

# EFFECT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON GENDER AND MARITAL STATUS

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Work-life balance is the term used to achieve a greater balance between work and home responsibilities. The conceptualization of balance is between one's use of time and her personal and professional goals and priorities. The demand for work-life balance by employees and managers is expanding at unprecedented way. As a result, work-life balance becomes a hot topic of discussion among the research community. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of work-life balance on marital status and gender of the people working in different companies in Delhi and NCR. A survey was conducted with a sample size (N=70) consisted of the first line management. The result shows that significant relationship exists between work life balance and marital status. The gender had a marginal impact on WLB The interaction effect of gender and marital status was also found significant.*

**Keywords:** *Work-life balance, Gender, Marital status.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Work Life Balance is the creation of a work environment that provides flexibility for employees to enable them to achieve a better balance between work, family and life commitments. Work-life Balance, also referred to as family friendly work arrangements (FFWA), and, in international literature, it is referred as alternative work arrangements (AWA). Work life balance (WLB) is the proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) on the one hand and "life" (Health, pleasure, leisure and family) on the other hand. It also includes the priority that work takes over family, working long hours and work intensification.

The term work-life balance is commonly used as a more comprehensive expression to describe policies that have been previously termed 'family-friendly', but are now extended beyond the scope of the family. Work-life balance refers to the flexible working arrangements that allow both parents and non-parents to avail of working arrangements that provide a balance between work responsibilities and personal responsibilities. The term 'work-life balance' is preferred due to the fact that it encompasses the experiences and needs of parents and non-parents alike, and is a more progressive theoretical framework in which to think about new ways of living and working that are satisfactory to all. In practice, it involves "adjusting work patterns so that everyone, regardless of age, race, religion or gender can find a rhythm that enables them more easily to combine work and their other responsibilities and aspirations" (Pillinger 2001: 1). Drew, Humphreys and Murphy (2003:13) point out "that personal fulfillment is important inside work and that satisfaction outside work may enhance employees' contribution to work"

Indian families are undergoing rapid changes due to the increased pace of urbanization and modernization. Indian women belonging to all classes have entered into paid occupations. At the present time, Indian women's

exposure to educational opportunities is substantially higher than it was some decades ago, especially in the urban setting. This has opened new horizon, increased awareness and raised aspirations of personal growth. This, along with economic pressure, has been instrumental in influencing women's decision to enter the work force. Most studies of employed married women in India have reported economic need as being the primary reason given for working.

Balancing work and non-work demands is an issue that pertains to all individuals who are in paid work, regardless of whether they have family responsibilities or not (Dex and Scheibl, 2001; Fu and Shaffer, 2001; Rotondo et al., 2003). The way women and men juggle their paid work with their household and caring responsibilities is a topic that requires even more attention when considering the negative consequences of work-family conflict. In order to reduce inequity, the differences between all these categories of employed persons (male/ female,unmarried/ married ) in terms of work-life balance were addressed in this study. This study is aimed to examine the effect of WLB on marital status and gender of the people working in different companies of Delhi NCR.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

As previous studies indicate, work-related effects include job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover intention and stress (Anderson, Coffey and Byerly, 2002). A high level of work-family conflict seems to be correlated with a low organizational commitment as well (O'Driscoll, Ilgen and Hildreth, 1992). A research found work life conflict and stress is positively related with turnover Noor & Maad (2008). Quality of work-life balance depends upon job satisfaction, human relations, development, and promotion, working conditions, compensation, grievance and stress (Subrahmanian & Anjani, 2010). A few of the demographic variables were also related to work-family climate, specifically flexible time expectations. Women still primarily take care of domestic tasks, irrespective of their employment status. So, many women employees continue to face difficulties in balancing these two forces (Hyman and Summers 2004).

Managers who reported greater flexibility in their time expectations were, on average, older, more likely to have children, and had a longer tenure in the industry (Behav, 2009). Choudhry (2011) tested the relationship between work-life balance and organizational commitment and found significant positive relationship between work life conflict and employee performance. Many other researchers found opposite result (see, Elaine Salansan, 2011) The study conducted by Meyer & Allen's (1991) supported positive relationship of work-life policies and organizational commitment. Jacqueline Norton's, study examines the relationship between work-life balance and three components of organizational commitment. It found that a positive correlation exists between affective commitment and perceived work-life balance.

WLB has been predominantly viewed as women's problem, especially of those who are in corporate employment and have family obligations (Parasuraman and Simmers, 2001; Hardy and Adnett, 2002; Felstead et al., 2002), Women still primarily take care of domestic tasks, irrespective of their employment status. So, many women employees continue to face difficulties in balancing these two forces (Hyman and Summers 2004). Work-life balance represents an issue of prime concern for working men too. Data suggests that in the families where childcare is shared men are likely to experience similar levels of work-life conflict as women (Duxbury and Higgins, 2008). According to Duxbury and Higgins (2008), a large body of research links the

parental responsibilities of working couples to the incidence of work-family conflict. Because they have more demands and less control over their time, parents seem to encounter more difficulties in balancing work and non-work activities than nonparents.

Similar results are reported by Galinsky, Bond and Friedman (1996). They found that parent employees exhibit significantly higher levels of conflict between work and family/personal life than non-parents. The transition to parenthood appears to be a period characterized by an increased level of stress (Owen and Cox, 1988), in which significant changes in the couple's relationship, responsibilities and preoccupations take place (Belsky and Pensky, 1988; Levy-Shiff, 1994; Feldman, 2000). Gender Differences in the Perception of Work-Life Balance terms of household responsibilities (Singh 2004). Women continue to undertake the majority share of domestic chores, and child rearing. Nowadays small nuclear families have come to stay, where both the spouses go to work. The nuclear households has created lots of stress in their existing pattern of living. In addition, there are an increasing number of single parent households due to increase in divorces (Amato et al. 2003). Consequently, a larger part of them have tended to be present at their work place for longer periods of time, thereby reducing the time for which they are available at home. Quite often the work intrudes on the family and social life, while at other times family pressures affect the work performance (Fu and Shaffer 2001). Several reviews have highlighted other issues such as age, gender, life-cycle stage, ethnicity, citizenship, and childcare arrangements which also merit attention (Wallace and Cousins 2004; Jager 2001).

These reviews highlight that there are work-life balance issues that need to be addressed. The work-life-balance problem is fairly similar cross countries (Humphreys 2000). Most countries have put in place some measures to address the work-life balance (Todd, 2004). However, there are differences in practices to address it (Lewis, Gambels, and Rhona 2007). Reviews also indicate that the perception of work-life balance is observed to be different across genders (Connell 2005; Smithson and Stokoe 2005; Duxbury and Higgins).

### **III. RESEARCH GAP**

Many researches been conducted in the past. An attempt has been made through this study to ascertain gender and marital status differences, if any, on the work life balance issues and to see how much it has impacted on their adjustment front. Surprisingly, the literature view did not reveal much studies of this nature in India. This study may be useful from the organization perspective designing gender specific measures and policies to address work-life imbalance, as expectations and coping styles appear to be different across genders (Baick and Drew 2006; Parker (2007).

### **IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Hypothesis**

Ho: Gender has no significant effect on WLB,

Ho: Marital Status has no significant effect on WLB,

Ho: Gender and Marital status will have no significant effect on WLB

#### **4.2 Methods**

A questionnaire on WLB was used to collect data on issues related to Work-life balance. The questionnaire was distributed at work places and the responses of employees were collected. A total number of 70 working

employees from different sector responded to the survey. Convenient sampling was resorted here. Research design proposed for the study is ‘Descriptive’ type . The research study is based on the data interpreted from the questionnaire of the samples. Their feed back as the response of the questionnaire were quantified. The row data computed in spss.

## V. ANALYSIS OF RESULT

From the research study and analysis of the obtained data it is clear from the Table 1, that, the gender has significant impact on work life balance, where males and females differ significantly in their work –life balance approach. The  $F=1.168$  and  $p=.284 (<.05)$  verify significant difference among males and females in present life style. As one of the objectives set for this paper is to identify that gender will have no significant difference on work-life balance. The null hope thesis is therefore rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

### Hypothesis I

Ho: Gender will have no significant effect on WLB, rejected

H<sub>1</sub>: Gender has significant impact on WLB- Accepted

The Following table was produced using SPSS

**Table-1 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable:WLB

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	211.465 <sup>a</sup>	3	70.488	25.888	.000
Intercept	91847.780	1	91847.780	3.373E4	.000
SEX	3.179	1	3.179	1.168	.284
MARRIED	149.087	1	149.087	54.754	.000
SEX * MARRIED	62.035	1	62.035	22.783	.000
Error	179.707	66	2.723		
Total	92055.618	70			
Corrected Total	391.173	69			

a. R Squared = .541 (Adjusted R Squared = .520)

**Table-2 Between-Subjects Factors**

		N
SEX	F	35
	M	35
MARRIED	NO	33
	YES	37

Achieving work-life balance is tough for everyone, but a woman has to make more sacrifices in terms of the choice of the career, adjustment with the daily household activities and also with respect to their personal life. Because of glass ceiling issues, some women may feel that they can't say 'no' because they may never be offered that opportunity again. In relation to gender differences, women were more likely to report that they have too little time for daily life activities, whereas men perceived that they spend too much time at work. More men than women reported changing or being willing to change jobs or careers to better manage work and family lives. Women also like to give up a promotion & preferred to stay in the same location where their family is comfortable than males. A man may be willing to turn down a promotion that would require him to relocate, while a woman may fear that, if she refuses the job, she may be losing and for further she may not get it again. Women are less committed to their careers.

### **Hypothesis II**

Ho: Marital Status has no significant effect on WLB -rejected

H<sub>1</sub>: Marital status has significant impact WLB- accepted

In the table 1, the f-value of 54.754 ( $p=.000, <.05$ ) found to be significant. Here we reject null hypothesis and accept H<sub>1</sub> for marital status. This states that married and unmarried people differ significantly on their work-life balance. This is because women more likely to make such sacrifices, societal expectations and feelings of responsibility tend to play into those decisions; Women are more likely to feel the pressure to make sacrifices and are more often expected to do so. The numbers of career sacrifices women are asked to make for the sake of balance.

### **Hypothesis III**

Ho: Gender and Marital status will have no significant effect on WLB-rejected

H<sub>1</sub>: Gender and Marital status have significant effect on WLB-accepted

In table 1, the interaction effect of gender and marital status also found significant. The f-value of 22.783 ( $p=.000, <.05$ ), which interprets that married males and females significantly differ from unmarried males and females. Gender Differences in the Perception of Work-Life Balance terms of household responsibilities (Singh 2004). Women continue to undertake the majority share of domestic chores, and child rearing. The 2015 EY Global Generations survey found that one-third of full-time workers say that managing a day job and having a life has become tougher over the past five years, with women and parents of both genders (35% each) finding it a bit harder than men (32%) and people who don't have children (31%). Campbell *et al.* studied the effects of family life on women's job performance and work attitudes. The result revealed that women with children were significantly lower in occupational commitment relative to women without children; contrary to expectation, women with younger children outperformed women with older children.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

This study brings out some of the issues related to work life balance .This study indicate the similar issues of work life balance prevailing in the West. In most developed countries of the world have put in place family friendly work practices (Moen and Yu 2000; Dougherty and West 2000), the same has also been practice by most of the companies and educational institutions, where good amount of care has been taken to those working women by providing the crèches and day care centers at their work place in India With the increase in number

of dual career couples, it is but natural that such practices must be adopted here too, as they would go a long way towards improving productivity and enhancing quality of work and family life. Flex time, home working, child care facilities and the option to work part time are facilities that need to be introduced. Building a supportive work environment is yet another important initiative to be addressed. .

From the research study and analysis of the obtained data it is clear that, the work life imbalance due to gender and marital status are obvious in present life style. We can reduced the imbalances, if above mentioned practices & policies are adopted at the workplaces, the stress can be reduced, and hence work life balance will be improved. Organization productivity depends on employees, so if a company wants to improve the productivity then they should focus on employees. Part-time working, Job sharing, Flexitime, Term-time working, shift working, Annualized hours, compressed hours, Teleporting / e-working, Home working and career breaks etc. An employee individually can improve their work life imbalance by implementing the following: He/ She should cultivate the habit of being self disciplined, meticulous, sensible, sensitive to the family members, if there is any reason of his/ her problem or stress at the office, that can be communicated to the spouse for sharing, regarding family matters/ problems regular discussion with spouse, children and parents must be there, once/ twice in a year long term tour with the family should be planned.

The study relies on the responses of the sample employees. The results of the study are affected by these responses and are subject to varying in a bigger or different sample. These limitations need to be addressed in future studies. Future research must focus on a wider sample in order to get more generalized results. Moreover, it must be directed at understanding individual differences so that employee specific initiatives to improve work life balance could be initiated by organizations.

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