THE MODERATING EFFECT OF COMPARTMENTALIZATION ON ROLE CONSENSUS AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE: AN INVESTIGATION ON MANAGERIAL LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL BANKS IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

In a complex, dynamic, fiercely competitive business environment and a society filled with conflicting responsibilities and commitments, work–life balance has become one of the predominant issues in today's workplace. As the organizations are constantly concerned over employees' well-being, creating an organizational environment in which a desirable level of work–life balance can be experienced by an employee has become a constant challenge and a contemporary people management issue for many organizations. Employees are required to achieve results in an effective and efficient manner, while performing multiple roles on the professional and personal front. The various work role demands they encounter place pressure on them to achieve success which in turn hinders their level of work–life balance. This study investigates the relationship between role consensus and work–life balance and the moderating effect of compartmentalization between the two constructs among the managerial level employees working in domestic commercial banks in Sri Lanka. A sample of 180 managerial level employees was selected from the twelve domestic commercial banks and surveyed using a questionnaire. Results suggest that role consensus has a significant negative influence on work–life balance and that compartmentalization moderates the impact. Findings also highlighted the importance of organizational consideration for various work role demands placed on managers.

Keywords: Role Consensus, Work–Life Balance, Compartmentalization, Contemporary issues in HRM, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Work–life balance has appeared as a major theme in the past two decades, which witnessed a considerable increase in work caused by economic uncertainty, organizational restructuring and increased business competition (Millward, et al., 2000; Green, 2001). To meet new conditions, organizations required greater performance and commitment from their employees, resulting in expectations such as working long hours and prioritizing work over personal life (Perrons, 2003; White, et al., 2003). Growing interest in work–life balance was also driven by the changing demographics of the workforce and rising recognition that work-life issues are of fundamental importance for many people (Bardoel, et al., 1999). Changes in the redefinition of 'normal working hours' (Wickham, et al., 2006), the demographic changes of the labour force (i.e. gender, ethnicity, dual career couples, and religion), and the different

kinds of employment contracts (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006) have compelled an increase in organizations' concerns for their employees' well-being. According to Covey (2007, p.1), "The challenge of work–life balance is without question one of the most significant struggles faced by modern man". Thus, in the present day context many scholars, practitioners and business leaders pay a great deal of attention to the aspect of work–life balance.

Amongst the widely cited, Kirchmeyer (2000) views living a balanced life as "achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains". In simple terms work–life balance can be defined as the balance between work and non-work related activities. It is the ability and efforts of employees to divide their time and vitality between work and the other essential facets of their lives. According to many researchers, failure to achieve the right balance is related to reducing psychological and physical well-being (Thomas and Ganster, 1995; Frone, et al., 1997; Martens, et al., 1999).

Traditionally researchers have assumed a "win-lose" relationship between work and life and have focused on work-life conflict, based on the belief that individuals have limited time and resources to allocate to their many life roles (Kossek, 2006). That work can "have a debilitating effect on life" is not new (Eikhof, et al., 2007, p.326). There are many non-work related roles where an individual engages himself with the society and these non-work roles have varying impacts on an employee's working life, however the design of many organizational roles has neglected other non-work roles that employees play outside the work environment (Wickham and Parker, 2007). Hence, generally "work is assumed to have a negative impact on life" (Eikhof, et al., 2007, p.329). Although many scholars, practitioners and business leaders highlight the importance of work–life balance and present many ways and means to accomplish a balance, it has become only a delusion for many workers due to organizational demand on the employee's adherence to the work role and organizational culture.

According to Rogers (1995), a role can be defined as a certain acceptable way of acting and behaving. In an organizational context, role behaviours are the recurring patterns of actions that are considered vital for effective functioning in that particular role and in that particular organization (Biddle, 1986). According to role theory, in an organizational context there should be a role consensus among the employees and employers about organizational goals and objectives. This reveals that for organizations to function effectively there needs to be a consensus regarding the expectations of enacted roles and the manner in which they interact (Parker and Wickham, 2005). Thus, employees and employers have to hold common norms and values that help to enhance consistency in expectations and behaviour (Biddle, 1986). According to Parker and Wickham, (2005), in an organizational context there is assumed consensus on behalf of the organization when employees enter into an employment relationship.

Consensus is an important component between the role-conferrers and the employee in order for role enactment to occur (Katz and Khan, 1966). However, it is necessary that work roles are predefined, agreed on and static before consensus can be achieved (Biddle, 1986). As this fails to account for the complexity of the array of non-work roles enacted by employees and the fact that these roles are changing over time (Kerr, 1978; George, 1993; Rotolo, 2000), role consensus frequently places pressure on employees to achieve success at work which in turn hinders and negatively affects achieving success at the non-work roles

(Jackson, 1998). However, based on past research, if employees can physically separate the performing of non-work roles from their work roles they will be able to successfully compartmentalize their conflicting work and non-work roles thereby minimizing role conflict (Wickham and Parker, 2007). This will eventually contribute to a lower level of work dissatisfaction and workplace stress (Wickham and Parker, 2007).

Managerial level employees tend to be in a less enviable position than non-managerial employees when it comes to maintaining a desirable work–life balance (Murphy and Doherty, 2011). Thus, the present study investigates the relationship between role consensus, work–life balance and the moderating effect of compartmentalization between the two constructs among employees holding managerial positions in the domestic commercial banks in Sri Lanka. The banking sector in Sri Lanka is an important aspect of the Sri Lankan economy. In the recent past, the Sri Lankan bank system has undergone a number of structural changes in many aspects thus increasing the work burden of employees and causing severe mental tension (Fernando, 2011). Further, the Sri Lankan banking industry is now on a new trend with extended working hours and holiday banking to cater to the majority of customer demands which in turn affect the work–life balance of employees. Further, previous studies provide evidence that the employees in the private sector commercial banks seem to encounter various work–family conflicts due to lack of free time, high workloads, unrealistic deadlines and lack of role clarity (Fernando, 2011). This was further established through the findings of a preliminary survey, which revealed that work–life balance was an issue among managerial employees in the banking sector and this was mainly due to the pressure stemming from organizational work demands, severe competition and vast changes that have taken place in the banking industry.

In light of the above context the specific objectives of this study were: (1) To determine the relationship between role consensus and work–life balance of managerial employees in the domestic commercial banks in Sri Lanka; and (2) To find out if compartmentalization moderates the relationship between role consensus and work–life balance of managerial employees in the domestic commercial banks in Sri Lanka. Consistent with the objectives, the rest of the paper reviews in brief the theoretical background of the study. This is followed by the methodology and results. The subsequent section will be a discussion on the findings and implications. The paper concludes with an indication on areas for future research.

RELATED LITERATURE

Work–life balance of managers

Managers are any individuals held responsible for the direction and effective performance of an organization's operation (Murphy and Doherty, 2011). Managerial work is undergoing enormous and rapid changes so that many managers are re-inventing their profession as they go (Kanter, 1977). Drew, Humphreys and Murphy (2003) argue that in the case of managerial work "commitment to work is often measured in terms of time spent at the workplace". Presenteeism is one way in which employees demonstrate their value to the business or organization by their almost constant presence (Purcell, et al., 1999). They also found that all of the senior managers they interviewed were opposed to the idea of working from home because they thought this would be required in addition to their already lengthy

office work schedule (Drew, et al., 2003). Those working from home have reported significant higher level of work– life conflict where the negative relationship is partly due to the long working hours and factors such as intrusion to the family space (Gregory and Milner, 2009).

The literature indicates that parents who are employed in managerial roles are under pressure on relationships between children, their parents and other relatives by the longer working hours and work intensification (Gatrell and Cooper, 2008). Further, the new communication technologies that enable constant contact with employees and the need for businesses to cut lead times in order to be competitive globally has led to time pressures and intrusion of work into non-work times of managers (Milliken and Dunn-Jenson, 2005). It is further argued that the cultural expectation that senior managers will work long hours has the effect of excluding many women from managerial employment (Dickens, 1998; Doherty, 2004). Working for extended hours may prohibit mothers or fathers from attending to their children's needs (Fredriksen-Goldsen and Scharlack, 2001, p.83; Gambles, et al., 2006, p.67). As a result childlessness among employees has been increasing, especially among female managers (Wood and Newton, 2006).

Recent studies which indicate that very few managers can afford to work standard hours or avail themselves of the work–life balance accommodations available to them as that would be seen as indicating a lack of organizational commitment and therefore potentially hamper their careers (Thesing, 1998; Drew and Murtagh, 2005). Further, according to the findings of Moore (2007) in the case of managers, company loyalty was incompatible with the maintenance of work–life balance. International research on managers reveals an intensification of working pressures and a significant lengthening of the work week (Drew and Daverth, 2009). Moore (2007) argues that managerial level employees face difficulties in finding another job immediately in contrast to the non-managerial employees due to imbalance of demand and supply in the labour market. Thus they have to be more committed and loyal to the organization and have to drive for higher performance. If not, their survival in the organization is at risk. He explains that managers value self-sacrificing loyalty to the organization with the intention to achieve status or career development and thus like to sacrifice other commitments on behalf of work roles. Researchers have found that, on average, manager's work more than 50 hours a week and had experienced a general intensification of working hours (Murphy and Doherty 2011) with the result that most managerial employees experience a poor balance between work and life in comparison to other workers. In the Sri Lankan context Akuratiyagamage and Opatha (2004) found that hours of work caused a high level of grievance among managers and there were slight variations in the level of grievance suffered by gender.

Relationship between role consensus and work–life balance

According to Jackson (1998), the designing of roles in the organization has emphasized their objective structure while not adequately focusing on subjectivity. Most of the workers today, regardless of gender, have family responsibility and most married workers have an employee spouse but jobs have been designed as if workers have no family responsibilities (Bailyn, et al., 2001). Thus, many people find it difficult to manage their time in a way that is healthy for their work as well as their personal life (Vlems, 2005). When employees struggle to find time and resources that are needed to satisfactorily complete their

in-role responsibilities, they may take work home, stay at work after normal business hours, work on their days-off and so forth in order to get the job done (Hyman, et al., 2003; Bolino and Turnley, 2005) Thus work–life tensions have been compounded by factors such as work intensification, long working hours (Green, 2001; Taylor, 2001) as well as extended shift working and unpredictable overtime to meet extended work schedules (Hyman, et al., 2003).

Many employers think that it is the responsibility of individuals to balance their work and domestic roles (Hyman and Summers, 2004). However, role consensus frequently puts pressure on employees to achieve success at work rather than achieving success in other roles (Jackson, 1998). This eventually leads to a high level of work dissatisfaction and workplace stress. High levels of job stress have been related to decreased work–life balance and increased work–life conflict among different occupations (Wallace, 2005; Won and Lin, 2007).

Katz and Kahn (1966, 1978) explain that if employee roles are not managed effectively, they are likely to manifest inter alia job dissatisfaction, lower levels of commitment and productivity, increased intention to resign, and higher rates of absenteeism. There is compelling evidence that work–life imbalance has great consequences for employees, their organizations and society (Lockwood, 2003). In particular conflicts between work and family significantly affect quality of family life and career attainment for both men and women (Rawlings, et al., 2012).

Facets of employees' lives outside of work play a greater role than formerly thought in affecting work attitudes and behaviour (Ford, et al., 2007; Hart, 1999). Further, ensuring that employees are able to engage in personal pursuits increases the possibility that they will gain skills that can be applied to the relevant workplace (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000). Therefore positive work–life outcomes for employees are key ingredients of a successful business strategy (Lowe, 2006). Where the right balance is achieved and sustained both employer and employee gain (Rawlings, et al., 2012).

Effects of compartmentalization as the moderator

Work–life conflict as an inter-role conflict in which work and life role demands are mutually incompatible, thus meeting the demand of one domain, makes it difficult to meet the demands of the other (Choi, 2008). The concept of role conflict is normally defined as the concurrent appearance of two or more incompatible expectations for the behaviour of a person (Biddle, 1986). Noor (2004) indicates that role conflict can occur under three conditions namely time based, stress based and behaviour based. When involvement in one role frequently interferes with another role, performance and quality of life in the second role suffer (Frone, et al., 1997). However, through role segmentation individuals may experience less distortion and interruption in their different roles and may be able to "psychologically compartmentalize their identities" (Olson-Bunchanan and Roswell, 2006, p.435). In recent studies segmentation has been defined as "an active psychological process whereby people may choose to maintain a boundary between work and family" (Rothbard and Dumas, 2006, p.74). Briefly, segmentation is about personal compartmentalization of work and non-work which provides independent experiences of different domains (Roehling, et al., 2003).

Theory says that if the employee can physically separate the enactment of their non-work roles (work–family and work–life roles) from their work roles they will be able to successfully compartmentalize their conflicting work and non-work roles (Wickham and Parker, 2007). As result, role conflicts are minimized. Compartmentalization tactics included both cognitive and behavioural components. Cognitively, respondents reported their compartmentalization efforts as the selective non-disclosure of non-work roles to their colleagues. Behaviourally, respondents reported their compartmentalization efforts as including refusal to work overtime, refusal to 'take work home', refusal to allow family members to visit them at work, and refusal to socialize with their work colleagues. It ultimately contributes to a lower level of work dissatisfaction and workplace stress (Wickham and Parker 2007).

METHODOLOGY

Conceptualization and Hypotheses Development

The conceptual model developed for the study consisted of the independent, dependent and moderating variables. Among the variables that affect work-life balance, this study considered role consensus as the independent variable, and work-life balance as the dependent variable. Compartmentalization was taken as the moderating variable. Two hypotheses were developed based on the conceptual model.

The past literature shows that role-consensus fails to account for the complexity of the array of non-work roles enacted by employees that impact at the workplace, and the fact that these roles necessarily change over time (Kerr, 1978; Turner, 1990; George, 1993; Rotolo, 2000). Further, it forces employees to devote their time and effort for the sake of organizational roles (Jackson, 1998). Thus, the greater the role consensus between employee and employer, the greater the employee has to strictly adhere to the organizational role and culture, eventually leading to the inability to maintain an appropriate balance between work roles and non-work roles simultaneously. Accordingly theory has shown that there is an inverse relationship between role consensus and work–life balance. In light of the above evidence the researchers developed Hypothesis One as;

H1: The greater role consensus has a negative influence on work–life balance.

The re-conceptualized organizational role theory recognizes that employee' efforts to successfully compartmentalize their work and non-work roles will lead to minimizing the role conflict (Wickham and Parker, 2007) and the achievement of an appropriate level of work–life balance. This reveals that if the employee has the ability to successfully separate the two roles and maintain a distinction between the two, the employee is in a position to achieve the appropriate level of work–life balance. In light of the above evidence the researchers developed Hypothesis Two as;

H2: The higher the employee's ability to compartmentalize the conflicting roles, role consensus will have a positive impact on work–life balance

Operationalization

Employers generally expect various work related behaviours from their employees for better organizational performance. Role consensus is the agreement among the expectations held by various role holders and role expectations are derived through the experiences individuals have when acting within particular environments (Biddle, 1986). Experiences help shape how people construe and choose to enact their roles (Jackson, 1981). Part of this process involves perception and judgments about work role requirements, which reflect the content of role expectation (Dierdorff and Morgeson, 2007).

Work role requirements have been described in many ways and most common in the role theory literature has been the focus on role behaviours or the actions that are performed on the job (Dierdorff and Morgeson, 2007). Work role requirements are unique to a given occupation and depend on the job category. High performance organizations have raised their expectations regarding time, energy and work commitment from employees (Burke, 2010). Past literature, however, does not list down any specific dimensions of role consensus. As the current study was focused on managerial employees in the domestic commercial banks, role consensus was operationalized via the various managerial work role requirements and expectations such as commitment, loyalty, role involvement and longer working hours which were denoted through time and energy (Kinman and Jones, 2007; Moore, 2007; Abdul and Roshan, 2010). For the measurement purpose an interval scale was used.

Operationalizing of the work–life balance concept was based on the dimensions and indicators used by Hayman (2005). Hence, work interference with life, life interference with work, and work–life enhancement were taken to measure the concept of work–life balance. When measuring work–life balance, work interference with life, life interference with work, was negatively charged and work–life enhancement was positively charged (Hayman, 2005). An interval scale was used for the measurement.

The concept compartmentalization was operationalized using two dimensions, namely separation of personal life from work life and the separation of work life from personal life (Wickham and Parker, 2007). When measuring the compartmentalization effort, the dimensions which evaluate the clear segregation between work and personal life i.e. separation of personal life from work life and separation of work life from personal life was positively charged. For the measurement purpose an interval scale was used.

The Sample

The population of this study included all managerial level employees who work in domestic commercial banks of Sri Lanka. Based on secondary data (Central Bank, 2012) the total number of domestic commercial banks in Sri Lanka was twelve. The random probability sampling technique was used to choose the appropriate sample. Fifteen (15) managerial employees from each domestic commercial bank were chosen and thus sample size was one hundred and eighty (180) to assess the relationship between role consensus and work–life balance.

Method of data collection

The data was collected by using a self-administered questionnaire. Prior to using the questionnaire to collect data it was pilot tested. The interview method was only used for the preliminary survey conducted among 20 managerial employees to identify the work–life balance issues that exist among managerial employees in the banking sector.

Data analysis techniques

Before starting the analysis the researcher conducted reliability analysis to examine the internal consistency of the study. As descriptive measurements the researcher used mean, mode, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, skewness and kurtosis. Hypotheses were tested by using the Pearson correlation and multiple regression models. The researchers used Barron and Kenny's (1986) moderated multiple regression model to test the effect of the moderating variable. Predictor and the moderate variable are standardized to create the moderator. The multiplication of the standardized predictor and the standardized moderate variable has been taken as the moderator. All the hypotheses were tested with respect to 5% level of significance. Validity of the regression model was tested in relation to the behaviour of residuals. The current study used SPSS as the software package for the data analysis.

Results

Prior to the data analysis, reliability of the measurement items was analyzed by using the Cronbach's alpha test. Internal reliabilities of the measures (Cronbach's alpha) are shown in Table 1. All the variables reported good internal consistency which exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.70.

Table 1 Reliabilities of the measures (Cronbach's alpha)

Construct	No of items	Cronbach's alpha reliability
Role consensus	14	0.751
Work–life balance	26	0.776
Compartmentalization	12	0.866

Source: Survey data

Multicollinearity

Current study entails role consensus as the independent variable and compartmentalization as the moderator. The collinearity statistics was below the threshold of 3, thus indicating there is no multicollinearity issue.

Response rate and adequacy of response rate

In total there were 180 questionnaires that were distributed among the managerial employees. The survey resulted in 180 usable questionnaires, which resulted in a response

rate of 100%. In accordance with Green (as cited in Field, 2009) this is a sufficient sample size for the data analysis.

Sample description

The final sample consisted of 52.2% males and 47.8% females which help to generalize the findings for both genders. The majority of the respondents belonged to the 30-39 years age group which was 60% of the sample. Further, it was noted that of the respondents, 16.7% were single, 81.7% married and 1.6% which belonged to the divorced and other category. Out of the married employees, 37.8% did not have children and 62.2% were having children.

The sample represented 16.7% state bank employees and 83.3% private bank employees and it included 37.8% lower managerial level employees, 52.2% middle managerial level employees and 10% senior managerial level employees. The majority of these employees (56.1%) had worked more than 7 years in their respective organization.

Non-work activities

There was a question which was included in the first part of the questionnaire survey to find out information with reference to the non-work related activities and non-work related roles that employees are engaged in outside their working environment. Most of the respondents have indicated that they play the role of a parent, spouse and child. Out of 180 respondents 62.2% play the role of a parent, 81.7% the role of a spouse and 70% the role of a child. Further, a major proportion is enacting the role of a friend (58.9%), committee member (48.9%) and student (35.5%). Comparing to the other roles a few of them are engaged in sports activity and music. Also, it was noted that some of them are enacting the role of a lecturer, in addition to their work role.

Descriptive statistics

All variables were tapped on a five-point likert scale. Based on the mean values derived upon analyzing the data, it reveals that comparatively, employees have an agreeable level of role consensus (3.84) and moderate level of compartmentalization (3.34). However, it is evident that their level of work–life balance is at a low level (1.1). As such the mean of work–life balance is in line with the research problem. Table 2 shows the summary of the descriptive statistics.

Table 2 Means and Standard Deviations of the variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Role consensus	3.07	5	3.8421	0.36265
Compartmentalization	2.33	4.83	3.3435	0.64853
Work–life balance	0	3.57	1.0971	0.90081

Source: Survey data

Overall results based on the coefficient of variation values in Table 3 indicate that, irrespective of gender, marital status, number of children, category of commercial bank and managerial level, role consensus and compartmentalization are maintained at a similar level and only slight variations exist with negligible differences. Further, it is noted that irrespective of the gender, both males and females encounter nearly similar level of work–life balance as there is no major difference in the variation that exist among both categories (79% and 84.6%) .

However, it is prominent that work–life balance is highly variable among the married respondents (85.1%) in comparison to the singles (65.8%) and managers with one child (91.5%) in comparison to childless, two children and three or more children. The figures also indicated that work–life balance is highly variable among the private banking sector (85.1%) and middle managerial level employees (89.2%) in comparison to the state banking sector (68.4%) and lower and senior managerial category (74.3% and 77.2%) respectively. Thus, it revealed that private commercial bank managers' and middle managerial category employees' are more prone towards higher work–life conflict.

Table 3 Coefficient of variation values

Variables	Coefficient of variation among the demographic variables											
	Gender		Marrital Status		Number of Children				Category of Bank		Managerial Level		
	Male	Female	Single	Married	None	One	Two	Three and above	State	Private	Low	Middle	Senior
Role Consensus	9.3%	9.7%	9.6%	9.3%	10.2%	8.3%	9.1%	9.2%	12.9%	8.6%	10.7%	9.0%	6.7%
Compartmentalization	19.0%	19.8%	22.7%	18.8%	20.4%	19.1%	19.0%	10.0%	18.1%	19.5%	19.6%	20.1%	14.8%
Work–Life Balance	79.0%	84.6%	65.8%	85.1%	80.1%	91.5%	82.6%	48.6%	68.4%	85.1%	74.3%	89.2%	77.2%

Source: Survey data

Hypothesis Testing
Hypothesis 01 –
H1: Greater role consensus has a negative influence on work–life balance.

As indicated in Table 4 there is a negative relationship between role consensus and work–life balance which is statistically significant at 5% level of significance (r = -0.166). This is in line with the hypothesized direction and supported the alternate hypothesis H1. Further, it is in line with the previous literature, which indicated that role consensus has a negative influence towards work–life balance.

Table 4 Correlation among role consensus and work–life balance

		Work–life balance
Role consensus	Pearson Correlation	-0.166[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.026
	N	180

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Survey data

Further, according to the Table 5, p value of the F test statistic is 0.026 which is significant at 5% level of significance. When the individual coefficient role consensus is considered, the p value is significant with negative beta value. Thus, it indicates that role consensus negatively influence the construct of work–life balance i.e. supporting H1.

Table 5 Regression model parameters of role consensus and work–life balance

Variables	Coefficients	Sig	F Value	p Value	R	R Square
Constant	2.684	0.000	5.063	0.026		
Role consensus	-0.413	0.026			.166[a]	0.028

Dependent Variable: Work–life balance
Source: Survey data

Hypothesis 02 –

H2: Higher the employee's ability to compartmentalize the conflicting roles, role consensus will have a positive impact on work–life balance

The moderator effects have been tested by using the moderated multiple regression model (Barron and Kenny, 1986).

Table 6 Regression model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.761[a]	0.579	0.572	0.4525

a. Predictors: (Constant), Moderator, Role consensus, Compartmentalization,
Source: Survey data

Table 7 Regression model parameters of role consensus, compartmentalization and work–life balance

Variables	Coefficients	Sig	F Value	P Value
Constant	2.867	.000	37.814	.000
Role consensus	-0.423	.000		
Compartmentalization	0.610	.000		
Moderator	-0.107	.003		

Dependent Variable: Work–life balance
Source: Survey data

According to Table 6 model summary, R² is 0.579. This indicates that 57.9% of the dependent variable is covered by the regression model. The P value of F test statistic is 0.000 which is highly significant not only at 5% but also at 1%. This result indicates that the model is well fitted to interpret the work–life balance. Therefore, role consensus and compartmentalization jointly influence the work–life balance.

When work–life balance has been taken as the dependent variable the p value of role consensus is highly significant not only at 5% but also at 1% as it is 0.000. Once compartmentalization is taken as a moderator between role consensus and work–life balance the moderator is significant as it is 0.003. Therefore, compartmentalization is influencing as a moderator to the relationship between role consensus and work–life balance. Hence, the results support H2 and it can be concluded that when all dimensions of role consensus is taken as a whole compartmentalization moderates the impact of role consensus on work–life balance. According to Table 7, the p value of compartmentalization is 0.000 with a positive beta value and this result says that compartmentalization has influenced the relationship between role consensus and work–life balance as a moderating variable in a positive manner.

DISCUSSION

The current study found that based on hypothesis I the role consensus has a significant negative impact on work–life balance. This research finding is consistent with the existing research on work–life balance. Firstly, as found in the work–life balance literature, work can have a debilitating effect on life (Eikhof, et al., 2007, p.326). According to Katz and Khan (1966), role consensus is an important component between role-conferrers and the employees in order for role enactment to occur. Kerr (1978) argues that the role consensus assumption requires that work roles are predefined and static before consensus can be achieved. However, this fails to account for the array of non-work roles enacted by employees outside the working environment and the nature of their interactions with work roles (Spinks, 2004). If an employee is to enact his/her role as expected by the employer the employee has to highly adhere to the role and organizational culture. Thus, it forces the employee to devote his/her time and effort for the sake of the organizational role (Jackson, 1998). Therefore, consensus places a high level of responsibility on employees to pay their attention to achievement of organizational expectations, which in turn results in difficulties of achieving non-work roles, thus creating an inverse relationship between role consensus and work–life balance. Further, according to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) both time-based and strain-based job demands can interfere with an employee's life outside of work. Therefore, role consensus had consistent results with work–life balance aligning with the above research findings.

The 2ⁿᵈ hypothesis which tested the moderating impact of compartmentalization, the moderated multiple regression model shows that compartmentalization has influenced the relationship between role consensus and work–life balance as a moderating variable. Findings revealed that when the individual variable role consensus is considered it exerts a negative influence on the work–life balance; however when considering the same with compartmentalization the impact of role consensus on work–life balance is moderated by the factor compartmentalization. These results are in line with research findings of Wickham and Parker (2007) which recognize that employee efforts to successfully compartmentalize their work and non-work roles will lead to minimizing role conflict.

Additionally the findings revealed that, irrespective of gender, both males and females encounter similar levels of work–life balance. Further, it was noted that the level of work–life balance experienced by them were at a low level. This is in line with previous literature (Bole, et al., 1997; Boyar, et al., 2003; Sturges and Guest, 2004) which highlight that work–life balance is not an issue pertaining only to female employees and is an issue for everyone. Also consistent with previous literature findings that state the work–life balance issue is not only limited to married but unmarried employees too (Boyar, et al., 2003; Sturges and Guest, 2004), the current research revealed that both married and unmarried categories experience lower levels of work–life balance.

Further, matching with the past literature, it was found that the level of work–life balance experienced by managerial employees was low. The literature states that there is a high level of imbalance reported in managers' work–life balance (Drew, et al., 2003) and that managers have the lowest levels of individual work–life balance (O'Connell, et al., 2004). Extant literature also states that most managerial employees experience a poor balance between work and life in comparison with other workers (Doherty, 2004).

The current research also found that managerial employees in private commercial banks experience a lower level of work–life balance than managerial employees in state banks. This was in line with research findings in the Sri Lankan context with respect to work–life balance that reveal the private commercial bank employees face a high work–life conflict (Fernando, 2011).

Implications of the study

It is expected that this research will have implications for the manner in which non-work roles are to be managed by the organizations in order to minimize their negative impact on employees' working life. The fact that employees are not only attached to the work role but perform a wide array of non-work roles and the employees are multifaceted, organizations need to expand their understanding of the way in which employees construct their individual role-sets. Further, it requires the Human Resource Managers to recognize and familiarize themselves with the manner in which family and non-family based roles influence the employee's capability and motivation to enact the work role to the standard required. However, if the organizations fail to identify and recognize this, the employees will encounter a higher level of stress, dissatisfaction and the intent to leave the workplace (Wickham and Parker, 2007). Further, the employers need to recognize and facilitate the three distinctive role groups namely; work role, work-family and work-life as the work-family and work-life roles can have varying impacts on an employee's work–role. Human Resource practitioners in their continuous efforts to manage the workforce more holistically need to be aware of the whole person rather than a part of the person. As the individual employees will create the role sets according to their specific circumstances, it is necessary that employers are equipped to discover individual differences for the effective construction of role consensus in the workplace (Wickham and Parker, 2007; Arachchige, 2013).

Another implication for employers is that they need to be aware how the influence of an array of non-work roles change over time. Both male and female employees' non-work roles tend to change over time such as single to married, childless to becoming a parent etc. Hence any accommodations made to them by their organizations need to similarly change to remain relevant to the wellbeing of employees in their work lives. A "one size fits all" Human Resource framework does little to account for multiple role enactment (Wickham and Parker, 2007) in the face of a wide array of non-work roles performed by employees. Further,

according to them "the one size fits all" does not account much on perceived levels of equity and on employee job satisfaction in general.

The research also indicates that compartmentalization acts as a moderating factor between role consensus and work–life balance. This implies that as a measure of improving work–life balance among the employees for the wellbeing of the individual and the organization, employers need to be aware of how they could assist the employees to successfully compartmentalize their conflicting roles. Further, it is also important that implications of compartmentalization such as employee self-management and control, the fulfillment of minimum job requirements as opposed to optimal ones are understood, accepted and effectively managed by the relevant employers (Wickham and Parker, 2007).

CONCLUSION

The term work–life balance has become a crucial contemporary issue in today's business context. Although many scholars, practitioners and business leaders highlight the importance of work–life balance, and there are several studies that have made an effort to address this issue, it has become only a delusion for many workers without a proper solution, due to organizational demands on the employee's adherence to work role and the organizational culture. This study confirms that work–life balance still remains a challenge in the face of high role consensus. Based on the empirical evidence of the present study it can be concluded that the higher the role consensus the more it negatively affects the level of work–life balance; however through compartmentalization the impact is moderated. It reveals that when employees are in a position to successfully compartmentalize their conflicting work and non-work roles, the role conflicts are minimized and employees encounter lower levels of stress, a lower level of dissatisfaction as well as achieving a desirable level of work–life balance.

The experience of work–life balance issues will differ from context to context and it would be beneficial if a future study is carried out by replicating the same study across all types of banks which includes domestic and international, non-managerial employees and in a different industry to identify and compare the data across industries. Additionally future studies could also focus on the cultural impact on the perception of work–life balance and the influence of work orientation on work–life balance.

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