

Factors Influencing Work-Life-Balance of Women Professionals in It Industry-A Study in TamilNadu, India

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Abstract: *Work-life-balance is one of the most difficult issues facing women professionals in IT industry. Despite the favorable conditions that prevail in the IT industry, in the society, and in the family, work-life-imbalance is found among women professionals which restrict their career advancement, mobility and performance. The present paper identifies the factors that influence work-life-balance of women professionals in IT industry in Tamil Nadu, India. 500 respondents were selected by random sampling method from IT companies in Coimbatore and Chennai. Primary data were collected by administering questionnaire. Thirty five components influencing work-life-balance given in the questionnaire and the response of the women were measured by applying Likert type five point scale. The respondents have agreed that twenty eight components have influenced the work-life-balance of respondents in the first stage. The factor analysis revealed that five factors such as Job Nature, Work Load, Job Environment, Organizational Support and Family Domain are the predominant factors that influence work-life-balance of women professionals. The correlation analysis has also confirmed that there exists positive correlation among the five factors and they are close-knit factors.*

Keywords: *Family support, Information Technology, Job Nature, Organizational Support, Work Environment, Work Load, Women professionals, Work-life-balance*

I. INTRODUCTION

Work life balance is one of the most difficult issues facing families in the twenty first century (Elizabeth W, Calvin W & Janice R.2008) and is viewed as "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict" (Campbell Clark 2000). Work-life-balance improves quality of work life and helps an individual to sustain in business. Maintaining balance encourages optimum working hours that ultimately enhances efficiency. Balancing work and family issues are increasingly important to employees and employers and are a universal worldwide phenomenon (Jarrod M. Haar 2007)

On the other hand, work life imbalance often results in absenteeism, employee turnover, and dissatisfaction with job, absence of organizational commitment and life style diseases like stress, hyper tension, obesity and stroke in some cases. It can result in poor coping skills, irritability, insecurity, exhaustion and difficulty in concentration.

Information Technology (IT) industry has emerged as a key growth engine of Indian economy. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry continues to be the largest private sector employer in India. India is the fourth largest start up hub in the world with over 3,100 technology start ups in 2014-15. Information technology revolution not only increases the employment opportunities and GDP of a country but also contributes to a cultural transformation and social revolution.

Indian women who used to prefer teaching, nursing, medicine and banking professions are now attracted towards IT profession and join IT firms in large number in various cadres. It is mainly due to the increasing access to professional training which enabled women to enter professional career. According to NASSCOM Report (2009), the gender ratio has registered a steep rise.

The IT industry is unique in adhering to practices such as at least 14 hours work per day, working against deadlines in weekends, temporary nature of project structure, global delivery model and attending to conference calls after working hours as U.S and Europe are dominant partners which put pressure on IT professionals particularly women professionals and creates work life imbalance. Employees now work to the timings of foreign clients and markets even while working within the country, which has been a major disruptive factor affecting their personal lives and health.

Work-life balance has been viewed more as a women's issue due to the traditional mindset where the woman is primarily responsible for the smooth running of day to day affairs of family irrespective of her job responsibilities. There is a positive change in the societal attitude towards the role of men and women but it is very slow. The family support, institutional support in the form of HR policies, superior and peer support in the work place and social support are certain desirable changes that facilitate work life balance of women professionals in IT industry. Despite the favorable conditions that prevail in IT industry, in the society and in the family, work life imbalance is found among women professionals which restrict their career advancement and

mobility. It is imperative to study the work family constructs from the point of view of India, where the institution of family is very strong and where women's participation in professional sphere is on the rise. The present article revolves around the following research question, 'What are the factors that influence work life balance of women in IT industry?' The study aims to identify the factors those influence the work life balance of women IT professionals in Tamil Nadu. IT companies in major cities of Tamil Nadu such as Chennai and Coimbatore are considered for the study. Multistage sampling has been adopted. At the first stage, IT companies which are listed in Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange are included. In the second stage, the IT companies which are in existence for more than 10 years are considered. Out of which companies having more than 20% of women in the workforce have been considered. The sample size determined is 500 and random sampling method has been adopted for selection of sample respondents. 500 respondents were contacted for the purpose of the study. Questionnaire method was used for collecting primary data for the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-life-balance is viewed as a form of inter role conflict wherein pressures from family and work are mutually incompatible (Frone 2003). According to Duxbury (2004), work-life-balance involves role overload, work to family interference and family to work interference. Work to family conflict occurs when there is participation in a competing family activity. Family work conflict occurs when family and work responsibilities are mutually incompatible. (Greenhouse, Beutell, 1997). Work-life-balance is considered as the lack of conflict between work and family roles (Frone 2003). But mere absence of conflict will not capture the positive aspects that contribute to the work-family balance (Clarke 2001). A comprehensive definition given by Clarke consists of five dimensions.

1. Work satisfaction
2. Family satisfaction.
3. Work functioning
4. Family functioning and
5. Role conflict.

It can be concluded that work-life-balance is nothing but a successful management and juggling of multiple roles. Work-life-balance includes proper prioritization between career and ambition on the one hand, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development on the other hand (T.S . Santhi 2012, Sarita Bhatnagar 2015). Striking a balance is a real fulfillment to life. Paid work and personal life should be seen less as competing priorities rather than complementary elements of a full life. In order to achieve this, the needs of employers and needs of employees should be considered. Employers may be persuaded about importance of employment policies and practices that support work-life-balance and mitigate the negative effects in the management of balance. (Levis 2000). Over the years there is a growing perception that the quality of employees' personal life and family life impacts work quality and it makes business sense to promote work and family integration (Lockwood 2003). Work-life-balance is a matter of concern for both the employees and the employer since the ill health of employees translates into reduced productivity. It affects employees in terms of stress level and physical and mental health. Hence work-life-balance is required for achievement through work and enjoyment through life which leads to success in work life and non work activities (Beulah Viji Christina, Joseph Sasi Rajan 2014). Leading a balanced life involves achieving satisfying experience in all life domains and it requires personal resources such as energy, time and commitment to be equitably distributed across various domains (Kirchineya 2003). The characteristics of the software service industry in India and the nature of work pose some unique challenges for professionals in the IT industry. The time difference with the West, the U.S. and the Europe necessitate employees to work during night in India. The project based work with unpredictable workloads and the requirement to deliver projects consistently within stipulated time and without critical bugs (Mathew 2007).

Software professionals face an environment of uncertainty and instability. Rapid technology changes necessitate them to opt for training, education and re skilling to prevent obsolescence. Long working hours, unpredictable workloads and the constant pressure of updating skills have strong impact on the work-family-balance (Reimara Valk & Vasanthi Srinivasan 2014). In view of longer working hours and round the clock support, IT workers suffer from work-life-conflict than in most other cases (C.S.Venkatratnam and C.Chanda 2009). Work and family life have always been interdependent. As the twenty four hour, seven day work, persistent change, wide ranging job responsibilities and uncertainties with increasing pressures of work week gains ascendancy, the possibility of achieving work-life-balance is proving an elusive goal for more and more people (Sangeeta Bhatnagar & P.K. Jain 2014). There exists glass ceiling or feminization or gender based stereotypes. They face failures to put up late hours to build informal networking, long distance travel from home, job insecurity, domestic responsibilities, marginalization of women at the time of project deadlines (Carol Upadhya 2006)

III. DISCUSSION

The socio economic profile of the respondents shows that 49.9% of the respondents are in the age group of 21-25 years. Educational qualification of the respondents shows that 39.7 percent are post graduates and 39.3 percent hold engineering degree. 59.5 percent of respondents have 2-4 years of work experience. 64.4 percent of sample respondents are unmarried. 48.6 percent of women employees' husbands hold post graduate degree. 37.7 percent of respondents' husbands are engineers. 45.7 percent of respondents' husbands serve as IT professionals. 46.2 percent of married women professionals have one child. 66.6 percent of respondents work for 9-10 hours in the office. 22.2 percent of women professionals experienced break in their career. Maternity leave is the main reason for career break for 53.5 percent among those who have career breaks. 41.3% of the respondents experience stress which appears to be a dominant health problem.

3.1 COMPONENTS INFLUENCING WORK-LIFE-BALANCE

The components influencing work-life-balance are measured by applying Likert type scale with 35 items. The respondents are required to give their responses on a five point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with following scale value.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

The scores obtained by each respondent and the total scores obtained by all respondents have been obtained and mean scores for all 35 statements regarding the factors influencing respondents' work-life-balance has been calculated. The nature of work in IT industry due to the time difference with the West make the IT professionals work during night. Besides uncertain workload, frequent changing of deadlines by clients and the continuous pressure to update skills create unpredictable challenges on work-life-balance. Components that influence work-life-balance are studied and the mean score for all 35 statements are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Components Influencing Work-Life-Balance

Sl. No.	Components	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
1.	Frequent extend work schedule	3.46	0.958
2.	Unrealistic deadlines	3.39	.969
3.	Role overload	3.42	.960
4.	Frequent changing requirement of clients and the resultant stress	3.45	.928
5.	Lack of flexible option	3.41	1.027
6.	Long and odd working hours	3.37	1.018
7.	Long commuting time from home to workplace	3.38	1.071
8.	Night shifts	2.78	1.237
9.	Taking work-home often	2.92	1.132
10.	Working late/week ends	3.15	1.084
11.	Always connected to office work through conference calls	3.01	1.087
12.	Official travel at short notice	2.87	1.034
13.	Check back with office even when on a vacation	3.18	1.096
14.	Non supportive attitude of superiors	3.13	1.117
15.	Compressed working week/job sharing	3.23	.963
16.	Working with incompetent subordinates	3.10	1.044
17.	Discrimination by superiors	3.10	1.087
18.	Inadequate leave facilities	3.23	1.097
19.	Lack of job security	3.18	1.129
20.	Organisation has established WLB policy	3.29	.946
21.	No serious implementation of WLB policy	2.79	.929
22.	Multiple social roles arising from marriage, child birth, pregnancy	3.52	.997
23.	Lack of support system at home	3.09	1.079
24.	Poor day care and crèche facilities in the office	3.21	1.028
25.	No time to socialize / relax	3.40	1.01
26.	Husband employed in another city/State and frequent travels	2.99	1.042
27.	Family related problems strain with job	3.32	.977
28.	When the need for personal space is higher, family and work demands leads to work-life-imbalance	3.47	.928
29.	Home identity role developed strongly among women	2.52	.843
30.	Professional isolation from office environment, when work from home	3.25	.856
31.	Round the clock support to meet aggressive time lines	3.30	.913
32.	Lack of gender sensitive WLB policy	3.14	.887
33.	Work identity role developed strongly by men	3.14	.942
34.	Negative perception of Superiors /Colleagues about work-life-balance practices	2.89	.951
35.	Forced to work in additional jobs	3.05	1.039

It is understood from Table 1 that the respondents agreed that 28 components out of the given 35 have influenced work-life-balance as their mean value is more than 3. Multiple social roles arising from marriage (3.52), the need for higher personal space (mean 3.47), frequent extended work schedule (3.46), frequent changing requirement of clients (3.45), role over load (3.42) lack of flexible options (3.41) and unrealistic deadlines (3.39) are the most important aspects that have influenced work-life-balance.

‘Night shifts’, ‘taking work to home’, ‘official travel at short notice’, ‘employment of husband in other place’, ‘home identity role developed by women’, ‘negative perception of colleagues’ and ‘non implementation of work-life-balance policies by the organizations’ do not influence the work-life-balance of women professionals in IT industry as their mean value is less than 3.

3.2 FACTORS THAT CONSTITUTE WORK-LIFE-BALANCE

Predominant factors that constitute work-life-balance of sample women IT professionals have been examined by applying factor analysis. Factor analysis by principal component method reduces the variables into predominant factors of work-life-balance with regard to women professionals in IT industry. The application of factor analysis on 35 variables of work-life-balance and the results are given in subsequent tables. Initially the test of validity of data for factor analysis was studied with Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of Sphericity. KMO and Bartlett’s Test had been administered in order to determine sampling adequacy. It indicates that the data set were adequate to perform factor analysis.

3.2.1 TOTAL VARIANCE

The KMO test and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity found that all extractions values have as per the expected values and all items can be used for further analysis. The item scales have been subjected to factor analysis using principal component method with Varimax rotation. SPSS statistical package has been used for this purpose. Table 2 explains the total variance explained in the principal component analysis.

Table 2
Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Rotation sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative Percentage	Total	% of variance	Cumulative percentage
1.	13.001	37.145	37.145	4.632	12.841	12.841
2.	2.081	5.945	43.090	4.089	11.336	24.177
3.	1.838	5.251	48.341	4.799	13.303	37.480
4.	1.428	4.080	52.421	3.919	10.864	48.343
5.	1.316	3.761	56.182	3.024	7.838	56.182
6.	1.135	3.242	59.423			
7.	1.040	2.973	62.396			
8.	.949	2.712	65.108			
9.	.931	2.659	67.767			
10.	.771	2.203	69.970			
11.	.766	2.188	72.158			
12.	.699	1.997	74.155			
13.	.644	1.841	75.996			
14.	.623	1.780	77.776			
15.	.605	1.730	79.506			
16.	.555	1.585	81.091			
17.	.515	1.472	82.564			
18.	.505	1.442	84.005			
19.	.479	1.368	85.373			
20.	.457	1.306	86.679			
21.	.449	1.283	87.962			
22.	.444	1.269	89.231			
23.	.414	1.183	90.414			
24.	.375	1.071	91.485			
25.	.335	.956	92.441			
26.	.320	.913	93.354			
27.	.311	.887	94.241			
28.	.296	.846	95.087			
29.	.287	.820	95.907			
30.	.275	.787	96.694			
31.	.264	.753	97.447			
32.	.253	.724	98.171			
33.	.232	.663	98.834			
34.	.206	.589	99.422			
35.	.202	.578	100.000			

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It is observed from Table 2 that total variance of the observed variables are explained by each of the principal components. The first principal component explains the largest part of the total variance, it accounts for 12.841 percent of the total variance, second component explains 11.336 percent of the total variance, third component explains 13.303 percent of the total variance, fourth component explains 10.864 percent of the total variance, and fifth component explains 7.838 percent of the total variance.

A component that displays an Eigen value greater than 1.000 accounts for a greater amount of variance, therefore only those components are considered as principal components which have Eigen value greater than 1. The principal components explain 56 percent of the total variance, and the remaining components explain 44 percent of the total variance.

3.2.2 ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX

The rotated component matrix shows rescaled factor loadings (correlation) to evaluate which variables load on each factor. The commonly used procedure of Varimax orthogonal rotation for factors whose Eigen values were greater than 1.0 was employed in the analysis. The rotation was converged in 7 iterations. Table 3 illustrates the results of related component matrix

Table 3
Rotated Component Matrix

	Component				
	Job Nature	Work Load	Work Environment	Organizational Support	Family Domain
Night shifts	.624				
Taking work home often	.752				
Working late/week ends	.598				
Always connected to office work through conference calls	.757				
Official travel at short notice	.697				
Check back with office even when away on a vacation	.713				
Non supportive attitude of superiors	.542				
Compressed working week/job sharing	.484				
Working with incompetent subordinates	.576				
Frequent extended work schedule		.755			
Unrealistic deadlines		.746			
Role overload		.773			
Frequent changing requirements of clients and the resultant time and stress based conflict		.662			
Lack of flexible working options		.664			
Long and odd working hours		.699			
Long commuting time from home to work place		.430			
Discrimination by superiors			.553		
Inadequate leave facilities			.422		
Lack of job security			.387		
Husband employed in another City / State and frequent travel			.388		
Interface of family related problems strain with job			.436		
Round the clock support to meet aggressive time lines			.466		
Lack of gender sensitive WLB policy			.581		
Work identity role developed strongly by men			.667		
Negative perception of colleagues / superiors about WLB practices			.689		
Forced to work in additional job			.560		
Organisation has established WLB policy				.463	
No serious implementation of WLB policy				-.490	
Multiple social roles arising from marriage, child birth, pregnancy and eldercare				.636	
Lack of support system at home				.674	
Poor daycare and crèche facilities in the office				.613	
No time to socialize/relax				.496	
When the need for personal space is higher, family and work demands lead to work-life-imbalance					.652
Home identity role developed strongly among women					.787
Professional isolation from office environment, when work from home					.651

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
 a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations

In Table 3 the rotated components show rescaled factor loadings. The rescaled factor loadings display ‘Job Nature’, as first factor (with factor loadings 0.624, 0.752, 0.598, 0.757, 0.697, 0.713, 0.542, 0.484, 0.576), ‘Work Load’ as second factor (with factor loadings .755, .746, .773, .662, .664, .699, .430), ‘Work Environment’ as third factor (with factor loadings .553, .422, .387, .388, .436, .466, .581, .667, .689, .560) ‘Organizational Support’ as fourth factor (with factor loadings 0.463, -0.490, 0.636, 0.674, .613, .496) and ‘Family Domain’ (with factor loadings .652, .787, .651) as fifth factor.

3.2.3 FACTORS EMANATING FROM FACTOR ANALYSIS

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 Table 4

Table 4
Factors Constituting Work-Life-Balance

Sl. 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 4 that five dominant work-life-balance factors, which consist of thirty five work-life-balance components, accounted for 56.182 percent of total variance.

‘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.

3.3. CORRELATION AMONG FACTORS ARISING FROM FACTOR ANALYSIS

In order to find out whether there is a correlation among the factors emanating from Factor Analysis with respect to influencing aspects of work-life-balance, the following null hypothesis has been framed.

Ho: There is no correlation among factors of work-life-balance

The Pearson correlation test has been applied to find out whether there exists a positive correlation among factors with respect to ‘aspects influencing work-life-balance’. Table 5 shows the correlation among factors such as ‘Work Environment, ‘Work Load’, ‘Job Nature’, ‘Organizational Support’ and ‘Family Domain’

Table 5 Correlation among Factors of Work-Life-Balance

		Job Nature	Work Load	Work Environment	Organizational Support	Family Domain
Job Nature	Pearson Correlation	1	.567**	.551**	.335**	.230**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	491	491	491	491	491
Work Load	Pearson Correlation	.567**	1	.651**	.390**	.319**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	491	491	491	491	491
Work Environment	Pearson Correlation	.551**	.651**	1	.445**	.363**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	491	491	491	491	491
Organizational Support	Pearson Correlation	.335**	.390**	.445**	1	.221**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	491	491	491	491	491
Family Domain	Pearson Correlation	.230**	.319**	.363**	.221**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	491	491	491	491	491

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The analysis of correlation among factors of work-life-balance shows that there exists a positive correlation between Job Nature and Work Load, Work Environment, Organizational Support and Family Domain (.567,.551,.335and.230) at 0.01% level of significance. In addition Work Load has a positive correlation with Job Nature, Work Environment, Organizational Support and Family Domain. (.567, .651, 390, .319). 'Work Environment' factor is positively associated with all other factors (.551, .651, .445, .363) and Family Domain factor is positively correlated with all other factors (.230, .319, .363 and .221). It is observed that there is a positive correlation among all the factors of work life balance.

IV. CONCLUSION

Work-life-balance is an important issue in IT profession. The study was 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. The project based nature of work, high reliance upon technology, overwork, job insecurity and contract work breed undesirable consequences of work-life-conflict. The organizations may be sensitized to work-life-balance issues at all levels. In modern days, dual career couples are found in large number. There is a need for systematic research in order to gain relevant insight into the work-life-balance practices implemented by IT firms as 'organizational intervention'.

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