

Work-Life Balance among Working Women of Tiruchirappalli City

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Abstract: *The fundamental changes in the structure of work and family roles namely dual earner couples, the influx of women into the workforce and the increasing family responsibilities that deviate from the traditional gender-based roles make the work life balance a challenging task for women. In spite of extensive researches in Work-life policies for women in IT sectors by different organizations, no such researches have been conducted for women in healthcare, banks, hotel and education etc. The purpose of this study was to find out the various issues faced by women while meeting organizational and personal goals and thereby suggest methods to overcome these issues.*

Keywords: *Work Life Balance, Work Life Conflict and Organizational Performance.*

I. Introduction

According to Martin Seligman (2006), some people appear to be hardwired to respond optimistically and hopefully to work life balance and life's ups and downs. Others are wired for opposite responses. With practice, one can improve his resilience and hopefulness by acquiring solid positive thinking skills to balance work-Life. It is required that one should take a stand for what he intends to accomplish to restore work life balance. Demographic changes such as ageing population and smaller family structures have increased the likelihood of women employees demanding flexibility in their working arrangements. Adjusting working patterns gives the employees the flexibility to meet their home responsibilities such as caring for children and the elderly members, without jeopardizing their work. Today, the traditional roles of males and females have become less clearly defined. The elder care and other family responsibilities have increased. In this context, work life balance can increase the efficiency and resourcefulness of women employees. Women who get their work-life balance right speak of a sense of satisfaction, achievement and excitement. At times, there are also possibilities of imbalance among women due to additional pressures and demands at home or in the work place that might result in an Emotional breakdown. It is acknowledged that there are inextricable links by both occupational and domestic pressures affecting people's lives. Within the working environment, organizational culture is the key to determine success in managing work-related stress. This study examines the work-life balance of women employees of Tiruchirappalli city and highlights some of the problems they face in balancing their work and life.

II. Theories Related to Work Life Balance

Several theories suggesting ways and means to balance work and family life have been created over a period of time. Few of them are highlighted here. **Segmentation Theory** postulates that work and family environments are distinct and that an individual can function successfully in one without any influence on the other (Evan and Bartolome 1984). The two environments exist side by side and for all practical purposes, are divorced from each other. Separation in time and function allows the individual to neatly compartmentalize his or her own life. **Instrumental Theory** suggests that one environment is a means by which things are obtained in other environment. (Work outcomes lead to good family life). **Conflict Theory** posits that satisfaction or success in one environment entails sacrifices in the other; the two environments are incompatible because they have distinct norms and requirements. The spillover view is probably the most dominant in work-family conflict literature since it is based on the idea that work spillover processes (i.e. time, energy, and psychological interference) affect an individual's personal and family life (Small and Riley, 1990). Such spillover processes also affect how individuals perform on the job and relate to others in the organizational context. For instance, employees' family demands, responsibilities, and emotions may spill over their work, causing difficulties on the job.

III. Statement of the Problem

Women employees may find it difficult to balance their work and family because of stress and other related factors. This affects the biological cycle of the individual that would automatically land up in emotional imbalance, stress, isolation and loss of touch with the family's daily happenings. The interpersonal relationship with the co-workers may also get affected which may lead to disturbance and lack of concentration in performing the tasks. The individual also fails to co-operate and co-ordinate with the fellow beings due to the effects that arise because of the imbalance in work-life. Hence work-life balance is very important for employees to perform better in their work.

IV. Research Methodology

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the relationship between demographic factors of the respondents and Work life balance.
- To study the perception of women employees about work-life balance and its impact on the organizational effectiveness.
- To identify the factors that help and hinder work life balance of women employees.
- To identify the impact of technology on work life balance.
- To provide suitable suggestions to enhance the work life balance of the women employees.

Hypothesis of the Study

- There is significant association between childcare and organizational performance.
- There is significant relation between childcare and hours of work by women employees.
- There is significant association between occupation (technology) and work life balance of women employees.
- There is significant association between age and work life balance of the women respondents.
- There is significant relation between recreation facilities and work life balance of women employees.

Population of the study is restricted to working women population of Tiruchirappalli city. They include those working in different domains of various organisations (bank, private sector, government sector, education, hotel and medical). Respondents were taken from different employment situations which provided a wider and more representative viewpoint in the study. The researcher has applied descriptive research design for this study whereby the exact nature related to the problems faced by women employees in various service sectors of Tiruchirappalli city are narrated in detail. Primary data was collected from the women employees with the help of structured questionnaire. Questionnaire covering the areas that lead to the solution of the objectives which were pretested and later restructured. The questionnaire contained both open ended and closed ended questions to obtain both quantitative and qualitative results. The "Secondary data collection was collected through Books, magazines, periodicals and websites. The researcher preferred Non probability sampling particularly convenience sampling techniques to select sample respondents from the total population of women employees. Non probability is that sampling procedure which does not afford any basis for estimating the probability that each item in the population should be included in the sample. The sample size for the study is 100. Chi-square test, descriptive statistics and cross tabulation tools were applied for data analysis.

V. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Age distribution of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	under 30	26	26.0	26.0	26.0
	31-40	44	44.0	44.0	70.0
	above 40	30	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table2: Occupational status of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Medical	24	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Education	24	24.0	24.0	48.0
	Govt. Service	29	29.0	29.0	77.0
	Hotel	12	12.0	12.0	89.0
	Bank Employee	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table3: Respondents' number of Children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
	2	36	36.0	36.0	78.0
	more than 2	8	8.0	8.0	86.0
	no children	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The above tables (1&2) shows the age and occupational status of the women employees respectively and table 3 shows their number of children.

Table4: Respondents' age versus Flexible hours

		Flexible hours			Total
		Yes	No	not applicable	
Age	under 30	13	7	6	26
	31-40	25	13	6	44
	above 40	15	8	7	30
Total		53	28	19	100

From **Table4** we can infer that respondents belonging to the age group of 31-40 years are maximum interested in flexible working hours because these age groups are early baby boomers.

Table5: Respondents' status of Work Life balance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	often	11	11.0	11.0	15.0
	occasionally	13	13.0	13.0	28.0
	rarely	32	32.0	32.0	60.0
	never	40	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table6: Impact of Work Life Balance on Organizational Effectiveness Work Life Balance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	55	55.0	55.0	55.0
	agree	29	29.0	29.0	84.0
	neutral	14	14.0	14.0	98.0
	disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From **Table 5 & 6** we can infer that very few of the respondents feel that their work and family are well balanced. While majority of women respondents strongly agree with the impact of work life balance on organizational effectiveness.

Chi Square test Results

Category	Chi Square Test value	Result
H₁ There is significant association between childcare and organizational performance. H₀ There is no significant association between childcare and organizational performance.	0.823	H₁ . accepted
H₂ There is significant relation between childcare and hours of work by women employees. H₀ There is no significant relation between childcare and hours of work by women employees.	0.232	H₂ . accepted
H₃ There is significant association between occupation (technology) and work life balance of women employees. H₀ There is no significant association between occupation (technology) and work life balance of women employees.	0.809	H₃ . accepted
H₄ There is significant association between age and work life balance of the women respondents. H₀ There is no significant association between age and work life balance of the women respondents.	0.167	H₄ . accepted
H₅ There is significant relation between recreation facilities and work life balance of women employees. H₀ There is no significant relation between recreation facilities and work life balance of women employees.	0.068	H₅ . accepted

*Significance at 5 per cent level

In this study, Chi Square test was applied, separately to test five categories of hypothesis. For category I, since the significant value 0.823 is more than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted i.e. Childcare is dependent on occupation. For category II, since the significant value 0.232 is more than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted i.e. Child care is dependent of Hours of work. For category III, since the significant value 0.809 is more than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted i.e. Work life balance is dependent on Occupation. For category IV, since the significant value 0.167 is more than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted i.e. Work life balance is dependent on Age of the respondents. For category V, since the significant value 0.068 is more than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted i.e. Work life balance is dependent on Recreational facilities provided by organization.

VI. Major Findings of The Study

- ❖ Most of the respondents are affected by high level of work life imbalance.
- ❖ Working hours, travel to work, week end work affect their family commitments.
- ❖ Support from superiors and colleagues are important to manage their work life commitments.
- ❖ Most of the respondents have turned down career growth opportunities because of their family commitments.
- ❖ Factors like child care, occupation, age of the respondents, age of the children are significantly related to work life balance.

VII. Suggestions

- Employees should be counseled properly to manage their work and family commitments in an efficient manner.
- Management should make attempts to gauge the feelings of the employees about the work environment and organizational culture through informal meetings.
- Organizations can have an option for women employees to avail their preferences of working schedules especially the officer cadre where in they have to stay back after the scheduled working hours and make alternatives accordingly like having male employees doing the required work thereby avoiding late shifts for females.
- Organizations can introduce facilities like child-care and adult care for those women employees for whom maintaining a balance between work-life and family becomes difficult. In addition to that organizations can organize programmes like -“Family day out”, “Baby Day in”to induce greater work- life balance, employee engagement etc.

VIII. Conclusion

This research shows that there is an impact of work-life balance on work performance among women employees. Most women employees are dissatisfied with their long working hours and suffer from health problems due to workplace demands. Many employees prefer to work for limited hours and would like to have flexible hours of work to improve their work life balance. It has been recognized that there are negative impacts of work-life conflict on women worker’s physical and mental well-being, their ability to care for their children and others, and their ability to carry out other unpaid responsibilities and pursue personal interests outside the workplace. In addition work-life conflict increases business cost for organizations. These costs are associated with reduced productivity levels, higher absenteeism rates and increased expenditures related to sickness benefits and employee turnover. However, there is no “one size fits all” approach to improve work life balance. Societal values and the degree of organizational policy also influence the type of initiatives that are developed to improve work life balance.

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