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A STUDY ON WORK- LIFE BALANCE AMONG WOMEN TEACHERS WORKING IN SELF-FINANCING ENGINEERING INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The expression work-life balance (WLB) was first used in the middle of 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. Over 30 years ago, Kanter (1977) opined about the myth of spate worlds and called attention to the reality that work and home are inescapably linked. In the past 15 years, there has been increasing interest in WLB in the popular press and in scholarly journals as well as government, management and employee representatives (Russell and Bowman, 2000). The importance of WLB was now focused by many organizations and hence this topic was chosen for the study. According to Heery and Noon (2008), "WLB is the principle that paid employment should be integrated with domestic life and community involvement in the interests of personal and social well-being." Teacher's role in student's development is an essential part which assists in creating a prosperous future. In this study the women teachers working in self-financing engineering institutions are taken as samples. Their role in work and family, factors hindering them to achieve WLB, impact of poor WLB etc., were considered as objectives of this study. Primary data was the main source of data collected to undergo depth knowledge about the topic and to fulfill the objectives. The study have thrown light on the problems faced by women teachers in achieving WLB and accordingly suitable suggestion were provided by the researcher which would benefit both individual and the organization.

KEYWORDS

Work-life balance, women, teachers, organization, fulfillment, development.

INTRODUCTION

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving"

- Albert Einstein

The expression work-life balance (WLB) was first used in the middle of 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. Over 30 years ago, Kanter (1977) opined about the myth of spate worlds and called attention to the reality that work and home are inescapably linked. In the past 15 years, there has been increasing interest in WLB in the popular press and in scholarly journals as well as government, management and employee representatives (Russell and Bowman, 2000). This increase in interest is in part driven by concerns that unbalanced outcomes for relationships can result in reduced health and low performance outcomes for individuals, families and organizations.

Dealing about women and WLB, there is a general saying that the rate of attaining WLB is lower in case of women than men. This may be said because of the role played by women in family is higher than men. Especially while considering the women entrepreneurs they are accountable for both family and business. Their role expands in accordance with their business advancement. Women's participation in children growth is higher than men. How come women manage their work and family life? According to Heery and Noon (2008), "WLB is the principle that paid employment should be integrated with domestic life and community involvement in the interests of personal and social well-being." In the words of Morgenstern (2008),

When employees work on achieving WLB it may ultimately result in organizational betterment. Hence every organization all over the world is focusing on assisting their employees in attaining work-life balance. Many organizations have begun to formulate WLB policies in their concern such as flexi-time, ease of taking casual leave, crèche in offices etc.. When a person achieves higher in his/her professional life and scores less in personal life, it may be due to poor WLB.

THE INDIAN PICTURE

The career-minded youngsters and India's booming economy once had people terming work-life balance as a 'Western' problem. But these same youngsters are now struggling with the inevitable effects of all work and no play. On the one hand, the drive is to keep up with the workload, to climb that corporate ladder and prove them. On the other, fatigue, milestones missed and lack of time with friends and family. For the 'We want it all' generation, this delicate see-saw to reduce stress and maintain harmony is an ongoing challenge.

However it is not easy to find many references to Work-Life Balance policies and issues in India. This is not to discount their existence in the country, but it does indicate its relative unimportance as a strategic business issue in the country. It is indeed hurting to see a majority of Indian companies still wedded to the old style presenters philosophy instead of offering managers opportunities to strike a healthy Work-Life Balance.

Thus, In India the IT Industry is probably the first mover in terms of introducing Work-Life Balance policies. There have been pioneers in the country like NIIT, a premier IT Training organization, which several years ago introduced innovative allowances for employees who were dating, got engaged and so on. It made the news time and again because of what these policies did to recruit promising talent and ensure a motivated workforce. Work-Life Balance policies seem to be targeted at potential recruits rather than a tool to further the entry and progress of women into the workplace as elsewhere in the world. (For example, Indian talented young women have often ended up quitting their job after marriage and children because of social constraints.)

In India, there is a starting point in that organizations have recognized the need for and value of Work-Life Balance policies. But the debate has to now move into implementation and the Government could play a critical role in being a catalyst of change. An advantage that Indian industry will however have is learning's from the experiences of other countries in what has worked and what has not. There's no 'one size that fits all' and Indian companies will have to adapt policies to fit in with not just the nature of industry, profile of workforce and other such factors but also with the local culture and environment.

Initiatives to promote work/ life balance for employees include free membership to children of all IBMers to the Genie Kids Resource center throughout the year. The Resource Center houses a library, activity based games, pottery classes, computer classes etc. IBM employees can also attend Parenting Workshops at

the Resource Center, covering topics like "Developing Child's Intelligence", "Communicating towards better parenting", "Developing parent child relationships", at discounted rates throughout the year.

Accenture has also incorporated family events into its employee calendars, with social gatherings or outings where the whole family comes together. Mandatory number of holidays, discounted gym and saloon memberships and even in-house work-life effectiveness managers and career counselors are all attempts by Accenture to counter stress and maintain the work life balance. Accenture currently has 30,000 employees in India as of May 2007.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF TEACHERS

Teaching is a profession that one could spend virtually hours upon hours working at every day, all day long – 365 days a year and still never be truly finished off. New teachers soon realize that there is always something that needs to be done: Students need enrichment, others need remedial assistance, the bulletin board needs to be changed, math sheets need to be copied, the yearbook pages need to be proofed...and this is just the beginning. For new teachers especially this seemingly endless list is daunting and doesn't even address the workload at home. It can be very stressful and intimidating, particularly at the beginning of the year.

But it's generally understood that the experienced teachers are better in managing time than the new teachers. College teachers have different kind of job description than the school teachers. The work under taken by the college teachers are different from the school teachers. The teachers who work in the same field of profession gains more experience in managing time, solving problems, finishing the syllabus in easier way etc., but the new teachers find the problem in these things.

Teacher's role in student's development is an essential part which assists in creating a prosperous future. In this study the women teachers working in self-financing engineering institutions are taken as samples. Their role in work and family, factors hindering them to achieve WLB, impact of work on WLB etc., were examined and accordingly suggestions are provided.

REVIEWS

It is of great to note that although the term 'work-family balance' has been widely adopted, yet a formal definition of this term has remained elusive. It is also acknowledged that there is a recent shift in terminology used to refer to this phenomenon, with many organizations using the term 'WLB' so as to include employees who are not parents, but who desire balance for non-work activities such as sports, study, and travel (Kalliath and Brough, 2008). "Work-family balance' reflects an individual's orientation across different life roles, an inter role phenomenon' (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

To sum it all, Kalliath and Brough (2008) have put forward their own definition of WLB and defined it: "WLB is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities."

We all play many roles: employee, boss, subordinate, spouse, parent, child, sibling, friend and community member. Each of these roles imposes demands on us that require time, energy and commitment to fulfill. Work-family or work-life conflict occurs when the cumulative demands of these many work and non-work life roles are incompatible in some respect so that participation in one role is made more difficult by participation in the other role. (Duxbury & Higgins, Oct 2001)

Jo Edwards, Tate's Managing Director says, "Where, in most cases, salaries have remained steady throughout the year, we have seen an increase in businesses reviewing benefits schemes to retain their staff and paying particular attention to the importance of family friendly practices." Whilst there is often a cost attached for businesses that endorse a work-life balance, there are many more beneficial advantages such as increased productivity and reduced absences.

Ronald Burke (2010) had done a study to examine the relationship of managerial and professional men's perception of organizational values supporting work-personal life balance in their workplace and their work experiences, indicators of work and life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. His findings shows that the managerial men reporting organizational values more supportive of work-personal life balance also report working fewer hours and extra hours, less job stress, greater joy in work, lower intentions to quit, greater job career and life satisfaction, fewer psychosomatic symptoms and more positive emotional and physical wellbeing.

The part-time managers in this sample held varied careers while working full-time but careers stalled once a transition to part-time work was made. The majority were career focused, worked intensively and felt frustrated with their lack of mobility and career progression while working part-time. The majority worked in excess of their contracted hours and did not experience an appropriate reallocation of work when they reduced hours. (Jennifer Tomlinson & Susan Durbin, 2010)

A study was conducted by Wendy C. Marcinkus, Karen S. Whelan-Berry, Judith R. Gordon (2007) to examine the relationship of a network of social support for midlife women with their attitudes toward work-family balance and work outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career accomplishment. Results indicate that the women generally received more personal social support than work-based social support and more instrumental than expressive support from all sources. Work-based social support was positively associated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career accomplishment; personal social support was also associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Work-family balance may partially mediate the relationship between social support and work outcomes.

Elizabeth A. Smith (2008) in his article about importance of work-life balance says that the flexible working helps to keep the staff motivated. The policy has also enhanced the company's reputation with both clients and employees. The author contends that workplace flexibility has helped to improve overall employee flexibility and empowerment. The review of literature reveals that there are only limited reviews on wlb of teachers. Hence this study focuses on giving new ideas on work-life balance which would act as a guide for further studies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today's career women are continually challenged by the demands of full-time work and when the day is done at the office, they carry more of the responsibilities and commitments to home. The majority of women are working 40-45 hours per week and 53% are struggling to achieve work/life balance. Women reported that their lives were a juggling act that included multiple responsibilities at work, heavy meeting schedules, business trips, on top of managing the daily routine responsibilities of life and home. Balancing both the personal and professional life is considered to be a serious problem of today's busy people especially women. Hence to analyze this problem and to find better solution, this particular study was undertaken.

OBJECTIVES FRAMED FOR THE STUDY ARE

1. To identify the factors affecting work-life balance among women teachers working in Self-financing Engineering Institutions in Madurai District.
2. To analyze the effects of poor work-life balance among women.
3. To provide various ways and means to assist women in achieving better work-life balance this would benefit both the individual and the organization.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design is adopted in this study as the problem is well known and the study focuses on procurement of in depth knowledge. Sampling method used in this study is Convenience sampling which belongs under Non-Probability sampling method as the samples are chosen in accordance with the convenience of the researcher. Samples chosen for the study were the women teachers working in Self-Financing Engineering Institutions in Madurai District, Tamilnadu, India. Seven engineering colleges were covered in this study. The sample size selected for this study is 150. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire containing around 30 questions. The data collected were tabulated and analyzed using Percentage analysis, Weighted Average analysis and Chi-Square analysis.

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses were determined in this study which is then tested using Chi – Square analysis.

- i. There is no significant relationship between age and work – life balance.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between marital status and work – life balance.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between experience and work – life balance.

ANALYSIS

The above determined hypotheses were analyzed using chi-square analysis which was described below:

COMPARISON OF AGE AND WORK – LIFE BALANCE**HYPOTHESIS**

H_0 = There is no significant relationship between age and work – life balance.

H_1 = There is a significant relationship between age and work – life balance.

TABLE 1

| | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|------------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| | | Age | | | |
| | | Less than 30 yrs | 31 to 40 yrs | Above 40 yrs | Total |
| Work – life | Yes | 45 | 32 | 37 | 114 |
| | No | 19 | 13 | 4 | 36 |
| | Total | 64 | 45 | 41 | 150 |

Source: primary data

| O | E | O-E | (O-E) ² | (O-E) ² / E |
|-------|-------|-------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 45 | 48.64 | -3.64 | 13.2496 | 0.272 |
| 32 | 34.2 | -2.2 | 4.84 | 0.142 |
| 37 | 31.16 | 5.84 | 34.1056 | 1.095 |
| 19 | 15.36 | 3.64 | 13.2496 | 0.863 |
| 13 | 10.8 | 2.2 | 4.84 | 0.448 |
| 4 | 9.84 | -5.84 | 34.1056 | 3.466 |
| Total | | 0 | | 6.286 |

The table value of χ^2 for 2 degree of freedom at 5 per cent level of significance is 5.99. In the above table the calculated value is 6.286 which is greater than the table value. Thus the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected in this case and the alternative hypothesis H_1 is accepted which states that there is a significant relationship between age and work – life balance.

COMPARISON OF MARITAL STATUS AND WORK – LIFE BALANCE**HYPOTHESIS**

H_0 = There is no significant relationship between marital status and work – life balance.

H_1 = There is a significant relationship between marital status and work – life balance.

TABLE 2

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|----------------|-----------|-------|
| | | Marital status | | |
| | | Married | Unmarried | Total |
| Work – life balance | Yes | 55 | 49 | 114 |
| | No | 35 | 11 | 36 |
| | Total | 90 | 60 | 150 |

Source: primary data

| O | E | O-E | (O-E) ² | (O-E) ² / E |
|-------|------|-------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 55 | 68.4 | -13.4 | 179.56 | 2.63 |
| 49 | 45.6 | 3.4 | 11.56 | 0.25 |
| 35 | 21.6 | 13.4 | 179.56 | 8.31 |
| 11 | 14.4 | -3.4 | 11.56 | 0.80 |
| Total | | 0 | | 11.99 |

The table value of χ^2 for 1 degree of freedom at 5 per cent level of significance is 3.84. In the above table the calculated value is 11.99 which is greater than the table value and thus the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected in this case and the alternative hypothesis H_1 is accepted which states that there is a significant relationship between marital status and work – life balance.

COMPARISON OF EXPERIENCE AND WORK – LIFE BALANCE**HYPOTHESIS**

H_0 = There is no significant relationship between experience and work – life balance.

H_1 = There is a significant relationship between experience and work – life balance.

TABLE 3

Experience

| Work – life balance | Attributes | 0-2 yrs | 3-5 yrs | 6-10 yrs | 11-20 yrs | Above 20 yrs | Total |
|---------------------|------------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| | Yes | 30 | 19 | 24 | 28 | 13 | 114 |
| | No | 17 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 36 |
| | Total | 47 | 27 | 33 | 30 | 13 | 150 |

Source: primary data

| O | E | O-E | (O-E) ² | (O-E) ² / E |
|-------|-------|-------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 30 | 35.72 | -5.72 | 32.7184 | 0.916 |
| 19 | 20.52 | -1.52 | 2.3104 | 0.113 |
| 24 | 25.08 | -1.08 | 1.1664 | 0.047 |
| 28 | 22.8 | 5.2 | 27.04 | 1.186 |
| 12 | 9.88 | 2.12 | 4.4944 | 0.455 |
| 17 | 11.28 | 5.72 | 32.7184 | 2.901 |
| 8 | 6.48 | 1.52 | 2.3104 | 0.357 |
| 9 | 7.92 | 1.08 | 1.1664 | 0.147 |
| 2 | 7.2 | -5.2 | 27.04 | 3.76 |
| 1 | 3.12 | -2.12 | 4.4944 | 1.440 |
| Total | | 0 | | 11.322 |

The table value of χ^2 for 4 degree of freedom at 5 per cent level of significance is 9.49. In the above table the calculated value is 11.322 which is greater than the table value and so the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected in this case and the alternative hypothesis H_1 is accepted which states that there is a significant relationship between experience and work – life balance.

IMPACT OF WORK ON WORK – LIFE BALANCE**TABLE 4**

| Factors | Spending time with friends | | Get home on time | | Do any study or training | | Take care of personal business | | Keep healthy and other leisure activities | | Take part in community activities | | Take care of family and spend time with them | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----|------------------|-----|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|---|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|--|-----|
| | Nr | Tv | Nr | Tv | Nr | Tv | Nr | Tv | Nr | Tv | Nr | Tv | Nr | Tv |
| Often | 0 | 0 | 11 | 55 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 65 |
| Rarely | 82 | 328 | 52 | 208 | 8 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 156 | 24 | 96 | 51 | 204 |
| Don't know | 0 | 0 | 18 | 54 | 9 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sometimes | 48 | 96 | 37 | 74 | 61 | 122 | 36 | 72 | 54 | 108 | 76 | 152 | 69 | 138 |
| Never | 20 | 20 | 32 | 32 | 72 | 72 | 114 | 114 | 26 | 26 | 50 | 50 | 7 | 7 |
| Weighted average = $\sum wx / \sum w$ | 29.6 | | 28.2 | | 16.9 | | 12.4 | | 24.9 | | 19.9 | | 27.6 | |

Source: primary data

It is found from the above table that spending time with friends is the major impact of work on work – life balance and taking care of personal business is the minor impact of work on work – life balance.

FACTORS MAKING WORK – LIFE BALANCE HARDER**TABLE 5**

| Factors | Lot harder | | A little harder | | No difference | | Doesn't apply | | Weighted average = $\sum WX / \sum W$ |
|--|------------|-----|-----------------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| | Nr | Tv | Nr | Tv | Nr | Tv | Nr | Tv | |
| Deadlines and schedules | 73 | 292 | 47 | 141 | 21 | 42 | 9 | 9 | 48.4 |
| Type of work you do | 32 | 128 | 38 | 114 | 64 | 128 | 16 | 16 | 38.6 |
| No. of hours you need to work | 40 | 160 | 35 | 105 | 65 | 130 | 10 | 10 | 40.5 |
| Expectations/attitude of supervisor or manager | 54 | 216 | 26 | 78 | 70 | 40 | | 0 | 43.4 |
| Expectations/attitude of male colleagues | 69 | 276 | 13 | 39 | 68 | 136 | 0 | 0 | 45.1 |
| How easy/difficult it is to leave | 20 | 80 | 22 | 66 | 68 | 136 | 20 | 20 | 30.2 |
| Amount of notice you get about the hours/overtime you need to work | 13 | 42 | 7 | 21 | 112 | 224 | 18 | 18 | 30.5 |
| Having to take additional work at home | 68 | 272 | 50 | 150 | 32 | 64 | 10 | 10 | 49.6 |
| Amount of travel required | 14 | 56 | 12 | 36 | 61 | 122 | 63 | 63 | 27.7 |
| Times meeting/training are scheduled | 33 | 132 | 47 | 141 | 70 | 140 | 0 | 0 | 41.3 |
| Starting and finishing time of work | 60 | 240 | 30 | 90 | 37 | 74 | 23 | 23 | 42.7 |

Source: primary data

It is found from the above table that having to take additional work at home is the major factor which makes work – life balance harder and amount of travel required is the minor factor which makes work – life balance harder.

FINDINGS

The main findings of the study are:

1. It's found that the respondents have no problem with the working time but they are seemed to worry about work while they are out of their office.

2. While questioned about their ability on work-life balance they opined that they are able to balance it. Even though they face many stress related problems raised out of work. It was founded that they sometimes missed out quality time with their family or friend because of the work pressure and they sometimes feel tired or depressed because of work. Entertainment is the major remedy used by many of the respondents to overcome work pressure. One thing which noted mainly was they do not suffer from any serious health problems due to stress.
3. Flexi-time is highly recommended by the respondents. But in India it may be a little difficult to adopt this policy in educational organizations in spite of it the pros and cons of it can be analyzed.
4. Regarding the working atmosphere, the negative attitude of peers and colleagues at work place was found to hinder work – life balance.

SUGGESTIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EMPLOYER

The following framework can be used for successful Work-Life Balance in organizations.

1. Identify the key need or reason for introducing Work-Life Balance policies.
2. Build the commitment to Work-Life Balance Policies into the organization's vision or value statement.
3. Set up a Work-Life Balance Task Force and Examine current practices in the organization.
4. Hold joint discussions with employees to evolve policies, while also identifying possible barriers.
5. Communicate policies through handbooks, newsletters, Intranet and other forms of communication.
6. Motivation, Appreciation of work, Authority and Responsibility etc., can be used to assist in enhancing better work-life balance.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EMPLOYEE

The following framework can be used by the employee for successful Work-Life Balance.

1. It is important for everyone to have a hobby or some activity that he/she can pursue, as a stress buster or just for fun. It can act as a major stress reliever and can go a long way in improving the Work life balance of employees.
2. Effective Time and Stress Management
3. Individual's incapability of managing his time that results in an unhealthy work-life balance. If the employees can work on their time management skills, they would definitely be able to improve their work-life balance.
4. Budgeting time both in and out of the office – schedule time for both you and your family.
5. Control interruptions and distractions - Stay focused and budget your time effectively. Try to schedule a block of time during the day without meetings when you can focus on your tasks with minimal interruptions.
6. Explore the availability of flexi-time - Research flexi-time options within your organization. If available, it may be a helpful solution.
7. Seize the weekend - Plan your time off as you plan your work week.
8. Schedule activities with family and friends, a weekend trip, or just something related to fun. Make your time away from work count.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the women teachers know the importance of WLB and they try to reach it. Women teachers have now started to work on scheduling their daily activities thereby have better time management. The organizations may avoid bombarding heavy work load to the employees. Caring the work tension to home and vice versa leads to chaos. That's why it's said that while you reach home leave your thoughts about work at home door steps. Working women needs to be concentrated on WLB, which facilitates their improvements and achievements. This study doest meant to say that women teachers of today have attained work-life balance but it reveals the truth that women teachers are trying hard to attain that balance. They are in process of finding ways and means to have a feeling of satisfaction that both work and family commitments are being attained equally. In our increasingly hectic world, the work-life strategy seeks to find a balance between work and play. A sentence that brings the idea of work life balance to the point is: **"Work to live. Don't live to work."**

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