

A Study on Work–Life Balance of Women Employees in Selected Service Sectors

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Abstract

In the recent times, the issue of work-life balance has gained more attention due to the reason that an individual's work life and personal life may present conflicting demands on one another while the demands from both the spheres are equally important. Work-life balance refers to maintaining the balance between performing roles and responsibilities at work and at home. Work-life balance is one of the most challenging issues being faced by the women employees in the 21st century. This problem is more for women employees because of the type of roles they play at home and the spillover of personal life over work life and vice-versa.

Based on the contemporary issue of work-life balance of women employees, the present research is done. The study aims to examine work-life balance of women employees and analyse various factors affecting work-life balance. The women employees in Bangalore city constitute universe for the study. The researcher has drawn 360 women employees working in various sectors like banking, insurance, IT, BPO, health care and education constituting 60 employees from each sector for the purpose of the study. Data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire and data was analyzed using statistical tools like ANOVA and Mean score. The study revealed that the levels of work-life balance of women employees in select service sectors of the study are significantly different.

Keywords:

Work-Life Balance, Women Employees, Banking, Insurance, IT, BPO, Health Care, Education Sectors

Introduction

In the traditional era, the women were confined to household work like cooking, washing, cleaning, taking care of children, etc. They were considered as home makers and were deprived of the right or opportunity to go outside home. But now the story is different. Apart from home maker role, they also have a significant role to engage even outside the home. With the increase in cost of living on one hand and the improved education and employment opportunities on the other

hand, both husband and wife started working and many families became dual earners. The growth of higher education has improved job prospects for women and resulted in the move from stay-at-home mothers to thriving professional women. Over a period of time women accomplished remarkable progress in every walk of life and made a noteworthy mark in the respective fields. But there is no significant change in performing the role of home maker. In majority homes, the women still does household work, cooks, takes care of the family members and manages the house. With increase in demands at work place and at home, the work- life balance of women employees is at stake.

In the cut-throat competitive environment, the organization's expectations from the employees are increasing. In order to meet the employer's demand, the employees have to stretch themselves and focus more on their work which is creating work-life imbalance. In fact striking a balance between work- life and personal life is one of the most challenging issues being faced by the women employees in the 21st century. It is said that many women employees working in various sectors are having a disturbed work-life balance leading to increasing number of divorces, strained relationships among the family members, conflicts in the organizations and suicides.

The issue of work-life balance has become the hot topic in the current day scenario. Sverko et al (2002)² emphasized that changes in technology, values and demographic trends contributed to the emergent relevance of work-life balance in industrialized societies. It is supplemented by other factors which include increasing complexity of work, change in nature of family and the extended number of women entering the workforce. Work-life balance refers to the divergence between the work place demands and the demands of personal life. When either side becomes unbalanced for extended periods of time, the effect is likely to be visible in unhealthy symptoms (fatigue, stress, depression, etc.). A lack of synchronization between domestic life and work life causes great personal and financial hardship, both to the individual and the company. In the competitive era, organizations are under competitive pressure to achieve high productivity and require employees with healthy work-life balance as an employee with good work-life balance will be in a position to contribute more towards the organizational growth and success (Naithani, 2010)⁹. Therefore it is a high time for employers to draw out strategies and help the women employees to enjoy their work and live life to the fullest.

Review of Literature

Work-life Balance of Women Employees

Both personal and professional lives are important and women employees struggle to do justice for both the roles

and in the process if they spend more time pursuing one role as opposed to the other can lead to negative outcomes (Nair, 2010)¹⁴. According to Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker and Schaufeli, (2005)¹³, job demands and family demands are often irreconcilable creating an imbalance between the two. Previously, in India the female employees were mainly confined to low-profile or non-managerial positions. Now, the story is different. Their presence is seen everywhere in different positions in the workplace. These transformations in work culture have brought in more additional duties and responsibilities for women employees towards their family, work place and society as well (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2009)⁸. Therefore, it is very much required to explore issues and implications of work-life balance.

For working women employees, work-life balance was considered as not only a source of distress but also the major source of dissatisfaction (Hughes, 2007)⁷. Work-life balance can be difficult to achieve for full time workers irrespective of work schedules especially for those with children (Williams, 2006)¹⁸. Part- time work would really help women to balance their work and family (Higgins, 2000)¹. This is the reason why many women employees choose part time job though there is lot of discrimination in wage (Schone, 2006)⁶.

Women always try to look for more self care time in an attempt to uncover new meaning in the work place, family and self equation (Geraldine Grady, 2008)³. In fact women frequently commit to achieve balance between their career and life (Kirton, 2006)⁴. Undoubtedly women participation in labor market is increasing but at the same time their identity and workload continue to be related to caring work especially for children (Thilakshi Kodagoda, 2010)¹⁷.

Equal opportunities are not just about women entering the work force as equals. It is also about men being empowered to take on non- traditional roles or careers (Nona Walia, 2012)¹¹. There are four factors relating to women's career continuity including household responsibilities, the women personality variables, financial considerations and the husband's attitude towards his wife's paid employment (Stolz & Marian, 1992)¹⁶. Women who spend more time at work climb the corporate ladder faster than those who don't work (Nirmala Govindarajan, 2009)¹⁰. Women choose to postpone child birth or remain childless in order to pursue a working career (Oliver, 2009)¹².

In international assignments which involves the physical relocation of family for female employees, work family conflicts are likely to increase due to the collective impact of role and culture uniqueness (Garris, 2004)⁵. Women have been argued on their behalf that they have maintained the emotional responsibilities for home and family hence they require more emotional intelligence (Srinivasa, 2009)¹⁵.

Need for The Study

In the present scenario, due to many changes happening in the work place and family systems, a vast majority of women are finding it difficult to achieve a desired Work-Life Balance. In comparison with men, women have more responsibilities at home. Though there are studies on Work-Life Balance, relatively there are fewer studies on work-life balance of women employees. The studies were more confined to sectors like IT/BPO. Therefore there is a need to study how women are balancing their work and family life in different sectors like IT, BPO, health care, education, insurance and banking.

Statement of The Problem

Today, career for women is continuously challenged by the increasing demands at work place. When the day is completed at the office, they will have responsibilities and commitments to handle at home. Majority of the working women are stretching themselves to discharge their roles at office and home and in the process experience work-life imbalance which will have undesirable consequences for individuals in the form of increased levels of stress complaints, depression, lower mental health, higher family conflicts, less life satisfaction, etc., as well as for the organizations such as decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, reduced organizational commitment, reduced productivity, employee disengagement and high turnover intention.

Scope of The Study

The present study is confined to women employees in Bangalore city. Bangalore city is one of the developed cosmopolitan cities in India. Women employees who have been working in different organizations covering different sectors like Banking, Insurance, Education, IT, BPO and Health care were considered for the purpose of the study.

Research Methodology

The study of the objectives and testing of hypothesis is dependent primarily on the reliable measurement of the variables and secondly on the methods and procedures applied for deriving conclusions.

Sample Design

The women employees in Bangalore city constitute universe for the study. The researcher selected women employees working in various sectors like banking, insurance, IT, BPO, health care and education sector as the sample frame.

Sample Size

The sample size considered for the study is 360 working women employees selected from various professions and jobs. The sample respondents include doctors, teaching faculty, software engineers, customer relationship officers, bank employees, etc.

Sampling Method

Simple random sampling method is used for the present study to ensure that different strata i.e. different sectors are adequately represented in the sample.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data are collected for the purpose of the study. The survey method is used to gather primary information for the study. The required data is collected from the sample respondents with the help of a questionnaire designed for the purpose and through personal interviews also. The secondary data is collected from books, journals, magazines, websites, etc.

Questionnaire

Based on the objectives of the study, questionnaire is designed. The questionnaire comprises few dichotomous (YES/NO) questions, few multiple choice questions and statements using Likert Scale method.

Statistical Tools Used for Research

The tools that are used for analyzing data are ANOVA, mean score and percentages.

Objective

To study the work-life balance of women employees in select service sectors in Bangalore.

As the nature of the job differs based on sector, work-life balance of employees may differ. Table-1 presents work-life balance of employees at different sectors. Mean score is calculated based on the responses on a five-point scale.

Table: 1- Mean Scores of Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance of Women Employees in Different Sectors

| Nature of the sector | VS | S | N | DS | VDS | Total score | Mean Score | Rank |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-------------|------------|------|
| Education | 6 | 32 | 17 | 5 | 0 | 219 | 3.65 | 5 |
| IT | 5 | 36 | 11 | 8 | 0 | 218 | 3.63 | 6 |
| BPO | 12 | 34 | 12 | 2 | 0 | 236 | 3.93 | 2 |
| Health care | 14 | 24 | 18 | 4 | 0 | 228 | 3.86 | 3 |
| Banking | 11 | 41 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 239 | 3.98 | 1 |
| Insurance | 5 | 41 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 226 | 3.77 | 4 |

(VS-Very Satisfied, S-Satisfied, N-Neutral, DS- Dissatisfied, VDS-Very Dissatisfied)

It is observed from table 1 that based on the mean scores calculated on a five point scale, Banking sector has topped the list followed by BPO, health care, insurance and education sector. IT sector was down the list. It implies that

employees from banking sector are relatively more satisfied with work-life balance and employees from IT sector are least satisfied.

Table: 2- Levels of Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

| Sector | Satisfaction with work –life balance | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|----|--------------|----|-----------|----|-------|------|
| | High level | | Medium level | | Low level | | | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Education | 38 | 63 | 17 | 28 | 5 | 9 | 60 | 100% |
| IT | 41 | 68 | 11 | 18 | 8 | 14 | 60 | 100% |
| BPO | 46 | 77 | 12 | 20 | 2 | 3 | 60 | 100% |
| Health care | 38 | 63 | 18 | 30 | 4 | 7 | 60 | 100% |
| Banking | 52 | 86 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 60 | 100% |
| Insurance | 46 | 77 | 9 | 15 | 5 | 8 | 60 | 100% |

Table 2 presents the satisfaction level of respondents with their work-life balance in the select service sectors. Greater part of the banking sector respondents (86%) reported highest level of work-life balance. It is followed by BPO sector respondents (77%) and Insurance sector respondents (77%) occupying the second place. The finding is in accordance with study revealed that respondents from the banking sector enjoyed better work-life balance as compared to the respondents from other sectors.

68% of IT sector respondents, 63% of Education sector respondents and 63% of Health care sector are highly satisfied with work-life balance. As far as the respondents

who have low level of work-life balance, IT sector respondents topped the list constituting 14%. It may be because of the influence of technology which has blurred the line between work life and personal life.

Hypothesis

- **H₀**: There is no significant difference in satisfaction with work-life balance of women employees in select service sectors.
- **H_a**: There is significant difference in satisfaction with work-life balance of women employees in select service sectors.

Table: 3- ANOVA

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 32.250 | 4 | 8.062 | 2.812 | .025 |
| Within Groups | 1017.750 | 355 | 2.867 | | |
| Total | 1050.000 | 359 | | | |

Hypothesis is tested using ANOVA. The results have shown that F value is significant at 5% and therefore alternative hypothesis that there is significant difference in the levels of

work- life balance of women employees in select service sectors in Bangalore is accepted.

Table-4: Ability to Balance Work Life and Personal Life

| Work-Life Balance | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| S.No | Work-Life Balance | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Total |
| 1. | Strongly agree | 55 | 15.3 |
| 2. | Agree | 220 | 61.1 |
| 3. | Neutral | 64 | 17.8 |
| 4. | Disagree | 8 | 2.2 |
| 5. | Strongly disagree | 13 | 3.6 |
| Total | | 360 | 100 |

Table-4 depicts whether respondents of select service sectors of the study are able to balance their work life and personal life. It is clear from the table that out of 360 respondents, 76.4% (275) respondents say they are

balancing their work and personal life. 17.8% (64) are neutral in their response and 5.8% (21) respondents articulated that they were unable to balance their work-life.

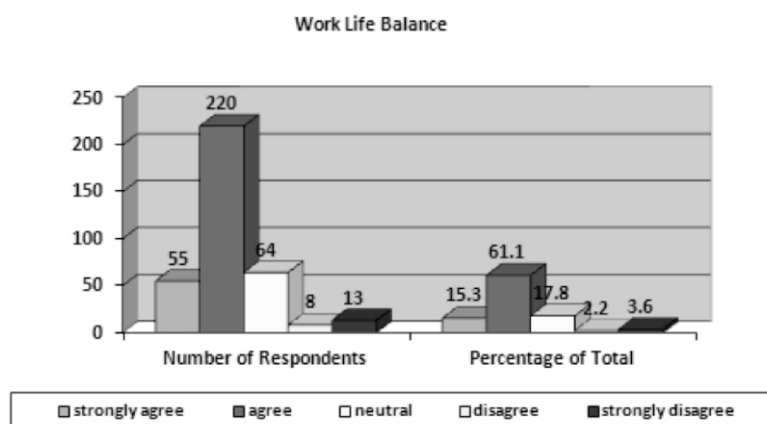
Figure: 1- Ability to Balance Work Life and Personal Life

Table-5: Facilitating Work-Life Balance to Women Employees

| Nature of the sector | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | Total score | Mean Score | Rank |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|-------------|------------|------|
| Education | 7 | 25 | 21 | 7 | 0 | 212 | 3.53 | 5 |
| IT | 8 | 23 | 27 | 2 | 0 | 217 | 3.61 | 4 |
| BPO | 12 | 32 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 236 | 3.93 | 2 |
| Health care | 17 | 12 | 13 | 18 | 0 | 208 | 3.46 | 6 |
| Insurance | 14 | 30 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 234 | 3.90 | 3 |
| Banking | 14 | 25 | 16 | 5 | 0 | 238 | 3.96 | 1 |

(SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-Neutral, DA- Disagree, SDA- Strongly Disagree).

Table-5 shows the sectors facilitating work-life balance to women employees. Based on the responses, it is observed that banking sector stands first in facilitating work-life balance to women employees. BPO sector stands second in

facilitating work-life balance, followed by insurance, IT, education and finally health care sector occupies last position in facilitating work-life balance to women employees.

Table -6: Level of Work-Life Balance Facilitated in Different Sectors

| Sector | Facilitating work –life balance | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|----|--------------|----|-----------|----|-------|------|
| | High level | | Medium level | | Low level | | N | % |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | | |
| Education | 32 | 53 | 21 | 35 | 07 | 12 | 60 | 100% |
| IT | 31 | 52 | 27 | 45 | 02 | 03 | 60 | 100% |
| BPO | 44 | 73 | 16 | 27 | 00 | 00 | 60 | 100% |
| Health care | 29 | 48 | 13 | 22 | 18 | 30 | 60 | 100% |
| Banking | 44 | 73 | 12 | 20 | 04 | 07 | 60 | 100% |
| Insurance | 39 | 65 | 16 | 27 | 05 | 08 | 60 | 100% |

Table- 6 depicts the degree to which different sectors are facilitating better work-life balance for women employees. Respondents expressed that Banking sector (73%) and BPO

sector (73%) facilitate high level of work-life balance for women employees followed by Insurance sector (65%). Education, IT and Health care sectors are down the list.

Table: 7 ANOVA

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 25.731 | 3 | 8.577 | 2.981 | .031 |
| Within Groups | 1024.269 | 356 | 2.877 | | |
| Total | 1050.000 | 359 | | | |

Table-7 shows the results of ANOVA. It is observed from the table that F value is 2.981 which are significant at 5% level. Therefore it can be concluded that there is difference between sectors in facilitating the work-life balance for women employees.

Findings of The Study

Work-life Balance of Women Employees

- As analysed most of the employees (77%) were highly satisfied by work-life balance, 15% expressed medium level of satisfaction and 8 % articulated that they have

low level of satisfaction.

- Based on mean scores calculated for satisfaction with work-life balance, the results indicated that banking sector has topped the list followed by BPO and IT sector was down the list. It implies that employees from banking sector are relatively more satisfied in addition to employees from IT sector who are least satisfied.

Hypothesis is tested using ANOVA. The results show that there is considerable variation within the levels of work-life balance of women working across different select service sectors of the study.

Conclusion

Women workforce is increasing and their contribution to the organizations is also considered to be valuable. It is very necessary for the organizations to acknowledge women employees by providing more appropriate work-life balance measures for them. Striking a healthy work-life balance is imperative for all the employees irrespective of the industry to which they belong. It is the joint responsibility of the employer and the employees to ensure strong work-life balance that can bring in fruitful results to organization as well as employees also.

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