



WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN IT PROFESSIONALS -AN EMPIRICAL STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO BANGALORE CITY

Mrs Minitha V Raj* Dr A Mahalakshmi**

* Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, M S Ramaiah Institute of Technology, Bangalore.

**Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, M S Ramaiah Institute of Technology, Bangalore..

Abstract

In today's world India is a super power in the global economy because of the talented and educated Indian professionals. There is a drastic change in the role of men and women over the past 50 years. More women than ever before are now in the workforce reflecting, the rise in educational levels and changing societal attitudes. They undergo great amount of stress to balance their professional and personal life. Work Life Balance is the key issue bothering many corporate and employees in Information Technology (IT) sector. Professional and personal life are the two sides of the same coin, the imbalance between these two leads to factors like stress, fatigue, poor performance, deteriorating quality of health, time management issues, lack of proper social support, elderly and childcare issues. The present study examines some of the factors affecting stress and work life balance amongst women IT professionals. The data pertaining to the study has been collected from professionals working in IT companies in Bangalore city to identify the factors leading to stress which affect the work life balance. The statistical tools namely Percentage analysis and Correlation are used for data analysis. The finding of the study reveals that there is no significant relation between age and amount of stress the women IT professionals undergo, but there is a positive relationship between the women IT professionals working late nights and suffering from stress. Also the study indicates that a significant relationship exists between organizational initiative to manage work life balance and the women professionals getting relieved from stress. A negative relationship has been found out between number of hours the respondent sleeps and if they suffer from stress.

Key Words: Work life Balance, Stress, Personal life, Family, health issues, Childcare, performance.

Introduction

A significant change is occurring all over the world with the advent of information Technology. The IT revolution not only increases the employment opportunities and GDP of the country, but also contributes to a cultural transformation and social revolution. In the past few decades, one can witness the entry of women IT professionals in the rapidly growing software services sector. Now women take on the role of a professional in addition to their traditional work as a home maker. The Indian women, who were mostly found in a socially acceptable employment like teaching, nursing, banking etc. in the last decade, are diverted now and actively participate in the IT revolution. It has become a common phenomenon that majority of the employees, especially the knowledge workers, are working harder and longer ever before. As a consequence, they find it difficult to achieve work life balance. This new information technology profession with a good pay, night shifts, cultural and social change has brought work life imbalance among the women employees in Information Technology Industry.

Work Life Balance in IT Industry – Present Scenario

Information Technology Industry is the rising sector where the long working hours and stress are typical of the IT industry, according to many human resources managers. Though most of the IT firms have a five-day week, the workload is rising up due to globalization, in which more services are to be delivered timely. After the 2001-02 slumps, companies that downsized did not always hire more people after business picked up. This means that being called to work on weekends and 14-hour working days have become synonymous with the sector. There are also long intervals between projects when many software professionals are sent to training sessions to keep them occupied. They react to such breaks negatively; many feel that they are not competent enough or that their potential is not adequately used.

There is also disappointment among newcomers, especially in the Information Technology sector. Other studies have revealed that IT executives suffer from deep feelings of inferiority owing to factors such as working late nights and not really using their soft skills. The skewed work-life balance affects their health and family life.

Literature Review

Ali (2006), in a study on women in the IT industry the researcher found that for women, social support from the family and the organization is crucial in playing multiple roles. While their husbands were away on business trips the women in that study were solely responsible for the household and child rearing and they reported having difficulty finding a reliable maid, they had to cope with young children and manage their careers since there were no crèches available. Often these women travelled frequently and had to deal with the challenges of balancing a career with motherhood. They reported that the



pressure of rearing a small child, especially when one travels for long durations can be tough in the absence of a support system.

Desai et al (2011) found that home-based working women had less stress, able to adjust better and were more satisfied with their careers. Doherty (2004) in the study on working life balance initiatives for women in the hospitality industry explored the main barriers to advancement into managerial roles. It was found that managerial roles called for long working hours. Prior research (Mainiero, 1994; Parikh, 2001; Lyness & Thompson, 1997) indicates that the ambition and involvement of working women cause them to make sacrifices and compromises in their personal lives as a consequence of their high-profile careers. This in turn impacts their work family balance. The narratives confirm this. A number of women mentioned that they were not able to pursue personal interests due to the commitments of work and family that were imposed on them. However, they were willing to make sacrifices for the greater cause of achieving the work family balance.

Minitha V Raj and Dr. A Mahalakshmi (2015) studied stress on women employees, they differentiated role-based stress (resulting from unclear responsibilities and criteria for evaluating success), task-based stress (resulting from work overload), and person/system-based stress (resulting from high self-expectations and pressure to compete). It concluded that stress appears to play a negative role on employee's work lives and that work overload is a major source of the stress experienced.

Malliga Dasgupta (2010) explored the relationship between psychosocial variables and emotional intelligence of women employees in Information Technology Industry. The psychosocial variables included in the study were Quality of Work Life, Work Family Role Conflict and Perceived Happiness of female IT professionals. The sample consisted of 30 female IT professionals of Kolkata. The findings positively correlated with Quality of Work Life and Happiness, indicating that it contributes toward achieving higher Quality of Work Life and greater perceived happiness and were negatively correlated with both the domains of Work family Role Conflict, indicating that Emotional Intelligence tunes down the perception of Role conflict and thereby reduces the stress produced by it.

Minitha V Raj and Dr. A Mahalakshmi (2016) in a study on women entrepreneurs, state that in spite of the several roles played by women in family and at work, like spouse, care taker, parent, employee, colleague and providing service to the community and society women also must take care of their own health and other personal activities which are often neglected due to work pressure, stress, as well as time limitations. All these situations lead to absence of Work life Balance and manifestation of many WLB issues.

Rehman, and Dr. Roomi (2012) found that achieving work-life balance is one of the key drivers of motivation for women entrepreneurs. The challenges identified were insufficient time, gender bias, social and cultural norms of a patriarchal Islamic society.

Vittal (2003) observed that in order to empower women in the IT sector in the real sense, it is necessary to investigate the social impact of IT sector on the women's community. The author has indicated the emergence of metro-sexual men, men who are sharing the responsibility of the family which might help women to be an active agent in the IT workforce. It is also observed that the dropout rates of women get increased with their marriage and childbirth. It is because childcare and housework remain women's responsibilities, irrespective of her income, educational level or employment. This places a great burden on women and restricts women's choices in terms of better job opportunities.

Additional working hours were at the expense of home time, while high work intensity or work pressure may result in fatigue, anxiety or other adverse psycho-physiological consequences that can affect the quality of home and family life (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills, & Smeaton, 2003).

Research Methodology

Statement of the problem

One of the essential factors in successfully managing work-life balance is the ability to reduce and control stress. Stress is undoubtedly one of the biggest problems faced by the modern workforce. It is also becoming an increasingly worrying problem for employers. Though the women employees are increasing in the work force today they still have to balance between both work and home, which gives rise to stress over a period of time. Stress results in various other problems like health issues, working late night, working overtime, and overload, parental and childcare issues.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is the women professionals of various age groups working in IT sectors and the study is limited to Bangalore city.



Objectives of the Study

- To identify the factors leading to stress among women IT professionals.

Sample Size

The present study was carried out in Bangalore city by selecting women professionals working in IT sector. A sample of 100 employees was selected for gathering primary data. To carry out the study in a more accurate and easier way, random sampling method was adopted.

Period of the Study

The period of the study or period of data collection has been done during the month of November 2016.

Limitations of the Research Study

- The study is restricted to women professionals of IT sectors, hence it cannot be generalized.
- The study is limited only within Bangalore city.

Data Collection Techniques

- **Primary Data**
 - The primary data has been collected by the researcher, directly from the women IT professionals, by administering questionnaires to them and carried out a survey.
- **Secondary Data**

The secondary data is the reuse of data that have already been collected or researched by someone, which can be broadly categorized as published and unpublished data. Various sources of secondary data that are referred are books, journals, documents and e-journals.

Tools and Techniques used for Data Analysis

The primary data has been obtained from the questionnaire filled by the respondents to identify the factors leading to stress that affect work-life balance. Most of the statistical measures in this study used a five-point Likert scale. Items were averaged within the scales to create composite measures for each variable such as childcare issues, roles and duties at work and home, stress levels, organization initiatives to overcome stress and so on. Correlation is used to determine the relationship between work life balance and stress, stress and age factor, stress and working late nights. Frequency analysis is used to determine the percentage of employees with respect to qualification and designation.

Hypotheses Formulated

1. Relationship between Qualification and designation

H₀: There is no significant relationship between qualification and designation.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between qualification and designation.

2. Relationship between age and stress

H₀: There is no significant relationship between age and stress.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between age and stress.

3. Relationship between working late night and stress

H₀: There is no significant relationship between stress and working late nights.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between stress and working late nights.

4. Relationship between Working hours and its effect on the time spent with family.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Working hours and its effect on the time spent with family.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between Working hours and its effect on the time spent with family.

5. Relationship between Stress an employee undergoes and its effect on sleep pattern.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Stress an employee undergoes and its effect on sleep pattern.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between Stress an employee undergoes and its effect on sleep pattern.

6. Relationship between Stress and the various initiatives taken by organization, for the employees to overcome stress

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Stress and the various initiatives taken by organization, for the employees to overcome stress.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between Stress and the various initiatives taken by organization, for the employees to overcome stress.

7. **Relationship between number of children and its effect on childcare issues.**

H₀: There is no significant relationship between number of children and its effect on childcare issues.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between number of children and its effect on childcare issues.

Data Analysis And Interpretation

An employee may feel dissatisfied if the organization does not consider the qualification required for the job. She may feel discontented if she is not offered proper designation based on qualification. These circumstances result in demotivation and stress among employees

1. Qualification of Women IT Professionals

Table 1: Qualification of Women professionals of IT Sector

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	UG	40	40.0	40.0	40.0
	PG	60	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above data analysis of qualification of software professionals, we can infer that the 40% of the respondents have pursued under graduation, and rest of the respondents that is 60% of them has pursued post-graduation.

2. Designation of Women IT Professionals

Table 2: Designation of Women Professionals of IT Sector

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	S/w Engineer	60	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Sr. s/w Engineer	20	20.0	20.0	80.0
	Architect/ Manager	20	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From the above data analysis we can infer that a majority of 60% of the respondents hold the designation of software engineer, 20% of the respondents are senior software engineers, 20% of them are architects or managers.

Testing of Hypotheses

3. H₀: There is no significant relationship between qualification and designation.

In certain companies qualification will not be the deciding criteria of the designation of the employee. Using correlating coefficient analysis it can be determined whether the qualification of an employee plays a role in determining the designation, or whether there is no relationship between the two variables.

Table 3: Correlation between qualification and designation

		Qualification	Designation
Qualification	Pearson Correlation	1	.357
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.155
	N	100	100
Designation	Pearson Correlation	.357	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.155	
	N	100	100

From the above analysis of data it can be interpreted that the significance value P is greater than 0.05 i.e. P=0.155, and P>0.05, which infers that correlation exists and H₁ is accepted. Therefore, there is a positive relation between qualification and designation.

4. H₀: There is no significant relationship between age and stress

Most of the women employees of the current generation in order to meet the various commitments of day to day life work irrespective of the multiple responsibilities and their age. Unlike men, women have to be juggling their roles throughout the day because of which very soon they start experiencing a stressful lifestyle. Using correlating coefficient analysis, it can be determined whether age will have an impact on the stress experienced by the women employees, or whether there is no relationship between the two variables.

Table 4: Correlation between demographic factor age and Stress

		Age	do you suffer from stress
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	-.655*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.040
	N	100	100
do you suffer from stress	Pearson Correlation	-.655*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	
	N	100	100

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

From the above data analysis it can be interpreted that the significance value P is lesser than 0.05 i.e. P=.040, and P<0.05 means that there is no correlation between the two variables exist and H₁ is rejected. Therefore, there is no significant relation between age and amount of stress the respondents undergo.

5. H₀: There is no significant relationship between stress and working late nights.

With the rise in the number of IT companies and the provision of several job opportunities, working late nights is more frequently found among the employees. This kind of a lifestyle will easily result in stress. Correlating coefficient analysis has been used to determine whether the working late nights will have an impact on the stress experienced by the women employees, or whether there is no relation between these two variables.

Table 5: To understand the correlation between Stress and working late nights

		do you suffer from stress	work late night
do you suffer from stress	Pearson Correlation	1	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		1.000
	N	100	100
work late night	Pearson Correlation	.000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	
	N	100	100

From the above data analysis it can be interpreted that the significance value P is greater than 0.05 i.e. P=1, and P> 0.05 means that correlation between the two variables exist and H₁ is accepted. Therefore there is a positive relationship between the women IT professionals working late nights and suffering from stress.

6. H₀: There is no significant relationship between working hours and its effect on the time spent with family.

Working for long hours is the current trend in the IT companies where the employees are given targets to reach for which they work day and night. No matter what amount of efforts they invest, their monetary returns may or may not high, but it involves a lot of personal sacrifices like health, time spent with family, lack of proper recreation, disturbance in sleep patterns etc. Using correlating coefficient analysis, it can be determined whether the working hours and the employee's time spent with their family are correlated or whether there is no significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 6: Correlation between Working hours and its effect on the time spent with family

		Working hours	time spent with family
Working hours	Pearson Correlation	1	-.667*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.035
	N	100	100
time spent with family	Pearson Correlation	-.667*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.035	
	N	100	100

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

From the above analysis of data it can be interpreted that the significance value P is greater than 0.05 i.e. $P=0.035$, and $P<0.05$ means that there is no correlation between the two variables exist and H_1 is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between working hours of the respondents and the time they spend with their family.

7. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between Stress an employee undergoes and its effect on sleep pattern

Several medical research studies have revealed that a normal person has to have 6-8 hours of sound sleep only then they can have a healthy lifestyle. But it is not only the sleep timings even the sleep pattern is very essential. If a person regularly sleeps for 8 hours but has a schedule of day and night shifts every alternate month, then it will have a negative impact on their health. Using correlating coefficient analysis it can be determined whether the sleeping pattern and the stress the employee undergoes are correlated.

Table 7: Correlation between Stress an employee undergoes and its effect on sleep pattern

		no of hours you sleep	do you suffer from stress
no of hours you sleep	Pearson Correlation	1	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		1.000
	N	100	100
do you suffer from stress	Pearson Correlation	.000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	
	N	100	100

From the above data analysis it can be interpreted that the significance value P is greater than 0.05 i.e. $P=1$, and $P> 0.05$ means that correlation between the two variables exist and H_1 is accepted. Therefore there is a negative relationship between number of hours the respondent sleeps and whether they suffer from stress.

8. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between Stress and the various initiatives taken by organization, for the employees to overcome stress.

It is widely observed that individuals working IT companies are subject to stress due to various reasons like workload, working late nights, irregular sleep patterns, deadlines etc. but another important factor that has a major role here is the initiatives that the organization takes up in creating work life balance or reducing the stress of the women IT professionals, like recreational facilities, team outing, yoga conducted at the work place, regular health checkups etc. Using correlating coefficient analysis it is required to determine whether the stress the employees face and the organizational initiatives for the employees to overcome stress are correlated.

Table 8: Correlation between Stress and the various initiatives taken by organization, for the employees to overcome stress

		Org initiative to manage your WLB	do you suffer from stress
Org initiative to manage your WLB	Pearson Correlation	1	-.096
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.792
	N	100	100
do you suffer from stress	Pearson Correlation	-.096	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.792	
	N	100	100

From the above data analysis it can be interpreted that the significance value P is greater than 0.05 i.e. $P=0.792$, and $P> 0.05$ means that correlation between the two variables exist and H_1 is accepted. Therefore there is a significant relationship between the respondents suffering from stress and the organizational initiative to manage work life balance.

9. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between number of children and its effect on childcare issues.

Women apart from their endless efforts to be equivalent to men with their contribution to the family welfare and societal development, they still are cannot drift from their primary roles such as wife and mother, which involved managing the household chores and child care. Once a women starts working she always has to look for alternative option for child care. Using correlating coefficient analysis it can be determined whether the number of children has any relation to child care issues faced by women employees, or whether there is no significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 9: Correlation between number of children and its effect on childcare issues

		no of children	Child care
no of children	Pearson Correlation	1	.773**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	100	100
Child care	Pearson Correlation	.773**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

From the above analysis of data it can be interpreted that the significance value P is lesser than 0.05 i.e. $P=0.09$, and $P<0.05$ means that there is no correlation between the two variables exist and H_1 is rejected. This shows that there is negative or no relation between number of children and their childcare issues.

Conclusion

Work life balance remains an issue that requires considerable attention from society. The dynamic environment, where organizations often operate on a 365/24/7 schedule and where the technological advances have made it possible. For an employee to be connected at all times, has ushered the work life balance issue into the forefront of the minds of many. As working women in the IT companies, she needs abundant applications of knowledge in her domain. This knowledge has to be updated in accordance with the recent developments to keep the company ahead in the competition.

Women IT professionals, though make several attempts to juggle between their work and family life they find it quite difficult to balance which will end up with issues like stress. From this study it can be concluded that stress always exist for women IT employees no matter what their age is. It can also be concluded that the stress levels the employees undergo has a severe impact on their sleep pattern. The emerging trend of having multiple targets and tight deadlines to complete assignments is compelling the employees to work late nights and overtime this has led them to suffer with health issues and work life imbalance. The organizations are also taking various initiatives to reduce the stress levels of the women employees by providing recreational facilities, team outing, regular health checkups, and conducting yoga sessions at work place.

Thus the study reveals the major factors namely working late night, sleeping patterns of the women employees; child care issues lead to stress formation and the organizational initiatives to overcome stress of the women employees is a timely gift. But the work pressure is very high such that the employees are unable to avail the facilities though they are provided.

The work pattern of women software employees hampers their association with their kith and kin. The society as well is at stake as the women who were seen as a connecting link between generations imparting values, beliefs and culture is no more available as in earlier generations.

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