Work Life Balance and Its Effect on Job Satisfaction among Women Employees: A Study of IT Firms in Chennai

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Abstract: Work-life balance (WLB) has become a highly critical determinant in employee satisfaction, productivity, and well-being, particularly in women with high work demands in the Information Technology (IT) sector where work-related responsibilities are expected to be performed not only at work, but also elsewhere. The study examines the relationship between socio-economic profiles—specifically age, educational qualification, and designation—and the level of work-life balance among 200 employees in selected IT firms in Chennai. Using cross-tabulation and Chi-square tests, the findings revealed that although descriptive variations exist across age groups, education levels, and designations, none of these factors demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with work-life balance. Younger employees stated that relatively higher levels of balance, while mid-career employees tended toward moderate balance due to professional and personal responsibilities. Similarly, male employees reported slightly higher levels of balance compared to females, though not at a significant level. Educational qualifications and job designations showed variations but did not significantly influence WLB. The article concludes that organizational culture, workload and policies, instead of socio-economic factors, might influence the work-life balance issues in IT companies. The findings underscore the need of IT organizations to embrace employee-centric policies and practices that are flexible so as to promote the work-life balance among various employees.

Keywords*:* Work-life balance, socio-economic profile, women employees, IT firms, job satisfaction and organizational culture

Introduction

The work-life balance has become one of the most acute issues of modern organizational reality, in particular, in the realm of the advanced and constantly changing environment of the information technology (IT) sphere. The increased involvement of women in the workforce has transformed the conventional work place practices especially in cities such as Chennai whose economy has largely relied on the IT companies as their pillars of economic growth and employment. Nevertheless, the ambivalent burden of the women employees necessitating professional duties and having to meet the family and social expectations puts special pressure on them, which has a direct impact on job satisfaction. The stressful nature of IT jobs when it comes to working the long hours, meeting project deadlines, global client demands, and the expectation to upgrade their skills on a regular basis can often put women employees under a lot of stress. Consequently, the capacity to achieve a healthy balance

between work and life is not only an individual well-being issue but also a major organizational success factor, as the more employees have a healthy balance, the more engaged, motivated, and committed they would be to their organizations. Research has warned that work-life balance may result in burnout, absenteeism, high turnover, especially when women have a case of role conflict and role overload. On the other hand, a favorable working environment, work flexibility, facilities, childcare, and organizational awareness have the potential to influence positively the job satisfaction of women employees, their career advancement, and the general productivity rate. Even the situation is complicated by the fact that, being one of the largest IT centers in India, the urban stresses of the long commuting hours, formation of nuclear families, and the increased cost of living has all been discovered to influence the ability of women to maintain a balance between personal and professional life in an efficient manner. WLB is not only a convenience but also a crucial issue in mental health, emotional stability and long-lasting professional work. Job satisfaction, however, has been identified as a complex construct that entails pay, career development, organizational culture, peer relationships, recognition and personal satisfaction. Accordingly, the study of WLB and the relationship with job satisfaction among the women IT professionals in Chennai offers a great deal of information on the approaches that organizations may take to retain good professionals and encourage gender equality in growth and development of careers. This article therefore urges companies to recognize the special needs of women in any IT company and to develop policies that can help achieve a sustainable level of professional ambitions and personal commitments.

Theoretical Background

Examining WLB and its correlation with satisfaction among IT female employees in companies is based on several organizational behaviors, psychology, and gender studies theoretical frameworks. Role Theory is one of the foundational theories in this regard and it argues that people will hold several roles in life which include; professional, caregiver, spouse, and parent and the demands of each role are in conflict with the other. There is a general increase in role conflict and role overload among women staff that work in IT companies and have to juggle between the requirements of the organization and those of their families. Parallel to this, the Spillover Theory elucidates on how the experience in one sphere of life could spill over to another either positively or negatively. An example of this is work stress in the IT that can lead to decreased family satisfaction and family conflicts that can disrupt workplace concentration hence job satisfaction. The next powerful paradigm is Boundary Theory which implies that people develop psychological and physical boundaries that isolate work and personal life but in the IT industry where clients are located all over the world and digital technology is 24/7, these boundaries become more and more unclear with a disproportionate impact on female employees. In addition, the Two-Factor Theory of Motivation by Herzberg provides information about the job satisfaction as it divides factors into the hygiene (salary, working conditions, policies) and motivators (recognition, career development and enriching work). Work-life balance serves as a hygiene factor, as it alleviates stress and dissatisfaction, and as a motivator, as it makes employees feel more independent and well. Further, the Social Exchange Theory demonstrates the mutual dependence between organizations and employees; as organizations put work-life balance programs (flexible working hours, maternity leaves, and telecommuting) into practice, employees will feel more satisfied with the job, remain loyal and dedicated. Gender-related concepts can also help to shed some light: Feminist Organizational Theory not only points to the traditional male-oriented structure of the workplace but also indicates that more comprehensive policies should be implemented, taking into account the exclusive difficulty that women face.s. In the Indian cultural context, To a certain extent, the Work-Family Conflict Theory is especially applicable since societal role expectations still expect disproportionate household tasks to women, which increases the stress in cases of professional necessity. Moreover, the Hierarchy of Needs developed by Maslow can be used to define the ways in which attaining the

work-life balance enables women to have their needs of safety, belonging, and esteem met, which eventually lead to self-actualization and professional fulfillment. Collectively, these theoretical approaches point to the fact that the work-life balance is not a one-dimensional phenomenon, but a product of various psychological, organizational, and socio-cultural influences. The IT industry and the stressful work schedule, the time zone and the competitive culture provide a special background in which these theories are highly expressed. To women employees, balancing their various roles and their job satisfaction are what define not only their job satisfaction but their sustainability in their career and long term organizational commitment.

Figure: 1

Grounded theory model for work-life balance
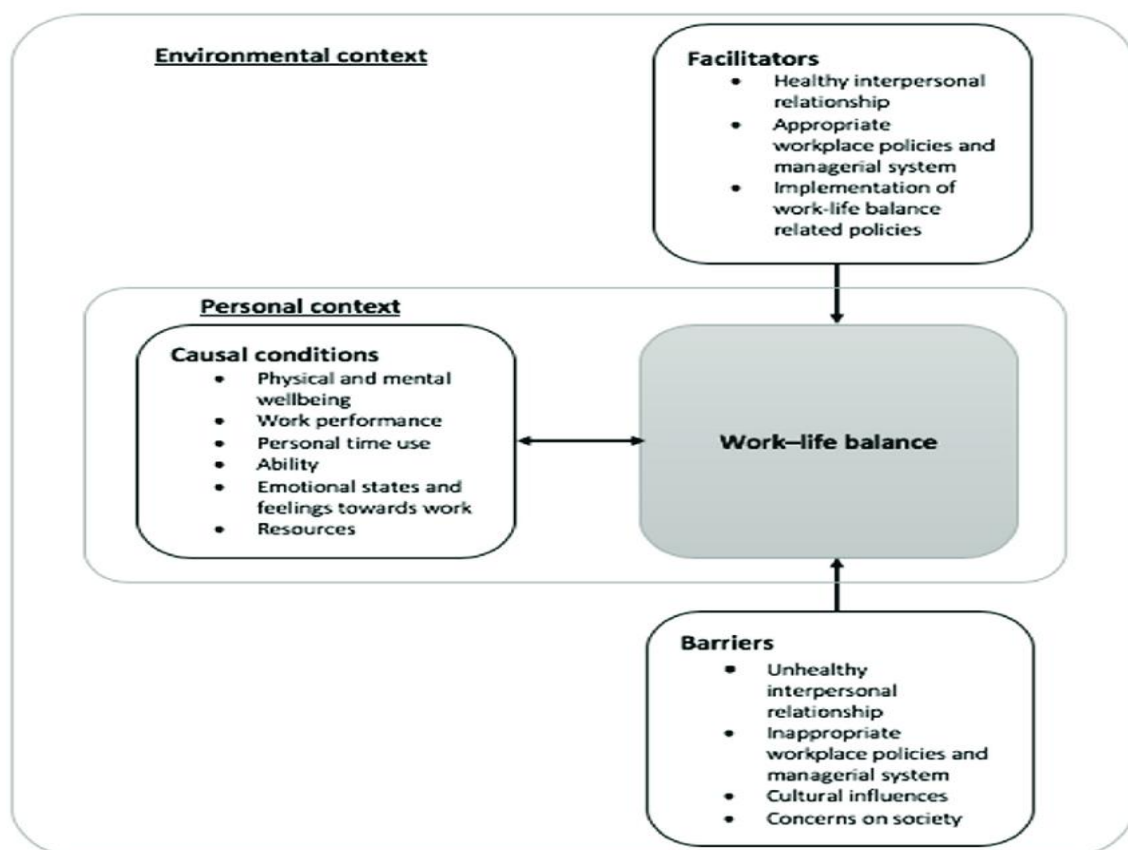
Research Gap

Majority of available literature on work-life balance in India has focused on manufacturing, education sector, or healthcare, where a relatively limited number of empirical research studies have been conducted on the IT sector, which is globally prominent and a sector that faces unique work-life challenges. Moreover, although the previous studies recognize the significance of work-life balance in improving employees work satisfaction, the dynamics of gender that specifically impact women employees are not given the due attention including the cultural requirement of taking care of family, social influence, and barriers to career advancement. The little literature available tends to focus on women as members of the overall workforce and does not seek to examine their plight in terms of the conflicting demands of work and home. Specifically in Chennai, one of the major IT hubs in India, there is little research that has explored how urban lifestyle, long commuting distance and nuclear

family arrangements worsen work-life conflict among female employees. Additionally, not many studies have been conducted to establish a direct relationship between practices of work-life balance adopted by IT firms and the ultimate job satisfaction level among women professionals. This disparity highlights why specific studies are necessary to produce knowledge that would be used to shape the organizational policies and gender-inclusiveness.

Importance of the Study

This study will be significant in that it may help advance academic knowledge and organization practice when it comes to women employees in the IT industry. In the modern competitive and globalised world, IT companies strongly depend on a talented workforce to maintain the innovation and productivity, but they tend to neglect the personal issues of employees, especially females. Exploring the connection between work-life balance and job satisfaction, this article focuses on the fact that the organizational policies, workplace flexibility, and supportive practices can directly influence the morale of the employees, their retention, and performance. Among the women in the IT sector in Chennai, where the dual roles of work and family are compounded upon by social expectations, the dynamics is an important issue to understand in order to attain sustainable careers and minimize attrition rates.

Statement of the Problem

Although the IT sector has been experiencing a boom in Chennai and stands as one of the biggest employers of women in the region, the work-life balance is one of the issues that have continued to be a challenge, which directly influences job satisfaction and career longevity. Employees of the IT companies are characterised by high workloads (long working hours, time zone coordination, frequent skills upgrade), and at the same time women are required to handle household duties as main caregivers. Such a two-fold task can lead to stress, exhaustion, role ambiguity, and low levels of work satisfaction. Even though the IT firms have launched different programs like work flexibility and working remotely, it is not clear how far these two programs are applicable in meeting the special needs of women. Moreover, the professional-personal life balance is also an issue that is aggravated by the cultural specificity of Chennai, where there are long commutes and a few social support mechanisms. Quite a few women professionals would be forced to either sacrifice career advancement or family life resulting in dissatisfaction and high turnover rates in IT companies. Though the literature has addressed work-life balance in general terms, there has been a lack of proper literature that addresses the direct relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction amongst women in the IT industry in Chennai. This gap explains why it is important to systematically study this issue.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between socio-economic factors (age education, designation) and work-life balance.

2. To identify whether socio-economic profiles significantly influence work-life balance.

3. To provide recommendations for improving work-life balance policies in IT organizations.

Methodology

The study examines the relationship between socio-economic profiles—specifically age, educational qualification, and designation—and the level of work-life balance among 200 employees in selected IT firms in Chennai. Using cross-tabulation and Chi-square tests, the findings revealed that although descriptive variations exist across age groups, education levels, and designations, none of these factors demonstrated a statistically significant relationship with work-life balance

Findings and results

Managerially, the study offers evidence based information that can be used by the IT companies to develop sensitive policies including flexible working schedules, work for home, and family support programs. In academic terms, the study contributes to a small amount of literature that is specifically concerned with women IT workers in India, both in terms of culture and occupation. Therefore, the research value lies not only in the quality of life and the level of career satisfaction of women employees but also in the development of the organization and the introduction of equality in the workplace.

H_0: *There is no significant correlation between the socio-economic and profile of the respondents and their level of work life balance* among Women Employees of IT Firms

Table 1

Level of age and work life balance

Age group	Level of WLB			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Less than 30	12	32	46	90
	13.3%	35.6%	51.1%	100.0%
30 to 50	24	46	30	100
	24.0%	46.0%	30.0%	100.0%
More than 50	3	5	2	10
	30.0%	50.0%	20.0%	100.0%
Total	39	83	78	200
	19.5%	41.5%	39.0%	100.0%

The data in **Table 1** shows the relationship between **age group** and the **level of (WLB)** among women employees in IT firms. Among employees **less than 30 years**, a majority (51.1%) report **high WLB** , indicating that younger employees perceive better balance between work and personal life. In the **30–50 years group**, the majority (46%) report a **moderate level** of WLB, suggesting greater challenges in balancing professional and personal responsibilities during mid-career, possibly due to higher job demands and family commitments. For those **above 50 years**, half (50%) also fall under the **moderate category**, with fewer reporting high balance (20%). Overall, while younger employees experience higher WLB, as age increases, the proportion of respondents with only moderate WLB also rises. This indicates that age may have an influence on the level of work-life balance, with younger employees experiencing it more positively compared to older employees.

Table 2

Chi-Square test

Test	Chi-Square	df	CC	Sig.
Result	5.519	4	0.118	0.329

The **Chi-Square test result** (χ^2 = 5.519, df = 4, p = 0.329) shows that the **p-value (0.329) is greater than 0.05**. This indicates that the relationship between **age group** and **work-life balance** among women employees of IT firms is **not statistically significant**. The **Contingency Coefficient (CC = 0.118)** also reflects a weak association between the two variables. Hence, the *"there is no significant correlation between the socio-economic profile (age) of the respondents and their level of work-life balance"* is **accepted**. This suggests that although descriptive data shows some variation across age groups, statistically, age does not significantly affect the level of WLB.

Table 3

Educational level

Educational qualification	Level of WLB			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Under graduate	22	28	39	89
	24.7%	31.5%	43.8%	100.0%
Post graduate	11	31	24	66
	16.7%	47.0%	36.4%	100.0%
Others	6	24	15	45
	13.3%	53.3%	33.3%	100.0%
Total	39	83	78	200
	19.5%	41.5%	39.0%	100.0%

The distribution shows that among **undergraduates**, the majority (43.8%) report a **high level of work-life balance**, followed by 31.5% at a moderate level and 24.7% at a low level. Among **postgraduates**, nearly half (47.0%) experience a **moderate level of work-life balance**, while 36.4% report high and 16.7% report low balance. For the **"others" category** (such as diploma, professional courses, etc.), more than half (53.3%) also report a **moderate level of work-life balance**, while 33.3% report high and only 13.3% report low balance. This suggests that **undergraduates perceive higher work-life balance compared to postgraduates and others**, who are more inclined toward a moderate balance. The trend may reflect that higher educational qualifications (postgraduate/others) often lead to more demanding job roles and responsibilities in IT firms, which could increase challenges in maintaining work-life balance.

Table 4

Chi-Square test

Test	Chi-Square	df	CC	Sig.
Result	8.536	4	0.126	0.421

The **Chi-Square value (χ^2 = 8.536, df = 4, p = 0.421)** indicates that the **p-value is greater than 0.05**. This shows there is **no statistically significant relationship** between educational qualification and the level of work-life balance among employees in IT firms.

Table 5

Designation

Designation	Level of WLB			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Trainee Engineer	20	8	22	50
	40.0%	16.0%	44.0%	100.0%
Software Engineer	9	37	23	69
	13.0%	53.6%	33.3%	100.0%
Project Manager	10	37	33	80
	12.5%	46.3%	41.3%	100.0%
System Analyst	0	1	0	1
	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	39	83	78	200
	19.5%	41.5%	39.0%	100.0%

The data reveals distinct differences in **work-life balance perceptions** across designations. Among **Trainee Engineers**, considerable proportions (40%) report a **low level of WLB**, while 44% report a high level. This suggests that at the entry level, employees may experience extremes—either struggling with adjustment and workload or perceiving flexibility and less responsibility as high balance. For **Software Engineers**, more than half (53.6%) fall in the **moderate WLB** category, indicating that this group often experiences ongoing challenges in balancing professional and personal life. Among **Project Managers**, the majority (46.3%) also report a **moderate level**, with a significant share (41.3%) reporting high balance, suggesting that while leadership roles bring responsibilities, they may also come with better control over work. The single **System Analyst** in the sample reported only a moderate level, which is not sufficient for meaningful comparison. Overall, the findings indicate that **designation has an influence on the variation in WLB levels**, with Trainee Engineers showing more imbalance compared to Software Engineers and Project Managers, who tend to experience more moderate or high levels of balance.

Table 6

Chi-Square test

Test	Chi-Square	df	CC	Sig.
Result	5.230	6	0.111	0.384

The **Chi-Square value (χ^2 = 5.230, df = 6, p = 0.384)** indicates that the **p-value is greater than 0.05**, meaning there is **no statistically significant relationship** between designation and level of work-life balance among employees in IT firms. The **Contingency Coefficient (CC = 0.111)** also reflects a very weak association. Thus, the **null hypothesis (H_0)** — that *there is no significant correlation between the socio-economic profile (designation) of the respondents and their work-life balance* — is **accepted**.

Implications for the Study

The academic implications of the research are that it fills a somewhat insufficient gap in the literature, namely the context of women working in IT in Indian metropolitan cities, which will be useful in the future as the basis of a comparison and longitudinal research. On the whole, implications of the study indicate the need to combine the personal well-being and professional satisfaction in order to secure the sustainability of the female workforce involvement in the IT industry.

Recommendations and Suggestions

First, to minimize stress due to rigorous schedules and commuting, organizations ought to implement flexible work schedules such as hybrid and remote working to lessen stress. Secondly, firms ought to invest in the support systems like cheap onsite childcare centers, parental leave programs and wellness programs to lessen the dual burden encountered by women staff. Third, an organizational culture of inclusiveness and empathy needs to be established; the managers must be trained to be aware of the special issues women have in the workplace and allow them to openly discuss work-life issues. Fourth, women career development programs like mentorship programs and leadership training can be used to counter the feeling that a woman is not intended to enhance her career because of the obligation to take care of her family. Fifth, government and industry organizations ought to work together to reinforce policies requiring gender-friendly practices and give rewards to organizations that exercise it well. At the personal level, employees who are women can be advised to train time management, stress management, and boundary-setting skills to improve their personal balance and well-being. Taken together, these recommendations can contribute to a positive ecosystem in which women employees can be satisfied in their careers and at the same time attain equilibrium in their personal lives.

Conclusion

The article was aimed at investigating the connection between socio-economic variables such as age, educational level, and designation with (WLB) of female workers in the information technology companies of Chennai. According to the data analysis based on the data gathered (200 respondents), the results were obtained, indicating that, although the differences between categories could be observed visually, all socio-economic factors did not significantly impact work-life balance. The younger staffs were more likely to report greater

degree of balance although middle age employees and employees in more demanding roles like project managers were more likely to report a moderate level of balance. Educational qualification was also marginally different, where undergraduates reported a higher level of balance than postgraduates or other participants, although Chi-square tests showed significantly no correlation.

These results demonstrate the heterogeneity of the work-life balance issue, that is, the individual socio-economic profile is not the only factor that can influence the way employees perceive the balance between work and personal life. Rather, organizational culture, expectations about workload, the presence of flexible policies, and supporting systems seem to become more important. In the case of IT companies, it means that they need to develop inclusive and people-centric strategies to support the needs of a large range of people instead of thinking that some of them are more problematic because of their age, sex, or educational level. Organizations can improve work-life balance among the workforce by developing flexible work schedules, employee assistance programs and encouraging leadership practices. Sustainable work-life balance will ultimately not just increase employee satisfaction and retention but organizational performance in the very competitive IT sector.

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