# Work-Life Conflict of Women Employees in Selected Sectors

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#### **Abstract**

In the current day scenario, it has become more challenging and difficult for working women to discharge their roles at office and home and in the process experience work-life imbalance which will have undesirable consequences for them in the form of increased levels of stress complaints, 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 and productivity, disengagement and high turnover intention.

The main objective of the study is to study work-life conflicts experienced by women employees in different sectors and to determine if there is significant different among the sectors. 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. The sample size comprised of 360 working women employees selected from six sectors. The study revealed that there is significant difference in work- life conflict experienced by employees across select service sectors. The study revealed that employees from BPO sector, followed by health care and IT sectors reported relatively more work-life conflict and the employees from education sector have least work- life conflict.

**Keywords:** Work-life conflict, Women employees, service sectors, work life balance, demographic variables

## Introduction

The organizational commitment of employees distinguishes those companies which are in a better position to compete in the market place from companies which are struggling to survive. The importance of work-life balance tends to be emphasized on two counts. First, work-life balance enhances employees' job satisfaction and their wellbeing. Second, organizations can benefit from work-life balance of employees as it results in enhancing employees' commitment, productivity, and organizational citizenship behavior, reducing absenteeism and turnover rates of talented workers and thereby replacement costs can be reduced.

In order to attract and retain talented employees, companies are realizing that providing a conducive and employee friendly work environment is absolutely necessary. Job aspirants are asking for more

than a competitive pay package, and are looking for what makes an organization a "great place to work." As a result many organizations are increasingly adopting work-life policies such as introducing greater work flexibility, providing child-care facilities and offering emotional support (Leonie, 2009).

#### Literature Review

The results of many research studies have shown gender differences in work-life balance and the striking feature was that women experience relatively higher work-to-family conflict when compared to men (Greenglass& Burke, 1988; Franakenhaeuser, Lundberg, Fredrikson, Melin, Tuomisto, Myrsten et al., 1989; Marshall & Barnett, 1993; Berntsson, Lundberg, &Krantz, 1994; Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994; Lundberg, Mardberg, &Frankenhaeuser, 1994, Williams &Alliger, 1994). 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 (Harris, 2004).

According to Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2005, job demands and family demands are often irreconcilable creating an imbalance between the two. 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). The struggle to balance work and personal life demands is more for women employees when compared to male employees (Kamenou, 2008). 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).

In another study it was found that work stress and work-life imbalance correlated with workaholic, regardless of gender. Women may be taking a more profession-minded view, while men are turning into family-oriented (Shahnaz & Jamie, 2008). Even today majority of the working women continue to perform the role of home maker and undertake the majority of the household duties and as such they are more likely to suffer from role overload (Bridge, 2009).

But there are certain studies which have shown contradictory results. A Swiss general population sample (Hämmig& Bauer, 2009) did not show differences in worklife balance between men and women. But when occupation was considered differences were found, with women working in full-time or higher occupational positions expressing higher levels of conflict than men.

Women who spend more time at work climb the corporate ladder faster than those who don't work (Nirmala Govindarajan, 2009). 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).

Women choose to postpone child birth or remain childless in order to pursue a working career (Oliver, 2009). Another research study revealed that mothers devoted more weekly hours in work than fathers (Raphael Snir&Dorit, 2009). Women have been argued on their behalf that they have maintained the emotional responsibilities for home and family as they require more emotional intelligence (Srinivasa, 2009).

Work-life balance may contribute positively to women only when the labour market conditions are tight. Moreover more work needs to be done with male managers in order to humanize the work place for men and woman who wishes to lead rounded lives (Liz Doherty, 2010). 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).

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 (ThilakshiKodagoda, 2010). 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).

Major factors that affect work-family conflict among women executives are harmony in home and office, organizational support, family expectations, parenting effect and professional skills, nature of organization, education (Sandhu and Mehts, 2006). In an empirical study, Krishna Reddy and Vranda, 2010reported thatFamily and Work Conflict (FWC) and Work Family Conflict (WFC) put forth negative influences in the family domain that will reduce life satisfaction and generate more conflicts within the family. WFC and FWC are affected by variables such as the size of the family, age of the children, work hours and the level of social support.

Spector et al (2005) argued that new technologies besides providing many advantages are also creating more demands and pressures on working people. Employees are accessible on a 24/7 basis and this may intrude into their personal time. Differences are also evident in perception of IT work, mentoring relationships and coping mechanisms relied upon (Monica, 2008). In the high-tech sector, women are expected to work long hours which will come in the way of care-taking activities. However, it should be emphasized that mother struggles to manage both active family caring

and career, rather than give up either of them. In IT work force, women say that many women sacrifice their career over family priorities and this is the reason why IT industry has a high proportion of women at lower levels and the number at the top remain relatively much lower (Phandnis, 2013).

Patwa (2011) conducted a study and the findings revealed that in spite of certain policies & provisions provided by their organizations for helping them to maintain their work-life balance; they still are unable to manage their professional life along with their personal life well. It was still observed that the respondents from the banking sector enjoyed better work-life balance as compared to the respondents from the insurance sector.

Gunavathy (2007) conducted a study among married women employees in BPO sector and the findings of the study indicated that more than two-third of the respondents experienced work-life imbalance primarily due to interference of work with personal life. The factors that were attributed for work-life imbalance were categorized as organizational and personal factors. The organizational factors comprised factors relating to work, time and relationship. Whereas inadequate family support, marital conflicts and frequent change in sleeping patterns are some of the personal factors that created work-life imbalance. The study also concluded that the three main negative repercussions of work-life imbalance were stress and burnout, ill-health and poor work performance.

BPO sector involves working 24\*7 and obviously stress will be involved with work. Hence, flexible working practices are very much required like part-time working, flexi-time, job sharing and home working. (Anil Kumar, 2013.)Meenakshi and Bhuvaneshwari (2013) conducted a study whose research findings revealed that most of the respondents experienced difficulties as work organization in the BPO sector consists of unusual work schedule, overbearing and irate callers, undue work targets, and daily quality assurance and service performance measurements, workers are more vulnerable to burn-out and other stressors compared to their contemporaries in different industries.

Lingard and Francis (2005) observed that in the construction industry, culture of working long hours and weekend working prevails. The scenario is quite similar in many industries such as real estate, travel and hospitality. It is quite obvious that people working in these industries may experience work-life imbalance because when employees spend more time on work domain it reduces available time for the other domain namely, personal life.

Work-life balance is a challengeable one even for hospital nurses (Lakshmi and Ramachandran, 2012). A study was conducted by Maren et al. (2013) to analyze work-life balance and job satisfaction among teachers exposed a negative relationship between work-life conflicts and job satisfaction. The study suggested that if organizations offer facilities to reduce work-life conflicts, it will lead to improvement in employees' job satisfaction.

When the responsibilities attached to the personal life get neglected due to the tasks of the professional life, it leads to job dissatisfaction which results in forgetfulness, less commitment towards work, complaints from clients, losing regular clients and leaving the job at its extreme end (PrasadiniGamage, 2013). The study has shown significant relationship work-life balance and organizational commitment (Gulbahar, et al., 2014). The findings of the study conducted by Mukururi and Ngari (2014) emphasized that each of the work life balance policies on its own is a predictor of job satisfaction.

Many studies emphasized the importance of work-life balance and it is quite important to know the factors affecting work-life balance. Though there are studies which have revealed certain factors, it is felt that there is a need to determine factors causing work-life conflict in different sectors and to study if there is a significant difference in work-life conflict across select service sectors.

## Objectives of the study:

- 1. To study work-life conflict experienced by women employees in different sectors
- 2. To study if there is a significant difference in work-life conflict across select sectors.

## **Hypothesis:**

**H0:** There is no significant difference in work-life conflict experienced by employees across select service sectors.

**H1:** There is significant difference in work-life conflict experienced by employees across select service sectors.

## Methodology:

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. Bangalore city is divided into two parts that is Bangalore urban and Bangalore rural. The current population of the study is considered from Bangalore urban only. As per NASSCOM report, 2011 (Source: www.nasscom.in/NASSCOM-city/Bangalore, Times of India, October 2011, page-17) and CENSUS (source: www.census 2011.co.in/census/district/242-bangalore.html) total size of population in Bangalore is 96, 21,551 lakhs out of which 50, 22,661 lakhs are males and 45, 98,890 lakhs are females. Total urban female population in Bangalore is 41, 91,539 lakhs. Out of which 3, 00,000 lakhs women employees (source:

Times of India, September 2011, pp 9) are working under the white collar jobs in different sectors such as Education, Banking, IT, insurance, Health care and BPO. Therefore for the present study, the population considered is 3, 00,000 lakhs.

## Formula for sample calculation

Where N= size of the population

e=Acceptable error (precision)

s = Standard deviation of the population

Z=Standard variate at a given confidence level

Here N=3,00,000 (population of the study);

e = 0.05 (precision desired expressed as a decimal i.e 1%, 5%, 10%);

? = 0.5 (estimated variance in population 0.5- 50-50, 0.3 70-30);

Z= 1.96 (based on confidence level and the normal distribution table value for 95%)

Substituting the above values in the given formula

The sample size considered for the study is 360. The sample size comprised of 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.

Table 1 presents the details of the sample units of different sectors in different areas of Bangalore.

Table 1 Geographical Sample Distribution In Select Service Sectors In Bangalore

Area/	East zone		West Z	Zone	North Z	Zone	South Zone		Total
Sector	K.R.Puram (45)	White Field (45)	Electronic City (45)	HSR Layout (45)	Malleswaram (45)	Jalahalli (45)	Yelahanka (45)	Hebbal (45)	
Education	8 (1)	7(1)	7(1)	8(1)	8(1)	7(1)	8(1)	7(1)	60
IT	7(1)	8(1)	8(1)	7(1)	7(1)	8(1)	8(1)	7(1)	60
BPO	7(1)	8(1)	8(1)	7(1)	7(1)	8(1)	7(1)	8(1)	60
Health care	7(1)	8(1)	7(1)	8(1)	8(1)	7(1)	8(1)	7(1)	60
Banking	8(1)	7(1)	7(1)	8(1)	7(1)	8(1)	7(1)	8(1)	60
Insurance	8(1)	7(1)	8(1)	7(1)	8(1)	7(1)	7(1)	8(1)	60

Note: Figures in the parentheses indicate the number of companies from which the respondents are chosen.

The researcher used simple random sampling method using Fishers and Yates numbers. The list of female employees was taken from different companies/ organizations and the sample respondents were chosen using Fishers and Yates numbers. Very partially convenience sampling was used in the selection of companies.

# **Data Collection and Data Analysis:**

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. Based on the objectives of the study, questionnaire is designed with statements using Likert scaling method. The tools that are used for analyzing data are ANOVA, Post hoc test and mean. SPSS was used for the purpose of statistical analysis.

## **Results and Discussion**

## Work Life Conflict

Table.	2 Work	_I ifa	Conflict	Of The	Respondents
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Sector	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Total score	Mean Score
Education	5	22	18	14	1	164	2.73
IT	2	21	18	18	1	175	2.92
BPO	2	17	25	13	3	178	2.97
Health care	1	20	23	14	2	176	2.93
Banking	1	27	17	13	2	168	2.80
Insurance	2	27	15	11	5	170	2.83

It is observed from table 2 that based on mean scores calculated for work-life conflict of the employees, BPO sector has topped the list followed by health care, IT, insurance, banking and education. Education sector was down the list. It implies that employees from BPO sector, followed by health care and IT are relatively having more

work life conflict. This shows that employees working in these sectors experience high work-life conflict due to shift system, long working hours, overtime etc., which affect personal life when compared to the other sectors selected in the study and the employees from education sector have least work-life conflict.

Table 3: Level Of Work-Life Conflict Of The Respondents

Sector	High Level	Medium level	Low level	TOTAL
Education	25%	30%	45%	100%
IT	32%	30%	38%	100%
BPO	27%	42%	31%	100%
Health care	27%	38%	35%	100%
Banking	25%	28%	47%	100%
Insurance	27%	25%	48%	100%

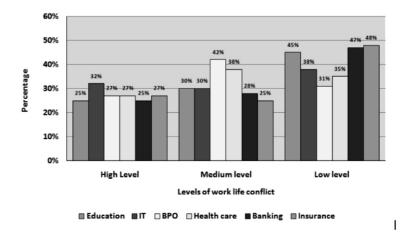


Figure: 1: Level Of Work- Life Conflict Of Respondents

Table 4 shows the level of work-life conflict in each sector. It is observed that employees in IT, BPO and health care sectors are relatively having high level of work-life conflict

and employees belonging to education sector are having low level of work-life conflict.

**Table: 4 - ANOVA** 

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.656	5	2.131	3.607	.010
Within Groups	245.967	354	.695		
Total	256.622	359			

Hypothesis is tested using ANOVA. The results have shown that there is significance difference in work-life conflict experienced by employees across select service sectors of the study and therefore alternative hypothesis is accepted.

The results from the ANOVA do not indicate which of the six sectors differ from one another in work-life conflict, hence, a post hoc Tukey test is computed.

Post Hoc Test
Table: 5 Multiple Comparisons Of Work-Life Conflict

		Mean Difference	Std.		95% Confidence Interval		
(I) sector	(J) sector	(I-J)	Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	<b>Upper Bound</b>	
Education	IT	183	.154	.000	.26	1.14	
	BPO	233	.154	.954	57	.31	
	Health care	200	.154	.000	.24	1.12	
	banking	067	.154	.000	.38	1.26	
	Insurance	100	.154	.000	.34	1.22	
IT	education	.183	.154	.000	-1.14	26	
	BPO	050	.154	1.000	-1.27	39	
	Health care	017	.154	1.000	46	.42	
	banking	.117	.154	.974	32	.56	
	Insurance	.083	.154	.994	36	.52	
BPO	education	.233	.154	.954	31	.57	
	IT	.050	.154	1.000	.39	1.27	
	Health care	.033	.154	.000	.38	1.26	
	banking	.167	.154	.000	.51	1.39	
	Insurance	.133	.154	.000	.48	1.36	
Health	education	.200	.154	.000	-1.12	24	
care	IT	.017	.154	1.000	42	.46	
	BPO	033	.154	.000	-1.26	38	
	banking	.133	.154	.954	31	.57	
	Insurance	.100	.154	.987	34	.54	

Banking	education	.067	.154	.000	-1.26	38
	IT	117	.154	.974	56	.32
	BPO	167	.154	.000	-1.39	51
	Health care	133	.154	.954	57	.31
	Insurance	033	.154	1.000	47	.41
Insurance	education	.100	.154	.000	-1.22	34
	IT	083	.154	.994	52	.36
	BPO	133	.154	.000	-1.36	48
	Health care	100	.154	.987	54	.34
	banking	.033	.154	1.000	41	.47

It is understood from table V that Tukey post hoc test indicate that work-life conflict of women employees in Education sector differed significantly from work-life conflict experienced by women employees in IT sector, Healthcare sector, Banking and Insurance sectors. Similar results are indicated between BPO and Healthcare sectors, BPO and Banking, BPO and Insurance sectors (p<0.05).

## **Conclusion:**

There is significant difference in work life conflict experienced by employees across select service sectors. The study revealed that employees from BPO sector, followed by health care and IT sectors reported relatively more work-life conflict. Employees who belong to these sectors experience high work-life conflict because of shift system, extended work hours, overtime etc., that affect employees' personal life when compared to the other sectors selected for the study and the employees from education sector are having least work-life conflict.

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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