

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN LAHORE, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Purpose – Increase participation and representation of women in the labor force has created numerous challenges for them, especially related to balancing their work and family duties. This challenge becomes more severe in collectivist cultures such as Pakistan due to a defined typical role of women, religious obligations and cultural and sub-cultural norms and values. Moreover, in Pakistan the concepts of entrepreneurship and new ventures are often associated with male members of the society.

Design /Methodology / Approach – This study is specifically conducted in the area of Lahore (Pakistan) and is based on a survey questionnaire administered to women running their own businesses. Data has been analyzed using advanced statistical techniques

Findings – Results show that there is strong association between work-life balance and factors such as role overload, dependent care issues, health issues, time management and support network. Majority of the surveyed women, were suffering from issues related to work-life balance.

Practical Implications – This study aims at exploring the factors that help or hinder a woman entrepreneur in Pakistan to maintain a balance between her professional and personal life. For a woman in Pakistan, to first define her role in the society and then seek to strike a balance between work and personal life is tedious task

Originality Value – Such studies discuss practical issues present in the Pakistani society. This is a unique study as it is focusing on Pakistan (Lahore), where a very limited research has been done to highlight the issues faced by working women.

Keywords work-life balance, entrepreneurial women, role overload, dependent care issues, quality of health, social support network, time management

Research type Research Paper

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In majority of developing countries, including Pakistan the word “Entrepreneurship” is often associated with male members of the society. However, increased participation and representation of females in the labor force has posed some serious challenges for them. In a collectivist culture like Pakistan, where a stereo-typed role of women is defined in the society (Rehman and Roomi, 2012), it is increasingly becoming difficult for women to balance her personal and professional life. Pakistan, as a country has undergone several major social transformation over the past few years, especially related to the opportunities of education, training and work being provided to the female segment of the society. Women

The current issue of this journal is available on
the official website of Institute: <http://www.ibfbzu.com/index.php/sajbs/>



South Asian Journal of Banking and Social Sciences

Vol. 1, No.01 (2015), ISSN: 2410-2067

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have started to recognize their intrinsic talents and acute skills. There are also many governmental and non-governmental organizations which are working especially for females entrepreneurs (Agarwal and Lenka, 2015). Although both men and women are now working together in most of the Pakistani organizations, yet women still face some problems due to their family and societal structure. According to Mathew (2011), women across the globe are facing work-life balance issues, because they are generally over-burdened and it's difficult for them to "come out" of their typical family oriented role.

As part of a dynamic workforce, women face many challenges. One of the most significant challenges faced by the women is managing family and work responsibilities (Frone, Russel and Copper, 1992). In order to cope up with this challenge, women across the globe have begun to convert their interests into 'self-employment', through which they are able to better manage their work and family lives. According to (Baber and Monaghan, 1988), the benefit of self-employment is to achieve more flexible hours along with greater control of life and work. Apart from this, the uneven distribution of the household duties and responsibilities between men and women is another major cause of difficulties and complications for females (Rehman and Roomi, 2012). Women face uneven distribution of childcare and other domestic responsibilities which become major barriers in the advancement of their career (Cross and Linehan, 2006).

The concept of work-life balance has mainly been discussed in western context (Cross and Linehan, 2006; Hendricks, 2005; Key, Gunterberg, Holz, Wolter, 2003; Lewis and Cooper, 2005; Welter, 2004). However, some recent studies conducted in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan (Agarwal and Lenka, 2015; Mathew and Panchantham, 2011; Rehman and Roomi, 2012; Umer and Rehman, 2013; Hossain, 2007; Kumar, 2006; Rizvi and Gupta, 2009) show that this concept is also spreading in the eastern culture due to globalization, which is impacted the way organization operates. Moreover, a large proportion of the research conducted in this domain (Gurvis and Patterson, 2005; Cohen, 2009; Gurney, 2009) has taken both male and female participants as sample and have focused on the research area in a generic manner. In Pakistani context, a few studies conducted in late mid-2000 focused on exploring the work-life conflict issues of both male and female members of the society. More recently, a few studies have shifted their focus on issues related to female workers in Pakistan. This study also aims at exploring the various kinds of issues faced by the women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and what factors most significantly impact this balance.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of 'work-life balance' originated from 'Engels' Marxist text, 'Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State' (1884). His studies show that both productive and reproductive work in a family is done by the female partner. Engels presents a model which analyzes the work a women does in a professional environment, which is paid and also the domestic toil and labor she performs at home, which is unpaid. He also provides comprehensive studies on women role within family domain and within public domain. He also defines lucidly how this specific role of women provide ground work for women's relegation to men's subordination in an entrepreneurial society. The innovation in Engel's research is that he tends to define the role of women in the society. This is the area which is ignored and neglected by other 'founding fathers of sociology', (Witz and Marshall, 2004) although focus has remained in identifying the public and private circles for both men and women. (Littlewood, 2004)

But with the passage of time as well as advancement in science and technology, there is a change in the workplace of an individual. According to Lewis, Gambles, and Rapoport (2009), it has now become more interesting and affordable for employs to work in a feasible environment. There are various ways through which employees can get connected to their office work i.e. Virtual Networks, Cloud Computing, and Mobile Phones etc. These tend to provide a more flexible boundary in a professional working environment. A research by Boswell and Julie (2007) showed that 'work role' is an essential component for the modern day employees, and that employees always prefer to use intercommunication technologies for their work in the non-work duration. But there are some theories which imply that the boundary between work-life balances is blurred only due to technology control, mostly in the developed countries (Mathew and Panchanatham, 2009).

At an individual level, the work life conflict operates in a totally different mode. Many authors suggest that married women who choose to work in a professional environment are mostly the ones which enter work-life conflict (Reynolds, 2005). For that, they either have to reduce number of working hours or they have to sacrifice any of their multidimensional roles. Therefore, work-life conflict is totally dependent on an individual status and responsibilities. Many causes of this situation have been mentioned in the literature, which range from the aim of an individual to the responsibilities assigned to the individual from the family and work place. A research was conducted recently by the *Center for Work-Life Policy* (2013) which shows that around 1.7 million people around the world consider that the modern phenomenon of Globalization is the primary cause for 'excessive' hours in the work lives.

These situations are creating more problems and making the working conditions worse. The same research study analyzed the top executive of the corporate world in USA, the results show that 50% of them were not satisfied with their current position and they are even ready to leave the position. 64% workers believe that the work pressure in their life is due to their own reasons or “self-inflicted”. Also, the same study reveals that about 70% of United States residents and 80% from around the world believe that their health is being affected because of their job (*The Center for Work-Life Policy, 2013*)

According to (Roomi and Parrot, 2008), work-life balance signifies the best fit between different roles of a person’s life. Trends indicate that with increased opportunities of education, training and skill development, a large number of women are part of the labor force. As suggested in the literature, some of the elements which create work life balance include role overload, dependent care, time management and support network. Working women encounter “role overload” issues i.e. they are expected to perform a number of roles in their families i.e. spouse, caretaker, parent, household manager (Roomi and Harrison, 2010). In addition, they have to perform some roles which are assigned to them by society and community. Likewise, in order to maintain their lifestyle, females are required to take care of their own health and personal activities as well and for this they need to “manage” their time. They have to look after their family members, manage their timings and then manage their jobs and relationship with supervisors. According to Clark (2000), “Support Network” can be categorized into organizational support and family related support. According to Shelton (2006), women tend to seek supportive organizational culture, as neglecting any one aspect of their “defined role” can create work life imbalance.

In Pakistani context, a few studies conducted (Nadeem and Abbas, 2009; Noor and Maad, 2008; Roomi and Harrison, 2010) focused on exploring the work-life conflict issues of both male and female members of the society. More recently, a few studies (Goheer, 2003; Rehman and Roomi, 2012; Umer and Rehman, 2013), adopted a more women-centric approach while dealing with the issue of work-life balance. This study aims at further exploring the various kinds of issues faced by the women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and highlights those factors which most significantly impact this balance.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given the nature of the study, “exploratory” study was conducted. Co-relational hypothesis was formulated because of the specified manner of the dimensions. The basic purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between work life balance and challenges faced to achieve that balance of life in the life of entrepreneurial women in Pakistan and to know the level of work-life balance in their lives. The research was done in the natural environment without providing any contrived settings.

Unit of analysis in this study were individuals i.e. entrepreneurial women who are either married or unmarried, and are running their own business (any kind) and living in Lahore (Pakistan). The study was conducted at one point in time i.e. cross sectional study. The technique used for the data collection was questionnaire. 250 total questionnaires were distributed among entrepreneurial women, among them 218 were returned, in this way response rate was 87.20%. The questionnaire designed for this study comprised of 41 statements, related to work life balance issues being observed in Pakistan's women entrepreneurs specifically in Punjab. First part of the questionnaire contains demographics, while the second section contains questions related to the study. Respondents were instructed to fill questionnaire according to their level of satisfaction or agreement. The items were categorized using five point likert scale.

The questionnaire was first tested on a sample of 35 women entrepreneurs. All the questions and their context were discussed in detail and suggestions were incorporated in the questionnaire. The improvements enhanced the miscellany, strength and intensity of the problem.

All advanced statistical tests were applied by using SPSS, except for the demographics which were analyzed through percentage analysis done using Microsoft Excel. After entering data in the SPSS, first of all reliability of the data was checked using Cronbach Alpha test.

Table 1 Reliability Statistics (Cronbach Alpha)

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.937	42

The score of the Cronbach's Alpha whole questionnaire is 0.937; the test was applied to the total number of items in the questionnaire. There are total 42 items in the questionnaire. The score of the Cronbach's Alpha highlights, $0.937 > 0.70$, which shows that questionnaire is enough strong from the testing point of view. In the other words, it also shows that this questionnaire is 93.7% reliable; there is only 7.3 % unreliability in the questionnaire. Reliability of the questionnaire is very high for the further analysis point of view.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to comprehensively analyze the results, the data was divided into logical segments and hypotheses statements were developed. The generated results were used to test the hypotheses statements, as follows:

Age and Work-Life Balance

The following hypothesis is developed to test the relationship between “age” and “work-life balance”:

H₀: There is no difference in the mean of work life balance and age variable.

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

H₁: There is difference in the mean of work life balance and age variable.

$$H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

Table 2 ANOVA: Age and Work Life Balance

work life Balance					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.273	4	1.568	4.248	.003
Within Groups	78.635	213	.369		
Total	84.908	217			

The above table clearly shows that value of $p < 0.05$ i.e. different classes of the number of dependent variable have different perception towards age. It is concluded that H_0 is rejected, H_1 is accepted.

Time to reach office and Work-Life Balance

The suggested hypothesis is as follows:

H₀: There is no difference in the mean of work life balance and time to reach office.

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$$

H₁: There is difference in the mean of work life balance and time to reach office variable.

$$H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

Table 3 ANOVA: Work Life Balance and Time to reach office

work life Balance					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.778	4	0.444	1.139	0.339
Within Groups	83.130	213	0.390		
Total	84.908	217			

From the table above, it can be seen that value of $p > 0.05$, thus H_1 is rejected and H_0 is accepted.

Time spent on Current Business and Work-Life Balance

In order to test the relationship between the “amount of time spent on current business” and “work-life balance”, the following hypothesis statements are developed:

H₀: There is no difference in the mean of work life balance and current business duration.

H₀: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H₁: There is difference in the mean of work life balance and current business duration.

H₁: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Table 4 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Time Spent on Current Business and Work-Life Balance

	Time spent on Current Business	N	Mean Rank
Work-Life Balance	Less than 01 Year	77	87.38
	1 to 3 Years	85	93.14
	3 to 6 Years	40	170.63
	6 to 9 Years	16	150.09
	Total	218	

From the rank table, it can be seen that mean rank of work life balance of those who were working in business from few months to less than 1 year is low, while those women who were working from 1 to 3 years in this business have larger mean rank. On the other hand, the highest mean rank of work balance is 170.63, which is of women entrepreneurs operating their current business from 3 to 6 years. In short, the above trend shows that time spent on running the current business has a direct impact on work-life balance. So, we will accept alternative hypothesis H₁.

Type of Industry and Work-Life Balance

As far as the type of industry is concerned, the following hypotheses statement has been developed:

H₀: There is no difference in the mean of work life balance and type of business industry.

H₀: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H₁: There is difference in the mean of work life balance and type of business industry.

H₁: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Table 5 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Industry Type and Work-Life Balance

	Type of Business Industry	N	Mean Rank
work life Balance	Manufacturing	21	188.02
	Trading	30	111.28
	Service	167	99.31
	Total	218	

From the rank table, it can be seen that mean rank of work life balance of manufacturing class is high, while in trading it is medium and it is low in the services. So every class has different mean work life balance, from this point we will accept alternative hypothesis H_1 .

Total Professional Experience and Work-Life Balance

The suggested hypothesis statements are as follows:

H_0 : There is no difference in the mean of work life balance and total period of professional experience variable.

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$

H_1 : There is difference in the mean of work life balance and total period of professional experience variable.

$H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Table 6 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Total Professional Experience and Work-Life Balance

Total period of Professional Experience		N	Mean Rank
work life Balance	Less than a Year	49	77.71
	1 to 3 Years	56	94.43
	3 to 6 Years	84	124.54
	6 to 9 Years	14	151.68
	Greater than 09 Years	15	146.00
	Total	218	

It can be observed that mean rank of work life balance of every group varies. Those women entrepreneurs who have one year or less experience have mean rank of work life balance 77.71. Those women who have professional experience of 1 to 3 years have mean rank of 94.43. The highest mean rank of work life balance is for those women entrepreneurs who have working experience of 6 to 9 years. The trend of mean work life balance keeps on increasing with increasing professional experience but once women gain experience of 9 years, the mean rank of work balance begins to fall, which to some extent show that as women become relatively experienced (greater than 09 years), they become capable of managing their personal and professional lives. We will accept alternative hypothesis H_1 .

Total No. of Jobs Switched and Work-Life Balance

The suggested hypothesis statement for this relationship is as follows:

H_0 : There is no difference in the mean of work life balance and number of jobs switched.

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$

H_1 : There is difference in the mean of work life balance and number of jobs switched.

$H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Table 7 Kruskal-Wallis Test: No. of Jobs Switched and Work-Life Balance

No. of Jobs Switched		N	Mean Rank
work life Balance	It's the first Job	109	105.88
	less than 2	89	108.38
	Greater than 04	20	134.20
	Total	218	

The above table clearly indicates that mean rank is different for each category i.e. mean rank of work life balance of those entrepreneurial women who are doing their first job or have switched less two jobs is lesser as compared to those who have switched 4 or more jobs. So, we accept our alternative (H1) hypothesis.

Nature of Family and Work Life Balance

As far as the family support is concerned, it is important to understand the “type” of family from which an entrepreneur comes. So, the suggested hypothesis statements are as follows:

H₀: There is no difference in the mean of work life balance and nature of family variable.

H₀: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

H₁: There is difference in the mean of work life balance and nature of family variable.

H₁: $\mu_1 \neq \mu_2$

Table 8 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Nature of Family and Work-Life Balance

Nature of Family		N	Mean Rank
work life Balance	Joint Family	181	96.51
	Nuclear Family	37	173.07
	Total	218	

As evident from the table, the work-life balance of those women is more disturbed who tend to live in nuclear families, whereas those women who live in joint families enjoy more family support and thus are able to strike a balance between their personal and professional commitments. So, we accept H1.

Correlation Analysis

As per the factors identified in the literature review, a correlation test has been run using SPSS to identify which factors play a significant role in maintaining a work-life balance. The women entrepreneurs from Lahore (Pakistan) were asked questions related to the following factors:

- I. Their “roles” in the family, society and professional work.
- II. Their “ability” to meet their own health demands and carry out their personal activities in life.

- III. “Dependence” of family members on the women entrepreneur.
- IV. Their ability of “manage time” for their family, work commitments and society.
- V. The “type” and “magnitude” of Support Network/System the women entrepreneurs enjoy.

The following table shows the result of the correlation analysis (two-tailed analysis):

Table 9 Correlation Analysis

		Role Overload	Quality of Health	Dependent Care Issues	Time Management	Support Network
Role Overload	Pearson Correlation	1	.895**	.637**	.965**	.261**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	218	218	218	218	218
Quality of Health	Pearson Correlation	.895**	1	.587**	.886**	.382**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	218	218	218	218	218
Dependent Care Issues	Pearson Correlation	.637**	.587**	1	.583**	.427**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	218	218	218	218	218
Time Management	Pearson Correlation	.965**	.886**	.583**	1	.270**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	218	218	218	218	218
Support Network	Pearson Correlation	.261**	.382**	.427**	.270**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	218	218	218	218	218

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table shows that “Time Management” and “Role Overload” are the most significant variables that determine the work-life balance of female entrepreneurs i.e. women entrepreneurs in Pakistan often find it difficult to manage their time between personal and professional commitments, and also they are overburdened by the roles assigned to them by their family members, employers and society.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The study has primarily focused on exploring the level of work-life balance that the women entrepreneurs in Pakistan are having. A limited geographical area of Lahore (Pakistan) has been covered in the study. The important parameters and concepts related to work-life balance have been identified through review of relevant literature. Survey questionnaire comprising of 41 statements related to work-life balance has been used to collect data and the results have been analyzed using advanced statistical techniques. The results clearly indicate the differences in the “level” of work-life balance of women entrepreneurs based on certain demographic factors such as nature of family, total professional experience, time spent on the current business, number of jobs switched etc.

Moreover, correlation analysis has been used to identify the factors which significantly impact the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. The study is significant, in the sense that it has been conducted with reference to a developing country, where female members of the society face numerous challenges and are “constrained” to adopt various roles. The most high up issues related to work-life balance for an entrepreneurial woman role juggling, physical and psychological problems which create problems in maintaining good health, inability to manage time properly which leads to imbalance in the life, responsibilities to fulfill dependent care issues and less support network involvement which leads to no help from the social networking.

As far as the system of work-life balance in Pakistan is concerned, this issue seems to be very complex because of the societal system in the country. The five dimensions of work-life balance shows highly correlation with each other, but these issues were different with respect to different business types a woman is involved in. Issues in the lives of respondents were also highly related to their demographics, like with their age, nature of family in which they are living, type of business in which they are working and much more. Because there is a lot of difference in performing the paid work roles and family roles, therefore, women need to struggle in their work and life, in order to achieve balance between them.

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