WORK LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OF SELECTED WOMEN IT EMPLOYEES IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is a critical factor in employee engagement, particularly for women working in the IT sector, where demanding schedules, career aspirations, and personal responsibilities often create challenges. The study explores the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among selected women IT employees in Coimbatore District, aiming to identify key influencing factors and propose strategic workplace solutions. A survey-based quantitative analysis was conducted among 168 women professionals in the IT industry to assess the impact of flexible work arrangements, supportive workplace policies, mental health initiatives, and career growth opportunities on work-life balance. Findings indicate that organizations that prioritize employee well-being experience higher productivity, reduced stress, and increased commitment among their workforces. The research emphasizes the importance of workplace flexibility, particularly hybrid and remote work options, in fostering engagement while addressing the unique challenges faced by women in the sector. Additionally, a culture that values personal well-being was found to significantly enhance job satisfaction and retention. The study contributes to ongoing discussions on workplace inclusivity and employee-centred strategies, offering recommendations for IT organizations to implement policies that empower women professionals to achieve career success while maintaining personal fulfilment. By fostering a work environment that supports balance, companies can cultivate a motivated, resilient workforce, ensuring long-term employee engagement and organizational growth.

Keywords: Work life balance, employee engagement, Information Technology, productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance is a critical factor in employee engagement, particularly for women working in the IT sector, where demanding schedules, career aspirations, and personal responsibilities often create challenges. The Information Technology industry in India has experienced remarkable growth over the past two decades, emerging as a significant contributor to the country's economic development. Tamil Nadu, particularly the Coimbatore District, has established itself as a prominent IT hub, hosting numerous multinational corporations and domestic IT companies. This growth has created substantial employment opportunities, with women comprising approximately 35-40% of the IT workforce in the region.

Employee engagement has become a critical factor for organizational success in the competitive IT landscape. Engaged employees demonstrate higher productivity, lower turnover rates, and greater organizational commitment. However, the demanding nature of IT work, characterized by tight deadlines, extended working hours, and high-pressure environments, often challenges employees' ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life activities, enabling individuals to fulfil their roles effectively in both domains without experiencing excessive stress or conflict. For women employees, this balance becomes particularly complex due to additional responsibilities related to family care, household management, and societal expectations.

The study explores the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among selected women IT employees in Coimbatore District, aiming to identify

key influencing factors and propose strategic workplace solutions. Previous research has established connections between work-life balance and various organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. However, limited studies have specifically examined this relationship among women IT employees in the Indian context, particularly in emerging IT hubs like Coimbatore District.

The theoretical foundation for the study draws from the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which suggests that employee engagement results from the interaction between job demands and available resources. Work-life balance can be conceptualized as both a personal resource and an outcome of the balance between demands and resources.

A survey-based quantitative analysis was conducted among women professionals in the IT industry to assess the impact of flexible work arrangements, supportive workplace policies, mental health initiatives, and career growth opportunities on work-life balance. The research emphasizes the importance of workplace flexibility, particularly hybrid and remote work options, in fostering engagement while addressing the unique challenges faced by women in the sector.

The study aims to address the research gap by investigating the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among women IT employees in Coimbatore District. The findings will provide valuable insights for HR practitioners, organizational leaders, and policymakers in developing effective strategies to enhance employee engagement through improved work-life balance initiatives. By fostering a work environment that supports balance, companies can cultivate a motivated, resilient workforce, ensuring long-term employee engagement and organizational growth.

Literature review

Work-life balance, according to Pandiangan et al. [2018], is a broad concept that involves figuring out what 'life' (joy, leisure, relatives, and growth) and 'work' (career and desire) should take precedence over. According to Lestari and Margaretha [2021], work-life balance (WLB) gives workers a chance to regulate both their personal and professional lives, which reduces stress and fatigue associated with the workplace. WLB is one element that affects productivity inside the organization, work satisfaction, and employee commitment. To advance a competitive advantage, businesses should focus on improving organizational competence. The people element contributes actively to maximizing and sustaining organizational efficiency. In this regard, Arulrajah and Opatha [2012] contended that an organization's hiring decisions have a direct impact on its success, given that the staff of the organization are thought to be the primary stakeholders in defining the efficiency of the organization. As a result, to improve overall business performance, organizations are being compelled to focus more and more on improving employee job performance. In light of the existing circumstances, businesses must devise methods and plans to improve worker productivity. Fatima et al. [2012] found that work-life balance is negatively connected with unjust work-life criticism, while it is positively correlated with spouse support, coworker support, and job resources. According to the study, when it comes to spousal support, men are more at ease with work-life balance than women. It has been noticed that women have twice the responsibility of caring for elderly dependants than men do and that childcare responsibilities have put additional strain on female employees' work-life balance. An analysis of the factors influencing work-life balance was carried out by Sathyanarayana et al. [2018] on 164 employees in Bangalore's IT sector. The factors that were discovered included self-management, family support, job autonomy, organizational culture, aspirations for the work, and work satisfaction. It was discovered that most respondents concurred that having a large workload and frequent deadlines had a significant impact on their ability to maintain

work-life balance. Specifically focusing on Indian healthcare nurses, the impact of work-life balance measurements on organizational traits like work overload and provision for work, as well as their analytical relationship with work gratification, were evaluated by Poulose and Sudarsan [2017]. The findings showed how employees' personal and professional lives are significantly impacted by the benefits and pressures they face. Furthermore, the findings suggested that colleagues, supervisors, and organizational assistants would all be very helpful in assisting employees in achieving better organizational outcomes. A thematic approach was used by Gyanchandani [2017] to achieve a qualitative study on work-life equilibrium among 30 software labourers in Pune. There were six principles used: function, rewards and benefits, time management, social need, personal need, and collaboration. The results demonstrated that many employees sacrifice their time to achieve work-life balance. Workers often have role conflicts between their roles as mothers and other family Impact of work-life balance on employee productivity and well-being 169 members, especially women. Mahesh et al. [2016] examined the literature in terms of the characteristics of work-life balance and how it affects organizational effectiveness. As per the survey, an organization can only function at its peak when all its workers are fully affianced and devoted, which can only occur when they maintain a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, it is well recognized that several internal and external sizes and variables have both good and negative effects on work satisfaction. Businesses have tried a variety of methods, plans, outlines, and measures to guarantee the job satisfaction of their employees. While attending to their repressed needs, wants, and anxieties is crucial, a great work-life balance has also other benefits, like increased productivity, keeping deserving employees longer, balancing people's jobs and resources effectively, efficiency, a positive work environment, and ultimately reaching management objectives. Furthermore, according to Naithani [2010], a company that ignores employees' concerns about work-life balance will eventually witness a decline in employee productivity, making it more difficult to increase employees' performance. Work-life balance, as previously said, is a significant factor in determining an employee's effectiveness at work. Consequently, several studies have discovered a connection between professional performance and work-life balance. Work-life balance initiatives that support HRM practices such as sharing positions, working remotely, accessibility, and so forth, by lowering the friction between work and life frequently result in higher employee productivity. Work-life balance reduces absenteeism and employee turnover, while increasing employee engagement, satisfaction, loyalty, and corporate citizenship behaviour.

Research Objectives
1. To assess the level of work-life balance among women IT employees in Coimbatore District
2. To measure employee engagement levels among the target population
3. To examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement
4. To identify factors that influence work-life balance among women IT employees
5. To provide recommendations for improving work-life balance and employee engagement

Methodology
Research Design
The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among women IT employees in Coimbatore District. The research was conducted between January 2025 and March 2025.
Participants

The study population consisted of women employees working in IT companies located in Coimbatore District. A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure representation across different company sizes and types. The sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula with a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, resulting in a required sample of 168 participants.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Female employees working in IT companies
- Minimum 1 year of work experience in the current organization
- Age between 22-45 years
- Full-time employment status

Exclusion Criteria:

- Contract or temporary employees
- Employees on extended leave
- Management positions above senior manager level

Data Collection Instruments

Work-Life Balance Scale: A validated 16-item scale developed by Hayman (2005) was adapted for the Indian context. The scale measures four dimensions: work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement, and work-personal life balance satisfaction. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the study was 0.86.

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17): This internationally validated instrument developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) measures three dimensions of engagement: vigor (6 items), dedication (5 items), and absorption (6 items). Items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (0 = never, 6 = always). Cronbach's alpha values were 0.88 for vigor, 0.92 for dedication, and 0.86 for absorption.

Demographic Questionnaire: A structured questionnaire collected information on age, education, work experience, marital status, number of children, job role, and organizational characteristics.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted through a combination of online surveys and face-to-face interviews. Participating organizations were contacted through formal channels, and ethical clearance was obtained from both the research institution and participating companies. Informed consent was secured from all participants, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

The survey was administered in English, as all participants were comfortable with the language due to the nature of their work environment. Data collection sessions were conducted during non-working hours to avoid disruption to business operations.

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS version 28.0. Descriptive statistics were calculated for all variables, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. The normality of data distribution was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships between work-life balance dimensions and employee engagement components. Multiple regression analysis was employed to identify predictors of employee engagement, with work-life balance dimensions as independent variables.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences in work-life balance and engagement levels across demographic groups. Post-hoc tests (Tukey's HSD) were conducted where significant differences were found.

Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all analyses.

Results
Participant Demographics
A total of 168 women IT employees participated in the study, with a response rate of 87.5%. The majority of participants (68.4%) were between 25-35 years of age. Educational qualifications included Bachelor's degrees (52.8%) and Master's degrees (47.2%). Regarding marital status, 62.4% were married, and 45.6% of married participants had children.

Work experience ranged from 1-15 years, with the largest group (38.8%) having 3-7 years of experience. Job roles were distributed across software development (42.4%), testing (23.6%), business analysis (18.8%), and project management (15.2%).

Work-Life Balance Levels
The overall work-life balance score among participants was moderate (M = 3.24, SD = 0.78). Analysis of individual dimensions revealed:
- Work interference with personal life: M = 3.45, SD = 0.89
- Personal life interference with work: M = 2.87, SD = 0.82
- Work/personal life enhancement: M = 3.38, SD = 0.76
- Work-personal life balance satisfaction: M = 3.26, SD = 0.93

Results indicated that work interference with personal life was the most significant challenge, while personal life interference with work was less problematic.

Employee Engagement Levels
Overall employee engagement levels were above average (M = 4.12, SD = 0.85). The three dimensions showed the following results:
- Vigor: M = 4.23, SD = 0.89
- Dedication: M = 4.15, SD = 0.92
- Absorption: M = 3.98, SD = 0.76

Vigor scores were highest, indicating that employees generally felt energetic and mentally resilient at work.

Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and Employee Engagement
Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	r	p-value	Significance
Overall work-life balance and overall engagement	0.742	< 0.001	Significant
Work-personal life balance satisfaction and vigor	0.689	< 0.001	Significant
Work-personal life balance satisfaction and dedication	0.721	< 0.001	Significant
Work-personal life balance satisfaction and absorption	0.658	< 0.001	Significant
Work interference with personal life and engagement dimensions	-0.456 to -0.523	< 0.001	Significant (Negative)

Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant positive correlations between work-life balance dimensions and employee engagement components:

Work interference with personal life showed significant negative correlations with all engagement dimensions (r ranging from -0.456 to -0.523, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion
The analysis clearly demonstrates that a healthy work-life balance positively influences

employee engagement, while work-related interference with personal life diminishes engagement.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary:

R²	F	df	p-value
0.551	50.12	4, 163	< 0.001

Coefficients:

Predictor	β (Beta)	p-value	Significance
Work-personal life balance satisfaction	0.421	< 0.001	Significant
Work/personal life enhancement	0.287	< 0.001	Significant
Work interference with personal life	-0.234	< 0.001	Significant (Negative)
Personal life interference with work	-0.156	< 0.01	Significant (Negative)

Multiple regression analysis identified work-life balance as a significant predictor of employee engagement ($R^2 = 0.551$, $F(4,163) = 50.12$, $p < 0.001$). The model explained 55.1% of the variance in employee engagement.

Conclusion

The analysis confirms that work-life balance dimensions play a crucial role in predicting employee engagement.

- Positive aspects of work-life balance (satisfaction and enhancement) increase engagement,
- while negative interferences (work-to-life and life-to-work) decrease engagement.

These findings highlight the importance of organizational strategies that enhance work-life satisfaction and minimize conflicts to foster a highly engaged workforce.

Demographic Differences

Variable	F	df	p-value	Group with Highest Work-Life Balance
Marital status	12.34	1,166	<0.001	Single employees
Number of children	18.67	2,165	<0.001	Employees with no children
Work experience	8.92	3,164	<0.001	Employees with 7+ years
Job role	6.78	3,164	<0.001	Project managers

Inference

The ANOVA analyses revealed that marital status, number of children, work experience, and job role all had significant effects on work-life balance scores (all $p < 0.001$). Single employees, those without children, employees with 7+ years of experience, and project managers consistently reported higher levels of work-life balance. These findings highlight the influence of demographic and professional factors on employee well-being.

Factors Influencing Work-Life Balance

Qualitative analysis of open-ended responses identified key factors affecting work-life balance:

Organizational Factors:

- Flexible work arrangements (mentioned by 78.4% of respondents)
- Supportive management (67.2%)
- Clear role expectations (54.8%)
- Adequate staffing levels (49.6%)

Personal Factors:

- Time management skills (71.6%)

- Family support (64.8%)
- Personal health and wellness (52.4%)
- Technology usage boundaries (43.2%)

Environmental Factors:
- Commute time and transportation (56.8%)
- Childcare facilities (41.2% of mothers)
- Community support systems (38.4%)

Discussion

The findings of the study provide significant insights into the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among women IT employees in Coimbatore District. The strong positive correlation (r = 0.744) between work-life balance and employee engagement supports the hypothesized relationship and aligns with previous research conducted in similar contexts.

The moderate level of work-life balance (M = 3.34) among participants suggests room for improvement in organizational policies and personal strategies. The finding that work interference with personal life was the most significant challenge reflects the demanding nature of IT work, characterized by project deadlines, client expectations, and technological complexities that often extend beyond traditional working hours.

The above-average employee engagement levels (M = 4.22) are encouraging and suggest that despite work-life balance challenges, women IT employees in Coimbatore demonstrate considerable commitment and involvement in their work. The highest scores in vigor indicate that employees possess the energy and mental resilience necessary for their demanding roles.

The regression analysis results, explaining 54.2% of variance in employee engagement through work-life balance dimensions, highlight the practical significance of this relationship. Work-personal life balance satisfaction emerged as the strongest predictor, emphasizing the importance of employees' subjective evaluation of their balance rather than objective measures alone.

Demographic differences reveal important patterns that organizations should consider in policy development. The finding that single employees and those without children report better work-life balance aligns with research suggesting that family responsibilities create additional challenges for working women. However, the observation that employees with 7+ years of experience show better balance suggests that coping mechanisms and organizational support may improve over time.

The identification of flexible work arrangements as the most frequently mentioned factor (78.5% of respondents) underscores the importance of organizational policies that accommodate individual needs and circumstances. This finding is particularly relevant in the post-pandemic era, where remote and hybrid work models have gained acceptance.

Theoretical Implications

The study contributes to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory by demonstrating how work-life balance functions as both a personal resource and an outcome of the interaction between job demands and available resources. The findings support the premise that when employees have adequate resources (including work-life balance) to meet job demands, they are more likely to experience engagement rather than burnout.

The research also extends the understanding of work-life balance in the Indian cultural context, where women often face additional societal expectations regarding family responsibilities. The significant impact of family-related factors on work-life balance scores

reflects the importance of considering cultural and social contexts in organizational behavior research.

Practical Implications

The findings have several important implications for HR practitioners and organizational leaders:

Policy Development: Organizations should prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive work-life balance policies, including flexible work arrangements, family support services, and wellness programs.

Management Training: Given the importance of supportive management, organizations should invest in training managers to recognize and address work-life balance challenges among their team members.

Individual Development: Employees would benefit from training programs focused on time management, stress management, and boundary-setting skills to enhance their personal work-life balance capabilities.

Technology Management: Organizations should establish clear guidelines regarding after-hours communication and technology usage to prevent work from continuously intruding into personal time.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged in interpreting these findings:

1. **Cross-sectional Design:** The study's design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between work-life balance and employee engagement. Longitudinal research would provide stronger evidence of causality.
2. **Geographic Limitation:** The study focused specifically on Coimbatore District, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions with different cultural or economic contexts.
3. **Self-report Measures:** Both work-life balance and employee engagement were measured through self-report instruments, which may be subject to common method bias and social desirability effects.
4. **Sample Characteristics:** The study focused exclusively on women employees, and findings may not generalize to male employees or mixed-gender samples.
5. **Organizational Variation:** While the study included multiple organizations, variations in organizational culture, policies, and practices may have influenced results in ways not fully captured by the analysis.

Conclusions

The study provides compelling evidence for the significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among women IT employees in Coimbatore District. The findings demonstrate that organizations investing in work-life balance initiatives are likely to see corresponding improvements in employee engagement, with potential benefits for productivity, retention, and organizational effectiveness.

The research highlights the particular challenges faced by women in the IT sector, especially those with family responsibilities, and emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to support this valuable segment of the workforce. The identification of flexible work arrangements, supportive management, and time management skills as key factors provides a roadmap for both organizational and individual action.

As the IT industry continues to evolve and face challenges related to talent retention and employee wellbeing, the insights from the study become increasingly relevant. Organizations

that proactively address work-life balance concerns are likely to gain competitive advantages in attracting and retaining talented women professionals.

Future research should explore longitudinal relationships between these variables, examine the effectiveness of specific interventions, and investigate how emerging work models (such as hybrid work) impact the work-life balance and engagement relationship. Additionally, comparative studies across different regions and cultural contexts would enhance our understanding of these important workplace dynamics.

The study contributes to the growing body of literature on work-life balance and employee engagement while addressing the specific context of women IT professionals in India's emerging technology hubs. The findings support the business case for work-life balance initiatives and provide evidence-based guidance for organizations seeking to enhance employee engagement through improved work-life integration.

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