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WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN DUAL WORKING COUPLES IN MEDICAL SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Work-Life Balance is one of the most important aspect in the life of a working professional. In today's competitive and ever demanding workplace striking a cord between responsibilities at work and home becomes an extremely difficult task. The nature of job in medical sector is highly service and humanity oriented which make these professionals face work life balance dilemma of much higher degree. Further the factors such as gender, marital status and parental status add more strain on the life of these professionals. With this backdrop the researchers tried to find out the impact of aforesaid factors on the work-life balance in the dual career couple from medical sector.

KEYWORDS

Work-life balance, dual career couple, medical sector, marital status.

INTRODUCTION

Work-Life Balance refers to the synchronization between accountabilities at the workplace and other roles and responsibilities of the personal life that are important to individuals. In an ideal situation there should be a perfect balance between time spent at work and home, but in reality this seems to be practically impossible. In today's scenario the innovations and accelerated growth have resulted in stressful, longer working hours and ever increasing expectations of the organisation on skilled and managerial personnel. As time spent at work increases, quality time available for the family shrinks, not only causing conflicts in the personal life but also resulting in deteriorating health of employees. The liberalisation in society has further changed the statistics of workplace, as women have joined the workforce in large numbers and are now performing a dual role i.e. of a breadwinner as well as a homemaker. The above said fact was further substantiated by Subramahiman, Geeta Balasundaram, Ali and Ershad (2001) that the developmental process underwent fundamental changes and the international economical growth had a major impact on the employment ratio of both men and women. This resulted in last two decades, an increase in female labour force participation rates in developed and developing countries. But as more and more women joined the work force juggling work and home became a major challenge for women who had to compromise on either their career or their family. This social change also brought about a pressure on men to contribute at home. The society is also experiencing the changes in the family sphere like, nuclear families, single parent, dual earning parents, parents placed at different locations and these changes have added to difficulties generally faced by working professionals. Globalisation and Economic liberalisation have brought another angle to this entire scene, as an increased financial comfort and flexibility has led to an increasing emphasis on leisure activities, like traveling, socializing, pursuing hobbies, taking up adventure sports etc. This puts further demand on available time and thus leading to frustration when people are not able to fulfill their interests and hobbies. The professionals in medical sector are also a part of the entire phenomena as they also have to work long and stressful hours, their work extends into evenings and weekends, including the conferences and seminars that they usually attend as part of their professional activity.

It has been generally observed that the one area of life which most individuals neglect is maintaining a balance between work and family. This article aims to study the work life balance of dual working couple in Medical Sector and also find out relationship between individual variables like gender, age, marital and parental status with work life balance.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to find out

- 1) overall work life balance of dual career couples in medical sector
- 2) relationship between individual variables like gender, age, marital and parental status with work life balance.

HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis of the study are as follows

- 1) There is no correlation between worklife and personal life among dual career couple in medical sector.
- 2) There is no relationship between gender, age and worklife and personal life among dual career couple in medical sector.
- 3) There is no relationship between marital, parental status and worklife and personal life among dual career couple in medical sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Karthik R (2013), Work life balance entails attaining equilibrium between professional work and other activities so that it reduces friction between official and domestic life. Work life balance enhances efficiency and thus, the productivity of an employee increases. It enhances productivity in both personal and professional facet of life. While work-life balance has become a buzz word today, there is hardly any consensus on its meaning, although most definitions do include the concepts of flexibility, balancing personal and professional life and sustainability. There is no one-size-fits-all definition for work-life balance as it is perceived differently by different individuals. For some individuals it is spending more time at work and less time at home, while for others it means ensuring that time spent at work does not take away the time needed for other domestic responsibilities. Fisher-McAuley, Stanton, Jolton, and Gavin (2003) describe work-life balance as a competition for both time and energy between the different roles filled by an individual. The concept of work-family (life) balance has emerged from the fact that an individual's work-life and personal/family life may exert conflicting demands on each other and the need of the hour is to manage the negative spillover of work and personal life conflict. Work-life balance should not be understood as an equal balance or scheduling equal number of hours for work and personal activities rather it is all about having a positive balance between professional achievements and personal deliverables. As per Maslow's Need theory, human being caters to various needs of life ranging from physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self actualisation need and was further substantiated by Morgan (2007) that work alone will be inadequate to achieve total satisfaction in life and thus a healthy work-life balance is necessary. The famous Motivational theory by McClelland also says that "Need for Affiliation" is very important to human life and

engenders building personal relationships at work and also beyond the workplace. As depicted above work-life balance is important for effectiveness and productivity not only for the organisational roles but also to satisfy the various other responsibilities in personal life. But the point to be understood here is that work-life balance varies for an individual over a period of time, at different stages of career and personal life, as different factors become important for an individual and the available time is to be prioritised accordingly.

According to Harvey and Warrick (2007) a large proportion of professionals face personal difficulties which can affect their workplace performance. He has also pointed out in his article that life is many times stressful because of complex family arrangements which may include joint families having sandwich generation, single parents and parents placed at different locations etc. The "sandwich generation" are grappling with issues relating to their elderly parents while their children are still at home. For many organisations longer hours are the norm and for a large number of employees who live at a considerable distance from the workplace, the trip to and from work is taking longer adding to the pressure of the day. The pressures in an employee's personal life, can have impact on their work performance and can lead to deteriorated results at workplace. This happens as they loose focus or are distracted by other life events. Not dealing with them can have a major impact on a company's bottom line. This will come from a variety of causes including poor customer service, increased mistakes, more accidents, greater use of sick leave, absenteeism, lower morale, increased staff turnover, more employment related litigations. Those working alongside a distracted colleague will often be affected. They may have to listen as the person shares their woes, pick up the pieces when their colleague makes a mistake, deal with angry customers, cover while the person is away, or take on extra duties when their colleague resigns until the vacancy is filled.

In our present economic environment, having two employed parents is a necessity not an option. The costs of running a household and meeting basic family needs require two incomes. However, women in families are generally less satisfied with their personal growth and their careers than men (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). According to Saritha Medipelli, V S Veluri Sarma and Y Chinnappaiah (2013), as more and more women choose to pursue a career, the multiple roles played by women at workplace and home leads to frustration and stress that may result in to work-life imbalance. They have also stated that the stress women face at work make them feel burdened to perform their domestic responsibilities. Finally they have concluded that marital relationship, attitude and cooperation of husband and family members are highly influencing factors which leads to work life imbalance for working women.

Technological and economic changes have raised expectations from employees increasing the pressure on them to spend more time at work. A full-time working parent spends approximately eight hours at the job, and slightly less than an hour to and from work each day (Reschovsky, 2004). It does not take too much imagination to understand why working parents, in the struggle to meet work and family commitments, report feeling stressed, emotionally and psychologically drained, and in danger of burn-out (Schneider and Waite, 2005). The time required to supervise children and be involved in their educational careers often collides with parents' work schedules. Being able to help with homework, be active in school, and troubleshoot academic problems requires time which is in short supply for many parents who work long hours and have little or no flexibility to alter their schedules so they can be available, when their children are at home. The inflexibility of work and school schedules is a pressure that working parents feel on a daily basis. These emotional experiences affect employee's health, productivity and family life. Role overload and time deprivation are particularly acute problems that many employed parents cope with on a daily basis. Whether working in a white collar job or in a low-wage one, employed parents often experience anxiety and guilt as they face the obligations of work and family. All the drivers/ variables of work-life balance are also equally significant in lives of Medical Practitioners. The average working hours for doctors are 9 (+) 2 hours. A significant proportion of doctors are found to be dissatisfied with the average number of their work-hours. Doctors experience a sense of being over burdened in fulfilling the assigned responsibilities. Work life balance is a serious issue for doctors as long hours at work are stealing quality hours from the time that they can dedicate to their families and personal pursuits. Doctors feel the conflict between the organizational role and family role (inter- role conflict). This conflict leads to stress. Work life balance is an important component that brings about satisfaction in the career of a doctor. Needless to say work life imbalance for a doctor will indirectly affect the quality of treatment provided to his/her patient and patient's health.

The above secondary research gives the researcher a scope to find out through imperative study the impact of work life balance on overall well being of individuals and society and medical practitioners are not an exception to this.

METHODOLOGY

To explore work- life balance in the medical sector survey research methodology was adopted. The data was collected by both primary and secondary method. The questionnaire was prepared by exploring secondary data. The objective of the study is to understand the relationship between personal variables like gender, age, marital and parental status and work life balance. 15 items questionnaire developed by Hayman (2005) was distributed and 38 responses were received. The questions were based on 3 dimensions of Work Life Balance, namely Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL) and Work Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE). In addition to the above few additional questions on demographic factors like age, gender, parental status and how many hours you spend on different activities like work, sleep, leisure, child care, etc were asked to understand the respondents better. The data obtained was analyzed through mean, median, point biserial correlations and independent t-tests.

DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaire was sent to 32 dual career couples, one or both of them working in medical sector. The questionnaire was distributed via two modes, 23 given online and 9 distributed via hard copy of questionnaire. However out of 32 couples (64 people), responses of only 19 couple (38 people) were received. The response rate was therefore 59.4%. The profile of respondents is as follows:

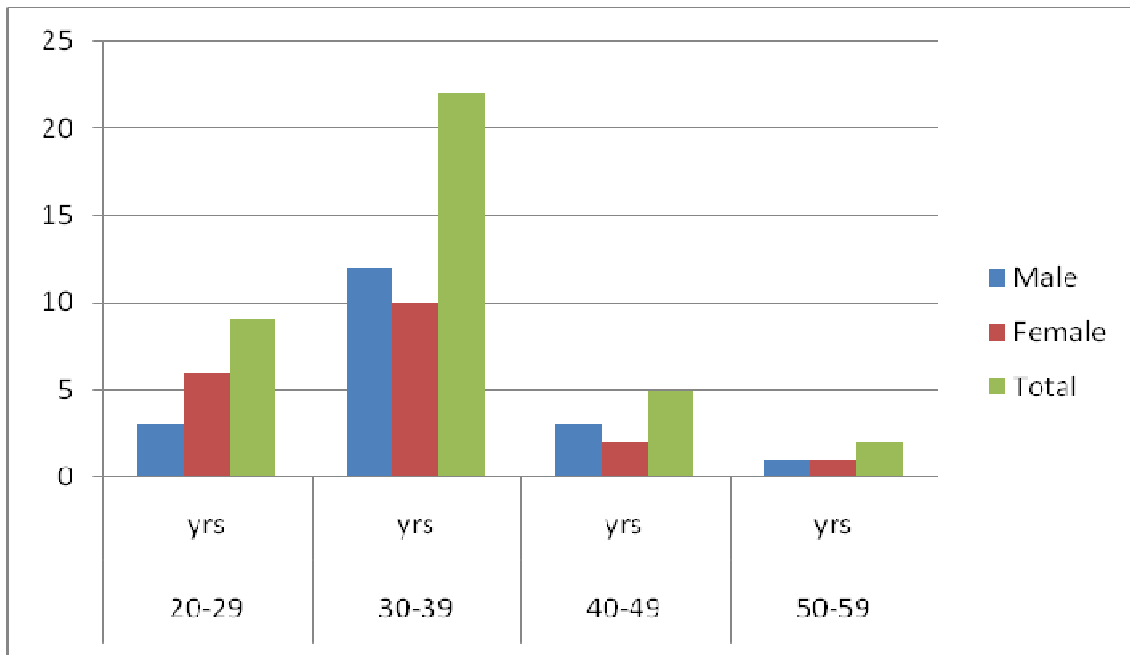
CHART 1: GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Gender Wise Distribution of Respondents



The above chart No.1 shows that out of total respondents, 19 (50%) were male while other 19 (50%) were females. The researchers tried to find out more samples from the medical sectors but due to the busy schedule of the respondents it was not possible to get more data. By keeping this research in backdrop further research can be conducted.

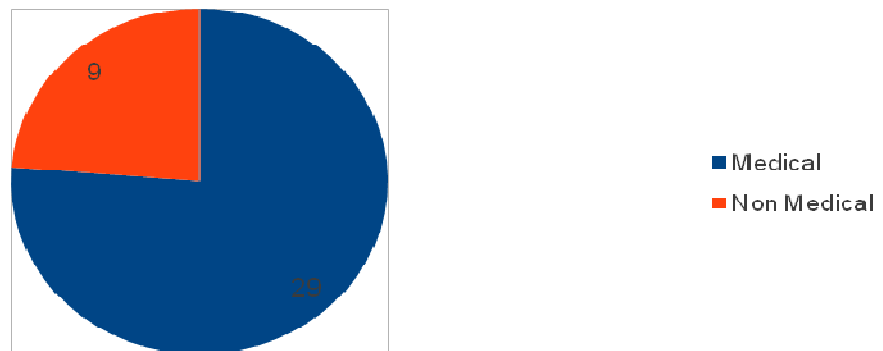
CHART 2: AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS



The chart No. 2 gives us the data of various age group of the respondents. Maximum respondents ie 22 (57.89%) are in the age group of 30-39 yrs., followed by 9 (23.68%) from the age group of 20-29 yrs, whereas 5 (13.15%) were from the age group of 40-49 yrs and only 2 (5.26%) were from the age group of 50-59 yrs.

CHART 3: OCCUPATION WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

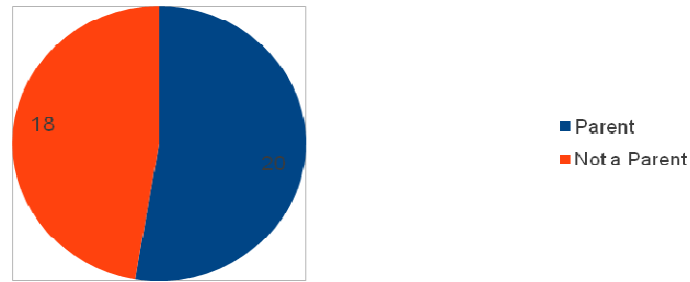
Occupational Sector Wise Distribution of Respondents



The Chart No 3, depicts that out of total 38 sample size 29 (76.31%) were from from medical field while the remaining 9 (23.69 %) were from non medical field. The people working in the medical sector take longer number of years to complete their education and settle in their profession as compared to any other trade.They generally get married and start a family after 30 yrs of age. Due to this reason the maximum respondents are in the age group of 30-39 yrs. It is then, the work life imbalance becomes evident and people start experiencing the strain. As the research was based on work life balance in medical sector, the researchers tried really hard to ensure that out of 19 couples who repodended to this survey, for each couple surveyed, atleast one of them must be working in the medical sector.

CHART 4: PARENTAL STATUS WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Parental Status of Respondents

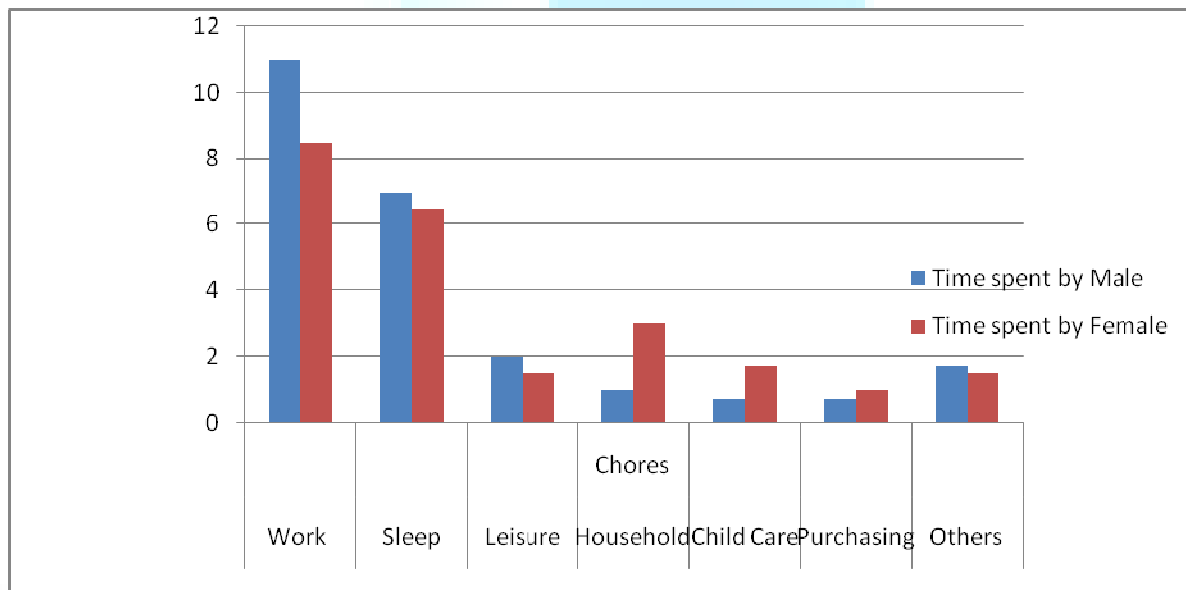


The chart No. 4 shows that out of all the respondents 20 i.e., 10 couples were parents while the remaining 18 i.e., 9 couples were not having any child. From the literature review as parental status is found as one of the criteria for work life balance, it is imperative to understand whether time required for child care interferes with the concentration and time needed at work. Of course, the work life balance is a bigger issue for women than for men because irrespective of their career choices the traditional roles of home and childcare considered as their prime responsibilities.

TABLE 1.1: TIME SPENT ON EACH ACTIVITY (GENDER WISE) ACTIVITIES

	Work	Sleep	Leisure	Household Chores	Child Care	Purchasing	Others
Time spent by Male	11	7	2	1	0.75	0.75	1.75
Time spent by Female	8.5	6.5	1.5	3	1.75	1	1.5

CHART 5

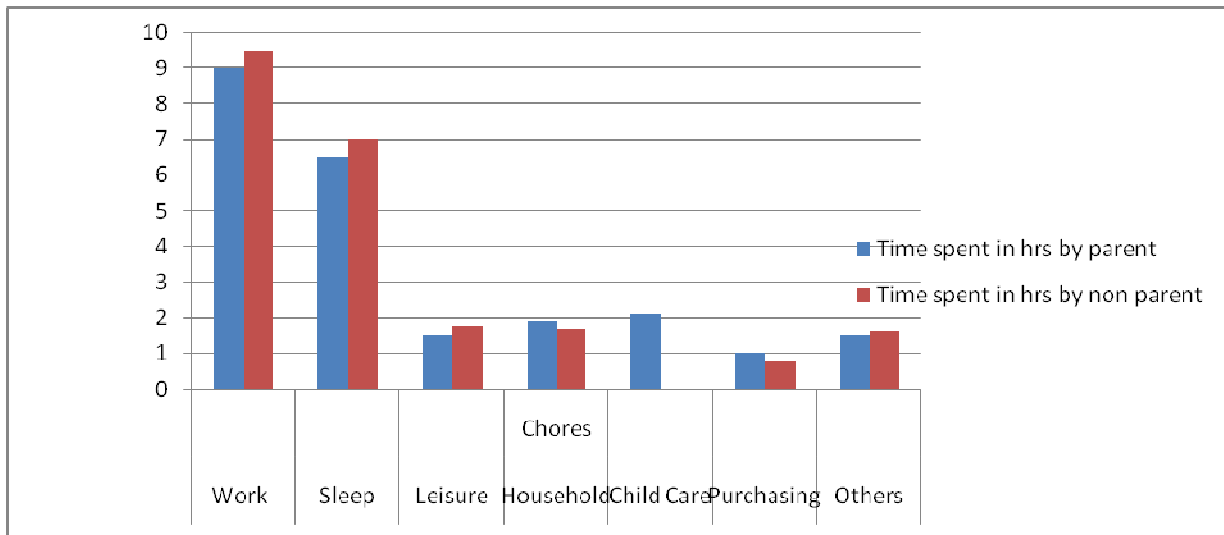


The chart No. 5 depicts that men spend more time at work than women, they also get more time to sleep and relax. Their contribution to household chores and child care is also less than women, while they have the privilege to spend more time on leisure activities than women. (The statistics of the above activities in number of hours spend by men & women is given in table 1.1).

TABLE 1.2: TIME SPENT ON EACH ACTIVITY (PARENTAL STATUS WISE) TIME SPEND IN HRS

	Work	Sleep	Leisure	Household Chores	Child Care	Purchasing	Others
Time spent in hrs by parent	9	6.5	1.5	1.9	2.1	1	1.5
Time spent in hrs by non parent	9.5	7	1.75	1.7	0	0.75	

CHART NO. 6



The chart no 6 and table no 1.2 show that parental status bring a separate angle to worklife balance. Parents as compared to non- parents give lesser time to work , sleep and leisure where as they give more time to house hold chores and purchasing.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Measures	Work in balance
Mean	43.74
Median	43.5
Standard Deviation	13.53

The scores on work life balance scale could range between 15 -105. However the scores of dual career couples on overall work life balance ranged from 17- 70. The average work life balance of dual career couples with at least one of them working in medical sector was found to be 43.74 and the median was 43.5.50% of the couples scored below 43.5 and the remaining 50% scored above 43.5. The results indicate that the mean work life balance of the dual career couples is above average.

4.3.2 CORRELATIONS & T-TEST

The correlations between work life balance including its dimensions and gender are given below:

	WIPL	PLIW	WPLE	WLB
Pearson Correlation	0.274	0.065	0.136	0.252
Sig. (2-Tailed)	0.096	0.700	0.417	0.126
N	38	38	38	38

From the above point biserial analysis, no significant correlation exists between work life balance including its dimensions and gender. t-test to determine whether there is any significant difference in work life balance scores including its dimensions between males and females.

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean
WIPL	Male	19	20.74
	Female	19	25.47
PLIW	Male	19	7.68
	Female	19	8.11
WPIE	Male	19	11.95
	Female	19	13.53
WLB	Male	19	40.37
	Female	19	47.11

Dimensions	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
WIPL	-1.711	36	0.096
PLIW	-0.388	36	0.7
WPIE	-0.821	36	0.417
WLB	-1.564	36	0.126

Consulting the t-value, df and two tail significance, no significant differences are apparent ($p > 0.05$). That is, there is no significant difference in gender (male & female) scores of work life balance and its dimensions.

The correlations between work life balance including its dimensions and parental status are given below:

	WIPL	PLIW	WPLE	WLB
Pearson Correlation	-0.257	-0.063	-0.396*	-0.354*
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.119	0.707	0.014	0.029
N	38	38	38	38

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From the above biserial analysis, significant negative correlation exists between work personal life interference (WPLE) and parental status. Also significant negative correlation exists between total work life balance (WLB) and parental status. This indicates that as the parental status moves from non parent to being parent, WLB & WPLE scores decreases, indicating greater work life balance of latter group.

t-test to determine whether there is any significant difference in work life balance scores including its dimensions between non parent and parent.

Dimensions	Parental status	N	Mean
WIPL	Not a parent	18	25.44
	Parent	20	21.00
PLIW	Not present	18	8.11
	Parent	20	7.70
WPIE	Not a parent	18	15.17
	Parent	20	10.55
WLB	Not a parent	18	48.72
	Parent	20	39.25

Dimensions	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
WIPL	1.595	36	0.119
PLIW	0.379	36	0.707
WPIE	2.588	36	0.014
WLB	2.273	36	0.029

Consulting the t-value, df and two tail significance, significant differences are apparent between WPLE, WLB dimensions and parental status ($p < 0.05$).

The mean work life balance of dual career couple is found to be 43.74, indicating good balance between work and life.

No significant relationship was found between gender and work life balance including its dimensions.

Significant negative correlation exists between Work Personal Life Interference (WPLE), Work life Balance and parental status. This indicates that as the parental status moves from non parent to being parent, WPLE & WLB scores decreases, indicating greater work life balance of latter group. A parent compared to a non parent spends less time for work and more time on childcare. A greater work life balance of a parent can be explained by being satisfied and happy spending time in childcare.

CONCLUSION

Though work life balance applies to all employees and professionals working in each and every sector, this concept is not much explored in medical sector with consideration of dual career couples. So the hypothesis i.e., there is no correlation between work life and personal life among dual career couple in medical sector is found to be proved. Moving towards the second hypothesis, there is no correlation between gender, age and work life and personal life among dual career couple in medical sector is also found to be proved, probably as the people working in this profession are fully dedicated and committed towards their work they are able to fulfil work related responsibilities and domestic responsibilities will equal ease. Of course this requires further research. Where as the third hypothesis i.e., there is no relationship between marital and parental status with worklife balance is found to be disproved. This means that the alternate hypothesis can be accepted i.e., there is relationship with marital and parental status and worklife balance, and differences exist between parent and non parent and their work life balance. This shows that a parent experiences more balance between work and life than a non parent.

The results indicate that in Medical Sector even if both the partners are busy in their work but still they can maintain balance between their personal and professional life. This study was an initiative to understand the balance between work life and personal life of dual career couples in medical sector. From the results of this study it was found that in spite of long working hours, a good balance is maintained between work and life among couples. Also no significant differences exist between males and females with respect to their work life balance.

As the sample was small the results can't be generalised but the same can be taken as a basis for further research.

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