead et al., 2002).

According to Forbes and Fortune, many organizations are stepping up to provide benefits to their employees amid the pandemic. Forbes lists Ally Financial as a company that could move

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most of its 8,700 employees to work from home by quickly expediting needed equipment to workers' homes to ensure that work continued (Kohll, 2020). Fortune listed benefits that Fortune 500 companies are providing, such as donating personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, and other critical supplies such as portable cell towers. Many Fortune 500 organizations started conducting clinical research, working on employee and organizational survival (Gallucci and Seetharaman, 2020). Business Insider wrote that many companies are also providing employee mental health supports which are a popular benefit demanded by employees (Hroncich and Ward, 2020).

It is important to note that observation of societal change has had a substantive impact on this APP exploration. People are very aware of what surrounds them, and how they interact with others does play a role in how they observe society. Research supports that women have been disproportionately and negatively impacted by the pandemic, research that is evidenced in the literature review. Such research brings us to the question of why women are being afflicted thus during this pandemic? It also brings up equality in workplaces, even in the US, which has a solid feminist history. The issue of women in the workplace and the role of sexism in work-family conflict is a critical issue to explore. This APP aims to analyze women's work and the work-family conflict, which is unclear if it has increased during the pandemic. This study looked at different variables such as employer-provided flexibility, hours worked, unemployment, childcare, marital status, economic status, and other causes that add to the work-family conflict.

Conclusion

In summary, this study hypothesizes that work-family conflict has increased during the pandemic as many people have endured a prolonged level of uncertainty, including fear of contracting the disease, death of loved ones, economic distress, prolonged quarantining with

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significant others, roommates, and family members. Although the latter might benefit some people, it meant being at home exposed to the conflict, including being trapped with domestic abusers. Whether a parent or a significant other, Evans, Lindauer and Farrell (2020) wrote that intimate partner violence (IVP) calls decreased during COVID-19 and for a reason being that the abused were unable to make calls due to being quarantined and in shutdown with their abusers. The study showed that shelter in place is not experienced in similar ways by everyone quarantined. The study does not discriminate based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, and more.

In contrast, it shows that all can experience IVP. As expected, the work-family conflict looks differently based on many factors brought up while living with others. “This pandemic has reinforced important truths: inequities related to social determinants of health are magnified during a crisis and sheltering in place does not inflict equivalent hardship on all people” (Evans et al. 2020:2302). As the British writer Damian Barr commented, “We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on superyachts. Some have just the one oar”.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Some significant themes, according to the literature, on women's employee experiences and the work-family conflict could be categorized into four distinctive areas: (1) the issue of working from home, (2) schedule flexibility, (3) benefits and employee well-being, and lastly (4) gender-related unemployment and employment changes. A foundation of this study is a review of data presented by the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalition (AHPC) regarding COVID-19 Benefit and Policy Direction, along with research done by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis on COVID-19 and the effect on mothers. The purpose of reviewing the AHPC survey is to highlight the benefits being offered and cross-analyze it with research emerging on work-family conflict. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis also published a few articles on mothers and COVID-19, which offered additional important insights.

This chapter focuses on the discussion of literature from four topical areas imperative to work-family conflict through a gendered lens. First, these areas include working from home as something that many companies have tried to implement for many years (Felstead et al. 2002; Hammer et al. 2015; Golden and Veiga 2005; Carnevale and Hatak 2020). Rapidly, working from home became a reality at the onset of the pandemic. Organizations had to take steps into helping their employees' transition into working-from-home practices by providing technical help and flexible schedules. Working from home has had many ups and downs as individuals and parents learned how to be home and work around others daily, and for many navigate challenges due to the dynamics that parents and individuals face when at home.

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Second, one-way workers have been able to manage the work-family conflict has been through schedule flexibility. Individuals (singles) and parents found it easier to manage other household and family tasks if they had more flexibility during the day to get their work done.

Third, schedule flexibility being a benefit that many looked forward to, the well-being of employees also played a role in how the work-family conflict is managed globally, given the difficulties that people are facing due to the pandemic. Some companies also offered free mental health therapy consultations/visits or health coaches—all of these aiming to make it easier to manage work during the pandemic. Moreover, although companies are offering benefits to make work manageable during this transition, many women left the workforce due to caregiving or family-related reasons. Historically, women took on duties such as caregiving that the patriarch deemed a role belonging to women (EL Sadaawi, 1980).

And fourth, although companies are offering benefits to make work manageable during this transition, many women left the workforce due to caregiving or family related reasons. Historically, women took on duties such as caregiving that the patriarch deemed as a role belonging to women (EL Sadaawi, 1980).

Issues presented when Working from Home (WFH)

Previous research (Hoschild, 1997; Allen et al., 2019; Kelly et al., 2011) on work-family conflict and working from home suggests that working from home has always been an issue for families. 2020 has shown us that forces beyond our control can disrupt how our society is organized. With the recent pandemic, new literature emerged regarding how organizations are managing the work-family conflict. Vaziri et al. (2020), through a person-centered approach, examined transitions in employees' work-family interfaces from before COVID-19 to after its

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onset. Vaziri et al. (2020) found that employees experienced more negative interfaces (e.g., lower job satisfaction and job performance and higher turnover intent) than positive interfaces.

The onset of the pandemic changed society and people's lives, causing job insecurity, social distancing, lost jobs (and health insurance), and concern about their health and that of their families (Vaziri et al. 2020). All the above likely impacted work-family conflict and enrichment (Vaziri et al. 2020). Vaziri et al. (2020) conducted two studies to identify profiles on conflict and enrichment. One study looked at establishing work-family experience profiles, and the second study looked at replicating and exploring transitions between Work-Family profiles. The Work-Family transitions between profiles may have improved for some as the commute hours decreased and their presence at home increased (Vaziri et al. 2020).

For others, however, the interfering behaviors between family and work increased. The studies showed that within a few weeks, all saw both positive and negative shifts in the work-family interfaces (Vaziri et al., 2020). Between enrichment and conflict, society as we knew changed within weeks. Employees who offered mental and emotional support to employees during this pandemic, Vaziri et al. (2020), suggests there is an impact of decreasing the work-family conflict.

As long ago as 1997, work-family conflict was being studied, and now some of the same issues still present themselves. While staff may have the equipment they need, are they productive without their boss around the corner? The subject of productivity and positive reinforcement from bosses is discussed in the literature review. According to Hochschild (1997, the issue of work-family balance) is an issue that will remain with us for a long time. Fast-forwarding 24 years later, we are still working on finding solutions to this issue. It is important to note that Carnevale and Hatak (2020) point out that working from home and greater job

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autonomy are associated with self-responsibility. Carnevale and Hatak (2020) point out that self-affirmation interventions are helping employees align such values when working from home; as such, Carnevale and Hatak (2020) expect to say that further research on self-affirmation intervention can help with the issue of work-life balance. There is much truth in having self-responsibility when working from home as the internal daily tasks can easily distract individuals from their home offices.

Research, however, does not agree whether working from home has positive or negative effects when it comes to work-family conflict. A part of research suggests that people that work from home are more likely to have positive effects as they can manage their home and work life with decreased levels of stress due to the manager and coworker inability to interrupt and having more control of how the day is laid out (Guimaraes and Dallow, 1999; Golden and Vega, 2008). Research also suggests that positive benefits can be faced with feelings of isolation (Golden and Vega, 2008), especially for singles, as they tend to be alone for longer times, especially with shelter in place orders (Carnevale and Hatak, 2020). The absence of face-to-face interactions with others can lead to more incredible frustration and isolation and can toll both job satisfaction and the work-family conflict.

The relationship seen within the literature suggests the absence of agreement can be because, as humans, we do not experience situations equally, and isolation can look differently across individuals. It is important to note that individuals have different identities when they are at work versus home. When home and work interact, one can assume that the work-family conflict only increases if one cannot organize their work-life versus their home life. HR News (2020) wrote that such an issue could be experienced differently from an extrovert versus an introvert. Both see changes when sheltered in place with relatives, family members, partners,

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children, or others who may be sick or struggling due to income loss. The pandemic has granted us that working from home gives us more flexibility in constructing our day while being present at home. As such, it brings us to an important question to consider. How/if has flexibility in a workplace help decrease the work-family conflict.

Lack of Control Over One's Schedule

It has been argued that flexibility at work improves the work-family balance of the worker (Blair-Loy and Wharton 2004). Work-family conflict refers to the general interference that work-life tends to have on an employee's personal life. Studies have shown that flexibility helps decrease stress levels among workers, increases productivity and job satisfaction (Golden and Veiga, 2005; Kurland and Bailey, 1999). "Work-life conflicts are seen to have a potentially detrimental impact on productivity, personal effectiveness, marital relations, child-parent relationships, and even child development" (Russell, O'Connell, and McGinnity, 2008). Furthermore, both work and home pressure create conflict. Research on job satisfaction and organizational psychology could aid in creating models that help with decreasing work-family conflicts by reshaping how organizations treat their employees. By creating more flexible schedules, many organizations have decreased burnout. Dickinson and McIntyre (1997) note that flexible schedules have led to employees taking fewer sick days. Organizations must work on creating more family-friendly environments to help increase job satisfaction and decrease work-family conflict.

However, work-family conflict can happen even when one has a flexible schedule. It is important to note that neither one indicates or proves that having a flexible schedule will decrease violence and family conflict. Moen et al. (2016) studied a STAR initiative that focused on how companies can improve the work-family conflict. STAR involved schedule flexibility as

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a big part of reducing work-family conflict as it allows employees to have control over their schedule, which would have allowed them to work from home whenever needed without supervisor permission. Their hypothesis (Moen et al., 2016) is that schedule flexibility allowed for better performance and allowed for better job satisfaction given the control employees felt about their schedule. “Shifting work schedules and working at home may also enable workers to adjust their work arrangements to fit their individual and family needs better, thereby improving well-being” (Moen et al., 2016:139). They also hypothesized that having control over one’s schedule increases employee’s well-being which also decreases work-family conflict.

Kelly et al. (2014) wrote that scholars had viewed schedule control as a critical work resource that can reduce work-family conflict. Schedule control and support ameliorate work-family conflict as they make it easier to get work done when in control of where you can be when you need to be (Kelly et al., 2014). The idea that you are in control of when you get to work on your project, especially as a parent (with getting children ready for school, medical appointments, dental appointments, and more). It gives parents the ability to stress less about work when they can come and go when they can, as long as they complete their weekly hours. Although some industries are unable to provide such flexibility to their employees, the ability to have such an opportunity does seem compelling and could decrease the work-family conflict.

“A recent Gallup poll found that 54 percent of office workers say they would leave their job for one that offers flexible work time. Furthermore, according to a recent IBM study, more than 75 percent of respondents indicated they would like to continue to work remotely at least occasionally, while more than half wanted remote working to be their primary way of working” (Stemmler and Hampton, 2020:23). The recent pandemic has demonstrated that people enjoy traveling and working remotely. It had allowed many to travel when they could not do before

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due to their confinement to their desks. Flexible work and WFH combined have allowed many to be present and to take trips and opportunities with their families and friends that were not seen before. Research is divided when it comes to flexibility and its ability to decrease work-family conflict; however, the analyses conducted suggest that it does have an incredible role in helping decrease work-family conflict.

Benefits, Programs, and the Issue of Employee Well-Being

As assumed, employees' well-being and mental state during COVID-19 have decreased based on the field research. Evanoff et al. (2020:7) ran a study called the EMPOWER study, which found that "a high prevalence of stress, anxiety, depression, work exhaustion, burnout, and worsened well-being among clinical and nonclinical university employees surveyed" was highly evident and were the critical factors in work-family conflict. All combined, these could potentially have severe indications on how employees perceive the benefits that companies offer. It can also be assumed that for some industries such as healthcare, caregiving, food industries, and more, there is a lack of opportunity to work from home given the work roles within the industry. We can continue to assume that the inability to stay home during lockdowns/quarantine and the inability to take days off puts families at risk of health issues, emotional well-being, mental health, and increased work-family conflict aforementioned issues.

While many companies tried to accommodate such issues, the economic issues that arose during the pandemic have played a significant role in employee well-being. Employees most likely worried about their family's health and safety. They worried about the economics of how to provide for their families. Employee well-being has been talked about by researchers such as (Aaronson et al. 20211); (Carnervale and Hatak, 2020); Geurts et al., 1999), and it has become more critical during the pandemic. Frontline workers faced health risks, were away from their

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families, and worked long hours. Frontline workers (e.g., health care, grocery stores, long-term care home, pharmacies, and more) were at a higher risk for contracting the virus, which caused stress and mental illnesses to increase (Sim, 2020; Tuzovic and Kabadayi, 2020). Mental health issues were seen among people working from home due to self-isolation (Tuzovic and Kabadayi, 2020). People spend time away from their family for too much, isolated from friends and colleagues, which could play a part in the increase in mental illness.

Cassidy (2020) wrote steps that employees can take to care about employee well-being, highlighting some essential areas such as leadership support mentioned before. Cassidy (2020), who writes for "Raconter" a business magazine, wrote that there are five ways, accordingly, that a leader can take to help with employee mental health during the pandemic: (1) Communicate clearly with everyone, (2) shift their leadership style, (3) relax the rules, (4) locate the resources, and (5) know when to step aside. More specifically, Cassidy (2020) adds that employers should also hold virtual coffee breaks, or social hours, show more care than control, and leave time for listening as resources to help with the mental health crisis during the pandemic. Furthermore, Cassidy (2020) highlights steps that employees can take to look after themselves (physical and mental health). Some of which include creating boundaries with their hours (start when they usually start and leave when they usually leave work), exercise, limit social media time, read-only information provided by credible sources to avoid overwhelming oneself, and doing something good for other people such as grocery shopping for the elderly. How the employers/companies are handling this pandemic most likely affects employee well-being, which could impact the decrease of the work-family conflict.

It is important to note that lockdowns/quarantine and work-from-home orders mostly came from states rather than organizations. The complicating issue of individuals also being in

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lockdown with their abusers for prolonged periods has been noted in numbersome research articles. Fisher (2020) wrote about an article by De Zwaan (2020), a Dutch newspaper wrote about a teacher attacked by her life partner during a zoom conference with her students viewing the incident. Fisher (2020:250), referencing the Guardian (2020), reported a "surge in domestic violence in relation to COVID-19 in the United States". Furthermore, countries like the Netherlands imposed rules that only allowed one individual to go in stores which caused issues for single parents as there was no one to watch their children (Fisher 2020). The study concluded that being single, not being financially stable, and having other health-related issues or other stressors other than the fear of contracting the virus did not offer the option of being safe and isolate during this pandemic. (Fisher 2020). The pandemic made it difficult for people to navigate between life and work given the number of factors impacting life and work when everything moved to "working-from-home" and "studying from home" modality.

Based on research done by Fiksenbam (2013), stress-related outcomes are most detrimental for an individual. "Stress-related outcomes such as depression (Grzywaca and Bass 2003), anxiety (Beatty 1996; Frone 2000), substance abuse (Frone 2000), elevated blood pressure and serum cholesterol levels (Thomas and Ganster 1995), gastrointestinal disorders (Kinnunen and Mauno 1998), cardiovascular disease (Frone et al. 1997) and somatic complaints, such as poor appetite, fatigue and nervous tension (Burke 1988; Grzywaca and Bass 2003) tend to take an enormous toll on the individual and his or her social others" (Fiksenbam 2020:655). Stress and related mental disorders are closely related to the work-family conflict, especially when working from home. Fiksenbam (2020) introduced the ideas of spillover theory which describes that "the boundaries between work and family are permeable; consequently, the

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experience of one domain influences attitudes, behaviors, values, and skills in the other domain (different work domains)" (2020:654).

The compensation theory says that work and family experiences are incompatible that if they are not satisfied in their jobs, they compensate that at home and vice versa. Fiksenbam (2020:654) also introduced the segmentation theory, which assumes "no relationship between work and family domains." Most research used in this APP explores the correlation between work-family conflict where one affects the other. Based on this analysis, it can be suggested that the spillover theory would best be used when researching the work-family conflict.

Gender related unemployment and/or employment changes

Historically, caregiving has been allocated mainly to mothers (Collins et al. 2020) pre and post COVID. Household chores are typically left]to women causing them to decrease their work hours (Collins et al. 2020). During COVID-19, the burden of caregiving also mainly fell to mothers (Boesch et al., 2020; Aarosan et al., 2020; Offer and Schneider, 2011; Lyttelton et al., 2020; Irak et al., 2019; Vaziri, 2020; Blair-Loy and Wharton, 2004). Boesch et al. (2021) of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis wrote that although both mothers and fathers leave the workforce during COVID-19, the distribution is disproportional. While both parents left the workforce, fathers were most likely to return to work (Boesch, 2021). Boesch et al. (2021) analyzed both parents and non-parents and found that women left jobs more than men in 2020. Although non-parents left at a lower percentage, evidence showed more women leaving the workforce than men. When examining parents, mothers, and fathers both left the workforce. However, mothers leaving was more significantly evidenced than the fathers.

With childcare closings (Saraiva et al. 2021), parents struggled to find a place to care for their children, forcing them to leave their jobs. Others were worried about the risks of the family

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members contracting COVID-19 if their child was sent to daycare outside the home, and others found that if they were affected financially by COVID-19, daycare was no longer affordable (Boesch et al. 2021). In April of 2020, a study done by Boesch et al. (2020) found that for non-parents, 0.3% of males and 1.5% of females left the workforce. The number of parents leaving the workforce increased for parents of children under five years of age ranging from 1.4% for males and 1.7% for females, 1.0% for males, and 2.7% for females with children under eighteen. These findings suggest that children under five require different or more intensive care than children above five or school-aged children.

Parents with school-aged children found themselves becoming educators to help their children through their online or remote classes, identifying the right technology resources, and stressing over not providing the technology resources if more than one child was present in the household. Aaronson et al. (2021) of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago wrote that women, in general, were affected during COVID-19, also emphasizing that mothers with children aged five and older substantiating that women were affected the most. Gender, race, education, and economic status also played a role in women leaving the workforce (Aaronson et al., 2021). Aaronson et al. (2021) estimated that roughly 190,000 prime-aged (25-54) mothers left the workforce. Lyttelton et al. (2021) found that mothers struggled the most when the childcare was provided at home when telecommuting. They took it upon themselves to work on the cleaning/household chores and found that children were with their fathers for 21 minutes during a workday compared to the 54 minutes with mothers, leaving a 27-minute gap which Lyttelton et al. (2021) claims not to have helped with solving the work-family conflict. As such work-family conflict disproportionately affected all mothers, including those who were telecommuting or

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working from the office, as they had to add the expense of childcare while parents are at work (Lyttleton et al. 2021).

Gender inequality in the workplace is a phenomenon that we hear daily, which women have been working to eliminate for centuries. The Women Rights Movement, which happened in 1848 in the U.S., was based on increasing equality between men and women (United States House of Representatives). This movement continued through movements like the Women's March, the #metoo movement, and one can expect this fight for equality to continue. Gender equality is not seen as much in the workplace among fathers and mothers. Significant discrimination is seen among married vs. non-married individuals. Although some improvement has been achieved through different movements, studies have found that there are still wage penalties associated with motherhood and married versus single women, whereas evidence shows that fathers have higher wages if married and with children (Blair-Loy and Wharton, 2004; Budig and England 2001; Waldfogel 1997; Hersch and Stratton 2000). It has been found that parents tend to not use benefits under the work-family policies (paid-time-off, paid childcare, working from home, and more) of fear of getting reprimanded for it (Blair-Loy and Wharton, 2004). It is hard to understand why these policies are implemented to help the work-family conflict if employees opt out of using them because of their supervisor or organizational culture.

Does emotional and social support help with the work-family conflict, and does emotional and social support help mothers/women decrease the work-family conflict? According to Irak, Kalkisim, and Yildirim (2019), social support is a factor that helps mothers overcome the work-family conflict. Having social support within both the home and workplace is significantly important (Irak et al. 2019). When it comes to childcare and family care, culture does play a role

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in how women feel when they enter the workforce. Women in cultures like Turkey believe that they are most responsible for caring for children and their family homes, leaving room for guilt when entering the workforce and being away from their children and homes (Irak et al., 2019). When not supported by their spouses, this guilt also leads to increased levels of work-family conflict (Irak et al., 2019). Research by Irak et al. (2019) found that women scored a .92 (on a scale from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) for work-family conflict and a .90 for family-work conflict. The women survey scored a .91 when asked if they felt guilty for working away from their children, a .92 when asked about supervisor support, a .97 for spousal emotional support scale, and a .92 for the spousal instrumental assistance scale. These findings suggest that work-family conflict depends on many factors, such as the emotional and instrumental support from family and work.

Hochschild (1997;2001) wrote about this issue in his book “Time Bind,” where he researched hundreds of companies and looked at the employee behaviors based on their schedules and the work they did. Hochschild observed that most parents in one of the firms worked from 8 am to 5 pm. “They bring their children in half an hour ahead of time and pick them up a half an hour after they leave work. It is longer if they have a late meeting or try to fit in errands or exercise. It is a nine-or-ten-hour day for most children” (1997; 2001:361). Hochschild (1997; 2001:370) also mentioned that studies show that “long hours at home alone increase the likelihood that a child will use alcohol or drugs.” The issue of childcare and shying away from “traditionally known” responsibilities when it comes to children becomes complicated when adding a sixty-hour week to the situation. Women must prove themselves to men (Hochschild, 1997;2001), making it hard to control the balance between work and family

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given the number of hours they must work to keep up with their male counterparts who already believe women do not belong in those positions.

“Time Bind” continues to be relevant even though it has been over 24 years since its first publication. Hochschild’s (1997;2001) research found that women opted out of using work-family policies or benefits for one of the reasons being that it was used against them when it came to promotions. Although there may not have been obvious sexism present, women noticed that their benefits and promotions varied significantly when women used the family-friendly policies offered to them.

There is also a difference between genders when using resources that companies offer regarding family-friendly policies. Blair-Loy and Wharton (2004:159) found that employees used work-family policies based on their earnings. For non-administrative positions, “up to 25 percent of fathers used dependent care and 44 percent of fathers use flexibility policies. But the proportion of policy use among fathers in the highest category was only 8 percent”. By comparison, 80 percent of mothers at the lower salary depended on care policies, and only 50 percent (two of the four mothers) in the highest salary category used such policies. Blair-Loy and Wharton (2004) found mothers in the highest salary categories to be more likely to use flexibility policies, with 50 percent (two women) using them than the 20 percent in the lower category. Flexibility policies that gave parents the ability to spend more time with their families could potentially decrease the work-family conflict, and Blair-Loy and Wharton (2004) found that working long hours does impact work-family conflict, and the parents who have more flexible schedules see decreases in work-family conflict.

Conclusion

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In summary, companies that offered benefits during the pandemic helped shape the new generation of workplace culture as individuals moved from in-office work to working from home. Parents took on teaching roles and parenting roles while managing the transition from in-office to working from home. While many “succeeded,” many others had to overcome issues such as being let go by their employer, raising children during a pandemic, and taking care of their loved ones. The literature supports the hypothesis that it was more difficult for married couples and parents to manage the pandemic, and work-family conflict was greater among parents than single individuals with no children. However, while families had collective support during the pandemic, individuals that lived alone did report feeling isolated due to the number of times they spend without human interaction. The literature neither supports nor denies that work-family conflict increased during the pandemic. However, this may result from limited research available and, with new literature emerging, a clearer understanding of the effects of the pandemic on the work-family conflict through the gendered lens.

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CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After reading over 30 articles that satisfied the criteria, I organized the literature in a table format to focus on the variables used and the results or findings of each article. The following have been used to develop the research questions as they emerged from the literature.

Table 1. Literature Systematic Review of Articles

Author(s)	Title	Concepts and Variables Used	Results or Findings
Aaronson, Hu, and Rajan 2021	Did Covid-19 disproportionately affect mothers' labor market activity?	Race, education, age, gender, labor markets, marriage status, children.	Women with children saw a downfall in labor participation compared to men with children.
Beatty 1996.	The stress of managerial and professional women: is the price too high?	Women, career, health, motherhood, family and work life, marriage, life choices, spousal support, social support.	Professional and managerial women exhibit higher levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and hostility than normal.
Blair-Loy and Wharton 2004.	Mothers in Finance: Surviving and Thriving.	Work-family conflict, gender and work, income, inequality.	Mother's experience higher work-family conflict compared to fathers. However, mothers at this particular firm were more successful compared to other female coworkers
Boesch et al. 2021.	Pandemic pushes mothers of young children out of the labor force.	Gender, mothers, fathers, parents, job loss, left labor force, college degrees, children, caretaking.	There are many factors that play into mothers leaving the workforce such as caretaking, children, education, and more.
Burke 1988.	Antecedents and consequences of work-home interference among medical residents.	Work-family interference, burnout, psychological health, medical residents, home characteristics, work characteristics, flexibility, emotional exhaustion.	Factors such as having a spouse that works overtime, an unfavorable worktime schedule, and a high quantitative workload put pressure on the interference between work and family. Such interferences have a negative effect on mental health

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Cassidy 2020.	Caring for employee mental health: a coronavirus guide.	Leadership.	Relaxing the rules of leading will help with easy transitions.
Evanoff et al. 2020.	Work-Related and Personal Factors Associated with Mental Well-Being During the COVID-19 Response: Survey of Health Care and Other Workers.	COVID-19, coronavirus, health care workers, mental health, occupational health, pandemic. Remote work; worker well-being.	Healthcare workers had increased difficulties with mental health. Mitigating exposure to COVID-19 and supervisor support could help support mental health.
Evans, Lindauer, and Farrell 2020.	A Pandemic within a Pandemic — Intimate Partner Violence during Covid-19	Health crises, intimate partner violence, COVID-19, working from home.	Governing bodies should consider social determinants of health when developing crisis standards of care. Privilege, finances, and access to resources all affect the impact of IPV on patients.
Felstead, Jewson, Phizackle a, and Walters. 2002.	Opportunities to work at home in the context of work-life balance.	Workplace size, working from home, public and private sectors, managers.	Granting the opportunity to work from home had a better turnover in this particular company.
Fiksenbaum 2014.	Supportive work-family environments: implications for work-family conflict and well-being.	Family-friendly benefits; life satisfaction and work engagement; work-family conflict; work-family culture.	Work-family benefits promoted a supportive work-family culture, and higher job satisfaction.
Fisher et al. 2020.	Community, work, and family in times of COVID-19.	Community, work, abuse, inequality, family, work-family conflict, poverty, age, disabled people.	COVID-19 helped increase virtual community engagement which is up for debated how it will present itself once everything opens up, extreme poverty will occur if governments don't get involved for loss of income due to the pandemic, and family life became more vulnerable and difficult amid the pandemic due to not everyone having the ability to have access to resources that can help balance family and other during the pandemic.

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Frone 2000.	Work–family conflict and employee psychiatric disorders: The national comorbidity survey.	Work-family conflict, psychiatric disorders, anxiety, substance abuse and dependence, mood, parents, marital status, employees.	Having a mental disorder had an effect on employees experiencing work-family conflict. No gender differences.
Gallucci and Seetharam an 2020.	How Fortune 500 companies are utilizing their resources and expertise during the coronavirus pandemic.	Benefits, employees, companies.	Companies are providing PPE’s donating trainings that will help with the transitions, conducting clinical research, sharing data and tech, trying to keep employees, employed, mental health help.
Golden and Veiga 2005.	The Impact of Extent of Telecommuting on Job Satisfaction: Resolving Inconsistent Findings.	Telecommuting, job satisfaction, telework, virtual work.	Telecommuting and job satisfaction depend on some job attributes.
Golden, Veiga, and Dino 2008.	The impact of professional isolation on teleworker job performance and turnover intentions: Does time spent teleworking, interacting face-to-face, or having access to communication-enhancing technology matter?	Telework, virtual work, professional Isolation, performance, turnover.	Face-to-face interactions were more preferable than telework.
Grrzywacz and Bass 2003.	Work, Family, and Mental Health: Testing Different Models of Work-Family Fit.	Anxiety, depression, family resilience, mental health, problem drinking, work-family fit.	Work-family conflict affects mental health
Guimaraes and	Empirically testing the benefits, problems, and	Telecommuting, employee benefits.	Success of telecommuting programmes relied on the characteristics of supervisors,

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Dallow 2017.	success factors for telecommuting programmes.		employees, tasks, and work environments, as well as management support and problems encountered.
Heggeness 2020.	Estimating the immediate impact of the COVID-19 shock on parental attachment to the labor market and the double bind of mothers.	Labor supply, Gender, Parenting, Pandemic, Difference-in-difference. Estimation, childcare.	Mothers and fathers with school aged children juggled their hours worked during the pandemic. While experiences differed among both, each were vulnerable. Mothers did see a negative impact in their working hours during the pandemic.
Henson, Felstead, and Jewson 2002.	In Work, at Home: Towards an Understanding of Homeworking.	Work-family, earning, work, working from home.	Changes between men and women in their pursuit of equality at work differs, while the authors neglect the issue of inequalities of gender race, and class.
Hochschild 1997;2001	The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work.	Work-family conflict, Marx, alienation.	Work is becoming a way of life which has led to many individuals losing themselves in the process.
Hroncich and Ward 2020.	Mental health benefits are becoming America's most competitive office perk in the age of coronavirus.	Stress, mental health care, pandemics, mental disorders, generations, mindfulness, meditation, anxieties, millennials, coronaviruses, COVID-19, employees, employers.	Employees have been seeking more mental health providers come the pandemic.
Irak, Kalkisim, and Muazzez 2020.	Emotional Support Makes the Difference: Work-Family Conflict and Employment Related Guilt Among Employed Mothers.	Emotional support, Work-family conflict, Working mother, Supervisory support.	“Spousal and supervisory emotional support were significant predictors of WFC for employed mothers. Moreover, supervisory support was a significant predictor of employment-related guilt.” (2020:53)
Kelley et al. 2014.	Changing Work and Work-Family Conflict: Evidence from the Work,	Work-family conflict, organizations, experiment, group-randomized	Flexible schedule improved work-family conflict while not increasing work demands.

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	Family, and Health Network.	trial, schedule control.	
Kinnunen and Mauno 1998.	Antecedents and Outcomes of Work-Family Conflict Among Employed Women and Men in Finland.	Work-family conflict, family-work conflict, family well-being, occupational well-being.	” The results showed that work-family conflict was more prevalent than family-work conflict among both sexes, but that there were no gender differences in experiencing either work-family or family-work conflict.” “The findings suggest that in particular improvements in working life are needed to prevent problems in the work-family interface.” (1998:157)
Kohll 2020.	How One Company Is Taking Care Of Employees During COVID-19	Working-from-home, well-being, employees, employers, medical support, emotional support, leadership support.	Helping employees’ transition to working-from home made a difference and prioritizing employee well-being helps the company production.
Kurland and Bailey 1999.	Telework: The Advantages and Challenges of Working Here, There, Anywhere, and Anytime.	Telework, telecommuting.	In-office work offers challenges and opportunities that working from home do not
Lyttelton, Zang, and Musick 2020.	Before and During COVID-19: Telecommuting, Work-Family Conflict, and Gender Equality.	Work-family conflict, family, parents, moms, dads, conflict, telecommuting, working-from-home, childcare, children.	“The parents in this sample tend to be more similar in their work-related characteristics relative to a broader group that includes those who never work from home” (no page format).
Moen et al. 2016.	Does a Flexibility/Support Organizational Initiative Improve High-Tech Employees’ Well-Being? Evidence from the Work, Family, and Health Network.	Subjective well-being, flexibility, organizational intervention, work-family, gender.	STAR initiative reduces burnout, perceived stress, and psychological distress, increased job satisfaction in a year. Such result came from increase in schedule control and declines on work-family conflict. “This study demonstrates, with a rigorous design, that organizational-level initiatives can promote employee well-being.” (2016:134)
Offer and Schneider 2011.	Revisiting the Gender Gap in Time-Use	Multitasking, well-being, work-family conflict, dual-earner	Mothers spend more time multitasking a day compared to fathers at home and is seen as a

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	Patterns: Multitasking and Well-Being among Mothers and Fathers in Dual-Earner Families	families, experience sampling method.	negative impact on women, at work however, both genders see negative impacts on multitasking.
Russell, O'Connell, McGinnity 2008.	The Impact of Flexible Working Arrangements on Work-life Conflict and Work Pressure in Ireland	Work-life balance, flexible working arrangements, gender, work stress, work pressure.	“While part-time work and flexitime tend to reduce work pressure and work-life conflict, working from home is associated with greater levels of both work pressure and work-life conflict” (2008:90-91)
Sim 2020.	The COVID-19 pandemic: major risks to healthcare and other workers on the front line.	Healthcare workers, COVID-19, major risks of infection.	Healthcare workers are more likely than other to get infected with the COVID-19 virus given their frontline interaction with the public and the infected individuals.
Stemmler and Hampton 2020.	Post COVID-19 Employee What to Look for In Your Compensation Package.	Workplace flexibility, COVID-19, benefits.	Reimbursements and allowances and the freedom to use them to their needs, help employees, while positively impacting business goals and objectives.
Tuzovic and Kabadayi 2021.	The influence of social distancing on employee well-being: a conceptual framework and research agenda.	COVID-19, Coronavirus, Employee wellbeing, Service hibernation, TSR.	Continued research on service continuity and service hibernation should help us fully understand the effects of social distancing and employee well-being.

Literature Findings

The work-family conflict is an issue that has been studied for years now. As it stands on the name, the work-family conflict is simply the balance or lack of creativity when work and life collide. To avoid the conflict, literature emerged with models and forms in which we can partake to avoid such conflict. Literature is divided on what is the right approach. However, a few that they agree on are 1) schedule flexibility (Blair-Loy and Wharton 2004; Burke 1988; Moen et al. 2016.; Stemmler and Hampton 2020) 2) working-from-home (Evans, Lindauer, and Farrell 2020; Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea, and Walters. 2002; Henson, Felstead, and Jewson 2002; Russell,

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O'Connell, McGinnity 2008), 3) mental health support (Frone 2000; Gallucci and Seetharaman 2020; Grrzywacz and Bass 2003; Htoncich and Ward 2020; Irak, Kalkisim, and Muazzez 2020; Cassidy 2020; Evanoff et al. 2020), 4) supervisor support or else relaxed leadership styles (Fiksenbaum 2014; Guimaraes and Dallow 1999; Irak, Kalkisim, and Muazzez 2020; Kelley er al. 2014; Kohll 2020) among others.

Schedule Flexibility

Schedule flexibility seemed to be the most sought-after benefit, especially for working mothers. Blair-Loy and Wharton (2004) found that workplace flexibility can alleviate the work-family conflict for working mothers as it allows them the flexibility to manage work and family as needed. Burke (1988) also suggested that an unfavorable schedule puts pressure on the interference between work and home. Literature found that having control over one's schedule was significant in improving the work-family conflict (Kelley et al., 2014). “We find statistically significant, although modest, improvements in employees’ work-family conflict and family time adequacy, and larger changes in schedule control and supervisor support for family and personal life. We find no evidence that this intervention increased work hours or perceived job demands, as might have happened with increased permeability of work across time and space. Subgroup analyses suggest the intervention brought greater benefits to employees more vulnerable to work-family conflict” (Kelley et al. 2014:585). Moen et al. (2016) using a method called STAR that they developed as part of their research, that when increasing schedule control, they were able to see declines in family-to-work conflict and burnout in about six months. Schedule flexibility has been proven as a benefit that helps with resolving or reducing the issue of work-family conflict.

Schedule flexibility allows for an employee to create their schedule as they plan their weeks. With the pandemic and transitioning to working-from-home, schedule flexibility helped

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parents, especially working mothers engage in homecare duties, such as parental duties, while working from home (Blair-Loy and Wharton 2014) as they were able to schedule their days accordingly. In addition, having the opportunity to take control over one's schedule allows for fewer sick days, less taking days off for family or other related day-to-day activities. The opportunity to schedule one's work and family life can help individuals live a healthier and more balanced life.

Mental Health and Well Being/ Supervisor Support

Along with schedule flexibility, mental health support is vital to the work-family conflict, especially for women as Beatty (1996) stated that stress and anxiety are at higher levels than average for working women. Cassidy (2020) wrote that relaxing the rules of leading will help with an easy transition to working from home, which will help prioritize employee well-being and mental health. Lastly, supervisor support is highly linked with mental health and reduced work-family conflict (Evanoff et al. 2020; Fiksenbaum 2014; Guimaraes and Dallow 1999). Supervisor support is highly suggested, especially given that we are not yet aware of the pandemic's effects on employee well-being.

Evanoff et al.'s (2020) findings suggested that the pandemic had a negative effect on clinical and non-clinical employees. Evanoff et al. (2020) continue by suggesting that supervisor support is the factor that could protect the mental health and well-being of all workers. Lastly, according to Gallucci and Seetharama (2020), mental health support is one of the most favorable benefits among Fortune 500 companies. It is no surprise that mental health support, given the astronomical prices of mental health treatments (Winerman 2017), is most favorable as a benefit for employees (Hroncich and Ward 2020). According to Winerman (2017), roughly 187 billion dollars were spent on mental health treatment in the American Psychological Association.

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Stemmler and Hampton (2020) wrote on what to look for in a compensation package, calling companies that offer the flexibility to choose benefits that fit the employee, including wellness benefits, as smart companies. Giving employees the flexibility to choose what better fits an employee's need will create a healthy relationship, if not a loyal relationship, among the organization and the employee.

Working-from-home

Literature is divided on the effects that working-from-home has on the work-family conflict. While many individuals enjoy working from home, for others may be more challenging to work from home (Felstead et al. 2002). Russell, O'Connell, and McGinnity (2008) found that working from home is associated with more significant work pressure and work-life conflict. Golden, Veiga, and Dino (2008:1412) also found that “professional isolation’s impact on these work outcomes is increased by the amount of time spent teleworking, whereas more face-to-face interactions and access to communication-enhancing technology tend to decrease its impact”

However, helping employees with the transition to working-from-home had positive effects for many (Kohll 2020). Working-from-home changed a lot as now individuals are saving on travel costs and are more present at home, which allows for more interactions with their children (Lyttelton, Zang, and Musick 2020). Working-from-home has been studied for a long time now as an attempt to find new models of work. Literature is emerging to understand the effects of transitioning to working-from-home in the numbers that we saw transition this past year and a half has had on organizational changes.

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Review of existing data surveys done.

The National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions ran a survey distributed among their employees regarding COVID-19 and workplace efforts to keep employees informed. The data presented showed the efforts that companies are making to battle the pandemic while offering options to their employees that could potentially help with productivity and decrease the work-family conflict. Companies, according to the data presented above, showed some companies making more effort than others to help support their employees, with 40% updating their employees daily on new measures to be taken to support them during the pandemic—nearly all of the companies within the coalition suspended travel, and person-meetings. However, the survey did not collaborate whether they offered technical support to their employees if they needed it to attend meetings and transition to working from home.

Benefits included medical coverage for testing and treatment of COVID-19 varied among the coalition, with 56% not offering the benefit of sharing the cost of treatment which increases to 83% for employees that are not offered benefits through their companies. Looking at these numbers, the fear of having to work in-office, which was a reality for many frontline workers, there is a gap in the survey data on whether the organization would help pay if COVID-19 was contracted at work. Working from home was only possible to grant to industries like IT, sales, or anything related to that extent that employees could complete their work duties from a home office. Frontline workers did not have the opportunity to work from home. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that the work-family conflict was higher among frontline workers, given the higher chances of contracting the virus.

The survey also showed that more relaxed and family-friendly approaches should be suggested for parents with young children. Working from home with paid leave, unpaid leave,

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vacation/sick time, or simply working from home was among the suggestions. An employee can receive flexible time to work in-between family responsibilities such as childcare, reasonably relaxing policies and requests from employees with young children and allowing for a flexible schedule to accommodate family life. This survey had limitations for this APP, given that their demographics were not examined through a gendered lens. Boech et al. (2021) presented data collected within the Federal Reserve of Minneapolis, which showed that mothers left the workforce increasingly due to caregiving responsibilities. By November 2020, men's involvement in childcare was 0.1% compared to 2.2% for women. The cause of this workforce leaves left to research on whether societal gender roles are the leading indicator of who was most affected during the pandemic. Lastly, the use of surveys for this paper came with its limitations as they both were limited to providing support for reducing the work-family conflict.

Limitations

The investigation of the issue of the work-family conflict and the effects COVID-19 has and on employee's, particularly women is a complicated effort. Research is currently limited on the effects of the pandemic on the work-family conflict. Therefore, I propose a survey to ask questions related to work-family conflict by understanding the needs of employees as companies transition into a post-COVID-19 era of organizational structure. The limitations of this study lie in the fact that there is not much research currently that explores how the pandemic has affected the work-family conflict. While the hypothesis explores that given what existing research shows us, we are not clear if it has reduced the work-family conflict. Therefore, I present the following research questions to be considered for future research to understand the issue of the work-family conflict better:

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1. How are organizations addressing work-family conflict among their workers through a gendered lens?
2. Does providing employee benefits such as childcare, flexible schedules, working-from-home, and supervisor support help decrease work-family conflict?

The questions above were attempted to be answered by the literature review. However, since there is a lack of research that covers the work-family conflict, COVID-19, and how it has affected women in an organizational setting, such attempts were limited.

Directions for Future Research

Directions for Future Research can be seen through the above-mentioned research questions. As a result, I suggest that a research survey is created to look at different organizational levels, starting with how it has affected individuals so far as their wellness, stress, and mental health. The survey should explore if there were changes based on married versus single individuals and gendered differences. Another issue that needs exploring is how organizations have changed as a whole and how has the pandemic changed their culture to help decrease the work-family conflict. I suggest that looking at whether employees have specific needs that help support their work when working from home, schedule flexibility, childcare options, and helping create family-friendly policies can help decrease the work-family issue. A model should be created to identify the needs of employees by asking the simple question of how often their work interferes with their home life and if that has made it, so women leave the workforce to tend to their home needs. Helping create new policies to support that and offering benefits such as childcare options must make a difference in how organizations approach the work-family conflict. I suggest that we need to embrace the opportunity to develop new models

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that identify the issues that organizations experience in their efforts to improve the interactions with their employees.

The pandemic gave us the opportunity to explore how we can change organizational structures in terms of benefits and programs that we can offer to employees, not only to allow room for growth, but to insert a sense of support in efforts for employee loyalty. Such efforts should allow organizations to increase their retention rates. Although this paper does not entertain the retention issues, employees do look at compensation packages. Efforts should be made to better understand how crisis affect organizations by creating surveys that initially ask employees directly for input on such issue.

Moreover, lastly, I suggest that we explore society in terms of how it has changed the family and organizations. Has it changed the outlook of our family values? Has the pandemic changed our outlook on our relationships? Dr. Heather Hanson (2018) wrote a book that focused on bringing love back in organizations. This APP does not necessarily look at bringing love back to work, but I would suggest that kinder or softer family policies, bringing back the human factor in organizations, will decrease the work-family conflict.

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