

# An Empirical Study on Work-Life Balance of Working Women in IT Sector, Pune

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There is increasing interest from governments around the world in the establishment of work-life balance policies on the basis that they can help workers achieve happier and healthier lives, while assisting a firm's performance. While initially the concept was developed for large firms, in recent times the scope of these types of policies has included the small business sector.

The concept gained popularity following a feminist movement throughout the twentieth century which resulted in women entering the workforce in large numbers (S. Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007).

In conjunction with the inclusion of additional activities under the heading of 'work', scenarios in which balance is sought to be achieved has also diversified. Segmented population groupings have therefore been created to assist in better understanding work-life balance for a greater number of workers, such as those with elder care responsibilities, singles, non-standard workers, students and women employees in IT companies (McPherson & Reed, 2007).

Various IT companies across the world are trying to formulate work-life balance policies so that women employees are happier and stress free, which would ultimately lead to better performance. Initially importance was given on the work-life balance policy by large organizations but now-a-days due importance are given by startup IT companies as well.

This study focuses on the work-life balance of women employees working in IT companies in Pune city, India. The women employees of various IT companies were interviewed with the help of questionnaire. It is observed that, respondents have accepted the fact that it is very difficult to balance work and life. It is equally important to note that respondents when questioned have accepted that they have job stress even when they are not working in the company. Time devoted by the respondents for their family is also very less.

**Keywords:** job satisfaction, job stress and work-life balance.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of work life gained popularity following a feminist movement throughout the twentieth century which resulted in women entering the workforce in large numbers (S. Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). Work-life balance has captivated the interest of a number of researchers and policy makers alike, due to the benefits it is said to provide both individuals

and businesses. The concept gained popularity following a feminist movement throughout the twentieth century which resulted in women entering the workforce in large numbers (S. Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). Before this time, women predominantly played a domestic role: caring for children and their home. As women took on greater responsibilities in paid employment, the prevalence of role conflicts between professional and domestic domains increased as a large majority of women were still performing a significant proportion of domestic duties (Hantrais & Ackers, 2005; Marks, 1998; Sarkisian & Gerstel, 2004).

The term work-life balance has received criticism for its outdated principles. Aware of this, as well as the benefits that personal balance can have on individuals, businesses and society at large, a number of researchers and policy makers have been addressing both the phrase and concept in the attempt to increase its relevance for more people. The foundational understanding of the concept is that people perform many different roles in various professional and personal areas of their life. These roles often require the same resources, and therefore flexibility is needed (mostly on part of the employer) to help an individual organise their life in the most fulfilling way.

#### Defining work-life balance

Work-life balance as a concept has been given various meanings since its popularisation in 1959 (Ransome, 2007). It is generally agreed in academic discourse however, that work-life balance is concerned with enabling individuals to achieve fulfilled lives through the attainment of greater personal control (Ghazi, 2003; Harris, et al., 2005; Pocock, 2005; Walker, et al., 2008; Walker & Webster, 2007) or management of their lives and work (Ang, 2008; Department of Labour, 2003; Harris & Pringle, 2007; McGregor, 2007). Personal control and management of work are two attributes which are said to be innately possessed by IT companies' women employees due to the role that they play in their firm.

There is contention surrounding the term work-life balance however, as modern literature has criticized its ambiguity and misleading connotations (Crooker, et al., 2002; Harris & Pringle, 2007). Some hold that as a phrase it creates issues by juxtaposing life with work and therefore implying that work and life are two disconnected domains (Beatty & Torbert, 2003; Harris & Pringle, 2007; Jackson, 2002; Kanter, 1989). A number of academics have suggested alternatives to the phrase, including work-life integration and work-life mosaic (de Bruin & Dupuis, 2004; Harris & Pringle, 2007; McPherson & Reed, 2007; Ransome, 2007).

The term balance has also been criticised as some believe that it posits an ideal of equality between work and life that is not appropriate for a significant number of people (Jones, et al., 2006; Thompson & Bunderson, 2001). Harris, Lewis and Massey (2005) contested the rhetoric of balance (Harris, et al., 2005). The fundamental theory behind the concept of work-life balance is that individuals have varying, and sometimes mutually exclusive, demands on them due to the roles that they play in the different facets of their lives (for example, mother versus worker) (Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964).

Work-life balance practices therefore assist individuals to gain greater control over their circumstances, in order to manage their life effectively (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002; Shelton, et al., 2008). The benefits that are gained through individual's achievement of a work-life balance are also thought to extend to their organisation. According to Harris and

Pringle (2007, p. 10) work-life balance policies are paraded as a “magical solution” to work-family disharmony (Danes, 2006; Danes & Morgan, 2004; Danes, Zuiker, Kean, & Arbuthnot, 1999) which help workers achieve happier (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gutek, et al., 1991; Netemeyer, et al., 1996; Voydanoff, 1988) and healthier lives (Department of Labour, 2004; Harris, et al., 2005; Kim & Ling, 2001; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001; Shelton, et al., 2008; Stoner, et al., 1990), and in turn assist a firm’s performance and public image (Harris & Pringle, 2007).

Research has revealed however, that self-employment offers individuals greater flexibility than those in paid employment (Ajayi-Obe & Parker, 2005; Department of Labour, 2008; Edwards, 1998; Hansen, 2009; Hill, et al., 2003; Hill, et al., 2001; Hundley, 2001a; Papalexandris & Kramar, 1997; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001; Peters, et al., 2009; Rowe, et al., 1992; Slate, 2007). Some believe that the flexibility that IT companies’ women employees gain in being their own boss provides them with the opportunity to gain greater control over their working lives and allow them to better fulfill their domestic and community obligations (Becker & Moen, 1999; Cooper, 2005; Daniel, 2004; Holmes, Smith, & Cane, 1997; Hundley, 2001b; Walker & Brown, 2004; Walker & Webster, 2006).

According to Fenwick (2002) women become self-employed in pursuit of greater control and freedom. Mattis (2004) study of business owners in the United States of America, which revealed that many women became self-employed for the flexibility it offers, supported this finding. Some believe it is for individual’s life or business motivations that women-owned businesses have a lower growth imperative than those owned by men (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Daniel, 2004; Hundley, 2001b; Loscocco & Robinson, 1991; Walker & Webster, 2007). A number of researchers however, have found that IT companies’ women employees (of both genders) place the importance of how they manage their work and life above the concept of growing their firm to become large in size (Heilman & Chen, 2003; Kanter, 1989; K. Lewis, 2006, 2008). As Marcketti, Niehm and Fuloria (2006) concluded, in accordance with others (Murry, 2002), “entrepreneurs consistently mentioned foregoing opportunities for growth in favour of fulfilling family and personal commitments” (Marcketti, et al., 2006, p. 248).

### Objective

1. To study the work life balance of women employees working in IT sector of Pune city.

### Hypothesis

H<sub>0</sub> : Work life balance of employees working in IT companies of Pune city, India are same.

H<sub>1</sub> : Work life balance of employees working in IT companies of Pune city, India are not same.

## 2. Research Methodology

Data has been collected through two sources: -

- Primary Source
- Secondary Source
- Primary data:-

Primary Data has been collected by the method of survey. Questionnaire was prepared and was given to the women employees working in IT sector of Pune city, India. There are total 547 questionnaires which were considered for the study, as these questionnaires were completely filled by the respondents.

- Secondary data:-

Secondary Data has been collected from Internet, Books, and Journals.

### Data Analysis

Table No. 1 Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-25 yrs	57	10.4	10.4	10.4
26-40 yrs	237	43.3	43.3	53.7
Valid 41-55 yrs	186	34.0	34.0	87.8
Above 55 years	67	12.2	12.2	100.0
Total	547	100.0	100.0	

Table no. 1 indicates that the approximately 77% of the respondents are in the age group of 26-55 years.

Table No. 2 Qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
School Pass	87	15.9	15.9	15.9
Graduation	224	41.0	41.0	56.9
Valid Post Graduation	124	22.7	22.7	79.5
Others	112	20.5	20.5	100.0
Total	547	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that 41% of the respondents have completed graduation. One of the interesting facts which above table indicate that 16% of the respondents have completed their schooling but have not completed their graduation.

Table No. 3 No. of Dependents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	105	19.2	19.2	19.2
1-2	154	28.2	28.2	47.3
Valid 3-4	112	20.5	20.5	67.8
5 and above	176	32.2	32.2	100.0
Total	547	100.0	100.0	

About 32% of the respondents are having 5 or more than 5 dependents in their family, including their parents and grandparents.

Table No. 4 Annual Income

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
100-300 USD	103	18.8	18.8	18.8
301-600 USD	208	38.0	38.0	56.9
Valid 601-900 USD	141	25.8	25.8	82.6
Above 900 USD	95	17.4	17.4	100.0
Total	547	100.0	100.0	

The annual income of 63% of the respondents is between 301-900 USD. Only 17% of the respondents earn more than 900 USD per annum, which may suggest that the very few IT companies are paying handsome salaries.

Table No. 5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.786 <sup>a</sup>	.617	.586	.53382

Regression is used to examine the effect of independent variables (Flexible starting and finishing times, Time off for family emergencies & events, working in shifts, support from superior, colleagues) on a single dependent variable (work life balance). From table 7, the value of R<sup>2</sup> is .617 which means that strong correlation is there between the variables.

Table No. 6 Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Balanced Work Life	Equal variances assumed	.144	.705	-1.054	130	.294	-.15278	.14489	-.43943 .13388
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.059	127.708	.291	-.15278	.14423	-.43817 .13261

It is observed from table no. 8, that there is a difference in standard deviation of work life balance of women employees working in IT sector of Pune city. The significance level in the table no. 9 is .705. Even if variances are equal or not, we have sufficient evidences to reject the null hypothesis, as the mean difference value lies between lower and upper curve values at 95% confidence level. It can be said that the work life balance of women employees working in IT sector of Pune city, India are not same.

### 3. Conclusion

The research shows that the work life balance of women employees working in IT sector of Pune city, India are independent of each other. The research also shows that support from superiors plays a very important role in maintaining a balance between work and life. On the other hand job stress adversely affects the work life balance. It was also observed that flexible starting and finishing time is having a favourable effect on the work life balance.

It is observed that, respondents have accepted the fact that it is very difficult to balance work and life. It is equally important to note that respondents when questioned have accepted that they have job stress even when they are not working in the organizations. Time devoted by respondents for their family is also very less.

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