



**Exploring the Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Work Effectiveness among Women in the IT Industry**

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**Abstract**

*The ability of women to play multiple roles successfully has been immensely recognized, especially in the IT field that witnesses more women compared to male employees. By focusing on bringing more women into the workforce, the sector has brought the gender ratio closer to the overall mix in the country's population. Almost all software giants have offered work life programs which have been unanimously recognized to improve the wellbeing of employees thereby enhancing their productivity and efficiency. Studies in such organizations which employ large number of women have proved that their productivity is the result of a satisfied and committed workforce. The current study examines the influence of satisfaction with work life balance on the women IT professional's capability to display improved effectiveness at work.*

**Key words-** Work Life Balance(WLB), Improved Effectiveness at Work(IEW), Information Technology (IT)

## Introduction

Among the many factors that contribute to radical transformations of organisations and the economy around the globe, the most significant is the rise of internet technologies. The accelerating pace of industrial development that is happening in India can be attributed to its booming Information Technology sector, which has helped the country receive global acclaim. Contributions made by the IT sector have resulted in the steady growth of country's GDP leading to tremendous development of the economy. Unemployment problem in India has been drastically reduced after the emergence of the IT industry which offers a splurge of employment opportunities to both men and women in the country. Hiring more women in the IT industry which is a lucrative option for women is seen as a way to bridge the talent crunch that the industry is facing.

Work life balance is a management issue that demands serious consideration as people have started attaching more significance and value to quality of life than financial rewards, such that employers who promote a supportive workplace imbuing meaningful organisational culture are considered the best to work with rather than the pay and perks. Hence organisations are devising ways to incorporate family friendly policies and nurturing culture by accommodating the expectations of their employees, especially the pool of involved and motivated women employees.

## Review of Literature

**Vittal (2003)**<sup>91</sup> feels that in order to empower women in the IT sector, it is necessary to investigate the social impact of IT sector on the women's community.

There is the emergence of “metro-sexual men”(men who are sharing the responsibility of the family) which might help women to be active agent in the IT workforce. The dropout rates of women increased with their marriage and childbirth because childcare and housework remain a women's responsibility, irrespective of her income, educational level or employment and is found to restrict women's choices in terms of better job opportunities. **Malliga Dasgupta (2010)**<sup>92</sup> in her study explored the relationship between psychosocial variables and emotional intelligence of women employees in IT Industry of Kolkata. The psychosocial variables included were Quality of Work Life, Work Family Role Conflict and Perceived Happiness, the findings of which positively correlated with Quality of Work Life and Happiness. The study asserted that Emotional Intelligence contributes towards achieving higher Quality of Work Life and greater perceived happiness, whereas it bears a negative correlation with Conflict. Thus it indicates that Emotional Intelligence lessens the impact of role conflict, thereby reducing the stress produced by it. **L.Sugandhi et al (2010)**<sup>93</sup>, explored the reasons for voluntary turnover of women professionals in the IT field within the age group of 20-35 who just entered their family life. Their study revealed and two factors namely psychological and cognitive factor and organizational climatic factor were found to be the causes of work-life imbalances for women IT professionals in the age group of 20 to 35 and recommended organizations to increase the work force diversity in order to mitigate voluntary turnover among women **Rani et al (2011)**<sup>94</sup> in their study among IT

employees in Chennai, India, with WLB, revealed high correlation between work task and employee satisfaction, taking work life balance as the moderating variable. The SEM model proposed had employee satisfaction and work life balance as the endogenous variables and career opportunities, recognition, work task, pay and superior subordinate relationship as the exogenous variables..**Renu (2012)**<sup>95</sup> in her study on the issues and challenges in the information technology sector highlighted the impact of work life balance (WLB) on quality of life (QOL) on married male and female IT employees of Bangalore city. The results indicated that work life balance is positively correlated with quality of life and Personal Life Interference with Work has a significant influence on the overall stress of the employees and overall quality of life. **Lakshmi, Kanteti & Vijaya (2013)**<sup>96</sup> investigated the impact of demographic variables on work life balance satisfaction among software professionals in the city Hyderabad. Eight hypotheses on demography were postulated and tested. The anova analysis indicated that there was a significant difference between the work life balance satisfaction level based on the demographic variables

### Objectives

1. To understand the levels of work-life balance
2. To identify the influence of age of employees on the dimensions of WLB and IWE
3. To assess the impact of Satisfaction with Work Life Balance on Improved Work Effectiveness

### Variables used in the study

#### (i) Work Life Balance (WLB)

Work life balance in the researcher's perspective is the ability of an individual to effectively prioritise work and non work demands with a balanced involvement in work and family leading to minimum role conflict that ultimately results in satisfaction in work and life which contributes to improved effectiveness at work. Such work life balance is moderated by the Quality of life in the domains of work and family.

#### (ii) Satisfaction with Work Life Balance (SWLB)

SWLB is defined as an overall level of contentment resulting from the degree of success at meeting work and non-work role demands. It is a newly developed construct that does not rest on the conflict occurring between work and family roles to measure work life balance.

#### (iii) Improved Effectiveness at Work (IEW)

Improved effectiveness at work reflects how the workforce of an organization adapts to the work place which supports their needs through 'work-life' and 'family friendly' programs and policies so as to make their life at work more effective.

### Research Methodology

As the study involved the measurement of Work life Balance (WLB) among women employees, the data were collected from women employees working in the IT/ ITeS sector in the district of Ernakulam .This study is purely based on primary data and employs the survey method by administering a well defined and structured questionnaire as the method of data

collection. The organisations are identified from the database of Infopark, Smart city and DIC. The population of women employees in the IT sector of Kochi is undefined, hence a multi stage sampling technique is adopted. The sample size of the study is 513 and includes women IT professionals with more than two years of experience, selected from organisations which have atleast 30 percent women in their workforce. The following hypotheses has been framed to validate the study results.

(H<sub>1</sub>): There is significant difference in the perception of WLB of women employees in terms of their age

(H<sub>2</sub>) : Satisfaction with Work Life Balance positively impacts Improved Effectiveness at Work

**Results and Discussion**

Being effective at work translates into good pay and perks, gaining better opportunities and projects apart from the adulation from the employer. The result of satisfaction with ones work-life balance should get reflected in the effectiveness an individual displays at

work, which is the key benefit to organisations as well its employees. Kofodimos (1993) suggests that imbalance—in particular work imbalance—arouses high levels of stress, detracts from quality of life, and ultimately reduces individuals’ effectiveness at work. Kearns & Gardiner (2007) tested the relationship between an individual’s behaviours related to time management, perceived effectiveness and work related morale and distress among university staff and students. The empirical investigation revealed that people who manage their time well perceive themselves to be more effective and feel less stressed.

*1. Levels of Work Life Balance*

In the current study, the levels of work life balance of women employees were determined by the values of mean and standard deviation calculated from the score values of six statements. The values higher than 30.86 (25.93+4.93) are classified as high level of SWLB, values lower than 21 (25.93-4.93) are classified as low level of SWLB and values within the range of 31-21 are categorised as moderate level of SWLB.

Levels of Work life balance

Sl.No	Levels of WLB	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Mean	S.D
1	High	108	21.1	25.93	4.93
2	Moderate	255	49.7		
3	Low	150	29.2		
	Total	513	100.0		

The above table indicates that 150 and 108 respondents respectively come under low level and high level of SWLB respectively. Moderate level of SWLB is the category that has the majority of respondents (255 nos., 49.7 percent)

2. *Differential Impact of Age on Work Life Balance*

Age of women employees is important to consider because it reflects their

potential and maturity in handling tasks at work and home. In this study, the employees are grouped into 5 categories on the basis of age. To examine H1, the study performed univariate ANOVA with SWLB and IWE dimensions as the dependent variables and age as the independent variable. Followed by this, post-hoc analyses were performed using Duncan and results of the same have been examined to test the following study proposition.

ANOVA of Age on SWLB AND IEW

Dimensions	Age Group in years				F value	P value
	Below 25yrs	25-30yrs	30-35yrs	Above 35yrs		
SWLB	24.82 <sup>a</sup> (5.29)	26.88 <sup>c</sup> (4.99)	25.46 <sup>ab</sup> (5.35)	26.26 <sup>bc</sup> (3.15)	4.779	0.003**
IEW	14.11 <sup>a</sup> (2.59)	15.41 <sup>b</sup> (2.78)	14.34 <sup>a</sup> (2.91)	15.12 <sup>b</sup> (1.73)	7.762	<0.001**

Satisfaction with work life balance is perceived differently by age group “Below 25years” and “25-30years” from the other two groups and the latter group has high perception of SWLB (mean=26.88), while it is least for the former group (mean=.24.82). The difference is found to be significant (F= 4.779, p=.003), which confirms that age of employees influences satisfaction with work life balance. With respect to perception on Improved effectiveness at work, age groups “Below 25 years” and “30-35years” are found to be similar, but the age groups ‘25-30 years’ and ‘31-35 years’ differ from each other and the value is significant at 1% level (F=7.762, p=<.001). Mean score indicates that the group “Below 25 years” (mean=14.11) have low perception on the dimension

when compared to the age groups 25-30 years (mean=15.41) and above 35years (mean=15.12). Hence the study hypothesis, “There is significant difference in the perception of WLB and IEW of women employees in terms of their age” stands accepted.

3. *Impact of Satisfaction with WLB on Improved Work Effectiveness*

Exploratory Factor Analysis(EFA) was performed to analyse the dimensional structure of the constructs, such as satisfaction with work life balance and improved effectiveness at work. The KMO and Bartlett’s Test supported the adequacy of performing the EFA. Later, the study results supported communality above the recommended threshold of 0.50. However,

from the analysis it was found that some of the items reported a low communality and low loadings. Thus, the study decided to keep all the items measuring the dimension and also dropped item with low loading and communality. In addition, the total variance explained by these two factors revealed a total variance of 67%. Thus, the

study confirmed the two dimensional structure of satisfaction with work life balance and improved effectiveness at work. The scale used to measure SWLB and IEW consisted of six and four statements respectively, adapted from Banu & Duraipandian(2014).

**KMO and Bartlett's Test [EFA FOUR]**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.910
	Approx. Chi-Square	1123.1
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	78
	Sig.	.000

The study examined the path coefficients to test the proposed hypotheses. While checking the path coefficients, it was found that that all the estimated path coefficients followed the researchers' expectation with regard to direction and magnitude. Table given below provides the estimated path coefficients derived from the model. In this table, the first and second columns show the relationship between the

exogenous and endogenous constructs. The third column reported the unstandardized path coefficients. In the fourth column, the standardized path coefficients are provided. Next, to standardized path estimates, in the fifth column, standard errors are provided. In the sixth column, the table reported the p-value and the final column reports the status of hypotheses testing results (i.e. accepted or rejected).

Endogenous variable	Exogenous Variables	Unstd. Estimate	Std Estimate	S.E.	P value	Hypothesis Status
SWLB	→ IEW	0.255	0.321	0.100	0.000	H1 Supported

The study proposed that Satisfaction with Work Life Balance has a positive impact on Improved Effectiveness at Work. In support with this proposition, the path estimates of this relationship supported a positive significant effect (p=,<.001) with unstandardised coefficient of 0.255 which confirms that increased SWLB leads to IEW.. Bi-variate correlation was also applied to assess whether there exists significant relationship between SWLB and IWE. Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.760 indicates there is significant

positive relationship between the two constructs.. Increased perception of SWLB results in significantly higher perception of IWE as there exists 76 percent positive relationship between SWLB and IWE. Thus, the study supported Hypothesis 2 "Satisfaction with Work Life Balance positively impacts Improved Effectiveness at Work"

**Conclusion**

Every individual is different, hence the perception of satisfaction in personal life and career is intertwined in the socio economic variables which need to be studied in order to comprehend the meaning of constructs. The academic literature dealing with work life balance being extensive and diverse in nature, the key insights gained from these studies have been adopted in this research piece. The study is based on the premise that work life balance is akin to an individual's ability to prioritize the domains of work and family in such a way that there is minimum negative spillover between the domains. The results of the study would help the women employed in the IT sector as well as the industry practitioners to understand the significance of work life balance and the impact of satisfaction derived from WLB on work effectiveness. It would also enable the Industry in evolving strategies to redesign the work environment such that it enhances quality of work life of its employees leading satisfaction with work life balance and consequently improved effectiveness at work.

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