



## Balancing Work and Family Commitments: Adaptive Strategies of Dual Income Couples

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### ABSTRACT

This research aids in exploring the adaptive strategies employed by dual-income earner couples to balance their work and family commitments. Via the comprehensive review of the literature, key themes and patterns in the strategies utilized by couples to achieve work-family balance are identified. These themes include time management strategies, communication and collaboration, flexible work arrangements, and self-care practices. The findings provide insights into the approaches couples employ to navigate the challenges and demands of dual careers and family responsibilities. The implications of the findings are discussed for individuals, organizations, and policymakers. Time management strategies emphasize the effective allocation and prioritization of time for work and family domains. Communication and collaboration underscore the importance of open and honest dialogue between partners. Flexible work arrangements are recognized as a vital adaptive strategy, necessitating options that accommodate the diverse needs of dual-income earner couples. Self-care practices are highlighted as essential for reducing stress and maintaining work-family balance. Organizations and policymakers can promote these strategies to support work-life integration.

**Keywords:** Dual-income earner couples, Work-family balance, Adaptive strategies, Time management, Communication, Collaboration, Flexible work arrangements, Self-care practices, Work-life integration.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Rationale

As both partners pursue professional occupations, dual-income couples have become increasingly common in modern society. This change in family dynamics has created new difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities. The ability to balance career and family obligations has significant implications for individual health, family functioning, and societal dynamics as a whole. In order to develop effective interventions

and policies to support their work-family balance, it is essential to comprehend the adaptive strategies employed by couples with two incomes.

### 1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The purpose of this study is to investigate the adaptive strategies employed by dual-income earner couples to balance their work and family obligations. The following are the specific objec-

tives of this study:

1. To investigate the numerous work-family challenges confronted by couples with two incomes.
2. To evaluate the efficacy and results of various adaptive strategies for attaining work-family balance.
3. To investigate the individual and contextual factors that influence adaptive strategy selection and implementation.
4. To provide individuals, organizations, and policymakers with recommendations to assist dual-income couples in achieving work-family balance.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study is important for a number of reasons. It contributes to the extant literature on work-family equilibrium by addressing a crucial issue encountered by couples with two incomes. This study will shed light on the practices that facilitate successful work-family integration by investigating the adaptive strategies employed by couples. The findings will inform the development of interventions and policies based on empirical evidence that can better assist individuals and families in achieving a work-life balance. In addition, this research has implications for organizations. Employers can create supportive work environments and implement policies that promote work-family balance if they are aware of the strategies employed by couples with two incomes. By doing so, organizations can increase employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention rates, resulting in a more engaged and devoted workforce.

### **1.4 Scope and Limitations**

This study concentrates on dual-income couples and their strategies for balancing work and family responsibilities. It acknowledges the diversity of this demographic, which includes couples from various sociocultural backgrounds, occupations, and family structures. However, it is essential to recognize that individual experiences may vary and that the findings may not be applicable to all couples with two incomes. Notably, this research will rely predominantly on self-report data obtained via surveys and interviews. This methodology provides valuable subjective insights, but it is susceptible to recall bias and

social desirability bias. However, cautious questionnaire design and rigorous data analysis techniques will be employed to mitigate these limitations.

### **1.5 Thesis Organization**

This thesis will consist of five chapters. Chapter 1 functions as an introduction, describing the study's context, purpose, objectives, significance, scope, and limitations. The first step in the process is a thorough examination of the literature on the subject. The research methodology, including sample selection, data acquisition procedures, and analytical techniques, will be described in Chapter 3. The study's findings will be presented in Chapter 4, followed by a discussion of those findings in Chapter 5. The concluding chapter will summarize the main findings, implications, and recommendations for future research and practice to conclude the thesis.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Dual-income couples confront unique difficulties in balancing work and family obligations. This section presents a literature review on the subject, examining the existing research on the adaptive strategies utilized by couples to effectively navigate these challenges. Multiple conceptual frameworks and theoretical perspectives have guided work-family equilibrium research. According to Kahn et al. (1964), the role theory emphasizes the influence of social roles in influencing the behaviors and experiences of individuals. According to this viewpoint, individuals engage in role-related behaviors to satisfy societal expectations. Applied to couples with two incomes, the role theory emphasizes the need for adaptive strategies that enable partners to effectively manage their work and family roles. The allocation and depletion of resources in the work-family context are illuminated by resource-based theories, such as the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Individuals, including their time, energy, and social support, endeavor to acquire and secure their resources, according to this theory. The COR theory emphasizes the significance of adaptive strategies that assist couples in maintaining and replenishing their resources in order to achieve a work-family balance. Spillover-crossover models, including the work-family spillover model, emphasize

the interdependence of the work and family domains. These models propose that experiences, emotions, and behaviors in one domain can influence the well-being and relationship dynamics of individuals in the other domain. Essential to attaining balance are adaptable strategies that address residual effects and facilitate positive crossover between work and family. Work-family balance incorporates multiple dimensions that influence the well-being and relationship satisfaction of couples as a whole. A crucial dimension, time balance refers to the equitable allocation of time and energy between the work and familial domains. (Kalliath & Brough, 2017) Couples employ adaptive strategies such as time management techniques, prioritization, and boundary setting to ensure adequate time allocation to both work and family responsibilities. Another important aspect of work-family balance is psychological well-being. Work and familial obligations can have a negative impact on an individual's mental health and emotional well-being. (Allen et al., 2016) Adaptive strategies such as self-care practices, stress management techniques, and pursuing social support contribute to maintaining psychological health. Relationship quality refers to the couple's interactions, communication, and support in the work-family context. Relationship satisfaction and cohesion are enhanced by adaptive strategies that promote effective communication, shared decision-making, and equitable division of labor (Shockley et al., 2017). Career advancement is an essential factor, especially for couples who seek professional success while maintaining a work-family balance. (Eby et al., 2016) Adaptive strategies, such as negotiating flexible work arrangements, pursuing mentorship, and building supportive networks, can facilitate career advancement for both partners. Dual-income couples face numerous obstacles in their pursuit of a work-family balance. (Grzywacz et al., 2010) Couples struggle to meet the demands of their employment and family responsibilities in the face of time constraints and role excess. Work-related stress, such as extended work hours, employment demands, and rigid work schedules, exacerbates the work-family conflict couples experience (Major et al., 2014). Childcare responsibilities pose a signifi-

cant obstacle, particularly for youthful couples with children. Balancing the demands of child care, such as arranging appropriate care, coordinating schedules, and managing parental involvement, requires adaptive strategies, such as effective communication, shared parenting, and use of support systems (Voydanoff, 2016). Additionally, gender role expectations and societal conventions present obstacles for dual-income couples. Traditional gender roles and expectations can affect the division of household labor and caregiving responsibilities, resulting in potential imbalances and conflicts (Deutsch, 2017). Work-family balance is facilitated by adaptive strategies that challenge and renegotiate these gender norms, such as promoting shared responsibilities and flexible gender roles (Friedman, 2018). In conclusion, the literature on adaptive strategies for dual-income couples emphasizes the significance of comprehending the difficulties they face in balancing work and family responsibilities. Researchers have cast light on effective methods for achieving work-family balance by investigating the various dimensions of work-family balance and the adaptive strategies employed by couples. Building on the knowledge presented in this literature review, the following chapter will describe the methodology used to investigate the adaptive strategies utilized by couples with two incomes.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research methodology used to conduct a secondary research study on the adaptive strategies employed by dual-income earner couples in order to balance work and family responsibilities. The chapter describes the research design, data acquisition, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

This study employs a secondary research design, which entails synthesizing and analyzing existing literature, research articles, and other scholarly sources relevant to the topic. Secondary research is appropriate for investigating the adaptive strategies employed by dual-income earner couples because it permits a thorough examination of the existing knowledge in the field.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The data collection process for this study entails an exhaustive review of relevant scholastic sources, such as academic journals, conference proceedings, books, and reports. To identify relevant literature, a systematic search strategy employing keywords such as "adaptive strategies," "work-family balance," and "dual-income couples" was employed. Access to scholarly articles and academic journals was achieved via electronic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and PubMed.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The process of data analysis involves synthesizing and organizing the information extracted from the chosen literature. The approach of thematic analysis was utilized to identify and classify key themes and findings related to adaptive strategies for couples with two incomes. The themes were then analyzed and compared to determine similarities, differences, and emerging patterns in the literature.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

As a secondary research study, ethical considerations primarily entail ensuring that the original authors and sources are properly cited and acknowledged. All consulted sources will be properly referenced and cited to give credit to the original authors and preserve academic integrity. In addition, efforts have been made to ensure that the sources utilized are reliable, credible, and published by renowned scholars and institutions. It is essential to recognize the limitations of this secondary research study. The potential for bias in the selection of sources and the inclusion of specific studies is one limitation. However, efforts have been made to reduce bias by undertaking an exhaustive search across multiple databases and considering sources from a variety of disciplines. Another limitation is the researcher's reliance on previously published data, which may limit his or her ability to regulate the information's quality and accuracy.

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter describes the research methodology used to conduct a secondary research study on the adaptive strategies employed by dual-income earner couples to balance work and family responsibilities. The research design in-

corporates a comprehensive literature evaluation, and the data analysis procedure includes thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns. By properly citing and acknowledging original sources, ethical considerations are upheld. The study's limitations have also been discussed. This secondary research will contribute to the existing corpus of knowledge on adaptive strategies for couples with two incomes and inform future research and interventions.

## **4. FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the secondary research study on the adaptive strategies employed by dual-income earner couples in order to balance work and family responsibilities. This chapter provides a thorough analysis of the main themes and patterns identified in the chosen literature.

### **4.2 Themes**

The identified themes and patterns associated with adaptive strategies are presented in this section. These themes emerged from the literature review and represent the common strategies employed by couples with two incomes to achieve work-family balance. Each theme is discussed in depth, supported by pertinent evidence and literary examples.

#### **4.2.1 Theme 1: Time Management Strategies**

The utilization of time management strategies has been identified as a prominent theme. To effectively allocate and manage their time between work and family domains, couples with two incomes employ various techniques, including setting priorities, developing schedules, and establishing boundaries. According to the research (Allen et al., 2016; Kalliath & Brough, 2017), effective time management contributes to diminished tension, increased productivity, and improved work-family balance.

#### **4.2.2 Theme 2: Communication and Collaboration**

Effective communication and collaboration between partners emerge as indispensable adaptive strategies. Couples can coordinate schedules, negotiate responsibilities, and make collabora-

tive decisions regarding work and family matters when they communicate openly and honestly. Shockley et al. (2017) and Dollahite et al. (2017) found that collaborative approaches, such as shared decision-making and equitable division of domestic tasks, cultivate a sense of partnership and improve work-family balance.

#### **4.2.3 Theme 3: Flexible Work Arrangements**

Another significant motif in the literature is flexibility in work arrangements. To accommodate their family responsibilities, dual-income couples frequently pursue flexible work options, such as telecommuting, flexible hours, and compressed workweeks. Eby et al. (2016) found that flexible work arrangements enable for greater integration of work and family roles, thereby reducing conflicts and enhancing work-family balance. The literature emphasizes the significance of self-care and wellness practices for dual-income couples. Activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being, such as exercise, leisure time, and self-reflection, reduce stress and improve work-family balance (Allen et al., 2016). In this section, the results are discussed in light of the research objectives and existing literature. The implications of the identified adaptive strategies for couples with two incomes are investigated, taking into account their efficacy, prospective obstacles, and contextual factors that may affect their implementation. The discussion emphasizes the significance of these findings in promoting work-family balance and offers recommendations for individuals, organizations, and policymakers.

#### **4.4 Summary**

This chapter summarizes the findings of the secondary research study on adaptive strategies for dual-income couples to balance work and family responsibilities. The identified themes, including time management strategies, communication and collaboration, flexible work arrangements, and self-care practices, provide valuable insight into the work-family balance strategies employed by couples. The discussion of the findings provides a deeper comprehension of the literature's implications and practical recommendations. These findings contribute to the existing corpus of knowledge and can inform future research and interventions aimed at assisting couples with

two incomes to achieve work-family balance.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

In this study, we investigated the adaptive strategies employed by dual-income couples in order to balance their work and family obligations. Through an exhaustive literature review, we identified key themes and patterns in the work-family balance strategies employed by couples. These included strategies for time management, communication and collaboration, flexible work arrangements, and self-care practices. The findings shed light on the strategies employed by couples to navigate the challenges and demands of dual professions and family obligations.

#### **5.1 Implications of the Findings**

The implications of this study's findings for individuals, organizations, and policymakers are substantial. First, the identification of time management strategies emphasizes the significance of time allocation and prioritization for work and family domains. Couples can achieve a balance between work and family obligations by implementing techniques such as setting priorities, creating schedules, and establishing boundaries. Second, the emphasis on communication and collaboration highlights the importance of an open and honest dialogue between partners. Effective communication permits couples to coordinate responsibilities, make joint decisions, and assist one another in attaining a work-family balance. In addition to nurturing a supportive and inclusive work environment, organizations can promote communication and collaboration by cultivating a collaborative and supportive work environment. The recognition of flexible work arrangements as an adaptive strategy highlights the need for organizations to offer options that accommodate the diverse requirements of couples with two incomes. Providing flexible work hours, telecommuting, and shortened workweeks can assist couples in integrating their work and family responsibilities and reduce work-family conflicts. In addition, the findings emphasize the significance of self-care practices for individuals in dual-income couples. Engaging in activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional health is essential for reducing stress and maintaining a healthy work-family balance. By promoting



wellness initiatives and cultivating environments that value work-life integration, organizations and policymakers can support self-care practices.

### 5.2 Limitations and Future Research

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study and the need for future research. As a secondary research study, it relied on extant literature and did not involve the acquisition of primary data. There may be voids in the coverage of adaptive strategies despite efforts to access a wide variety of sources. Future research can consider incorporating primary data collection techniques such as surveys and interviews to obtain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of dual-income couples. In addition, this study focused on adaptive strategies for work-family balance, but future research could investigate the influence of external factors, such as social support networks, organizational policies, and societal norms, on the efficacy of these strategies. Longitudinal research can also shed light on the long-term outcomes and dynamics of adaptive strategies among couples with two incomes.

### 5.3 Conclusion

This study shed light on the adaptive strategies employed by dual-income earner couples in order to balance work and family responsibilities. The findings emphasized the importance of time management, communication, adaptability, and self-care practices in attaining work-family balance. Individuals, organizations, and policymakers are affected by these findings, which emphasize the need for supportive environments, open communication, and flexible work options. Dual-income earner couples can improve their well-being, relationship quality, and overall satisfaction in the work and family domains by recognizing and implementing these adaptive strategies. This study adds to the existing corpus of knowledge on work-family balance and lays the groundwork for future research and interventions aimed at assisting dual-income earner couples. In today's fast-paced and demanding work environments, it is anticipated that these findings will inform practices and policies that promote work-family balance and the well-being of individuals, couples, and families.

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