Work-Life Conflict during Covid-19 and Psychological Resilience Role of Self-Affirmation Interventions - A Study in Bangalore, India

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Abstract

The present research is an attempt to find out the impact of work-family conflict on employee resilience and the role of Self-affirmative interventions in building the resilience and mitigating the impact. A total of 55 interviews were conducted. This paper proposes that work-life conflict during Covid-19 had a negative impact on psychological resilience. Moreover, various self-affirmation strategies adopted by the respondents during Covid-19 helped them to combat the work-family conflict and stress created by it. A research need has been identified by the previousresearch to find out the role of self-affirmation interventions in aligning the values and needs withchanged or unexpected environments to tackle the work-family conflict. Moreover, the relationship between the psychological resilience and self-affirmation interventions has not been explored previously, particularly in the Indian Context.

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 has been quite challenging raising both physical and psychological concerns for humankind[1]. As is evident from our experiences the pressure on people is enormous regarding their work and family demands, specifically as they are navigating the requirement of balancing various roles across work and personal lives. Role pressures can come from either the family or work domain[2]. Covid-19 has worsened the work-family conflict in which the pressures from family and work segments are not mutually compatible[3]. Due to pandemic the potential of work-family conflict increased manifold for those not used to autonomous working conditions. At the same time the workforce is a precious asset and substantial source to the success of the organization[4].

According to Antonovsky[5], many variables play a helping role for individuals in trying to buffer their stressors and emerge healthier as compared to others in stressful situations. Resilience has been identified as one of such powerful resources. Psychological resilience is the capacity to show flexibility to the demands of tense situations as well as bounce back from overbearing emotional experiences[6]. According to previous research, work and family conflict have a negative association with resilience[7]. Resilience has a huge significance in the context of present situation. The strengthening of resilience may help workers to sustain themselves during these hard times and maintain their career development in the face of this stressful and complex situation. One of the interventions which can be helpful in enhancing resilience is self-affirmation techniques. Self- affirmation can provide an assurance to people that life is okay despite the difficult times. Previous research has shown the connection between Self-Affirmation and Resilience[8]. The adaptive processes promoted by self-affirmation show resemblance to the strategies of the resilient[8]. Taking the past research into consideration it is assumed that during these difficult pandemic times especially for workforce, Self-Affirmation interventions can be used to build resilience to combat the detrimental impact of work-life conflict.

The present research has been carried out to investigate the relationship between work-family conflict on employee resilience and the role of Self-affirmative interventions in building the resilience and mitigating the impact. Previous research has given a way to a research need of finding out the role of self-affirmation interventions in aligning the values and needs with changedor unexpected environments to tackle the work-family conflict[9]. Moreover, the association between the

psychological resilience and self-affirmation interventions is yet to be explored, particularly in the Indian Context. There is also a dearth of research about the nexus between work-family conflict and resilience among the workforce and only few studies have been done in this regard[7]. The present study is an attempt to find out how self-affirmation interventions mitigate the effects of work-family conflict on psychological resilience of workforce in stressful situations. The vaccination has brought down the severity of the pandemic, but it has not died down altogether. There is still a lot of uncertainty regarding the future and given the fact that Covid-19 is not the first pandemic we have faced. There is an immediate need for the organizations to understand the role resilience and self-affirmation interventions play in helping the workforce to handle such kind of difficult situations in future.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Work-Family Conflict

The Covid-19 has obstructed the work-family interface at a large scale[10]. It is a time to explore the 'Unknown' about the dynamics of work and family particularly during a crisis like the Pandemic[11]. The unfolding of the pandemic led to the possibility of conflict between family and work became more and more evident. The demands have resulted in the blurring of work and family boundaries[12]. Evidence from past research suggests that work-family conflict contributes to poor physical health[13]. This is particularly true for Covid-19 pandemic crisis. Moreover, work-life conflict has been associated with low levels of adaptability in the face of stress or adversity which is indicative of the fact that resilience and work-family conflict have a negative relationship. Previous research is supportive of these views[7].

This phenomenon of work-life conflict can be explained in accordance with JD-R model (Job demand-resources model) suggesting that stress is due to the unevenness between demands and resources available with an individual to deal with them[14]. JD-R has been introduced as a model of employee well-being. Work-family conflict is a common stressor, studied in JD-R investigations of employee well-being. Additionally, Work-family conflict is seen as a bigger failure in those contexts where high engagement is a norm in both family and working life, the trend which has been seen during Covid-19. This may result in more frustration and a decreased level of employee well-being[15]. A coherence between high level of well-being and resilience has been identified in previous research[16]. Since work-life conflict has a negative relationship with well-being therefore it can negatively impact resilience also, as resilience is regarded as an antecedent of well-being in accordance with past research[16].

2.2 Resilience

Resilience is measurable and is applicable and related to performance in the workplace. There is a fundamental assumption that stressful situations impact well-being, and people use resources, known as coping mechanisms, to deal with the negative effect[17]. According to Herbane et al.[18], resilience work is becoming more and more professional in nature particularly within present-day organizations. The underlying research on resilience applicable to the workforce has two theoretical approaches: COR theory (Conservation of resources) and positive psychology. According to Luthans[19], the field of positive psychology is the basis of the research of the concept of resilience.

Moreover, the positive indicators of mental health and resilience share a positive relationship[20] and also psychological health and resilience are positively related[21]. During and post-pandemic it is critical for people to put efforts for building resilience so that they can cope up with the stressful situations as the boundaries between work and life are blurring.

2.3 Self-Interventions

Self-affirmation is the demonstration of one's adequacy[22]. Big as well as small events can affirm anybody's sense of adequacy. Even when the small reinforcements are given to the self it motivates the self-system to sustain integrity and produce affirmative meanings[8]. Everyday small events shows their relevance in some or the other way enabling people to reinforce the sense of adequacy.

Timely administered self-affirmation interventions are quite helpful to people in traversing difficulties. These interventions will help in boosting their confidence to overcome future difficulties thereby enhancing their resilience for another hardship, in a supporting narrative[22].

2.3.1 Self-Affirmation Theory

Self-enhancement researchers[23] conclude that people have a basic need to uphold a positive self-assessment. Taking this into consideration, self-affirmation interventions are likely to decrease the psychological discomfort related with cognitive discord[24]. Considering the significance of life changing events like Covid-19, the present research was undertaken to find out its implications on individuals. Another aspect explored in this research is to find out the impact of work-life conflict on psychological resilience. Moreover, self-affirmation has been added to find out how self-affirmation interventions influence the relationship between work-life conflict and resilience[9]. To fill this gap, the present study was undertaken in Bangalore, India, to find out how much work-life conflict has impact the psychological resilience of workers and what is the role of self-

affirmation in dealing with the stressful situations created by work-life conflict.

3. Methodology

Participants: Around 55 professionals were contacted, 28 of whom were females (50.9%). Researcher had interviews with 10 Directors from various industries including talent acquisition, mining, public sector, retail, IT, automobile, defense, and aerospace, and education; 2 vice presidents from BPO and banking industry; 11 professors and 1 consultant from education industry; 1 program manager from automobile industry; 1 program manager, 6 software engineers,1 principal manager engineer, 2 project heads, 2 project managers, 1 team manager, 1 tech support, 2 principal engineers, 1 Head workforce planning and management, 1 Head-program management, 1 consultant from IT industry; 1 team manager, 3 escalation engineers and 2 embedded escalation engineers from ITES; 1 customer support head; 1 Head operations-HR consultancy; 1 Healthcare Coordinator; 1 Head-HR consultancy.

3.1 Interview Design

The interviews were semi-structured in nature and were conducted using interview schedule from Zwack and Schweitzer[25] for psychological resilience. The questions for work-life balance were prepared after reviewing Eby et al.[11], and self-affirmation were prepared after reviewing Sherman[26].

3.2 Procedure

The interviews were conducted between September 26th-25th December 2021 in Bangalore, India. A total of 55 interviews were conducted in the time range between 15-45 minutes. Participants were informed through WhatsApp messages as well as emails. The researcher ensured that only interested participants would be contacted. A snowball and judgmental sampling technique was used. Most of interactions were conducted in person while few were conducted virtually. All the interviews were recorded. Post transcription the audios were destroyed.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was done using interpretive phenomenological analysis technique[27]. The transcripts were read and listened to simultaneously so that the researcher can actively engage with the data. The transcripts were read and coded by the researcher until steady coding was attained.

4. Themes

Our superordinate themes were labeled as: Physical and mental health issues due to work-life conflict, increase in family burden, increase in work burden, nature of psychological resilience, psychological resilience strategies, self-affirmation, self-affirmation interventions. The main themes and the subordinate themes are summarized in Table 1. The subordinate themes may overlap in many cases.

4.1 Theme 1: Physical and Mental Health Issues Due to Work-Life Conflict

The most obvious outcome of work-family conflict research is various health and well-being issues[28]. Past research has shown and association between work-family conflict and certain clinical disorders[29]. The stress caused by work-family conflict has increased the risk of both physical and psychological disorders[30]. Different types of physical and emotional health concerns were mentioned by the respondents' emerging due to work-life conflict during lockdown in Covid-19. The respondents' experiences towards this aspect were manifested through eight subordinate themes described below:

4.1.1 Psychological Distress

Past research has associated work-family conflict with psychological distress also[31]. Parental role strains lead to psychological distress and during Covid-19 parental role strains increased due to the non-availability of a proper support system. Psychological distress was an issue identified during the interviews with respondents. As expressed by a team manager of an IT company,

"I came across mental health issues. Physical activity pre- covid was a stress buster for me but during this phase we were confined within our homes. I felt a kind of helplessness and there was a feeling of psychological distress".

4.1.2 Anxiety and Stress

The conflict between family and work domains can result in withdrawal behaviors and attitudes and have been seen as critical precursors of work stress[28]. Moreover, there has been an indication that employees feel threatened, and have disagreeable emotional experiences such as anxiety and stress in the workplaces[32]. Many respondents spoke about anxiety and stress issues. Out of 55 interviews conducted 16 (30%) complained about stress and anxiety issues. As was mentioned by one of the software engineers of the software industry:

"As the Pandemic started my routine changed and mental stress started building up due to the blurring of boundaries between work and life."

Table 1. Superordinate themes and their subordinate themes

Sl. No.	Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
1	Physical and Mental Health issues due to WFC	Psychological distress Anxiety and stress Sitting anxiety Disturbance in routine Eyesight problems Depression High Blood pressure
2	Increase in Family Burden	Increased expectations More mental involvement Opportunity for family bonding Disturbance by the kids Lack of space
3	Increase in work burden	Virtuality Overlapping of spheres Extended meetings Focus time Difficulty in handling technology Self-imposed burden
4	Nature of Resilience	Ability to achieve Calmness Being strong Handling difficult situations Testing the limits Bouncing back Mental balance Awareness Managing pressure Positive thoughts Fighting back Balancing Withstanding pressure Tolerance Focus Avoiding stress
5	Impact of work-life conflict on resilience	Confidence Coping up with demands Break-even point Lack of tolerance Needed medical assistance Quitting the job
6	Nature of self-affirmation	Self-adequacy Self-sufficiency Control Positivity Self-esteem Back to normal Self-assurance Confirmation Self-empowerment Belief Reassurance Sense of self-worth Self-strength Mental strength Overcoming

Table 1 to be continued...

Sl. No.	Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
7	Self-affirmation interventions	Physical exercises Connect with God Positive self-talk Team activities Social interactions Spirituality Yoga and Meditation Being close to nature Keeping a journal Family support Reading Bible Adopting pets

4.1.3 Disturbance in Routine

Family routines are the usual practices that are believed to encourage organization and predictability[33]. Covid-19. The pandemic caused a huge disruption in the routines of the individuals. Changes in daily routines during Covid including social distancing, changes in sleeping patterns, online platforms impacted the mental health of people. As said by the Vice President of a BPO company.

> *"The routine has been disturbed during Pandemic blurring the line between work and life. This led to the lack of focus and concentration."*

4.1.4 Eyesight Problems

Due to the non-availability of proper infrastructure at home the eyesight of few respondents got impacted due to teleworking during Covid-19. During Covid-19 employees from all industries hadto sit in front of devices. Digital eye strain is the usual problem associated with usage of digital devices leading to symptoms like watering, blurring of vision and dry eyes[34].

> *"When pandemic started my routine changed and the mental stress started building up due to the blurring of boundaries. I had blurred vision for some time due to the lack of proper seating arrangement at home".*

4.1.5 Depression

The Covid-19 has led to the depressive disorders in many cases. The changes due to pandemic hasposed a threat to the mental health. The past research has also associated work-family conflict withburnout, depression, and emotional exhaustion[35].

> *"My eyesight got impacted. I got into depression and startedfeeling fatigue in my legs. "*

4.1.6 High Blood Pressure

Work-family conflict during Pandemic led to stress. Research studies have associated telecommuting with higher level of cognitive stress and emotional exhaustion[36]. The cognitive stress usually leads to high blood pressure. Two respondents complained about the high bold pressure issues during the Pandemic due to work-life conflict.

> *"I could not meet friends and colleagues which increased my anxiety levels and I also developed high blood pressureproblem".*

4.2 Theme 2: Increase in Family Burden

4.2.1 Increased Expectations

After analyzing the respondent's description of work and family lives during Pandemic it was disclosed that the domestic responsibilities of people increased manifold. As everyone was confined to home, homely duties increased specifically for women. Many respondents spoke about the increased expectations family members had due to them being home.

> *"There was a lot of family stress, I had to be a part in household chores, being home there was an expectation of helping with kids", says the Vice President of a BPO firm.*

4.2.2 More Mental Involvement

The respondents explained that the metal involvement with the family was more during this phaseas there was no scope to mentally detach ourselves either from home or family realm as the boundaries were blurred. The briefings are provided below:

> *"Yes, the family burden increased for me. When we go to the offices, we get mentally detached from home… But working from home that mental detachment was not possible, and we were most of the time involved in household affairs", said the Principal Engineer managerof an IT firm".*

4.2.3 Opportunity for Family Bonding

Teleworking during COVID-19 was also identified as an opportunity to recognize the value of family well-being during

this stressful event and to enhance the emotional bonding with the family members. The families already enjoying the affectionate relationship utilized this opportunity to bond with family without distractions. The same observation has been witnessed in one of the previous research studies[37].

"No, I saw it as a break time for us…. We were not following 6:00 AM-9:00 PM routine anymore…. We started prioritizing the things we had neglected previously, and we had time for bonding with the family," says the Head of an HR consultancy.

4.2.4 Disturbance by the Kids

In this study the disturbance by kids has emerged as one of the significant issues during work from home phase. Many respondents complained that handling small kids and working simultaneouslyproved quite challenging for them.

"As offline schools were called off. My kids thought I was accessible. My son used to disturb me during my business calls", says the Team Lead of an IT Firm.

4.2.5 Lack of Personal Space

Personal space is talked in the context of sphere around the human being, any kind of intrusion in this space results in discomfort. Because the external borders were closed, the family members started focusing on each other. This led to various problems regarding the manifestation of freedom and lack of respect for family members' personal space. Certain other research has indicated lackof personal space as one of the outcomes during Covid-19[38]. Few respondents said that being home took away that personal space that they enjoy in their offices.

"Family burden increased for me in the sense that I felt thatI am not getting my space…. All the people in my house weregetting into one another's space".

4.3 Theme 3: Increase in the Work Burden

4.3.1 Virtuality

Interactions with people virtually has is another challenge expressed by the respondents and because of virtual set ups respondents felt increase in the work burden as has been explained by few of the respondents. Specifically, the people from the education sector have associated virtually with depersonalization, exhaustion, and lack of personal fulfilment[39].

"We were already working 12-13 hours. But there is a little difference… Previously the work was compartmentalized. But now we are having meetings for 10-12 hours. There are no whiteboard discussions and

no socialization with colleagues… Things are becoming difficult virtually."

4.3.2 Overlapping of Spheres

Work from home during Covid-19 reshaped the boundaries between work and home[40]. The rationale behind this opinion is derived from the boundary theory characterization of the work andfamily boundary. In normal situations work is performed at a fixed location and definite boundariesreflect the uniqueness of the domains, as work and home roles have been described as separate spheres in terms of expectations and responsibilities. During Covid-19 there was work-home integration. According to few respondents, the work and life sphere overlapped due to working from home during Pandemic.

"Work stress also increased because two spheres were overlapping and there was no demarcation between work and home".

4.3.3 Extended Meetings

A major challenge during Covid-19 was the increase in the number of video conference calls to hold the wok meetings. Zoom meetings increased by a margin of 290 million calls within a time span of 4 months, from December 2019 to April 2020[41]. Many users have felt fatigued and exhausted due the extended video conference meetings many respondents expressed this concern. Nine respondents expressed their frustration about the extended meetings during the work from home phase.

"Definitely the work burden increased…. We used to havemore meetings during evenings".

4.3.4 Difficulty in Handling Technology

There was an enhanced use of technology during Covid-19 particularly in the academic industry. The respondents specifically from academic industry mentioned that the shift from online to offline classes has been difficult for them. Initially, they were ignorant about handling technology.

"Work burden increased due to the introduction of online classes…. Managing technology was difficult at times as we were not used to it…. Knowledge transfer virtually wasdifficult."

4.3.5 Self-Imposed Burden

Many people during Covid-19 were not able to disengage from work and integrated work into family. Not being able to disengage from work makes people stressed, one of the repercussions ofwork-family conflict[42]. Few respondents said that the work burden increased but it was self- imposed. They

themselves started stretching their work hours for various reasons.

"I started working long hours on my own. I started setting goals for myself and did not follow any specific work *hours*".

4.4 Theme 4: Nature of Resilience

This theme encapsulates the definition of psychological resilience of respondents as per their understanding. It consists of seventeen subthemes. Few participants referred to psychological resilience as, "The ability to bounce back. How do you accept and learn"? One of the respondentsrelated psychological resilience with our ability to resist our daily routines. "It is resisting routine. Not letting your child eat outside during Covid-19 is psychological resilience for me". The sub- themes of the nature of psychological resilience are given below in Figure 1.
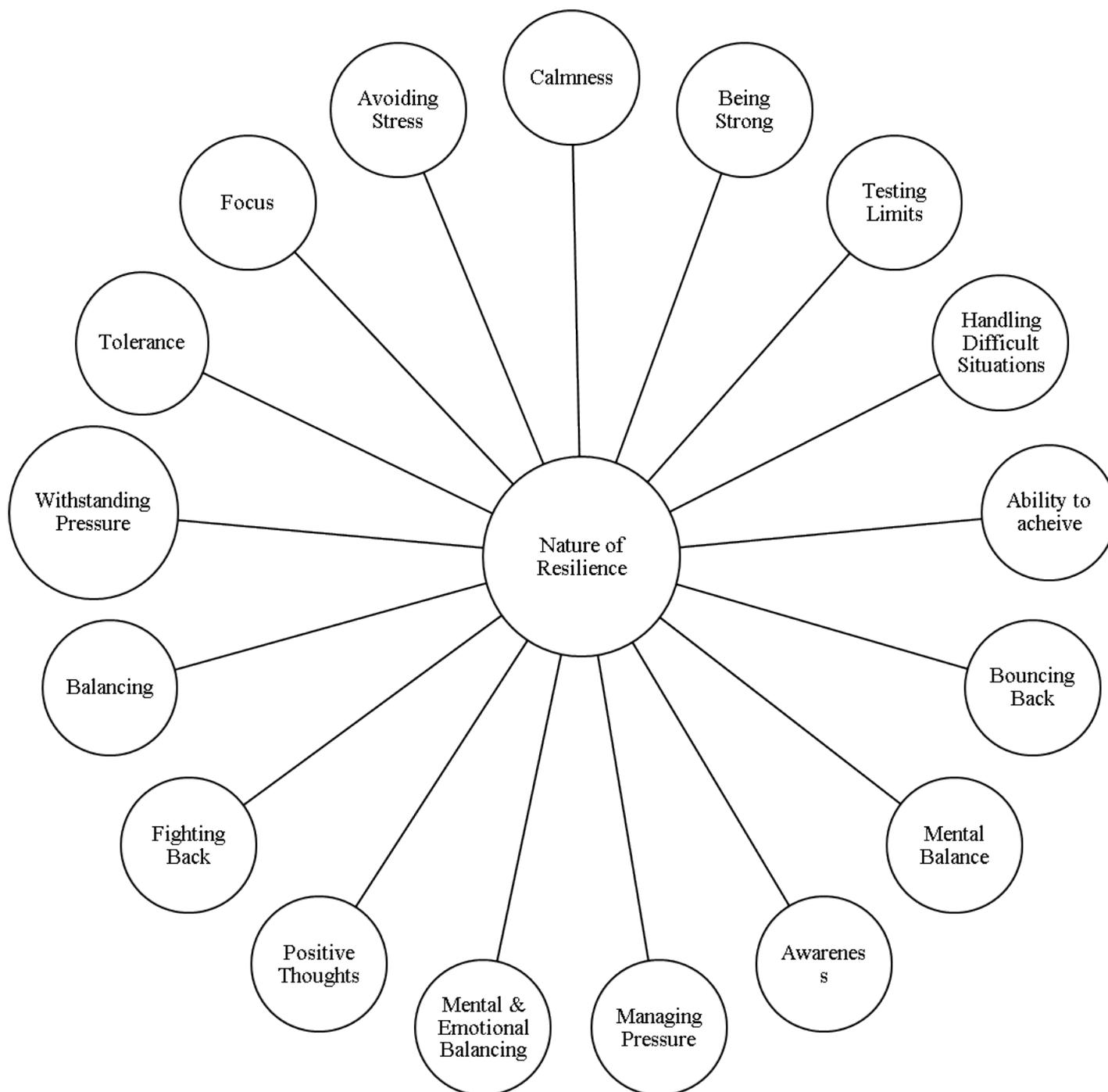

Figure 1. Nature of psychological resilience.

4.5 Theme 5: Impact of Work-Life Conflict on Resilience

This Superordinate theme encapsulates how work-life conflict has impacted the psychological resilience of individuals during Pandemic.

4.5.1 Confidence

Psychological strain has been connected with many psychological complaints including lack of concentration and decision-making abilities and loss of self-confidence[43]. During Covid-19 due to the work-family conflict, people endured psychological strain leading to loss of self-confidence.

"It impacted my resilience at moments. Confidence of closing something like a project within a given time got impacted as we were on our own".

4.5.2 Coping up with Demands

During Covid-19 the physical activity of children was reduced to nil which was accompanied by long screen times, intolerance to discipline and mood swings. Any kind of mental distress has a negative impact on relationships, People were trying to figure out how relationships with kids can be improved. At the same time due to the non-availability of schools kids had to be helped with academic assignments along with taking care of their official responsibilities. It was difficult to cope with the demands of both roles. Few respondents shared their experiences and expressed in a stoic voice their difficulty in coping up with the demands of work and life.

"It impacted my resilience sometimes, particularly due to dealing with a difficult kid and work assignments simultaneously".

4.5.3 Break-Even Point

Two respondents mentioned that this conflict between the two spheres impacted his resilience so much that they reached to breakeven point.

"It impacted my psychological resilience in a negative way. I reached my break -even point at times. There were many days when I did not sleep at all and had emotional outbursts," says the team manager of an IT firm.

4.5.4 Lack of Tolerance

Today's workforce is fulfilling many roles simultaneously (care giver, employee, parent, spouse) which hampers their ability to achieve satisfaction in family and work domains. Different people many respond to these demands differently depending upon their tolerance levels. There is evidence from past research demonstrating the difference in people's response to work-family conflict[44]. Individuals develop a tolerance for the uncertainty they encounter. Certain respondents expressed that they suffered from lack of tolerance.

"Yes, sometimes it impacted my psychological resilience. Many times, I thought it was better to be in office due to the undue attention demanded by my teenager. Sometimes work demands full attention, and any disturbance can't be tolerated".

4.5.5 Needed Medical Assistance

Work-family conflict that followed the unparalleled Covid-19 could be a major course of frustration and mental health issues[45]. As is evident from the research this conflict had a negative effect on mental health of professional and made people to seek medical assistance. One of the Directors of an IT firm mentioned that he had to seek medical assistance as he was struggling through this phase.

"It impacted. I cried at time…. Many times, I watched TV till midnight... I felt a need to see a psychotherapist."

4.5.6 Quitting the Job

Past research has revealed the work-family conflict leads to increased turnover intentions. Moreover, work-family conflict and turnover intentions have a positive relationship[28]. As was revealed by one of the respondents that she had reached to such a hopeless situation due to her inability to handle work-life balance issues that she even thought of quitting her job.

"Yes, it happened. I stopped talking to my family members…. I lost my patience; I didn't enjoy doing anything. I thought of quitting my job."

4.7 Theme 7: Nature of Self-Affirmation

This theme captures the definition of self-affirmation interventions of respondents as per their understanding. It consists of fifteen subthemes. Few participants referred to self-affirmation as, *"Self-affirmation means who you are. It is the ability to control your surroundings."* Few other participants defined it as, *"Self-affirmation is always look at the positive aspects of life".* The definition of self-affirmation interventions is shown in Figure 2 below.

4.8 Theme 8: Self-Affirmation Interventions

This theme encapsulates the self-affirmation interventions applied by respondents to deal with the stress created by work-family conflict during Covid-19. Around fifteen subthemes were identified based on the interactions with respondents given below:
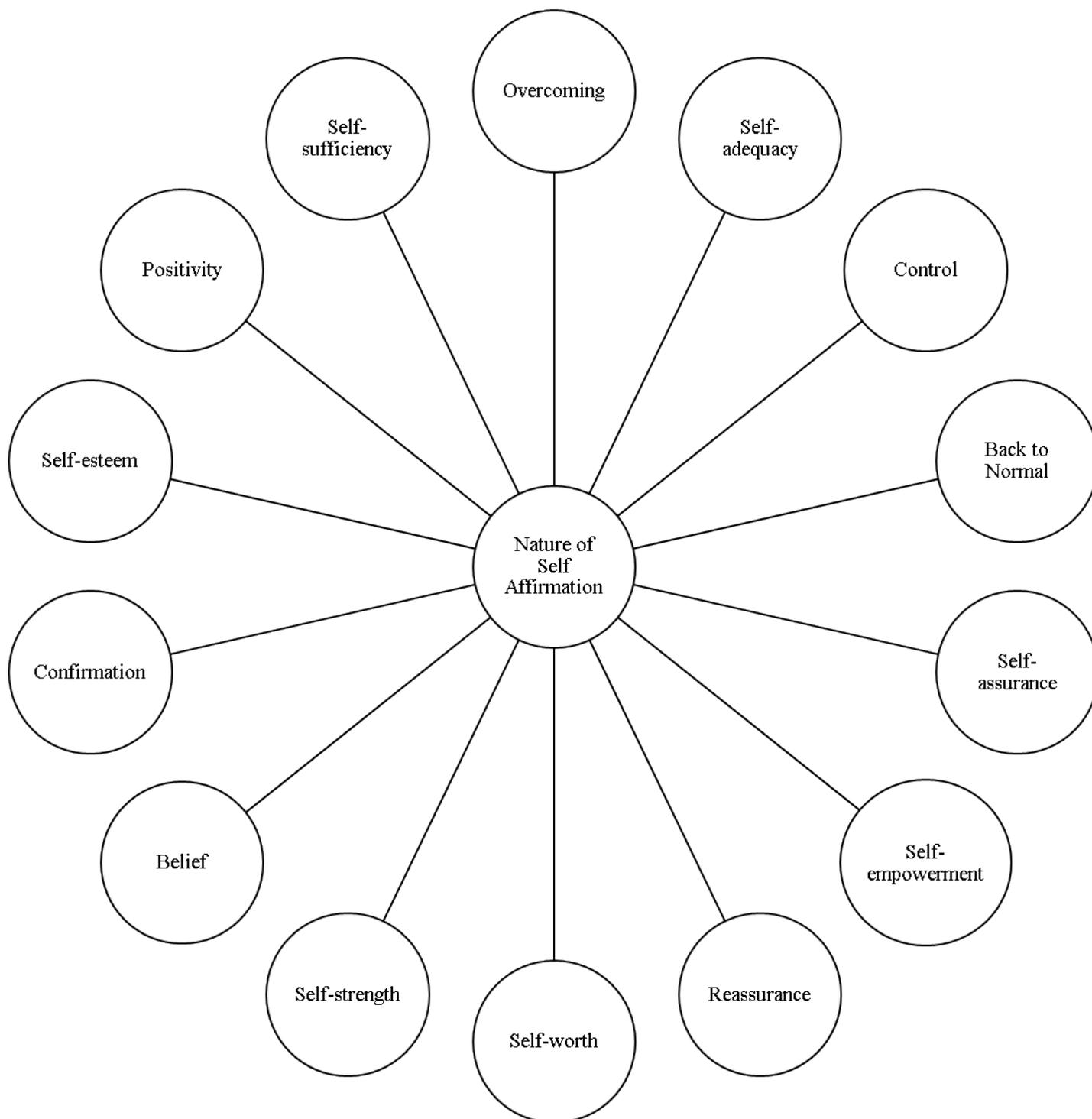
Figure 2. Nature of self-affirmation.

4.8.1 Physical Exercise

Engagement in meaningful activities and achievement of desired results are significant characteristics of well-being. There is proof that the self-affirmation process enhances accomplishments. Few studies have exemplified the impact of physical exercise on self- affirmation, one of the highly conducive lifestyle interventions to the well-being of individuals[46]. Any kind of physical activity enhances self-affirmation and well-being.

"My self-affirmation intervention was lot of physical exercise; going for the multiple rounds of running", says Vice President of a BPO Firm.

4.8.2 Connect with God

Past research studies have identified religion as one of the core values taken into consideration while doing the self-affirmation interventions. Religion provides an individual a broader sense of self and purpose in life. So, when individuals come across the difficult situations, they use religion to affirm themselves in order to restore their self-efficacy and self-control[47].

"I keep talking to God…. Faith in God keeps me going…. I feel God is listening to me and he will help me whenever I ask him", says an academician.

4.8.3 Positive Self-Talk

The positive self-talk has an impact on how we feel and think. When we put our self-image to words and be repetitive it gains power. Positive self-talk is repeating phrases and telling ourselves positive things repetitively. Positive self-talk is used to enhance self-esteem and combat the difficult situations in life[48].

"I started the positive self-talk. For example, it is going to be a positive day; I will get up fresh in the morning. It helped me in looking at the positive side of the stressors and move on."

4.8.4 Team Activities

Many affirmations focus on absolute sources of integrity usually from the social circle. Within the social circles specifically friends' individuals can be their real selves and are accepted the way they are. Proper socio-psychological interventions help people to have healthy narratives and be optimistic[8]. Involvement in the team activities may be beneficial in handling the stressful situations as pointed out by one of the respondents.

"I arranged zoom calls with my school friends. I also arranged treasure hunt virtually for the entire team as an activity. We developed a tool, and it is adopted as a stress buster tool by the organization, says a software engineer".

4.8.5 Social Interactions

Socio-psychological intervention may help people to generate adaptive responses. A loop based on positive feedback between the social and the self-system helps to improve an individual's adaptive effects. Since social interaction in a form of social intervention, it can disrupt a failure trajectory[8].

"For me it was taking the example from others. Looking at China's revival I thought I will also be able to do it. I understood that future is ahead. I also got involved in social interactions across the world which helped me in affirming myself. The social interactions helped me to understand how to cope up and how to deal with my thought processes."

4.8.6 Spirituality

Spirituality affirmations are affirming decisive concerns which means finding meaning in experiences and encounters one is facing in life. It leads to the acceptance of an individual's issues and concerns even if the concern is unacceptable to the individual[49]. Since, issues arising out of work-family conflict during Covid-19 were unacceptable and one of the ways to combat them was spirituality.

"Spirituality was my intervention. I believe in the goodness of Universe. Such interventions improve your outlook towards life. It helped me to connect', says an IT professional.

4.8.7 Yoga and Meditation

The meditative techniques have the potential to control unwanted thoughts. Yoga and meditation programs have been found to reduce the symptoms of stress[50]. Meditation has such effects because it increases capacity for the suppression of unwanted thoughts.

"Meditation and Yoga are my interventions during this difficult phase of our lives. It helped me in reducing my anxiety and stress levels."

4.8.8 Keeping a Journal

In the past research self-affirmation manipulations have been done by asking individuals to put in writing their pleasurable experiences and life events. Past research has also identified the significance of writing about the positive characteristics about us as a self-affirmation technique[51]. Writing about our blessings increases our gratitude and makes us more tolerant of unpleasant situations.

"I keep a journal for writing my blessings, I do meditation also. It keeps me calm. My outlook about life has changed. It has helped me in believing that bad times are time-bound and good times are approaching," says an academician.

4.8.9 Family Support

Family support is a motivational factor. The comfort and love received from our relationships is always an inspiration to look forward to the better things in life. Whenever we have problems our family support helps us to pull through it. Family has been identified as one of the self-affirmation interventions to deal with the difficult situation[7].

"My family support, specifically the support of my husband. My work-family conflict was dealt with by my spouse's support; he helped me whenever needed".

4.8.10 Reading Bible

Past research has indicated the significance of reading Bible in extreme psychological distress[52]. People having mental afflictions like depression have also acknowledged that reading bible gives them a sense of hope and solace. It connects people to a higher power. The distress caused by Covid-19 was of paramount magnitude and reading Bible was one to the self-affirmation techniques people adopted to sail through it.

> "The reading of verses from Bible every day. It helps me with anxiety. I feel a peace within myself and believe that there is a purpose behind whatever is happening."

4.8.11 Adopting Pets

Many medical health concerns were observed during Covid-19. One of the reasons may be that despite social media engagements, many people were experiencing lack of touch as they could not socialize with family, colleagues and friends. Adopting pets was used as a remedial measure to reduce the anxiety generated by lack of touch. It served as a source to reduce emotional discomfort and loneliness[53].

> "I got a pet. Your pet helps you mitigate your negative energy. It brings out a positive energy in you and you start feeling more positive. Taking care of my pet has calmed me down," says an HR professional.

5. Discussion

The requirement to explore and appreciate self-affirmation interventions to enhance well-being and psychological resilience in the face of stressors created by work-life conflict during Pandemic is evident in this population. One of the reasons to do this study is to contribute to the current knowledge regarding how people from different industries define their physical and mental health challenges posed by work-life conflict during Covid-19, its impact on their lives and their psychological resilience.

First, in the framework of work-family conflict the impact on physical and emotional health issues has been highlighted. Based on the responses, physical and emotional health concerns challenged the respondents in many aspects of their work and life including eyesight getting impacted, anxiety and stress issues, depression, and psychological distress. The agony of the respondents based on their confinement to their homes led to many challenges both physical and mental. This finding is consistent with past research studies confirming work-life conflict leads to various physical and mental health consequences[30]. Burnout is a state of emotional, mental and physical fatigue caused by stress and anxiety and is associated with physical illness[54].

Our findings about the work and family burden due to work-life conflict during pandemic show the consistency with the earlier findings. Berkovits[55] examined the relationship between the family-work conflict and work burnout and concluded that the conflict leads to work burnout. Social distancing implemented across the world during pandemic led to school closures and teleworking which placed a tremendous burden on families. Teleworking due to COVID-19 has increased the burden of working couples due to housework, child care and home schooling[56].

Our second contribution is associated with the conceptualization of psychological resilience. Our theme on resilience provides valuable insights into how individuals working in different industries understand psychological resilience in the framework of work from home during Covid-19. Respondents primarily viewed psychological resilience as 'Coping', 'Bouncing Back', and 'Self- adequacy' while coming across various difficulties and challenges due to work-life conflict during Covid-19. These definitions align with the conceptualizations of psychological resilience in past literature, such as that of Vella[57], who defined psychological resilience as an ability to bounce back. According to Britt *et al.*[58], PR as employees coping and showing well-being and low symptoms are burnout and continuing good job performance. For organizations psychological resilience is also identified as a coping mechanism, so there exists a fit between the responses and organizational context of resilience. This emphasizes the significance of valuing the present understanding of psychological resilience among the respondents so that appropriate workplace- based resilience interventions can be introduced.

Another contribution of the study is the conceptualization of self-affirmation by the respondents. The assumption of self-affirmation is that individuals try to sustain self-integrity and a perception of adequacy in response to threats posed to them[8]. The themes evolving from analyzing the narratives of the respondents provide deeper insights into opinions of respondents about self- affirmation specifically while teleworking during Covid-19. Respondents viewed self-affirmation as self-adequacy, self-sufficiency, positivity, Self-esteem, self-assurance, belief, sense of self- worth. The link between self-affirmation and self-adequacy has been identified in past research[23]. Similarly, the association between self-sufficiency and self-affirmation has been demonstrated in past research[59]. Self-affirmation leads to a route towards positivity[60], is in alignment with our study where positivity emerged as one of the sub-themes of self-affirmation. The findings of this study are in alignment with our study as few respondents viewed self-esteem as self-affirmation[61], concluded that self-affirmation theory decreases defensiveness by enhancing sense of self-worth due to its reflection on important values.

Moreover, during the interviews, the respondents revealed certain self-affirmation interventions that they applied to handle work-life conflict during Covid-19. Some of the interventions revealed by them included connect with God, positive self-talk, Team activities, social interactions, spirituality, Yoga and Meditation, caring for pets, Keeping a journal, and association with special kids. Even though many inductions of self-affirmation are there, but in most of the studies people regarding self-affirmation individuals write about personal values or beliefs[62]. The main characteristic of self-affirmation intervention is that its theme is created by self and customized into the valued identity of an individual[26]. Past research has identified religion as one of the self- affirmation interventions[8]. Positive self-talk has been mentioned in past research as a way of combating negative thoughts and emotions and a motivational tool to get through difficult situations in life. According to Self-affirmation theory people are striving to sustain their self- worth[8] and relatedness or social interaction is positively associated with self-worth. The connection between the spirituality, mindfulness, and meditation, caring for pets and self- affirmation has been investigated in previous research[63]. Future research should be built on this study by investigating the processes through which these self-affirmation interventions improve the well-being of individuals and help them in coping the stress. The findings of the study shall be helpful in fostering these interventions to build self-affirmation and reduce stress.

Another contribution to the study is regarding the difference between female and male respondents. The researcher did not witness any gender-based variances among respondents regarding the increase in the work and family burden due to work-life conflict during Covid-19. Most of the respondents experienced increased number of calls, extended meetings, disturbance by the kids. However, catering to the needs of kids is mentioned more by female respondents as compared to male respondents. This finding is supported by the previous research as women are considered as primary caregivers to the kids[64]. While females tried to find refuge in softer approaches like Yoga, meditation and religion, male respondents showed more orientation towards the practical approaches like applying logic, social interactions, team's activities.

6. Practical Implications

This study has certain practical implications regarding the work life balance initiatives to be taken by the organizations specifically during the times when employees are facing work-life conflict issues. As is evident from the data the burden of employees increased both at the family and work front. Respondents complained about extended meetings, virtual set ups and self-imposed burden. Organizations can initiate certain practices such as virtual socialization practices and happy hours.

The responses collected during this study are suggestive of many recommendations regarding the study and promotion of psychological resilience among workers during stressful situations, going forward. There is a lot of emphasis on developing interventions which address the challenges and stressors. Previous research has focused on difficulties about defining psychological resilience[65], respondents showed consistency in understanding of this notion of psychological resilience. This data offers a comprehensive insight into the definition of resilience and the attitudes associated with resilience may be helpful in developing an instrument to improve the validity of psychological resilience measurements.

Third, the data gives valuable information about the nature of self-affirmation as per the understanding of the respondents and the self-affirmation interventions applied by them to deal with stress. Such kind of value affirmations may prove helpful in improving the inter-group and interpersonal relationships within the organizations. Such interventions can be utilized by the organizations to lessen stress. Self-affirmed people are better achievers, the ac hievement reaffirm them and leads to better outcomes and the cycle continues[8].

7. Limitations and Future Research Implications

There were few limitations to this study. First, this study used the framework to measure psychological resilience set out by Zwack and Schweitzer[25]. This framework was used to capitalize on existing data so that the knowledge in this area can be advanced. Second, qualitative data was used in this study; hence, generalizability cannot be guaranteed. However, qualitative data provides deeper insights which may be helpful in complementing and enriching quantitative data. Third, using deductive approach for analysis may have led to potential bias, as there might be preconceptions about the data. But it is a well-established method and has been used in past research studies also. In this method theory already exists so that researchers are not entering into analysis unwisely.

The themes emerging from the interviews, centered on work-life conflict, psychological resilience and self- affirmation can be tested by using quantitative analysis. Conducting both qualitative and quantitative studies surrounding the same concepts may ensure valid findings based on the experiences of the respondents, leading to a justified conclusion. Future research can also be focused on the impact of self-generated affirmations and how they vary from the experimental affirmations.

8. Conclusion

The present study attempted to find out the impact of work-family conflict on employee resilience. It is important for organizations to understand the nature of work-family conflict and its impact on the physical and psychological health of the workforce. Moreover, work-family conflicts impacting resilience may be self-threatening in situations like Covid-19. Moreover, any affirmation given to self as an encouragement, caregiving, and family support can make positive changes in anyone's life. At times the processes can be made to change their direction to help attain sustainable adaptive change.

I describe my sampling plan, all data exclusions (if any), all manipulations, and all measures in the study, and I adhered to the Journal guidelines. The interview schedule and qualitative data collected with the help of interviews is available at https://osf.io/ykwmj/?view_only=4c646145386a446e82200dc8d15eeeef. *Analysis code is not available since data were analyzed using interpretive phenomenological analysis technique (Smith et al; 2019). No computer code or syntax was used to reproduce analysis. This study's design and its analysis were not preregistered.*

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