



4. A Study on Work Life Balance of Female Employees in its Sector – A Study with Special Reference to Employees in Pondicherry

Dr. Mary Sudharshini Fernando

*Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce,
(Accounting & Finance), SRM Institute of Science and Technology,
Vadapalani Campus, Chennai.*

ABSTRACT:

In this paper, an endeavor has been made to track down the professional and the personal difficulties and enhancers for work life balance among working women during work from home through a study of 50 ladies working in the IT area in Pondicherry. The primary difficulties in professional life were discovered to be expanded working hours, travel time from home to work place, and additional tasks engaged by them. Where as in personal life, the primary anxieties were blame from elders for not being taken care of family. Most of the women would incline toward adaptable planning, flexi-time, and strong spouse, family, and companions just as a climate helpful for work at the workplace.

Introduction:

Every person is an essential component of society overall and families in particular. In the modern corporate environment, employee performance plays a critical role in determining whether organizational objectives are met. Consequently, companies search for novel approaches to inspire their staff members to provide their utmost to the company. Every organization has employee performance as a major concern. Every policy need to be designed with improving employee performance in mind. Organizations must be able to monitor and enhance employee performance in order to stay at the top. If this doesn't happen, they can encounter a number of difficulties, which would be a setback for the company in the industry to which they belong.

Work-life balance is a significant issue that worries many different types of workers in the public and private sectors. It extends beyond giving one's personal life and professional duty first priority. Additionally, it has an impact on mental, social, psychological, and financial well-being of the person. Each of these has been manifested in the person's output, which ultimately impacts how well they do at work. Organizational efficiency and employee attitudes, behaviour, and welfare are all impacted by work-life balance (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeanx, and Brindley, 2005). In an effort to reach their goals, bank managers may give their staff an excessive workload due to the fight for market dominance in the

banking industry. Workers make every effort to stay with the company by working longer hours, sometimes at the expense of their personal lives. All of these might have an impact on children's upbringing, result in dysfunctional and unhappy households, and have a negative social life.

According to common belief, a contented employee makes a better employee. However, it appears that the employers are having trouble grasping this reality. All of us deal with pressure on a daily basis. It is necessary for us to be inspired and able to do our best work. Stress, however, results from pressure that is too great. Workplace stress is often associated with events such as job insecurity, shift work hours, unfavourable working conditions, downsizing, layoffs, organisational readjustments, etc. To support its rapid expansion and competitiveness in the global market, India's IT sector has long been free from employment laws. Although this is a sound argument in the wake of our developing economy struggling to sustain and expand economic growth, yet it needs to be checked whether the burden is not being borne by the industry's labour force.

Work schedules have changed in the recent past. Because of this, a greater portion of the IT industry is switching from a typical eight-hour workday to a twenty-four-hour workday, seven days a week. A lot of workers also have to report for duty on Saturdays and Sundays. Additionally, there is a shift in the working hours schedule that differs significantly from the typical schedule, which runs from 9 am to 5 pm. While some workers work according to schedule, others must be available for labour that often begins early in the evening and lasts all night. They occasionally even have to work longer than the standard eight hours. Employees are under pressure to show their dedication to their jobs in increasingly overt ways as a result of growing workloads. As a result, a greater proportion of them have a tendency to spend more time at work, which decreases the amount of time they are available at home.

When pressure to perform mounts, workers may find themselves in a vicious cycle where they put in more effort to satisfy expectations yet see little improvement in their level of job satisfaction. Organisations may now be in continual communication with their staff day and night thanks to the internet and mobile phones. In the IT industry, there is a general expectation that workers be present at work nearly all the time. As a result, reports of stress and imbalance at work are increasing. The ongoing pressure to perform at your best has a negative impact on your work-related happiness, employee retention, productivity, and in certain situations, even your health. The consequences of an overly stressful work environment include absenteeism, drinking, poor or rash judgements, indifference and apathy, lack of desire, and lack of inventiveness. Thus, the lines separating work-life from family-life have disappeared.

Review of Literature:

Kandel et al. (1985) examined the relationship of marital, occupational and house work roles amongst married women. They found that the family roles create less strain and stresses when compared to occupational and household roles among the married women.

Chassin et al. (1985) found three types of conflicts in their research on a sample of 83 working parents who have pre-school kids. These differences were related to (a) the

demands of multiple roles, (2) between role expectations of self and spouse, and (3) lack of congruence between expectation and reality of roles.

Frone et al. (1992a) in their randomly drawn sample of 631 comprising 278 male and 353 female respondents also found that work to family conflict is more prevalent than family to work conflict. Their study suggested that family boundaries be more permeable to work demands than are work boundaries to family needs.

Thompson et al. (1999) found that work and folk cultivation is a collective perception by members of an organization that it “supports and values the integration of employees' work and family lives”. Indian families are undergoing rapid changes due to the increased pace of urbanization and modernization. Indian women belonging to all classes have entered into paying jobs. At the present time, Indian women's exposure to educational opportunities is substantially higher than it was some decades ago, especially in the urban context. This has opened new vistas, increased awareness and raised aspirations of personal growth. This, along with economic pressure, has been instrumental in influencing women's decision to enter the workforce. Work life Balance of women employees has become an important issue since the time in today's world where both men and women equally share the responsibility of earning for the betterment of their family life. Hence it is really necessary to know how the women balance very professional and domestic life.

Bachmann (2000) and Schwartz (1994) found that work arrangements such as flexi-time, telework ethic are depicted as an important component of an individual's work preference towards work time. There is a suggestion that such work arrangements will help the employee achieve a better blend between their work and non-work activities. This will assist the organizations recruit, retain and motivate their workforce.

Hochschild (1997) has observed that to enhance commitment to an organization, the promotion of work life balance policies is of a compulsory interest to the governing body.

Burke (2002) noted that an organization that supports work life balance is preferred by both women and men. The benefit for Men appeared to be more than women. Satisfaction was more for Men when their achievement in job was more even at the cost of ignoring the family. On the other hand, women emphasized the need to strike a balance between work and family sources for their gratification. Women feel unhappy, disappointed and frustrated when work prevents them from taking care of their family. Women do not like the crisscrossing of the boundaries between work and home.

De Bruin and Dupuis, (2004) and Greenblatt (2002), emphasized the integration of the work and non-work roles of employees. Then the levels of multiple-role conflict, and the associated stress and job-dissatisfaction, can be minimized or avoided.

Zimmerman (2003) examined the strategies that working couples adopt in an attempt to strike a balance between family and work. They studied 47 middle-class, working parents who have children to be successful in balancing family and work. They identified six general collaborative themes namely shared housework, mutual and active involvement in child care, joint decision-making, equal access to and influence over finances, value placed on both partners work life goals and shared emotion work.

Hyman et al. (2003) discovered that the work-related factors which intrude the non-work of employees' lives are organizational pressures clubbed with lack of work centrality. Such intrusions often manifest themselves differently depending on the type of work, extent of autonomy and organizational support (Hyman et al. 2003; Atkinson and Meager (1986).

According to Fisher and Layte (2003) three distinct sets of measures of work-life balance, were identified namely proportion of free time, the over-lap of work and other dimensions of life, and the time spent with other people.

Hyman and Summers (2004) challenged the assumptions and consequences on the Government's approach to help employees balance their work and domestic responsibilities. The identified seven major problems associated with current UK practice over work-life balance. These are concerns of unevenness of adoption of practices across different sectors and organizations, lack of formalization of policies at organizational levels, restricted opportunity of being heard from employees in the origination and execution of policies, the business centric nature of policies, no evidence of working hours reduction, the intrusion of tangible and intangible factors in domestic life and women conducting domestic responsibilities irrespective of their status of employment.

Doherty (2004) in the study on working life balance initiatives for women in the hospitality industry explored the main barriers to advancement into managerial roles. It was found that managerial roles called for long working hours.

Valcour and Hunter (2005) found that greater flexibility and independence can be experienced by working from home, but it can result in people working longer than their office timings which included weekends and evenings. The quality of life is significantly impacted by the home environment. Home working could be stressful, if young children have to be supervised.

Marcinkus et al., 2007 found that there is a positive association in work based support for women with job satisfaction, organizational commitment and career achievement.

Grady and McCarthy (2008) in their study defined that work-life integration is an outcome of the complex relationship between the dynamics of employment and personal factors. They found the balance between work and life is achievable through the funding and coordination of multiple activities which included the organization's interest. Children were given first priority by the respondents exhibiting a deep sense of motherhood. Factors like work stimulation, challenges, achievement and enrichment were given high importance and sought more self-care time to balance work and family.

Shelton et al (2008) explored the challenges in managing work-family conflict for minority entrepreneurs. They sampled African-American, Mexican-American, Korean-American, and White business owners. Their study found that the difficulty of managing work-family conflicts was higher in Korean American and Mexican-American entrepreneurs due to the necessity to cater to greater role demands, and subsequently, higher levels of difficulty in managing. Moreover, the negative impact was found between business performance and difficulty in managing work-family conflict.

Baral (2010) studied 485 employees working in varied organizations in India found that working men and women in India experience more work family enrichment than the work family conflict. It was also found that there were no gender differences in the employee perception of work family enrichment.

Valk and Srinivasan (2011) in their study of the work and family related factors in women IT professionals in India revealed six major themes namely family influence on life choices, attempts to negotiate multi-role responsibilities, self and professional identity, work life challenges and the combating strategies, organizational policies and practices and social reinforcement.

Desai et al (2011) found that home-based working women had less stress, able to adjust better and were more satisfied with their careers.

Wheatley (2012) found that the barrier to women employees achieving work-life balance is the existence of work-group cultures. The over-lap between work and non-work activities created challenges of allocating time. Amongst others travel-to-work, issues in getting space to park their car were found to be creating conflict leading to stress in balancing work.

Rehman, and Roomi (2012) found that achieving work-life balance is one of the key drivers of motivation for women entrepreneurs. The challenges identified were insufficient time, gender bias, social and cultural norms of a patriarchal Islamic society.

Panisoara and Serban (2013) in their study examined the impact of marital status on work-life balance in order to enable the organizations to conceive and implement appropriate motivational policies. They found that no significant level of work- balance existed in the four categories of employees namely unmarried, married without kids, married with children under 18, married with children over 18.

Objectives of the Study:

- To find out problems faced by women employees in IT sector.
- To determine the factors affecting work-life balance.
- To examine the effect of work life balance on Job performance

Hypothesis of the Study:

- There is no significant difference among the factors influencing work-life balance.
- There is no significant impact of Work life balance on the Job performance of the female employees.

Research Methodology:

Research methodology is a method to solve the research problem research systematically. It involves gathering data, use of statistical techniques, interpretations and drawing conclusions about research data. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, data is collected from the following sources. Source of data are:

- Primary data
- Secondary data

Primary data - The primary data is collected by using primary methods such as questionnaires. For this study questionnaires are used to collect primary data from the respondents.

Secondary data - Secondary data collected from various journals, websites and other research reports.

Sample size:

Under this research 50 respondents in Pondicherry opinion are being to obtained on the basis of convenient sampling method.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance:

The factor analysis results in five important work-life-balance factors of the respondents and the names were considered based on the list of items under each component and the respective loadings of the item. The Eigen value and the percent of variance explained by factors are presented in the below table

Table 4.1: Factors Constituting Work-Life-Balance

Sr. No.	Factors	Number of variables	Eigen value	Percent of variation explained	Cumulative percent of valuation
1.	Job Nature	9	13.001	12.841	12.841
2.	Work Load	7	2.081	11.336	24.177
3.	Work environment	10	1.838	13.303	37.480
4.	Organizational support	6	1.428	10.864	48.343
5.	Family Domain	3	1.316	7.838	56.182

It is clear from Table 3.1 that five dominant work-life-balance factors, which consist of thirty-five work life-balance components, accounted for 56.182 percent of total variance.

Inference:

‘Job Nature’ is the dominant factor that influences the work-life-balance since its Eigen value and percent of variation explained are 13.001 and 12.841 respectively. Work load is the next significant factor with Eigen value of 2.081 and percent of variation explained is 11.336. ‘Work environment’ is the third important factor followed by ‘Organisation Support’ and ‘Family Domain’ in terms of their Eigen value of 1.838, 1.428 and 1.316 and

percent of variation explained with value of 13.303, 10.864 and 7.838 respectively. It is concluded that ‘Job Nature’, ‘Workload’, ‘Work Environment’, ‘Organizational Support’ and ‘Family Domain’ are the predominant factors of work life balance.

Relationship and Impact of Work Life Balance on Employee’s professional life:

Correlation analysis was carried out to study the relationship between work life balance and professional life of working female employees. The results were shown in the below table

Professional Life		
Work life balance	Pearson Correlation	.594
	Sig. (1 – tailed)	.000

Table 4.2: Showing Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.053	1.30	594	5.231	.000
Worklife balance	.612	.085		6.943	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Professional Life

Value of t for human resource system comes out to be 6.943, p value is .000 and beta value is .594 which is significant at 5 percent level of significance. Thus, null Hypothesis 2 was not accepted in this regard.

Inference:

The result depicted significant positive relationship between work life balance and employees’ professional life. Coefficient of correlation 0.594 is significant at 5 percent level of significance. The result depicted that there exists a significant positive relationship between work life balance and female employees’ professional life.

Thus, there is significant impact of work life balance on employees’ professional lives. Hence there must be focus on improving the work life balance which will further improve their professional life leading to more productive and efficient staff.

Findings and Conclusion:

Work-life-balance is an important issue in IT profession. In today’s competitive era, with changing demands, regulations and so much pressure the work needs have increased a lot. This leads to increase in stress level of the female IT employees .Majority of the respondents expressed that there is no separate policy for work life balance in their organisation and many people were doing work overtime. Also, management has not done much in terms of designing and implementing effective work life balance policies and practices.

If the personal and professional lives of female employees are balanced, they can devote more time to their children and can focus on their upbringing. It was found that the number of hours worked per week, the amount and frequency of overtime, and inflexible work schedule increase the likelihood of employees to experience conflict between their work and family roles as it kills their time to perform family related activities.

Also, there is significant positive relationship and impact of work life balance on employee's professional life. Study also revealed some of employees feel so stressed that they are not able to handle family responsibilities even after coming from workplace as they feel so tired and exhausted because of long working hours. Breaks are also very short so they were not able to take proper rest. However, their company provides no policy as such to help their employees meet their family commitment. Thus, focus must be there in making policies that can help the female employees to have balance between the two.

The study was also able to measure women IT employees' work-life-balance and found that 'frequently extended work schedule', 'frequent changing requirement of clients', 'role overload', 'lack of flexible options' and 'unrealistic deadlines' are some important determinants which influenced women employees' work-life-balance. The analysis also reveals that five factors namely, Job Nature, Work Load, Job Environment, Organizational Support, and Family Domain constitute work-life-balance of women professionals. The result of correlation analysis also confirms the positive correlation among the above five factors. The companies in IT industry may consider the above five factors and modify their HR policies suitably and create conducive work environment to maintain work –life-balance among women professionals so as to improve their performance

Reference List:

1. Atkinson, J., and Meager, N. (1986). Changing working patterns. How Companies Achieve Flexibility to Meet New Needs.
2. Bachmann, K. (2000). Work-life Balance. Are Employers Listening? Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada.
3. Baral, R., and Bhargava, S. (2010). Work-family enrichment as a mediator between organizational interventions for work-life balance and job outcomes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 25(3), pp 274-300.
4. Burke, R. J. (2002). Organizational values, job experiences and satisfactions among managerial and professional women and men: advantage men?. *Women in Management Review*, 17(5), pp 228-236.
5. Chassin, L., Zeiss, A., Cooper, K., and Reaven, J. (1985). Role perceptions, self-role congruence and marital satisfaction in dual-worker couples with preschool children. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, pp 301-311.
6. De Bruin, A., and Dupuis, A. (2004). Work-life balance?: Insights from non-standard work. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations*, 29, pp 21-38
7. Desai, M., Majumdar, B., Chakraborty, T., and Ghosh, K. (2011). The second shift: working women in India. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 26(6), pp 432-450.
8. Doherty, L. (2004). Work-life balance initiatives: implications for women. *Employee Relations*, 26(4), pp 433-452.

9. Frone, M. R., Russell, M., and Cooper, M. L. (1992a). Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict: testing a model of the work-family interface. *Journal of applied psychology*, 77(1), p 65.
10. Grady, G., and McCarthy, A. M. (2008). Work-life integration: experiences of midcareer professional working mothers. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 23(5), pp 599-622.
11. Greenblatt, E. (2002). Work/life balance: Wisdom or whining. *Organizational Dynamics*, 31(2), pp 177-193.
12. Hochschild, A. (1997). The time bind. *Working USA*, 1(2), pp 21-29
13. Hochschild, A. R. (1997). When work becomes home and home becomes work. *California Management Review*, 39(4), p79.
14. Hyman, J., Baldry, C., Scholarios, D., and Bunzel, D. (2003). Work-life imbalance in the new service sector economy. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 41(2), pp 215-239
15. Hyman, J., and Summers, J. (2004). Lacking balance?: Work-life employment practices in the modern economy. *Personnel Review*, 33(4), pp 418-429.
16. Kandel, D. B., Davies, M., and Raveis, V. H. (1985). The stressfulness of daily social roles for women: Marital, occupational and household roles. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, pp 64-78.
17. Kaplan, A. M., and Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), pp 59-68.
18. Marcinkus, W. C., Whelan-Berry, K. S., and Gordon, J. R. (2007). The relationship of social support to the work-family balance and work outcomes of midlife women. *Women in Management Review*, 22(2), pp 86-111.
19. Panisoara, G., and Serban, M. (2013). Marital Status and Work-life Balance. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 78, pp 21-25.
20. Rehman, S., and Roomi, M. A. (2012). Gender and work-life balance: a phenomenological study of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 19(2), pp 209-228.
21. Schwartz, D. B. (1994). An examination of the impact of family-friendly policies on the glass ceiling.
22. Shelton, L. M., Danes, S. M., and Eisenman, M. (2008). Role demands, difficulty in managing work-family conflict, and minority entrepreneurs. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, 13(03), pp 315-342.
23. Thompson, C. A., Beauvais, L. L., and Lyness, K. S. (1999). When work-family benefits are not enough: The influence of work-family culture on benefit utilization, organizational attachment, and work-family conflict. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 54(3), pp 392-415.
24. Valcour, P. M., and Hunter, L. W. (2005). Technology, organizations, and work-life integration. *Work and life integration: Organizational, cultural, and individual perspectives*, pp 61-84.
25. Valk, R., and Srinivasan, V. (2011). Work-family balance of Indian women software professionals: A qualitative study. *IIMB Management Review*, 23(1), pp 39-50.
26. Wheatley, D. (2012). Work-life balance, travel-to-work, and the dual career household. *Personnel Review*, 41(6), pp 813-831.
27. Zimmerman, T. S. (2003). Intimate partnership: Foundation to the successful balance of family and work. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 31(2), pp 107-124.