



Systematic Review of Work-Life Balance on Gender: Variables and Avenues for Future Research

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Abstract

Purpose- The objective of this research is to explore and give a frame to Work-life balance literature and identify different variables that affect gender and determine avenues for future research.

Design/methodology/ approach- The study involves a systematic review, and determine 92 significant journal publications from 1987 to 2016 on work life balance.

Findings- This research determines 11 variables that affect gender among which dominance of work-family conflict. The studies suggest a high prevalence of conflict while balancing work and life in women than men. Limited data were available in how to manage this imbalance among which organization policy played a very important role.

Research limitation/ implication: Research-based on men and women was only covered so it cannot be generalized.

Originality/ Value- This research provides the first systematic review to determine and analyse the literature on Work-life balance. This review identifies the various variables of Work-life balance that affect gender.

Keywords: Work-life balance, work-life, balancing life, work-life conflict

1. Introduction

Work-life balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) on one hand and "life" (pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Related, though broader, terms include "lifestyle balance", and "life balance" (Choudhary et al. (2014).

The interface between work and family roles has begun to capture the interest of a growing number of work and family researchers. This new focus has been stimulated by several demographic trends, such as the increasing numbers of married women with children joining the workforce, and by increases in the prevalence of employed adults who are part of dual-earner families, single-parent families, and families facing the demands of elder (Rice et al. 1992). The growing body of occupational stress research regarding the relationship between work and family has suggested that there are interconnecting and possibly reciprocal influences between these two domains (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1989).

Frone (2003) widely held, the meaning of work-family balance is a lack of conflict or interference between work and family roles. Research on work-family balance has progressed substantially over the past decade. Nonetheless, plenty of work remains to develop a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between work and family and between work and other non-work roles.

With every new change in the environment the variable of work-life balance kept on increasing the purpose of the study is to identify these variables from previous research based on male and female employees. The objective of the study is:-

- a) To know various variables that affect work-life balance.
- b) To know the avenues for future research
- c) To know the methodological issues of work-life balance on gender.

2.Scope of the research

In order to keep the scope of study rationale, the review is explicitly concerned with work-life balance literature and does not take into account only women-related issues in work-life balance, despite its particularly close nature. This is due to the following: First women work-life balance is mostly concerned with only with female employees in an organization it narrows down the research since in today's time as males to are facing the problem of work-life balance, whereas work-life balance takes into account both male and female employees working in an organization. Rebecca Bundhun quotes in —The National (August 12, 2009) an Abu Dhabhi National Paper1 that —Women and men generally have a different perception of what the “life” part of the balance involves. For women, it tends to be devoting more time to family, while for men it is spending more time pursuing personal interests. Secondly, past research indicates that that partner/family schedule it predicts marital-role quality among women, with a similar trend among men. (Gareis et al. 2003).

The salience of work-life balance may be different for Indian men and women as the husband's career has a priority against the wife's career (Chandra, 2012). In India it has followed two separate and disconnected paths, focusing on underprivileged women that have discussed structures of patriarchy and their contribution to the subordination of women at work and home and psychosocial research conducted largely from a role theory perspective that has examined work-family relations within urban settings. (Ujavala, 2011)

This study is limited to articles published in academic journals, since they have already undergone a rigorous peer-review process, indicating an acceptable level of quality.

2.2 Search strategy

2.2.1 Data base search protocol

Search strategy played is central of systematic review for this no specific time frame was figured. A total of 584 published journal articles on work-life balance were analyzed. Several databases were covered in order to cover multiple ranges of publication as possible. Search engines used were: Ebsco, Proquest, Emerald, and Google Scholar. The keywords used for the search were: "Work-life balance" OR "WLB", "work-family", work-life imbalance, Work-family conflict, "Work-family conflict", "and Work enrichment". A cumulative of 584 databases was found, Google scholar fetched the highest which was 228 out of which 98 research papers were selected and least was Emerald with 35 papers out of which 21 research papers were included. The database search protocol is shown in Table I.

Data base search protocol (Table I)

Database	Scope	Date range	Number of items	Cumulative Total	Selected papers
Emerald	Full paper	2005-2013	35	35	21
Ebsco	Full paper	2000-2016	194	229	79
Google Scholar	Full paper	1987-2014	228	457	98
Proquest	Full paper	1989- 2014	127	584	63
Total			584	584	261

2.2.2 Inclusion and exclusion

Our systematic review identified 261 peer-reviewed journal publications from the period 1987 to 2016 on work-life balance. All the redeemed research papers are presented in Appendix 1. In the following sections, a descriptive overview of redeemed data is presented.

The search approach initially started with identifying keywords in the article's citation, which fetch 584 articles with no time frame, these contained journal articles, Full-text articles, Ph. D thesis, review papers, books, conference proceedings review, newspaper articles, commentaries, and viewpoints. To spick and span with aim of the study a comprehensive inclusion and exclusion criteria was enhanced. Inclusion criteria included keywords, abstract, methodology, and an exclusion criterion was based on newspaper articles, repeated papers, incomplete papers, non- English papers, etc. Table II shows the full inclusion and exclusion criteria. Table II shows the full inclusion and exclusion criteria.

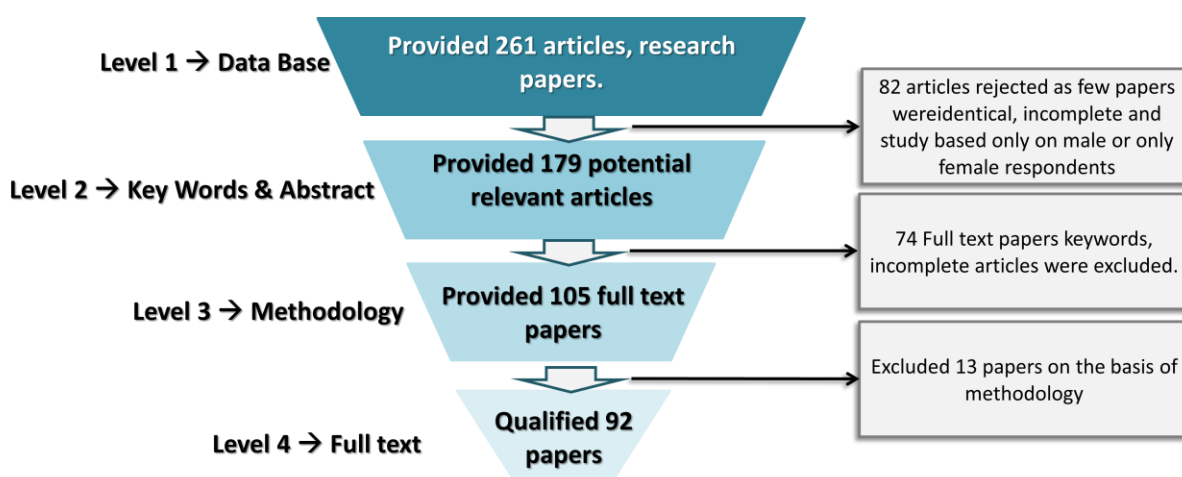
Table II: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
Focus on work life balance, Gender (both male and female)	Books, conference proceedings Review, repeated paper, newspaper article, Non-english research papers, commentaries, viewpoints.
Journal articles	
Full text articles.	
Ph. D thesis	
Literature review	

2.2.3 Search strategy levels

Three-level search strategies were adopted, initial database constitute 261 articles from which 82 articles were rejected as few articles were identical, incomplete, study based only on male or only female respondents. Now only full-text research papers were left there were 179. Further rejections were done on the basis of keywords and abstract the articles which used keywords or titles like a trade union, small business, papers only with abstract, horticultural farms, etc the number of these were 74. This resulted in 105 papers all these 105 papers were read fully and the last selection was done on the basis of methodology (13 papers) were rejected and selected papers were left to 92. This is shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Summary of Systematic review process



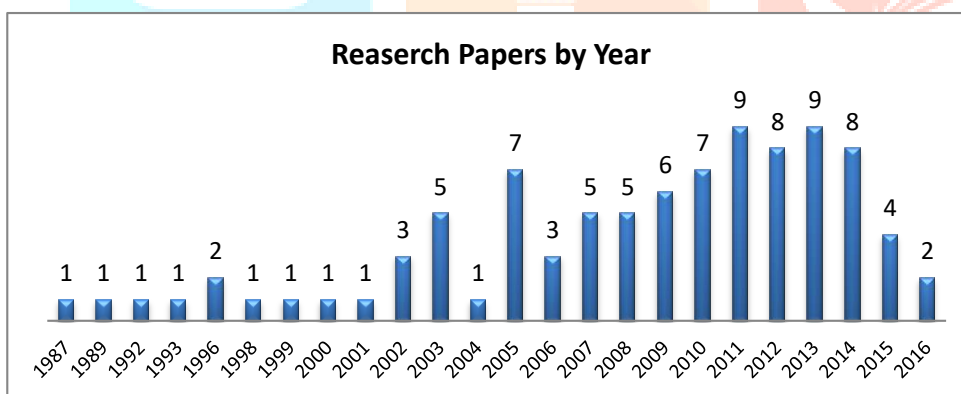
3. Description of Literature

Systematic literature review identified 92 peer-reviewed journal articles from period 1987 to 2016 on Work life balance. All the redeemed research papers are presented in Appendix 1.

3.1 Publication activity

All the redeemed research papers on the basis of their year of publication are shown in figure 2. In the initial years, the publication was limited to one i.e. from 1987 to 2001, it was two in 1996. From 2002 to 2006 it was zig-zag i.e. in increasing and decreasing state but slowly and steadily it started to rise after 2007. After 2011 and 2013 about 9 articles were found which was relatively very high this shows the growing importance of work-life balance. This is shown in figure 1. These articles were derived mostly from journals associated with psychological science (27%), Management (51%), and Technical research journals 6% another research journal (16%) respectively. The details of the journals are listed in Appendix 1 at the end. From 92 research papers, 7 authors have published more than one article and the remaining have published one article each from whom many acted as first authors. All full-text articles were obtained from various search engines as already discussed. The analysis proceeding was done by systematically coding the articles using an Excel spreadsheet using headings consistent with the research questions.

Figure 2: Years No. Of Research Papers



3.2 Constructs and measurement

Variables were created in the Excel spreadsheet like Title, author name, year of publication, Journal published in, Abstract, Objective, Findings, limitation, research gap, and future research. Research constructs were coded according to the Year they are published.

4. Methodological Issues

4.1 Sampling

Data related to sampling categories were summarized according to (a) year of publication; (b) discipline of the journal; (c) research design (field versus experimental; cross-sectional versus longitudinal); (d) quantitative versus qualitative methodology; (e) gender breakdown of sample; (f) sampling procedures (e.g., stratified random, purposeful); (g) occupational group(s); (h) country of sample; and (i) industry.

4.2 Research Method and Sampling.

The review shows that while a range of research methods have been applied to examine the work-life balance, the majority of them have been quantitative in nature. However, extensive use of quantitative methods was found in research papers which still have not gained maturity till now Beutell (2007), Perrone et al (2005), Emslie & Hunt (2009), Wesley et al (2009), Zhao & Qu (2009). Most of the quantitative studies have adapted questionnaire surveys. Out of 92 research papers, 58 were quantitative and methodology was one of the reasons for inclusion. In quantitative research papers, 70% of the papers used descriptive statistics few others to show the relationship between variables used chi-square, regression, and correlation, In some research papers Anova, Manova, and factor analysis were also used and, 18 were of mixed method in which both survey and in-depth interview were done and this research papers seen to have good analysis and 16 papers used qualitative method in which 15 research papers were based on in-depth interview and one paper with case study method was covered.

The sampling method used in 76 research papers (quantitative plus mixed method) are 31 papers that used non-probability sampling like convenience, judgemental, snowball and quota sampling, the research papers which used probability sampling were 34 which were random sampling, stratified random sampling, and cluster sampling and 6 cast off their data from government or from various agencies survey and rest 5 used other methods like experience sampling, etc.

4.3 Geographical Area

Among 87 (as three were based on a case study and two on literature which did not belong to any specific geographical area) research papers 37 papers were from Asia (which included 24 papers from India, 4 from Pakistan, 4 from Malaysia, 3 from China and one each from Japan, Sri Lanka, 18 research papers from Europe (which included 9 from the UK, two from Turkey, Germany, Spain one each from Geneva, Ireland, Iceland, Slovenia) from the US there 25 papers (which included Boston, Los Angeles, and Michigan). & 3 research papers from Australia, one from South Africa, and 4 research papers were mixed which included a mix of various countries which included India, Australia, UK, and the US.

Table III: Studies by research method

Research Method	Type	Number
Mixed Method	Survey, case study, interview	18
Qualitative	Case study, in depth interview, grounded theory	16
Quantitative	Survey and analysis	58
Total		92

4. Industry/ Organisation

Organizations studied in these research papers are categorized as Public and Private Sector. Public sector organizations included hospitals, banks, universities, schools and other public sectors in different countries and studies from the Private sector included hospitals, Information technology, BPO, call centre, Banks, Private colleges, the Insurance sector. Few studies also did a comparative study of both public and private sectors and few studies took multiple organisations for their study.

4.5 Sample Size

All the quantitative and qualitative studies included sample size in their studies it was less in qualitative studies as compared to in quantitative and mixed research papers. In these research papers data was collected from working professionals in various sectors which they choose to study. Since our study is based on work-life balance on gender so in all studies whether qualitative, quantitative or mixed both male and female employed are participants which ranged from 9 papers collected data from dual working professional in which both husband and wife are working it ranged from 9 (couples) to 3381(couples) 9 studies did not indicate any sample size as these were based on case studies and rest 66 studies included working professionals from various organisations ranged from 30 to 2769 working professionals.

5. Variables that affect work life balance

5.1 Spouse support- Among 82 studies only two studies revealed spouse support. In a study by Reeves et al. (2009) and Schmidt (2011) men are helping their spouse in various household activities from maintenance, cleaning responsibilities to repairs on equal status with women.

5.2 Organisation Policy- In a study by Rice et, al (1992), Gunavathy (2010), Organisation behaviour plays an important role in work non-work relationships. Singh (2014), Daipuria and Kakar (2013), HyeKyoung Kim (2014), explains achieving a good balance between work and family commitments is a growing concern for contemporary employees and organisations. Parkes and Langford (2008), Pasamar& Cabrera (2013), Moore (2007) few companies promote work-life balance which is linked with the supervisor's evaluation of OCB. Carlson et, al (2013) and allows individuals to negotiate roles with members of a dyad (Carlson) (2009). The findings of Rajkumar & Kaur (2012) were contrasted as the

study reveal that there was no support from organisations and a very less percentage of organisations have work-life policies for balancing their work-life which resulted in a situation of stress, work overload, time pressure when they told about their daily routine activities.

5.3 Stress- The findings of Schmidt (2015) are related to stress due to Work-life balance revealed that the presence of children under the age of six in the home was found to be a significant predictor of spillover for females. Gatrell and cooper (2008) argue that the pressure to organise work-life balance, according to embodied and gendered social norms, is a cause of stress to both fathers and mothers who are employed at a managerial level. Wheatley (2012) Senthilkumar (2012) finds that women face more stress in achieving work-life balance; there is spill-over between work and non-work activities, creating time allocation challenges, and stress, in a study by Lockwood (2003) moderate amounts of stress can be benign, even beneficial, and most people are equipped to deal with it. However, increasing levels of stress can rapidly lead to low employee morale, poor productivity, and decreasing job satisfaction.

5.4 Supervisor support- Baral & Bhargava (2011), Kishino (2015) and Lapierre & Allen (2006) finds Supervisor support, job characteristics, WLBP and work-family culture predicted WFE. Core Self Evaluations, family support and job characteristics predicted FWE. T. Alexandra Beauregard (2014) CWB emerged as both a negative emotional reaction to unfairness and as a tool used by employees to restore equity in the exchange relationship with their employer.

5.5 Health/ wellbeing- Guest (2002), Singh (2014) and Ghalawat & Sukhija (2012) This study finds that outcome of work-life imbalance to reduced health, wellbeing and effective functioning among individuals and families, strained marital relation, blood pressure. Rajadhyaksha (2012) commonly offered work-life interventions by Indian companies to address issues of gender equality, flexibility, stress reduction, health awareness and childcare.

5.6 Conflict- Adams et al (1996), Nancy R. Lockwood (2003), Waumsley & Houston (2010), Ahuja et al., (2007), and Schmidt (2015). the relationship between work and family can be simultaneously characterized by conflict and support. Work-life conflict can have adverse effects on both families and workplaces, impacting the wellbeing of society as a whole. demographic characteristic plays an important role in conflict Greenhaus et al (1989) The impact of task characteristics and work salience on work-family conflict was somewhat stronger for women than for men.. Jayaweera (2005), Zhao and Qu (2009), L Riz (2013), Beutell (2007, Salam (2014), Judge et al (2006) Work Family Conflict was found to have a negative relationship with Job Satisfaction. Bruck (2007) considering all three forms of conflict simultaneously (time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based), regression results revealed that behavior-based was the only form of conflict significantly related to job satisfaction.

Few studies by Anafarta (2011), Lee and Hong (2005), Vallone and Donaldson (2001) and Gilley et al., (2015) showed moderate levels of WFC/ FWC.

5.7 Demographic-Shah (2009), Toth (2005), Moen and Yu, (2000), Emslie & hunt (2009). A changing economy Results suggest that in an increasingly globalizing India, young Indians will strive to preserve traditional values collectively when it comes to family, but will loosen their reins on workplace collectivism

Wendy J Casper, David Weltman, Elineen K Wesiga (2007) and Warriar (2013) Singles perceived more inequity in work-life support from their organisation than did those with families. Rajadhyaksha & Bhatnagar (2000), Cinmon (2006), Frone (1996), Kakkar and Bhandari (2016) Emslie and Shah (2015) finds that women are more committed to the homemaker role than men demonstrated lower efficacy in managing these conflicts than men.

5.8 Enrichment- Baral and Bhargava (2011) moderated the relationship between supervisor support and WFE. Rupashree Baral and Shivganesh Bhargava (2011) work-to-family enrichment mediated the relationships between job characteristics and all job outcomes and between supervisor support and affective commitment.

5.9 Flexibility- Drew et al (2005), the greatest obstacle is long working hours. Dan Wheatley (2012), Chou and Cheung. - (2013), Yuile (2013), Lingard et al (2010) Employers also need to reconsider their approach to flexible working, five-day work and career breaks to dissolve the negative repercussions. Linda et al (2011) the male participants manage their time better than the female participants, independently of their age or the number of their children. On the other hand, time poverty is prominent among both women and men.

5.10 Job satisfaction-Noor (2011), Padma and Reddy (2014), Devi and Rani (2012) and Jayaprakash & Madhavi (2014) job satisfaction and organisational commitment are partial mediators for the relationship between work-life balance and intention to leave.

Salguero et al. (2010) and Saeed and Farooqi (2014) the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between work-to-family conflict and job satisfaction, such that women show a lower level of job satisfaction than men.

5.11 Career development

Perrone et al (2005) Results of gender analyses indicated that women in this study participated more in parenting and housework, whereas men participated more in career and leisure activities

Gatrell and Cooper (2008) argued that mothers may be more able to access opportunities to work flexibly than fathers, but that mothers' embodied absences from the workplace may lead to restricted career progress, a situation which is highly stressful for work-oriented women.

6.Avenues for future research/Research Gap

6.1 Lack of gender difference research-Gareis et al. (2003) state that future research should also address the question of whether these effects (variables) are gender-specific, or whether they would apply equally to men and to women who accommodate their work to their family needs. Barnet and Bruch (1987) determine the dominant causal direction of these relationships. Greenhaus et al. (1989) Additional research are needed to understand the dynamics of gender differences in work-family conflict within two-career relationships.

6.2 Lack of longitudinal research

Many studies found the research gap that there is a need for longitudinal design these are Adams et al (1996), Bruck et al (2002), Md- Sidin et al (2008), Yuile et al (2012), Beauregard

(2014). Some say it is required to distinguish the short term and long-term effects of Work-life balance (Greenhaus et al, 1989; Greenhaus et al, 2003) through longitudinal research researchers could examine various variables of Work-life balance (Grant- Vallone &Davidson, 2001) (Casper et al, 2007) (Baral and Bhargava, 2011). Future studies employing longitudinal designs would be helpful in establishing causal relationships the need for qualitative studies to gain deeper and richer insights into how women and men experience and cope with conflicts in the work-family interface (Yavas et al, 2008) it would be worthwhile to carry out a similar study with a sample made up of an equal number of males and females to investigate the impact of gender, too (Anafarta,2011)

6.3 Methodological issues- Adams et al (1996) future research is to examine the relationships among the forms of conflict and types of support with more advanced statistical methodologies such as structural equation modelling. Grant- Vallone & Donaldson (2001), Rajadhyaksha& Bhatnagar (2000), Cinmon (2006), Frone (2003), Grandey et al (2005), Waumsley et al (2010), Calvo-Salguero et al (2010), Clare et al (2010), Rajadhyaksha (2012), Chimote& Srivastava (2013), Gilley et al (2015) Future studies should also continue to refine the methodology used in the area of work-family research. Beutell (2007), Perrone et al (2005), Emslie & Hunt (2009), Wesley et al (2009), Zhao & Qu (2009) Proper sampling method to be used for future research. Gunavathy (2010), Singh (2014) Future researchers may conduct qualitative studies to gain in-depth knowledge Singh (2014)

6.4 Approaching different organisation/ industry.

Eileen et al, (2005) a comparative study with a multinational company could be conducted in the future to understand how well foreign company work-life balance policies are accepted. Baral& Bhargava (2010) Future studies may go for fair representation of manufacturing and IT sectors. Pasamar& Cabrera (2013) Future research may analyse different companies, industries and contexts to determine whether the perceptions of institutional pressures and the resulting clusters are similar. Riz (2013) for future research

different industries can be taken for the study purpose and a more in-depth analysis of work-life balance should be studied.

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