

Work–Life Balance and Mental Health: A Study of Stress, Anxiety and Coping Mechanisms among Working Women in Nagpur

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Abstract: The idea of work-life balance has emerged as one of the most urgent issues of working women because the need to reconcile work challenges with basic life causes stress and anxiety, which deteriorates the mental state. The paper focuses on the work-life balance of 200 working women in Nagpur and evaluates measures of stress, anxiety levels and coping strategies. Through descriptive research design and structured questionnaire, the research concludes that the majority of the respondents have moderate work life balance and have moderate stress and anxiety. The most prevalent strategies of coping involved time management and relaxation techniques. Correlation analysis showed that work-life balance has a significant negative correlation with the variables of mental health, which implies that the better the balance, the lower the psychological strain. These results highlight the need to support the well-being of working women with the help of favorable workplace policies, interventions aimed at reducing stress levels, and proactive coping strategies.

Keywords: Work–life balance, Stress, Anxiety, Coping mechanisms, Working women, Mental health, Nagpur

Introduction

The modern world of globalization and urbanization has also seen a higher involvement of women in the workforce which has consequently become a problem as to how to balance between work and personal life. The Work-Life Balance (WLB) is the capacity of a person to balance the work and non-work responsibilities as well as not experiencing role conflict (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011). The lack of balance in these areas may cause stress and anxiety, worsening the results of mental health, especially to working women who have to balance between various social and familial tasks (Pandya et al., 2022). The current research of mental health in the workplace in India is also highlighting occupational stressors as one of the most significant causes of psychological distress and burnout, which is why it is extremely important that the research can be done and the interventions be placed in the Indian setting (Pandya et al., 2022).

Employees who are women also face a dual role burden, i.e., combining paid work with domestic and care giving responsibilities, when in the developing regions, and therefore the risk of experiencing chronic stress and anxiety rises significantly (Solanki et al., 2025). There is cross-sectional research evidence in Central India that suggests that working women are exposed to high levels of stress due to work and home-pressure that impacts their general wellbeing (Solanki et al., 2025). The pressure between the professional and personal space is further increased by the gender roles expectations, lack of institutional backing of the flexible work arrangements, and a shortage in institutional support of flexible work arrangements (Savarimalai et al., 2023). Therefore, the work-life balance and mental health interdependence are not just occupational but owe to the profound macro-social arrangements.

Theoretical theories of stress and coping including Lazarus and Folkman (1984) transactional model of stress and coping point out that individuals cope with stress by using diverse coping strategies including problem-oriented, emotion-oriented or avoidance coping mechanisms, all of which have direct impact on mental health outcomes. According to empirical evidence, these coping strategies are not always effective, and their success is determined by such situational variables as workplace culture, family support, and social expectations (Hosseini, 2023). Research on the topic of stress-management interventions among working women illustrates that it positively affects emotional stability and psychological wellbeing, but that research is still limited in the context of low- and middle-income environments, to which India belongs (Hosseini, 2023).

Although there is an increasing literature on work-life balance, very few studies have empirically examined the manifestation of stress and coping strategies of women working in medium-sized cities like Nagpur. The city of Nagpur, as one of the rapidly-growing metropolitan areas with multiple economic activities, including education, healthcare, banking, and services, provides a special setting upon which the research of occupational stress and anxiety levels in women working there could be considered. Thus, the purpose of the study is to determine the correlation between work-life balance and mental health of working women in Nagpur, evaluate the outputs of stress and anxiety experienced by these women, and single out the coping strategies they have developed to effectively deal with work and family conditions. The results will help to design the workplace policies and community-based interventions that can facilitate the mental health and gender-sensitive working conditions.

Literature Review:

The presence of women in the working environment has risen dramatically in the modern age of globalization and urbanization but this has created new issues pertaining to the optimal balance between work and home life. The concept of Work-Life Balance (WLB) means that a person is able to balance work-related and non-work issues without experiencing role conflict (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011). Existing imbalance in these areas may cause stress, anxiety, and worsening mental health conditions, especially in working women who have to fulfill numerous social and family responsibilities (Pandya et al., 2022). According to the recent researches about mental health at the workplace in India, the impact of specific occupational stressors has turned out to be one of the primary causes of psychological distress and burnout, which makes the research and interventions specific to the Indian context urgent (Pandaya et al., 2022).

Female employees in particular, primarily in developing countries, frequently have to face dual roles, i.e., part-time work and family and home responsibilities but this affects them to a greater extent as they are more likely to experience chronic stress and anxiety (Solanki et al., 2025). According to cross-sectional studies conducted in Central India, working women report being at an increased level of stress due to their workplace and home expectations, of which they have to live with, which has impacted their overall wellbeing (Solanki et al., 2025). The role expectations that are divided by gender and the lack of the institutional assistance on flexible work options also intensify the tension between work and personal spheres (Savarimalai et al., 2023). The interdependence between the work-life balance and mental health, therefore, does not just have an occupational, but a socio-cultural implication.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) theoretical models of stress and coping explain the fact that all people react to stress in different ways using different coping strategies, e.g. problem-oriented, emotion-oriented and avoidance strategies that have direct impact on the mental well-being. According to the results of empirical studies, the success of such coping strategies is contingent upon contextual issues such as workplace culture, family, support, and societal expectations (Hosseini, 2023). Research that dwells on stress-management programs targeting working women shows beneficial outcomes of such programs in emotional stability and mental health,

but the same results are very limited among the low- and middle-income populations, such as in the case of India (Hosseini, 2023).

Although the literature on the topic of work life balance is increasing, empirical research to investigate the manifestation of stress among women living in urban centres in medium cities like Nagpur and coping mechanisms is still rare. Nagpur is a rapidly growing metropolitan area where most of the employment opportunities are in the fields of education, healthcare, banking, and services, and therefore the occupational stress and anxiety of working women will be examined in this unique background. Thus, this research endeavors to examine the correlation between work-life balance and mental health in working women in Nagpur, determine the stress and anxiety experience of these women, and determine the coping skills that they use to balance between work and family demands. It is anticipated that the findings will help to develop the workplace policy and community-driven interventions that support mental wellbeing and gender-sensitive work environments.

Objectives of the study:

- This research will focus on the work-life balance of working women in Nagpur and the effects it has on the levels of stress and anxiety, as well as mental well-being.
- It also tries to determine the coping strategies they apply and offer suggestions of how they can improve themselves psychologically and work performance.

Methodology:

The research design that will be employed in the study to investigate the work-life balance and mental health of working women in Nagpur is descriptive research design. The data collection method is based on the structured questionnaire which includes the demographic information section, work-life balance indicators section, stress and anxiety levels section and coping mechanisms section. Purposive sampling is used to select a sample of 200 working women of various sectors such as education, healthcare, IT, and services since it will be important to represent the various occupational backgrounds. To investigate work-life balance, mental health, and coping strategies correlation, collected data is analyzed with the help of quantitative methods such as frequency distribution, percentages, and correlation analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The researchers used 200 working women in Nagpur to gather the responses and study the work-life balance, stress and anxiety and coping strategies. Descriptive statistics and correlation were applied to analyze the data to draw patterns and relationships among the variables.

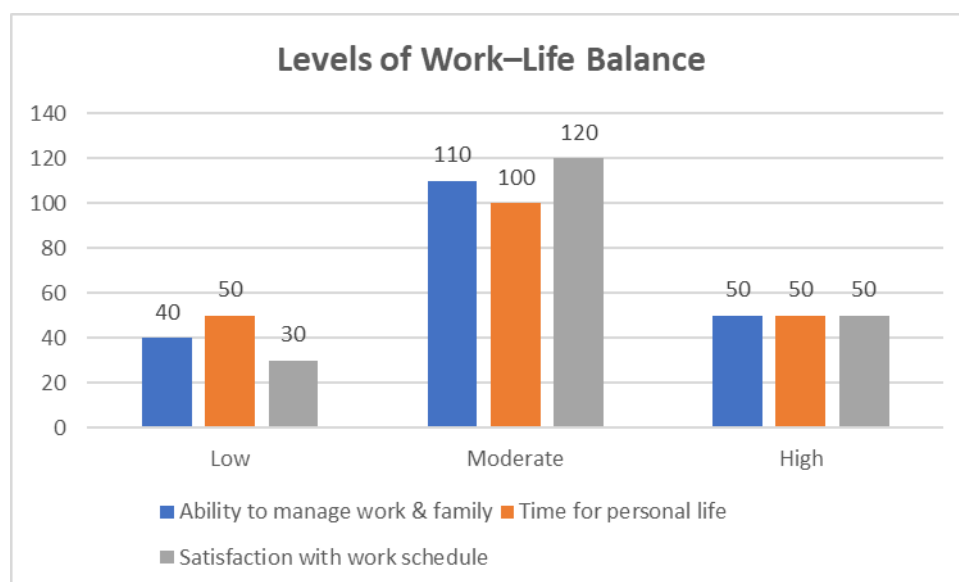


Fig. 1 Level of Work Life Balance

Majority of the respondents indicated moderate balance between work and life with less of them indicating high balance or low balance. It means that although there are women who are more or less able to cope with their work and life, there also is the possibility to gain more and attain a perfect balance.

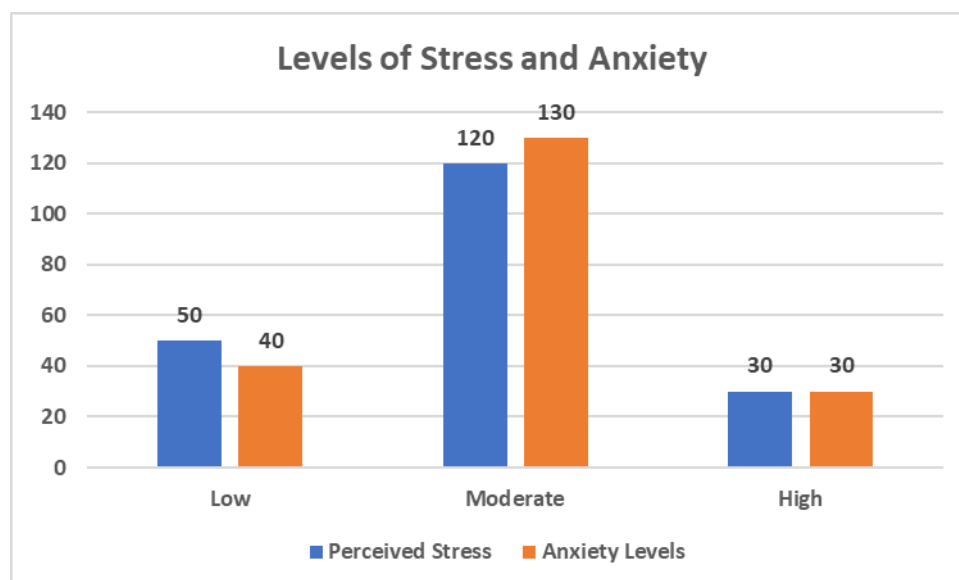


Fig. 2 Level of Stress and Anxiety

As depicted in Fig. 2, most of the respondents are moderately stressed (60) and anxious (65) suggesting that the working women in Nagpur are under a lot of psychological strain when balancing between professional and family life. Although a lower percentage of the sample evidenced high levels of stress and anxiety (15% each), there is evidence of moderate levels indicating that one is faced with a constant, daily pressure, and not a crisis. The results portray that work-life imbalance is one of the causes of unremitting mental health issues, which

should be addressed through intervention, work-related policies, and positive coping mechanisms to alleviate stress and anxiety among working women.

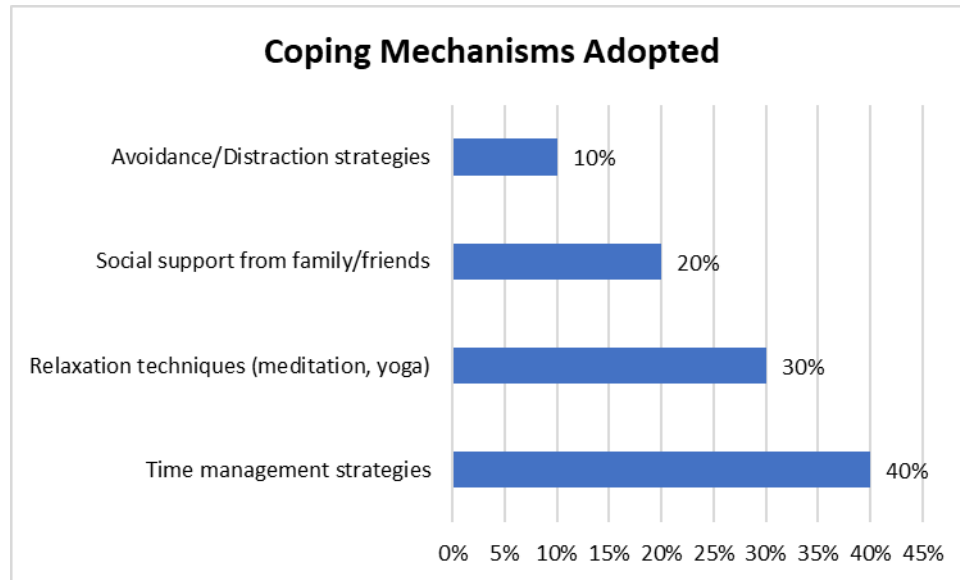


Fig. 3 Coping Mechanism

Table 4 shows that, time management strategy (40 percent) and the use of relaxation methods like meditation and yoga (30 percent) are the leading approaches used by the working women in Nagpur to cope with stress and balance working and personal life. A lesser rate depends on family and friend social support (20%), with 10 percent resorting to avoidance or distraction skills. These results indicate that the majority of the women use proactive and useful coping strategies in working with stress, time management and relaxation techniques are the most wonderful tools, which help to alleviate the psychological burden of having to combine work and personal roles.

Table 1 Correlation

Variables	Work–Life Balance	Stress	Anxiety
Work–Life Balance	1	-0.62*	-0.58*
Stress	-0.62*	1	0.74*
Anxiety	-0.58*	0.74*	1

The negative correlation between work-life the balance and stress (-0.62) and anxiety (-0.58) show that the relationship between work-life the balance and stress or anxiety is negative among working women. We have found out that there is positive correlation between stress and anxiety (0.74), and this implies that stress directly correlates with the stress levels.

The research results in showing that the majority of working women in Nagpur enjoy moderate work-life balance, with moderate stress and anxiety levels, which implies that they continue to feel a significant pressure of dealing with continuous pressures of balancing between professional and personal lives. Time management and relaxation are the main strategies that the respondents use in coping with less dependence on social support or avoidance strategies. The analysis of correlation demonstrates that the relationship between work-life balance

and stress as well as the work-life balance and anxiety are significantly negative, which proves the fact that the higher work-life balance is, the less mental health will be strained. On the whole, the results highlight the relevance of favorable work-place policies, stress-management programs, and effective coping skills to improve the well-being of working women.

Conclusions:

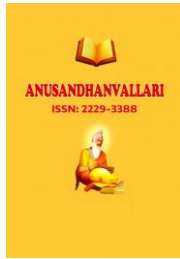
The research shows that at Nagpur moderate work-life balance is experienced by working women, and this is directly linked to moderate levels of stress and anxiety. The results reveal that professional and personal dual roles cause persistent psychological stress, which has an impact on general mental health. Time management and relaxation strategies are commonly used as coping mechanisms and proactive strategies among women are likely to counter stress. The high negativity between work-life balance and the mental health variables is the confirmation that the improvement of the balance can lead to a significant decrease in stress and anxiety. These observations underscore the issue of addressing organizational and individual aspects as a means of enhancing the psychological comfort and efficiency of working women in urban cities such as Nagpur.

Recommendations:

Flexible work schedules, remote work opportunities, and friendly work policies should be adopted by organizations, where women can be able to balance work and family demands. Women can be empowered to help them manage the work-related pressures through training to manage stress, time, and mindfulness. Peer support and counseling rehabilitation services in workplaces should be encouraged as a means of additional emotional and social support. On the personal level, women are advised to embrace the structured time management and relaxation techniques and proactive coping mechanisms to counter stress and anxiety. Organizational leaders in collaboration with policymakers are supposed to work to make the working place a gender sensitive working environment that is sustainable in terms of work-life balance and enhanced mental health outcomes of working women.

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