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# Work Family Balance: Challenges, Experiences, and Implications for the family: Case Study Qatar and Oman

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2. Meaning of work-family balance.
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# Objectives

To build an evidence base to inform the creation or refinement of policy targeting work-family balance and its related implementation standards to ensure the well being of Qatari and Omani families.

# Overview of the Studies – Theoretical Framework

## Approaches

**1- Low conflict & high enrichment approach**

**2- Equality between roles approach**

**3- Social approach – Role Partners' Contribution is essential.**

## Work-Family Balance Definitions?

Combination of low work-family conflict and high work-family enrichment (Frone, 2003)

“equality” component of the work-family balance metaphor, and

Work-family balance as equally engaging in both work and family roles (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003).

Work-family balance must be understood as a socially and relationally constructed concept rather than an individual appraisal of environmental demands and resources or personal performance role-partners' contribution is essential. (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

# Methodological Framework

## Qatar

- Qualitative
  - 20 in-depth interviews with Qatari working adults (10 males & 10 females)
- Quantitative
  - Survey done by SESRI on 807 Qatari

Demographics	<u>Men (n=478)</u>		<u>Women (n=329)</u>	
	M or %	S.D.	M or %	S.D.
Age	39.3	12.4	36.8	9.5
Married	75%		66.7%	
college degree and above	37.4%		52.3%	

## Oman

- Qualitative
  - 15 in-depth interviews with Omani working adults (7 males & 8 females).
  - Four focused group discussion (males group and 2 female group each ranging between 9-10 participants).

# Meaning of Work family balance

## 🇶🇦 Qatar

🇶🇦 One participant said:

“Work means carrying out our tasks and job duties because that is required of us. And that should be done with dedication. We have to serve the individuals in type of work performed] because it is our duty and we have to put all our effort and dedication into our work”.

## 🇴🇲 Oman

🇴🇲 One participant said:

“... balancing work is about the individual’s dedication to perform his work and his ability to complete it in the best manner so [emphasis added] in return he can meet the expectations of his family.”

# Work-family balance is a non-possible ideal

## Qatar

- 🕒 A female participants said: "Generally, there isn't any balance. For working women, there isn't any balance – just an attempt to accommodate between here and there.

## Oman

- 🕒 A participant said: "There is no set balance, meaning there is a period of balance sometimes and then during another period [there's] none.

# Challenges of Work Family Balance

- Work Focus
- Work and Family Distraction
- Child Rearing Distractions

# Work Focus

## Qatar

One female participant said: “[h]er work responsibilities will be given to other employees. Of course, the other employees are not happy with her and the administration is not happy. So, her job appraisal is poor. She will face a bad situation at work...and a psychological state where one is constantly thinking, worrying, and it will affect one’s emotional state at home”

## Oman

A female participants said  
“A female participants said My performance and deliverance of work tasks was poor; this entailed being questioned and having to answer to my manager.”

## 2- Work and family distraction

### Qatar

One male participant said:

“There are tasks that require a designated employee to invest all energy to the point [that] it affects their home and their husband or wife and children. For example, for me, the [specific work task that spans a period of time] is very tiring and I go home unable to deal with anything from anyone. Although I am a calm person, sometimes I am like a volcano that could blow up in anyone’s face. That is from all the stress and exhaustion of work”.

### Oman

One female participant said:

“My performance and deliverance of work tasks was poor; this entailed being questioned and having to answer to my manager.”

## 2- Child Rearing Distraction

### Qatar

One participant mentioned:  
"Raising children nowadays is extremely difficult when leaving children with domestic workers is highly criticized. No one knows that the children are with domestic workers because of your job and that I am helping my husband. There is no mention of that...Every day I discover something new about my daughter's personality. She acquires it either from school or from other children around. When I am not present, the domestic servant can't monitor the children as needed as they are not her children, and she gives them whatever they want without any supervision"

### Oman

One male participant said  
"Without a doubt, a person cannot perform his duties in the best manner if he is overshadowed by the family stress related to having children"  
one woman fully elaborated the demands of parenting, particularly a newborn, when she said:  
"Yes, because we know that a newborn child needs a great deal of care, a very great deal, and she might request permission a lot from work in order to take care of him and to take him to follow-up visits at the hospital and otherwise".

# Women Suffer more than men in their pursuit of WFB

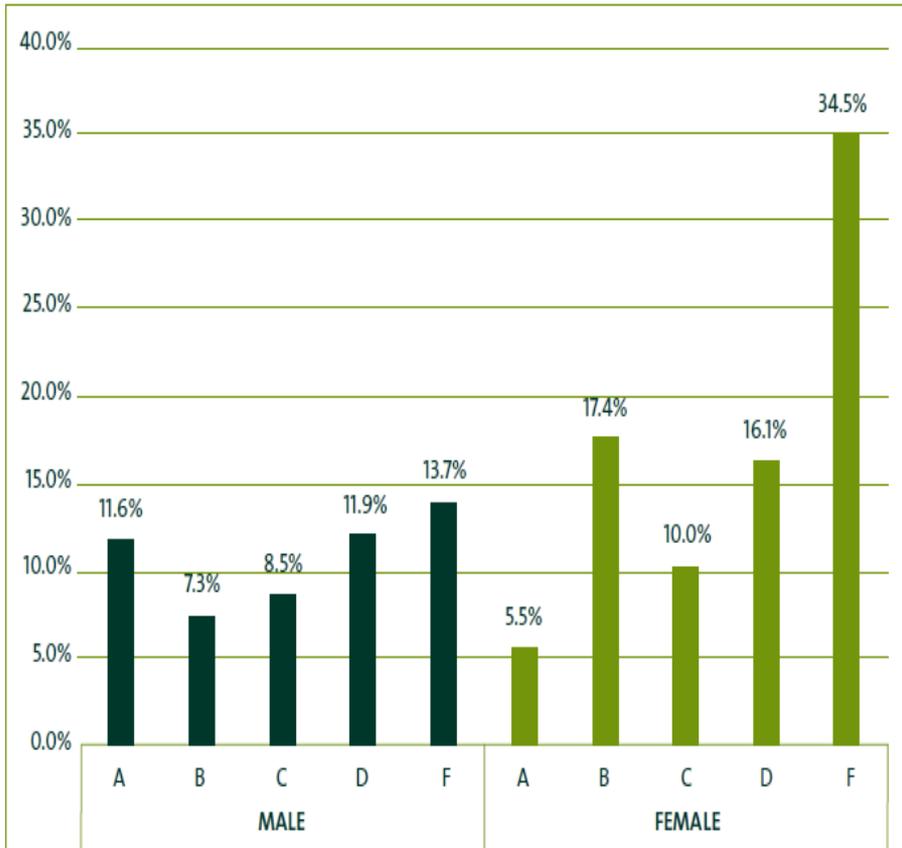


Figure 3.4b. Percentage of Individuals with Fair/Poor Health, by Work-Family Balance Grade and Gender

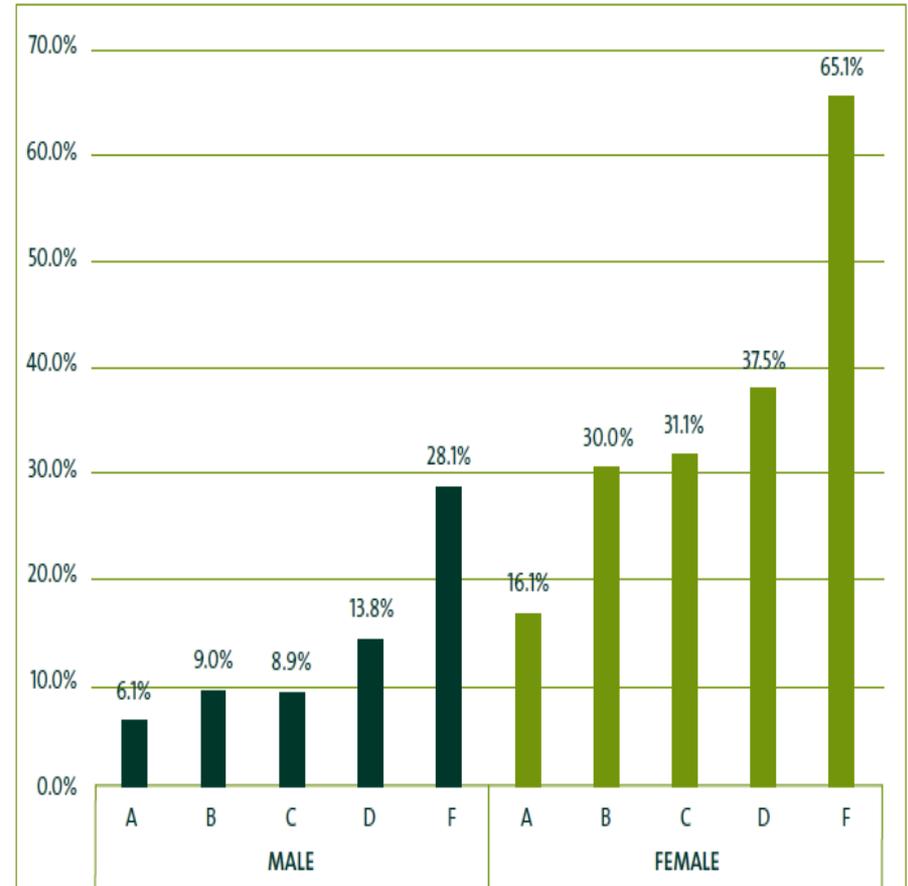


Figure 3.4c. Percentage of Individuals with Depression, by Work-Family Balance Grade and Gender

# Strategies to Achieve WFB

- 🕒 **Negotiation & Planning**
- 🕒 **Extended Families**
- 🕒 **Domestic workers**

# Negotiation and Planning

## Qatar Negotiation

- “Being successful and maintaining balance doesn’t just happen automatically. I have to work hard to maintain balance so that it isn’t one-sided but multisided – [including] my husband, and my children”

## Oman Planning

- “As one male focus group participant stated, “[work-family balance] doesn’t happen on its own, instead it is the result of work and effort preceded by planning.”
- Similarly, a female focus group participant commented that “[work-family balance] happens as a result of organizing my time at work and with my family, and organizing other matters and completing work at a set time.”
- “[work-family balance] doesn’t happen automatically. I completely separated my work from my family and I made myself used to having a set time for my work and a set time for my family.”
- “The proximity of the work to my home and the flexibility of my work and the great management, which created a positive feeling.

# Extended Family and Domestic Workers

## Qatar

- Several participants mentioned that spending time with extended family and taking care of elderly parents and relatives were among their family responsibilities
- Others were concerned that raising children nowadays is extremely difficult when leaving children with domestic workers.

## Oman

- One female participant said  
"Thank God, by coordinating with my family members and finding a domestic worker to help... [I was able to] reduce the workload at home"

# Recommendations and Policy Implications

## Qatar

- Expand paid maternity leave under the Human Resources Law of 2016 and Labor Law of 2004 from 60 and 50 days respectively to 90 days.
- Limit the workweek in the public sector to a maximum of 30 hours/week, and/or introduce flexible working time in all sectors.
- Subsidize high-quality childcare for all children below compulsory education in a manner consistent with financial support of education.

## Oman

- There was substantial agreement by men and women alike about the value of mandatory workplace flexibility policies.
- Expand maternity leave policies in both public and private sectors so that these require a minimum of 70 days of paid leave that is separate from annual leave and is taken at the birth of each child as a strategy for reconciling one's increased family responsibilities with existing work responsibilities.
- Implement mandatory breastfeeding hours in both the public and private sectors that require flextime policies around core operating hours to enable new mothers to continue breastfeeding their infant for at least the first year following their resumption of work after maternity leave.
- Reduce the Omani workweek hours to less than the current status of (40-48 hours).

Thank you