

Work Life Balance: A Comparative Study of Government and Private Sector Women Employees

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ABSTRACT

In today's fast-paced and highly competitive world, maintaining a balance between work and family life has become a significant concern for many individuals, particularly women employees. Work-life balance refers to the ability to manage professional responsibilities while also dedicating sufficient time to personal life and other interests. This raises an important question: does the nature of one's organization—whether in the government or private sector—affect this balance? The present study is, therefore, an attempt to examine and compare work life balance among government and private sector women employees. The hypothesis posited that there would be no noteworthy distinction in the capacity of women who are employed in government sector and those who are working in private sector to establish a balance between their work life and personal life. A sample comprising 100 women, 50 government employee and 50 private employee ages between 20-60 years were randomly selected from Uttarakhand. The data were collected using Hyman's (2005) work life balance scale and analysed by calculating mean, SD and 't'.

Keywords: *Work life Balance, government sector, private sector, working women*

Maintaining a healthy symmetry in professional responsibilities and personal well-being is inevitable for a successful and happy life for women. Sometimes the working conditions of organisations such as long working hours, stringent deadlines, and heightened levels of stress pose significant challenges before the employees. Therefore, the relevance of achieving work-life balance has garnered increased recognition in recent times, as evidenced by the rising prevalence of stress-related ailments, burnout, and many other mental health problems among the population.

Work-life balance refers to the integration of an individual's personal and professional lives, and it can be particularly challenging for employees with family responsibilities, such as women. It has become a major concern for those seeking a better quality of life (Breitenecker and Shah, 2018). Role balance, in this context, is defined as the ability to be fully engaged in performing each role within one's overall role system, approaching every role and interaction with attentiveness and care (Marks & MacDermid, 1996).

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There are mainly two types of employment sectors in India, one is government owned and the other is private sector. The government sector employee refers to an individual who is employed by a government entity at any level. Such employees are subjected to the rules, regulations and policies set forth by the government or relevant governing bodies. Likewise, private sector employee is someone employed by a privately-held company or organization, as opposed to a governmental entity. These individuals generally work for businesses focused on profit-making objectives. Private sector workers can be found across diverse industries like technology, finance, manufacturing, retail, and services. Their employment terms, including conditions and benefits, are typically set forth by the employer.

Balancing personal and professional responsibilities is a challenge faced by both government and private sector employees. In today's competitive environment, workplace stress has become a widespread issue across various occupations and industries. Factors such as heavy workloads, unrealistic deadlines, and numerous job responsibilities often create stressful conditions. The constant pressure to meet targets and deliver results on time can lead to burnout and a persistent feeling of being overwhelmed. Stress may further intensify when individuals feel a lack of control over decision-making, limited autonomy in their roles, or excessive supervision. Such situations can result in frustration and a sense of helplessness, especially when employees feel unheard in important aspects of their work. Moreover, maintaining a balance between professional duties and personal, family, and social commitments becomes increasingly difficult when work demands encroach upon personal time and space. Over the past few decades, work-life balance has gained considerable importance for both individuals and organizations. Research indicates that achieving a healthy balance not only enhances employee well-being but also improves productivity, ultimately contributing to better organizational performance (Guthrie, 2012).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Work life balance is very important for satisfaction and overall personal wellbeing of the employees, irrespective of their age, gender, socio-economic status and nationality. It affects the interpersonal relations in families, as well as, the outcome of the work in organizations belonging to any sector-private or government. The enormous value of work life balance in role performance and life satisfaction has inspired researchers to explore various factors affecting this ability of the individual. Some of the relevant studies have been mentioned below.

A study conducted in Canada revealed that one in four Canadians found their work obligations like long working hours, the pressure of globalisation, and the expectation of a constant connection making it difficult for them to fulfil their duties at home. As a result, the workers have started demanding changes in their working conditions from their employers. This is especially true for younger workers. Additionally, older workers are working longer hours than they did a few years ago, and in order to meet their needs, they are demanding different work arrangements (**Duxbury and Higgins, 2001**).

A survey on work-life balance conducted in 2002 by **True Careers** found that 70% of over 1,500 respondents reported lacking a harmonious balance between their personal and professional fields, both.

A study titled "Holding a Job, Having a Life: Strategies for Change" conducted by the Work Institute of America in 2001, highlighted that solutions driven by employees can mitigate

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overtime, stress, and workload while enhancing flexibility and providing more time for family and leisure activities.

Work–life imbalance can lead to several adverse outcomes, including depression and overall dissatisfaction with life. Supporting this view, Lowe’s study, cited in Delecta (2011), highlights the possible consequences of imbalance, such as lower life satisfaction, increased levels of depression, and a greater risk of substance abuse. Recent surveys further reveal that an increasing number of employees have struggled over the past three years to reduce conflicts between their professional and personal lives. **Delecta (2011)** also notes that organizations often expect employees to devote more time and energy to work, while families simultaneously rely on them to meet their domestic responsibilities. Individuals who fail to maintain a proper balance between these competing demands may experience family-related difficulties, including decreased satisfaction and reduced involvement in household roles.

In her review article on Work-Life Balance, **Kashyap (2021)** underscores the contemporary importance of this issue in today's professional landscape, where individuals grapple with balancing personal and work commitments. The review highlights the growing acknowledgment among companies of the importance of integrating work-life balance into their operations. Notably, the execution of such policies has been shown to yield tangible benefits, including heightened employee dedication, satisfaction, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. Moreover, fostering work-life balance has been linked to enhanced individual happiness, reduced stress levels, and improved overall well-being, both physically and mentally. However, it is acknowledged that achieving work-life balance in the workplace poses significant challenges, given the diverse needs of employees and organizations

Mishra (2022) in her comparative study finds that quality of work life of people working under government sector is significantly high as compared to the people working under private sector.

Mohan and Ashok (2011) investigated the impact of Quality of Work Life (QWL) on employee work performance within the textile and weaving mill settings. They explored various facets of QWL, including equitable compensation, health and wellness, job security, satisfaction, opportunities for growth, interpersonal relationships, and the balance between work and non-work life. The study highlighted the complexity of QWL, presenting challenges for both individuals and organizations. It underscored the significant implications of welfare measures on employee performance.

The above description reveals various aspects of work-life balance, but there is still a need to know what is the difference in work-life balance of women working in Private sector and those working in government sector. The present study is therefore being conducted to find out the role of the type of organization on women employees’ work-life balance.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A sample of 100 working women was selected from various regions of Uttarakhand through random sampling method. The age range of respondents covered from 20 to 60 years. There are 50 government employees and 50 employees of private sector institution in the sample. The working women come from a variety of backgrounds and occupations, including self-employment, banking, advocacy, teaching and medicine.

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Variables

- Independent variable- working status of women
- Dependent variable- work-life balance

Objective

To compare the difference between government and private sector women employee in their work-life balance.

Hypothesis

There would be no significance difference between government and private sector women employee in their work-life balance.

Tool Description

A 15-item scale originally developed by Fisher (2001) and modified by Hyman (2005) was used to measure work-life balance. This 15-item scale measures three aspects of work-life balance: Work interference with personal life (WIPL-7 items), personal life interference with work (PLIW-4 items), and work/personal life enhancement (WPLE-4 items). Work interference with personal life (WIPL) was the first dimension, and it contained items like "Put personal life on hold for work" and "Personal life suffers because of work." These items indicate how much work gets in the way of personal time. Work-life interference with personal life (WIPL) is the second dimension. The items in this component show the opposite direction of interference between work and personal life. The third dimension of work/personal life enhancement (WPLE) included items that addressed the benefits of one's work on one's personal life or vice versa, and the degree to which one's personal life contributes to one's work.

Scoring

The scale is five-point Likert scale (Strongly disagree-1, Disagree-2, Neither Agree nor Disagree-3, Agree-4, Strongly Agree-5). The scoring was done as 5, 4,3,2,1 for the dimension of WIPL (except item 7, which was reverse scored i.e. and PLIW, since the items were negatively worded. Higher score referred to lower interference and, low levels of interference were elucidated as higher levels of work life balance. For the dimension of WPLE, scoring was 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 (i.e. Strongly Disagree -1, Disagree -2, Neither Agree nor Disagree- 3, Agree-4, Strongly Agree-5) as the items were positively worded. High score specifies as high work/ personal life enhancement.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered on 100 women, 50 employees of the government, and 50 employees of the private sector, representing a range of professions and ages 20 to 60, from different parts of Uttarakhand. The random sampling technique was used to collect the sample. In order for the respondents to feel comfortable during the administration of the study, they were given assurance about confidentiality and anonymity.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed by calculating Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' test for comparing both groups of employed women and measuring the significance of difference in their obtained scores.

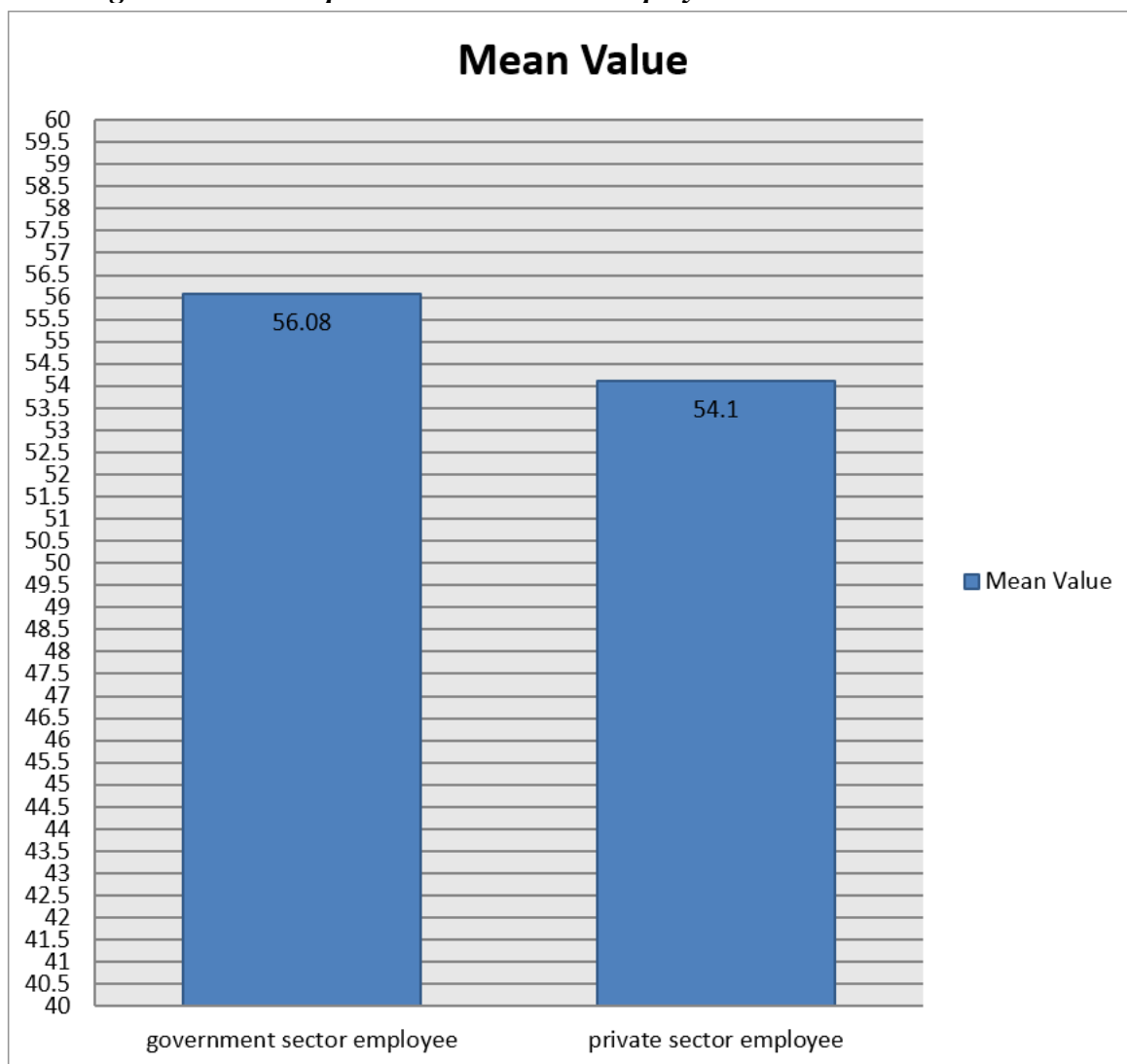
RESULTS

This study aimed to compare the work-life balance of women who are working in the public and private sectors by computing the mean, standard deviation, and applying the 't' test for comparison. The data were analysed after the investigation was completed, and the findings are shown in the following table.

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' score of work-life balance between government and private sector women employees

Work-life balance scores	Government sector		Private sector		T value
	women	employees	women	employees	
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	
	56.08	9.79	54.1	8.57	0.2894

Graph 1: Comparison through graphical representation of work life balance (Mean Scores) between government and private sector women employees



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to compare the Work-life balance of women who are working in government sector and private sector organizations. Hyman's (2005) work life balance questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings of this investigation were examined

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in relation to the initial hypothesis. The hypothesis posited that there would be no statistically significant variation in the work life balance of government and private sector women employees. According to the results (Table 1), the mean for working women in government sector is 56.08, while the mean for working women in private sector is 54.1. The standard deviations of both the groups are 9.79 and 8.57, respectively.

The 't' test was used to measure the significance of the difference of the mean between the two groups. With a degree of freedom (df) of 98, the values of 't' is 2.63 at the 0.01 level of significance and 1.98 at the 0.05 level of significance. In this study, the obtained value of 't' is 0.2894, meaning that it is not significant at any of the above-mentioned levels. It demonstrates that the difference of means in Work-life balance of women working in government sector and private sector is not significant.

The available literature shows conflicting opinions about the capability of work life balance in women employed in government and Private sector. In our study we found that there is no significant difference between both of the groups. They experience stress, but they know how to manage and maintain a balance between their personal and professional lives simultaneously.

Limitations of the study

Present research has a few limitations. The small sample size is the primary limitation of this research. We only chose 100 working women for this investigation because of time constraints. Results might have been different with a larger sample size. Another drawback is that this study only looked at government and private sector working women's capacity to balance their personal and professional lives; whereas there could be many other aspects of research on the topic such as stress, gender, marital adjustment, family structure, Anxiety, depression etc. These limitations will be taken care of in future research on the topic.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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