

Research Paper

The Interrelationship of Work-Life Balance, Mental Wellbeing and Emotional Intelligence Among Women Corporate Employees

B. Jayapriya^{1*}, V. Raji Sugumar²

ABSTRACT

Background: The role of women employees in corporate world as well as in society is splendid while considering their immense contribution in our economy, growth. Due to their multiple roles in the society achieving mental wellbeing and work life balance has become vital to ensure sustainable growth. Since this study aims to explore the mental wellbeing, work life balance pattern and emotional intelligence of women employees. **Methodology:** It is a cross sectional social study conducted among 60 corporate women employees from Puducherry between the age group of 25 to 40 years. Self-administered questionnaire was designed and used to collect data regarding socio-demographic profile, work life balance pattern, mental wellbeing and Dr. Paul Mohapel's pre- validated scale was used to assess the emotional intelligence score. **Result:** Out of 60 women employees, 50% of the selected respondents scored high emotional intelligence score. 34% of them expressed that there is no work life balance. 37% of them agreed there is gender discrimination in workplace. 54% of the people ask for help from their colleagues when there is heavy workload and 90% of them express their hardship to their colleagues among which 100% and 75% respectively are those who scored high emotional intelligence score which expressed there is a significant relationship between high emotional intelligence and seeking help ($p=0.038$). **Discussion:** The findings of the study indicate that a significant number of respondents faced challenges in work life balance and mental wellbeing and gender biases. Emotionally intelligent employees expressed their hardship to their colleagues and sought assistance highly.

Keywords: Women Employees, Work-life, Mental wellbeing, Emotional Intelligence

Women workers play a central role in the corporate world and society at large. Their significant contribution to our economy and growth is undeniable. They use their skills and talents to guide society, families, and respective organizations on the path to growth. However, because their roles in society are diverse, it is important to achieve psychological health and work-life balance to ensure sustainable growth. These factors have a great impact not only on their work performance, but also on their normal life. Emotional intelligence plays a key role in supporting women employees to achieve mental health and work-life balance.

¹Research Scholar, Research Department of Home Science, Bharathidasan Government College for Women, An autonomous College affiliated to Pondicherry University, Puducherry

²Associate Professor & Principal (i/c), Research Department of Home Science Bharathidasan Government College for Women, An autonomous College affiliated to Pondicherry University, Puducherry

*Corresponding Author

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Psychological well-being is the well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of everyday life, is able to work productively and successfully, and contributes to his or her community effectively.

Work-life balance is a concept that refers to the state of equilibrium between an individual's personal and professional life. It is a state in which a person can successfully manage work and personal responsibilities without experiencing undue stress or conflict (Greenhaus and Hülsell, 1985).

Mental health and work-life balance are extremely important for women employees, as they often play different roles such as employee, caregiver, and spouse. Employees who are mentally fit and have a good work-life balance are more likely to be productive, engaged, and satisfied. They are also less likely to experience burnout and other health problems.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use one's own emotions and the emotions of others. It is a critical skill for success in both personal and professional life. (Goleman, D. (2007). Goleman's model of EI is based on four components: i) Self-awareness: The ability to identify and understand your own emotions. ii) Self-regulation: The ability to manage your emotions in a healthy way. iii) social awareness: The ability to understand the emotions of others. iv) Relationship management: The ability to build and maintain positive relationships with others.

It is an important skill for success in both personal and professional life. EI has been shown to be associated with a variety of positive outcomes, including psychological well-being, work-life balance, and job performance. EI helps women employees achieve mental health and work-life balance in a variety of ways. For instance, EI can help women employees to identify and manage emotions effectively, build and maintain strong relationships with colleagues and managers, set and achieve realistic goals communicate effectively deal with stress and setbacks.

Statement of the Problem

The relationship between work-life balance, mental well-being and emotional intelligence is important because these factors could significantly affect the productivity, commitment, and satisfaction of women employees in companies as well as in their personal life. A poor work-life balance can lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout. These things can negatively affect mental well-being. Similarly, poor mental well-being and emotional intelligence can make it difficult for women corporate employees to achieve a good work-life balance.

Hence, the research aims to explore about work-life balance, mental well-being, and emotional intelligence and their association among women corporate employees which could through light on the role of these three factors that can help to develop more effective interventions to support women employees in their workplace as well as in the society.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are given below.

- To explore the socio-demographic status of the selected women employees.
- To explore the work life balance pattern of the selected women employees.
- To assess the association between emotional intelligence and mental well-being of the women employees.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a growing body of research on the relationship between psychological well-being, work-life balance, and emotional intelligence in women employees.

A study conducted by Balaji, R. (2014) suggested that it is highly important to study what women undergo in their career path as they will be handling their family as well at the same time and the stress and work pressure is far more than others as a lot of time management, job management, kid management, house management.

A study conducted in Bangalore city among women IT professionals by Ravi Kumar, T. (2014) has also found that there is a significant impact of emotional intelligence on work life balance.

Another study conducted by Singh and Kaur (2019) found that EI had a positive impact on the psychological well-being and work-life balance of women employees.

A study by Sharma et al. (2020) found that EI mediated the relationship between work-life balance and psychological well-being of women employees.

Another study conducted by Begum, G. T., & Osmany, M. (2019) revealed that there is a significant positive correlation of work-life balance with psychological well-being and mental health while there is significant negative correlation of work-life balance with psychological distress of women managers.

The findings of the study conducted by Channar, Z et al. (2011) showed that women are discriminated more than males in private sector than in public sector. It showed that gender discrimination decreases satisfaction & motivation and commitment & enthusiasm level of employees and increases the stress level in the employees.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a cross-sectional social study conducted among 60 women employees from various corporate companies in Puducherry in the age group of 25-40 years using snowball sampling technique.

Data collection tool

A self-administered questionnaire is a type of questionnaire that is completed by the participant himself. This type of questionnaire is often used in research because it is relatively inexpensive and effective to administer. For this study, a self-administered questionnaire was designed to collect information on the following variables: i) Socio-demographic profile: This included variables such as age, education, marital status, and income. ii) Work-life balance model: This included variables such as workload, incidence of missing personal life events and family responsibilities. Iii) Mental well-being in workplace: This included variables such as stress, discomfort at work, gender discrimination and help seeking behaviour in workplace.

Emotional Intelligence: This was assessed using a questionnaire adapted from the pre-validated scale by Dr. Paul Mohapel. The scale consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The scale measures two different components of emotional intelligence: i) Self-awareness: The ability to understand our

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emotions and how they affect behaviour. ii) Self-control: The ability to control our emotions and expression in a healthy way.

Data analysis

This study is based on the primary data collected among the selected respondents. The data collected in the study has been analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Chi Square test) using tools such as Microsoft Excel and SPSS. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the distribution of sample characteristics and variables. Inferential statistics are used to test research hypotheses.

Ethical considerations

All participants in this study have been informed of the purpose of the study and the risks and benefits of participation. Participants are also informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All information is collected and kept confidential. Informed consent has been obtained from all the participants.

This study provides valuable information on the relationship between mental well-being, work-life balance and emotional intelligence among women workers in Puducherry. The results of this study can be used to develop interventions that support women workers to reach their full potential.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socio- Demographic Details of the Women Employees (N= 60)

Marital Status	Percentage (%)	Number of Samples
Married	53.33	32
Single	46.67	28
Educational Status		
Undergraduate	36.67	22
Postgraduate	63.33	38
Family Type		
Nuclear Family	43.33	26
Joint Family	56.67	34
Age in years		
25 - 35	55.00	33
36-45	45.00	27

The socio-demographic data of the selected respondents from table 1 are discussed as follows:

Marital status: 53.33% of respondents were married and 46.67% were single. Education level: 36.67% of the respondents had a basic degree and 63.33% had a postgraduate degree. Family type: 43.33% of the respondents lived in a nuclear family and 56.67% in a joint family. These results indicate that most of the respondents were married, had a master's degree, and lives in a joint family, that indicates that women in Puducherry combine their work and family life well and are highly educated, joint families are still prevalent in Puducherry and women play an important role in these families.

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Table 2. Work Life Balance, Mental Well- being and Emotional Intelligence Assessment (N=60)

	Percentage (%)	Number of Samples
WORK LIFE BALANCE		
YES	66.67	40
NO	33.33	20
WORKLOAD (N= 20) *		
IN OFFICE	80	16
IN HOME	20	4
PERSONAL LIFE EVENTS		
MISSED	56.67	34
NOT MISSED	43.33	26
FREQUENCY OF EXPRESSING HARDSHIP IN WORK		
MOSTLY	46.67	28
NEVER	10	6
SOMETIMES	43.33	26
SEEKING ASSISTANCE FOR WORKLOAD		
YES	53.33	32
NO	46.67	28
DO YOU FEEL STRESSED IN WORKPLACE		
YES	56.67	34
NO	43.33	26
HOW OFTEN YOU FEEL STRESS IN OFFICE		
RARELY	76.67	46
MOSTLY	23.33	14
EXPERIENCE OF DISCOMFORT AT WORK		
YES	56.67	34
NO	43.33	26
HOW DO YOU TRY TO ALLIVIAE DISCOMFORT		
ADJUST	16.67	10
TAKE A BREAK	60	36
I WILL EXPRESS TO COLLEAGUES	23.33	14
MY WORK ENVIRONMENT IS FRIENDLY		
AGREE	53.33	32
DISAGREE	46.67	28
PREFERRED WORK STYLE		
OFFICE	66.67	40
WFH	33.33	20
HOW DO YOU REACCT IN DIFFICULT SITUATION IN OFFICE		
PROFESSIONAL	73.33	44
EMOTIONAL	26.67	16
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN IN WORKPLACE		
YES	63.33	38
NO	36.67	22
HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN WORKPLACE		
YES	36.67	22
NO	63.33	38
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE		
HIGH SCORE	50	30
LOW SCORE	50	30

**The N = 20 are those who responded "No" to work life balance.*

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The work-life balance pattern, mental wellbeing, and emotional intelligence score data of the respondents from table 2 are discussed as follows:

Work-life balance pattern:

Work-life balance: 66.67% of respondents reported having a work-life balance, while 33.33% reported no work-life balance and they stated the most common reason for not balancing work and family life was office work (80%), followed by workload at home (20%). Missed out on personal life: 56.67% of respondents said that they missed out on personal life due to work commitments. Disclosing workload to others: 46.67% of respondents reported disclosing their workload to colleagues most of the time, 10% reported never disclosing their workload, and 43.33% reported disclosing their workload occasionally.

The findings of this study show that most of the selected women workers have a good work-life balance. However, there is a significant number of women who do not have a work-life balance. The most common cause of work-life imbalance of the selected respondents is office workload. Majority of respondents who do not have a work-life balance miss their personal life due to work commitments, which suggests that work-life balance is an important issue for women workers. The results also suggest that many of the respondents are willing to disclose their workload to colleagues or superiors.

Mental well-being and emotional intelligence in work:

Stress at work: 56.67% of the respondents reported feeling stressed at work and 43.33% did not experience stress at work mostly. Frequency of work stress: 76.67% of respondents reported that they rarely feel stressed and 23.33% mostly. Discomfort at work: 56.67% of the respondents reported that they experienced discomfort at work and 43.33% did not feel discomfort at work. Ways to relieve discomfort at work: 60% of respondents reported taking a break from work to relieve discomfort, while 16.67% reported adjusting their work to relieve discomfort. Work environment friendliness: 53.33% of respondents thought that their work environment is friendly and 46.67% disagreed. Preferred way of working: 66.67% of respondents preferred working at home (WFH) and 33.33% office work. Reaction to difficult work situations: 73.33% of respondents reported that they react to difficult work situations professionally and 26.67% emotionally. Equal opportunities for women in the office: 63.33% of the respondents thought that women have equal opportunities in the office, while 36.67% disagreed. Gender discrimination in the workplace: 36.67% of the respondents stated that they encountered gender discrimination in the workplace and 63.33% did not encounter gender discrimination in the workplace.

The findings of this study indicates that a significant proportion of women workers experience stress and discomfort at work. The most common way to relieve discomfort is to take a break. However, it is important to note that this is not a sustainable solution. Organizations must take steps to reduce employee stress and discomfort.

The results also suggest that most women workers prefer to work at home. This is probably due to the flexibility and work-life balance offered by WFH. Organizations should consider offering WFH opportunities to their employees as it can improve their job satisfaction and productivity.

The results also suggest that most women employees in Puducherry believe that women have equal opportunities in the office. However, it is important to note that a significant

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proportion of respondents (36.67%) reported experiencing gender discrimination in the workplace. Organizations must take steps to create a more inclusive and equal work environment for all employees.

Emotional Intelligence: 50% of the selected respondents scored high emotional intelligence score. 54% of the people ask for help from their colleagues or superiors if they had difficulty or heavy work load and 90% of them express their hardship to their colleagues among which 100% and 75% respectively are those who scored high emotional intelligence score which expressed there is a significant relationship between high emotional intelligence and seeking help ($p=0.038$ at significance level of 5%). The study found emotionally intelligent employees expressed their hardship to their colleagues and sought assistance highly. Hence, offering training on emotional intelligence can help them to cope with stress and other challenges in the work environment and could help them to lead a balanced life.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the study highly focused on exploring the work life balance pattern, mental well-being, and emotional intelligence and their role in women employees. The findings of this study show that most of the selected women workers in Puducherry have a good work-life balance. However, there are significant number of women employees who responded about the hardships in work environment, the study suggests that organizations in Puducherry can support their women employees in achieving work-life balance by offering flexible working arrangements, such as the option to work from home or flexible working hours and Offers childcare. Create a culture of support and understanding where women employees feel comfortable expressing their workload to colleagues and managers. Through these activities, organizations can help their employees achieve a healthy work-life balance.

They could focus on reducing the workload of their employees both in the office and at home by delegating tasks according to the priority, automating tasks and giving employees the resources; they need to do their jobs effectively. Organizations should also promote a culture of work-life balance. This can be done by encouraging employees to take rest breaks, use their vacation time and leave work outside of working hours. Through these activities, organizations can help their employees achieve a healthy work-life balance and be more productive and engaged at work.

The results of this study show that organizations can improve the work environment for women employees in several areas to help with their mental wellbeing. They include Reduces employee stress and discomfort, Provision of training program to enhance their emotional intelligence, Create a more inclusive and equal work environment for all employees. Through these activities, organizations can create a more positive and productive work environment for all employees. Mental health and work-life balance are extremely important for women employees. Emotional intelligence plays an important role in helping women employees achieve mental health and work-life balance. Further research is needed to understand the complex relationships between these variables and to develop effective interventions to help women workers reach their full potential. EI helps women employees identify and manage their stress levels. Stress is a major cause of mental health problems, and EI helps workers identify sources of stress and develop coping mechanisms. EI helps women employees set and achieve realistic goals. When women employees have realistic goals, they are less likely to feel overwhelmed and stressed. EI helps women employees break down large goals into smaller, more manageable steps. EI helps women employees

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develop and maintain strong relationships with co-workers and managers to have a strong social support network.

Limitations:

It is important to note that this study was conducted on a small sample of 60 women workers in Puducherry. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all women workers in India. However, the findings provide some insight into the challenges women workers face in the workplace and areas where organizations can improve.

It would be interesting to do further research on the following topics:

- Specific causes of stress and discomfort among women workers.
- The impact of gender discrimination on women employees.
- Effectiveness of different interventions to reduce stress and discomfort and promote gender equality in the workplace.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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