



A STUDY ON WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG DUAL EARNER COUPLES

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Abstract

This paper describe about a study on work life balance among dual earner couples. This study of work life balance involves the examination of ability to manage simultaneously the multi-fileted demeanors of life. 116 dual earner couples were taken as sample for this study.

Key Words: Work Life Balance, Dual Earner Couples.

INTRODUCTION

In the present scenario, majority of the people are working longer and harder than ever before. Because of this, it is ever more difficult to achieve a much desired work-life-balance. In particular, technological, structural and demographic changes, brought about in employment, together with greater than ever demand for more multi skilled and flexible 'knowledge workers' are being allied with negative experiences of work, such as involuntary contingent work and role overload. These experiences have been correlated directly and indirectly to the quality of family life, psychological well-being and health (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

Work-life-balance refers to the effective management of multiple responsibilities, at work, at home and in the other aspects of life. It is an issue that is important both to the organizations and to the employees. In the current economic scenario, organizations are hare pressed for higher productivity and need employees with improved work-life-balance, as an employee with better work life balance will contribute more meaningfully towards the organizational growth and success (Naithani, 2010)

Maintaining a balance between one's personal and professional life has become a prominent topic in the society. The expression Work-life-balance was first used in the middle of 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. Over 30 year's age, Kanter (1977) opined about the 'myth of separate 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 work-life-balance in the popular press and in the 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 work-life relationships can result in reduced health and low performance outcomes for individuals, families and organizations.

A balance between work and life is supposed to exist when there is a proper functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict. Therefore, the incompatibility between the demands from the work and non-work domain gives rise to conflict; and confirmation of the fact that people entering the workforce today lay emphasis on the importance of work-life-balance more than their predecessors. In spite of this, the extent to which this balance is being achieved is far less than what is desired. In fact, researches brought to mind that graduates are being drawn into situations where they have to work for progressively longer hours and so experience an increasingly unsatisfactory balance between home life and work-life.

Family sphere changes that have impacted the work life balance of individuals include nuclear families, single parent households, and dual earning parents, parents working at different locations and increasing household work.

Dual-career couple has been defined as "a married couple where both husband and wife have different careers" (HR Dictionary, 2011, online). "For dual-career couples and working women, balancing work demands with personal and family responsibilities is difficult to do" (Jackson and Mathis, 2007, p.295), and the situations becomes even more challenging where dual career couples have a child or children.

CONCEPT OF WORK-LIFE-BALANCE

The term "work-life-balance" was coined in 1986, although its usage in everyday language was sporadic for a number of years. Interestingly, work-life programs existed as early as 1930's. Before World War II, the W.K. Kellogg Company created



four, six hour shifts to replace the traditional three daily eight-hour shifts and the new shifts resulted in increased employee morale and efficiency (Lockwood, 2003).

In the recent years, it is being realized that life involves multiple domains and is not restricted to the domains of work and family only. Warren (2004) observed that over 170 different life domains have been identified in previous investigations. The major ones include domains of work, financial resources, leisure, dwelling and neighborhood, family, friendships, social participation and health. All these domains of life are closely related to each other. This means that neglecting or inappropriately preferring one life area will have an impact on other areas. For example, spending too much time and energy for work could lead to health problems (e.g., somatic complaints) or conflicts in the family (e.g., with one's partner), which in turn might affect the performance at work. On the other hand, spending too little time and energy for work usually leads to problems at the workplace and loss of employment which could also affect other life areas (e.g., stress, depression, family problems, less self-actualization).

A broad term thus emerged in literature to refer to work or non-work conflict and it is "Work Life Balance" (Fisher, 2001; Hobson et al., 2001). Work-life-balance was initially conceived in terms of work family conflict (Kahn et al., 1964), work family enhancement/ facilitation (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000) work family balance (Hill, et al. 2001).

Kahn et al., (1964) defined role conflict as the "simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other". Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work family conflict as: "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role."

Most researchers make the distinction between work-family conflicts and family-work conflict. Work-to-family conflict means, when work interferes with family life. For example, an unexpected delay in the completion of the work in the day may prevent a parent from picking up their child from school. Family-to work conflict means when family interferes with work life. For example a parent may take time off from work in order to take care of sick child.

Work-life-balance is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life. Work life balance is generally associated with equilibrium, or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in of life. The study of work-life-balance involves the examination of people's ability to manage simultaneously the multi-faceted demands of life.

Although work life balance has traditionally been assumed to involve the devotion of equal amounts of time to paid work and non-work roles, more recently the concept has recognized as more complex; and has been developed to incorporate additional components. Time balance concerns the amount of time given to work and non-work roles. Involvement balance means the level of psychological involvement in, or commitment to, work and non-work roles. Satisfaction balance means the level of satisfaction with work and non-work roles. This model of work-life-balance, with time, involvement and satisfaction components, enables a broader and more inclusive picture to emerge. For example, somebody who works two days a week and spends the rest of the week with their family may be unbalanced in terms of time (i.e. equal measures of work and life), but may be equally committed to the work and non-work roles (balanced involvement) and may also be highly satisfied with the level of involvement in both work and family (balanced satisfaction). Someone who works 60 hours a week might be perceived as not having work-life-balance in terms of time.

However, like the person who works only a few hours a week, this individual would also be unbalanced in terms, but may be quite content with his greater involvement in paid work (balanced satisfaction). Alternatively, someone, who works 36 hours a week doesn't enjoy his or her job and spends the rest of the time pursuing preferred outside activities, may be time-balanced but unbalanced in terms of involvement and satisfaction.

Work-family-balance is defined as "the extent to which individuals are equally engaged in and equally satisfied with work and family roles" (Clark, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 2000). Work-family balance referred to the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal demands of both paid work and family responsibilities, whereas work-family conflict represented incompatibilities between work and family responsibilities because of limited resources like time and energy (Gropel,2005).

IMPORTANCE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The term work-life balance is mostly interpreted as the compatibility and harmony of private life and the working life (Tucholka and Weese, 2007). So, generally it is considered as the balance between different parts of life. However, it is a



dynamic term as the different aspects of work and life are not required to be stringently equally proportionate. For organizations work-life balance is about developing working practices that benefit both businesses and their employees (Coussey, 2000). Also it is an important component of family-friendly policy formulated by the organizations to help those with family responsibilities such as support in child care and care for older people.

The concept of work-life balance became popular since the launch of a major government campaign in 2000, Changing Patterns in a Changing World, an initiative intended to persuade employers to accept flexible working arrangements such as job sharing, flexi-time, compressed hours so that their employees can achieve a better balance between the demands of their paid employment as well as those of private life (Manfredi and Holliday, 2004).

Apart from the popularity, the benefit quotient of work-life balance concept is also very high. The concept of work-life balance is considered as modern tool of dealing with changing family demographics and life of workforce in an organization. Work-life balance policies provide work arrangements that provide greater job satisfaction along with increased productivity at the organizational level and thus results in greater organizational profitability.

Other key benefits of work-life balance include employee commitment, increase in performance and reduced absenteeism. Moreover, the adoption of work-life policies by the employers provide them with competitive advantage in labor markets particularly with the new generation of employees who believe in work-life balance ethos and appreciate flexible working arrangements.

TEN ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT ACTIONS FOR CREATING WORK LIFE BALANCE

- Positive Work life Balance thinking
- Work Life Balance policy
- Work Life Balance employer
- Awareness of entitlements
- Work Life Balance survey
- Implement flexible work practices
- Willingness to pilot or trial initiatives
- Management accountability
- Management Training
- Pre-exit interviews

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

White et.al, (2003) analyzed the effect of selected high-performance practices and working hours on work-life balance. The data were collected from two representative surveys of the employed and self-employed in Great Britain. The samples were 2132 in Working in Britain and surveyed 2000 and 3458 in Employment in Britain and surveyed 1992 Survey.

The results showed that negative job-to-home spillover increased with additional hours worked and to a similar degree for both men and women. High performance practices namely appraisal systems, Group-working practices and performance related pay were also found to be a source of negative spillover. It was further found that taking part in a flexible hour system significantly reduced negative spillover for women but not for men. Working from financial necessity was found to be significantly linked to negative spillover for women. Dual earners reported less negative spillover than those in single earner situations.

Zimmerman (2003) studied the strategies that dual earner couples adopt balancing in family and work. In a study of 47 middle-class, dual earner couples with children, who see themselves as successful in balancing family and work, their thought is classified into six general partnership themes such as shared housework, mutual and active involvement in childcare, joint decision-making, equal access to and influence over finances, value placed on both partners work life goals and shared emotion work.

Waite and Gallagher (2000) documented the tensions within and between dual career couples brought about by the transformation of marriage and family life. At the personal level, marriage and family functioning have become fundamentally personal choices and responsibilities, making the maintenance of both, more vulnerable. At the cultural level, while traditional values such as gender role ideologies are constantly being challenged, balance related to the importance of work life and personal life still persists to role efficacy and emotional intelligence.



Milkie, Melissa and Peitola (1999) stated that gender and the work-family balancing act found that women and men report similar levels of success in balancing work and family and kinds of work family tradeoffs. However, the tradeoffs reported by respondents were gendered. Longer working hours – negatively affected men’s sense of balance, but did so only marginally for women. For women who worked full time, work hours did not affect balance. It was also found that young children in the household had a negative impact on success in balancing paid work and family life for employed women but not for employed men.

Again, sacrifices made at work affected men more than women whereas sacrifices made in the family affected women more than men.

Aryee and Luk (1996) study of 207 dual-earner parents in Hong Kong where husbands appeared to define themselves through their work role, while wives defined themselves through their family role. Multiple regression analysis revealed a positive relationship between work and family in identifying men and a negative relationship for women. Therefore, the mothers in author’s study participated in work and family roles by trading –off one role for the other, whereas the men had no such dilemma. The authors concluded that these findings are consistent with a gender stratified social system. Also, Hong and Seltzer’s (1995) discovered in their research that the beneficial psychological well being outcomes were longitudinal study of non-normative sample at 305 aging mother of children with intellectual disabilities. The finding from Hong and study was an eighteen- month long investigation with mothers, who were managing substantial familial role demands because of their age and their child’s level of ability, and yet when those familial role demands were combined with the work role, the overall result for those women was beneficial. However, it has been found (Beerman and Nachreiner, 1995) that gender related unequal division of domestic duties when coupled with a job, may not result in more severe psychological or subjective health impairment. The reason could be that opportunity to interact with people. It could be an important source of satisfaction in their lives (Bailyn, 1970). Further, it is possible that the negative feeling about full time home making rather than positive attraction of work might draw undesirable and paid work place (Reposit and Rapoport), as idleness is socially undesirable and paid work enhances the status of the women, this might result in enhanced self esteem. Thus with the support of the research studies, the work lives of both the genders disclose a considerable differentiation in the work /family, when the stress is considered.

Marshall and Barnett (1993) in their research both work and family strains and gain with a sample of sample of 300 dual – earner couples (180 of whom were parents) the authors concluded that/ Family strain was not an inevitable outcomes of multiple role participation because more than one quarter of their sample reported no and Barnett indicated that it was “fairly” or “very true “that combining work and family role had definite gains. Consequently, the studies reveal that the work /family stress and strains may be harmonized by the characters of expressive and influential support.

Burke (1987), dual earner couples are a predominantly interesting and vivid union of work and family roles. They perform three jobs (two markets and one family) with the same two adult resources as the traditional breadwinner family (Piotrowski & Hughes, 1993). In this scenario they face many difficult situation and time in multiple social roles, Gilbert & Rachlin (1987) explained this scenario that dual earner couples countenance with many challenges as they try to integrate and balance the multiple social roles occupied by both adults. But Goode (1960) argued that total commitment and conformity to one role reduces the amount of time and energy available for investment in other role because of finite support of energy available for each day. Further Goode marked that therefore, individuals attempting to meet all of the responsibilities of their multiple social roles are likely to experience role incompatibility with, or makes compliance with, the pressures and expectations of other roles difficult. These role conflicts often reason to disturb the once of the two different roles. Burke and Weir (1981) found that occupational demands were significantly related to negative experiences in the participants’ non- work lives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was descriptive in nature. Convenient sampling method is adopted for this study. This study conducted among 116 dual earner couples in cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu. Researchers generally use convenience sample to obtain a large numbers of completed questionnaires. These questionnaires were distributed personally and the data were collected.

LIMITATION

The study was conducted in cuddalore district in tamilnadu. So the finding may not be generalized to all dual earner couples. This because there are other factors like climate, working condition varies from place to other. But the findings may be useful some meaningful suggestion to the dual earner couples.

Table 1 showing distribution of dual earner male and female according to demographical variable based on monthly income and department

Respondent	Male		Female		t-test	p-value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Monthly income						
1. 20001-30000	14	12	31	26.7	9.94	0.007
2. 30001-40000	33	28.4	36	31		
3. Above 40000	69	59	49	42.2		
Department					1.84	0.87
1. College Teacher	33	28.4	26	22.4		
2. School Teacher	16	13.8	17	14.7		
3. Bank Employee	14	12	12	10.3		
4. Private Sector Employee	23	19.9	24	20.7		
5. Doctors	8	6.9	11	9.5		
6. Business	22	19	26	22.4		

59 percent of the male dual earner is earned above Rs 40000,28.4 percent of the male dual earner monthly income about Rs 30001-40000 and 12 percent of the male dual earner is been Rs 20001-30000 . Whereas 42.2 in the case of female dual earners income of Rs 40000,31 percent of the female dual earner income of Rs 30001-40000, 26.7 percent of the female dual earner income of Rs 20001-30000.

Chi – Squire Test has applied to identify the differences in the distribution of monthly income among the male and female dual earners the p – value is found to be 0.007 since the p – value is significant there is a significant differences in distribution of monthly income among male and female dual earners.

It is evidence that 28.4 percent of the male dual single earner is working in college teachers, 19.9 percent of the male dual earner working in private sector employee, 19 percent of the male dual earner doing in business, 13.8 percent of the male dual earner is working in school teacher,12 percent of the male dual earner is work in bank employee, and 6.9 percent of the male dual earner is doing in professional Doctors . Whereas 22.4 percent of female dual earners working in college teachers 22.4 percent of female dual earners doing business, 20.7 percent of the female Dual earners working in private sector employees ,14.7 percent of female dual earners working in school teachers,10.3 percent of female dual earners working in bank employee and 9.5 percent of dual earners working in doctors.

Chi-squire test is examined to know the difference in the distribution of present department among male and female dual earner. The p-value is 0.87 since the p-value is not significant. There is a no major significant difference in present department among male and female dual earner families.

Table 2 showing distribution of dual earner male and female according to demographical variable based on distance, mode of transport and working hours

Respondent	Male		Female		t-test	p-value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Distance						
1) Less than 5 Km	33	28.4	33	28.4	8.52	0.089
2) 5-10 km	46	39.7	36	31		
3) 10-15 km	17	14.7	32	27.6		
4) Above 15 km	20	17.2	15	12.9		
Mode transport					3.41	0.182
1) Own Vehicle Arrangement	79	68.1	87	75		
2) Company Provided	19	16.4	20	17.2		
3) Private Vehicle	18	15.5	9	7.8		
Working Hours					2.59	0.273
1) Upto 8 hours	59	50.9	47	40.5		
2) 8-10 hours	45	38.8	56			
3) Above 10 hours	12	10.3	13			

39.7 percent of the male dual earners travel for 5 to 10 km from work place to resident, 28.4 percent of the male dual earners travel for less than 5km, 17.2 percent of the male dual earners travel for above 15 km between work place to resident, 14.7 percent of the male dual earners travel for 10 to 15km. where as 31 percentage of female dual earner travel for 5 to 10km, 28.4 percent of the female dual earners stay close to work place to resident less than 5 km, 27.6 percentage of the female dual earners travel for work place residents 11 to 15 km and 12.9percentage of the female dual earners travel for work place residents above 15 km.

Chi-square test is examined to know the difference in the distribution of distance travel between work place to resident among male and female dual earner. The p-value is 0.089 since the p-value is not significant. There is no significant difference in travels of male and female dual earner families.

68.1 percent of the male dual earner travel by own vehicle arrangement, 16.4 percentage of the male dual earners travel by company vehicle 15.5 parentages of male dual earners travel by private vehicle where as 75 percentage of female dual earners travel own vehicle arrangement , 17.2 percentage of female dual earners travel by company providing vehicle and 7.8 percentage of female dual earners travel by private vehicles,Chi-square is been applied to know the difference in the distribution of mode of transport among male and female dual earner families. The p-value is found to be 0.182. Hence the p-value is not significant. There is no significant difference in distribution mode of transport among male and female dual earner families.

It is found that 50.9 percentage of the male dual earners spent in work up to 8 hours, 38.8 percentage of the male dual earners spent in 8 to 10 hours and 10.3 percentage of the male dual earners spent in work to above 10 hours . Where as 48.3 percentage of the female dual earners spent in work 8 to 10 hours 40.5 percentage female dual earners spent in upto8 hours 11.2 percentage of female dual earners spent in work above 10 hours.

Chi – square test applied to know the difference in the distribution of working hours among male and female dual earner families. The p – value is found to be 0.273. Since the P- Value is not significant. There are no significant differences in the distribution of working hours among male and female in dual earner families.

Table 3 showing the difference in the work family conflict and family work conflict among male and female in dual earners

Respondent	Male		Female		t-test	p-value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Work family conflict	14.42	4.74	15.35	4.6	1.509	0.133
Family work conflict	14.94	4.89	16.5	4.36	1.811	0.071
Overall conflict	29.37	8.95	31.4	8.12	1.812	0.071

The tables no explain the differences in the work life balance work family and family work conflict among male and female dual earners.

It is found to be that the work family conflict low among dual earners in male respondent and mean value is 14.42 and the work family conflict among dual earner is slightly high in female dual earner employee and the mean value is 15.35,To test this hypothesis spastically performed't test was implemented. It is found that't value is 1.509 and the 'p' value is 0.133. Since the 'p' value is non-significant the hypothesis is accepted and it is conclude that there is no significant difference among male and female dual earners with regards to work family conflict.

It is observed that the family work conflict low among dual earner in male employee and mean value is 14.94 and the family work conflict among dual earner is slightly high in female dual earner employee and the mean value is 16.5,To test this hypothesis spastically performed't test was implemented. It is found that't value is 1.811 and the 'p' value is 0.071. Since the 'p' value is non-significant the hypothesis is accepted and it is conclude that there is no significant difference among male and female dual earners with regards to family work conflict.

It is observed that the overall conflict low among dual earner male employee and mean value is 29.37 and over all conflict among dual earner is slightly high in female dual earner employee and the mean value is 31.4,To test this hypothesis spastically performed't test was implemented. It is found that't value is 1.812 and the 'p' value is 0.071. Since the 'p' value is non-significant the hypothesis is accepted and it is conclude that there is no significant difference among male and female dual earners with regards to overall conflict.

Table 4 showing the difference in the work life balance among male and female in dual earners.

Respondent	Male		Female		t-test	p-value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Work interference with family	19.12	4.36	18.57	4.39	0.959	0.339
Family interference with work	19.9	3.69	19.75	3.59	0.324	0.746
Work and personal enhancement	11.64	2.7	11.75	2.42	0.332	0.740

The table shows that the work interference with personal life slightly high among dual earner male employee and mean value is 19.12 and work interference with personal life is low among dual earner in female employee and the mean value is 18.57. To test this hypothesis statistically performed 't' test was implemented. It is found that 't' value is 0.959 and the 'p' value is 0.339. Since the 'p' value is non-significant the hypothesis is accepted and it is conclude that there is no significant difference among male and female dual earners with regards to work interference with personal life.

It is found that the family interference with work slightly high among dual earner male employee and mean value is 19.9 and family interference with work is low among dual earner in female employee and the mean value is 19.75. To test this hypothesis statistically performed 't' test was implemented. It is found that 't' value is 0.324 and the 'p' value is 0.746. Since the 'p' value is non-significant the hypothesis is accepted and it is conclude that there is no significant difference among male and female dual earners with regards to family interference with personal life.

The table shows that the work and personal enhancement life slightly low among dual earner male employee and mean value is 11.64 and work and personal is slightly high among dual earner in female employee and the mean value is 11.75. To test this hypothesis statistically performed 't' test was implemented. It is found that 't' value is 0.332 and the 'p' value is 0.740. Since the 'p' value is non-significant the hypothesis is accepted and it is conclude that there is no significant difference among male and female dual earners with regards to work and personal enhancement.

CONCLUSION

To conclude the study reveals that there is a significant difference in the distribution of monthly income among male and female dual earners. It is also found that there is no significant difference in the department in the department in which they work, distance, mode of transport working hour and but work family conflict significant difference is noted among male and female in the family work conflict and overall conflict. It is also observed that there is significant difference in the web dimensions such as interface with family interference with work, work and personal enhancements.

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