A STUDY TO ANALYSE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME WORK LIFE IMBALANCE AMONG WOMEN ACADEMICIANS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KUMBAKONAM DISTRICT

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Abstract

In the modern-day working environment, it is highly important for employees and employers to achieve proper work life balance. The increased demands and expectations on the role of academicians have results in balancing their responsibilities at work and at home is gaining more importance. Previous research has stated that the women academicians need to focus in class preparation creation of lesson plan involve in counselling and guidance of the students etc and also need to manage their personal life and other activities at home. Moreover, the ever-changing trends in the higher education like application of technology, online class modalities, support in increasing the brand image of the institutions. The increased job responsibilities in the work area tend to impact the management of personal life of the women academicians. This may lead to unpleasant issues in the family and their health and wellbeing are also impacted greatly. Hence, coping up with these extremities are not an easy task and hence, the current study is more involved in understanding the challenges and strategies to overcome the work life imbalance among women academicians. The researchers intend to analyse the critical factors and strategies which influences in enhancing the work life balance among women academicians, the researchers have used both primary data and secondary data for performing the study.

Keywords: Work life balance, Women academicians, Regression analysis, Chi square test.

Introduction

It has been regarded that the work and personal life are considered as the core domain for an individual, there needs to be a better balance between the two and it has now become the necessity in the fast-changing world. Researchers has noted that the changes in the overall demographic, economic aspects, declining death rate, increase in literacy rate, focus of financial independence, increase in disposable income, opportunities to grow, need for flexibility on time, work from home and other aspects have influenced the evolution of the concept of work life balance (WLB). The term work life balance is mainly referred as the division of time by an individual between work and attention to family and leisure activities. Whereas Work life imbalance is the opposite of WLB, where the individuals could not able to focus on his or her personal life due to high work pressure, long working hours, more responsibilities (Alboliteeh, 2019). The work life imbalance tends to cause serious effects on the overall health and wellbeing of the individual.

In India, the primary education is mainly subject to the state government and higher education is mainly regulated by University Grants

Commission, which is considered as the central regulatory body. In Tamil Nadu, there are nearly 59 Universities which are approved by the UGC and are run under the direction of Ministry for Higher Education development, these universities are mainly classified into central, state and deemed. It has been widely stated that the work life balance is perceived to be better in the education sector, however the sad part is that it is not entirely true (Lakshmi 2018). Researchers has identified that the professors and faculty members in colleges and universities tend to face considerable amount of pressure at work from handling the classes, preparation for class, record keeping, publishing research articles, preparation of project reports, book publishing, adhering to the standards as set by UGC, NAAC and other regulatory bodies.

The increase in global competition, privatisation of higher education, increase in awareness of the students, open market access and other aspects has enabled the education industry to be more diverse, dynamic and increasingly complex (Kar 2019). Furthermore, teaching in the class and preparation for the class is more time consuming, with the advent of technology, faculty members are forced to adapt to the changing environment and hence they need to do normal paper work, create PowerPoint presentation and other modes to present in the class, these aspects tend to drain the time of the professors and faculty members. Moreover, they are required to plan and prepare the course planner, creation of assessment sheets, support in offering counselling and career guidance for students, take part actively in enhancing the credibility and brand image of the educational institutions etc. all these demands a higher amount of time and effort from the faculty members (Owens, 2018).

Problem Statement

The overall responsibilities of the professors tend to cover wide range from teaching and training the students, offer counselling and advise, focus in research, support in enhancing the credibility and brand image of the education institutions, take part in social related activities and other aspects. Hence, there is a wide range of roles which are inherent in the career goals of the faculty members across various disciplines, these aspects tend to impact the overall work life balance of the individuals in the education sector. Hence, it is highly essential in

understanding the major challenges and strategies to overcome work life imbalance among women academicians (Tripathi, 2018).

Hence, this study is more confined in analysing the critical determinants in overcoming the work life imbalance among the academicians in the education industry, the major determinants considered for the study are: offering cognitive training for the women academicians in managing the work and life, usage of technology for better productivity, feasible and supportive working environment and freedom of flexible working hours.

Review of Literature

Florea (2018) analyzed that the balance between work and private life is a comparison between time at work and time in the family or private life. Today, it is the biggest challenge for both employers and employees to find the right balance between work and private life. It has a greater impact on career success by keeping the right balance with changing demands on work and home. The problem of work-life balance leads to stress, depression, absenteeism and low performance. The employee's private life and professional life must be balanced, where professional obligations must not burden his private life.

Muthulakshmi (2018) examined different views of employees in terms of work and managing family life. They noted that while some are simply busy with work, there are those who also miss milestones in their lives because of work. More than half of the respondents felt that work stress also affected their integrity. Others felt that family life also had a major impact on work. Financial insecurity also played an important role in the balance between work and private life.

Chandra, (2019) conducted a study to explore the balance between work and private life for professionals working in the field of education. The authors conclude that effective policies and strategies for work-life balance help organizations achieve their desired goals. Organizations that value their employees through work-life balance policies will see these employees work effectively and contribute to success.

Mayya (2020) argued that work-life balance practices improve working women's quality of work life, leading to job satisfaction. Shreemathi Maya, (2021) investigated maintaining optimal stability between work and private life for employees. Through structured interviews, the study identified concepts such as work life conflict, parenthood, addiction care, business income, respondents, and business risks, working hours, work-related stress, family support and job satisfaction. Among these factors, the conflict between work and private life is the one that most causes the balance between work and family life and the family support and state subsidies that are proposed to eliminate family and private conflicts and thereby improve integrity. Balance in working life.

How we experience events or situations is governed by our reflections on these events. Sustainability is closely related to the ability to pay attention to spontaneous negative thoughts and replace them with positive thoughts. This is called cognitive reappraisal or reframing. By replacing negative thoughts with positive thoughts (for example, watching the opportunity to listen to a podcast in a traffic jam), we can control the negative emotions associated with it and reduce stress. Mindfulness is another strategy for cognitive education and to increase the feeling of well-being. It is usually described as an act of intentional attention to the present moment without judging. Awareness methods have been associated with improved attention, positive emotions and well-being and better relationship quality. Neurological changes due to the exercise of consciousness include structural and functional changes in the prefrontal cortex and amygdala that indicate better emotional regulation.

Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to analyse the major challenges and strategies to overcome work life imbalance among women academicians with special reference to Kumbakonam.

The objectives are framed as follows:

•   To understand the major challenges of work life imbalance among the women academicians

•   To apprehend the role of cognitive training for the women academicians in order to enhance the work life balance

•   To analyse the impact of feasible and supportive working environment in influencing the work life balance among women academicians.

Methodology

The main purpose of the study is to critically analyse the major challenges and strategies to overcome work life imbalance among women academicians with special reference to Kumbakonam. The researcher intends to use primary data source and secondary data source for the study, the primary data source is collected through the use of questionnaire which are issues to the women academicians who are currently working in colleges and universities. The researchers have used purposive sampling in order to choose the respondents for the study. The secondary data sources are used in order to understand the previous study related to the subject areas, the researchers have used EBSCO, Google scholar and other sources for collecting the secondary data.

Data Analysis

This section deals in present the detailed analysis based on the data collected by the researchers, the major analysis used are frequent analysis, regression analysis and Chi square test.

Frequency analysis

Table 1: *Frequency analysis*

Age of the respondents	Frequency	Percent
Less than 30 years	47	33.6
31 - 40 years	44	31.4
41 - 50 years	18	12.9
Above 50 years	31	22.1
Current Occupation	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Guest Lecturer	37	26.4
Assistant Professor	52	37.1
Associate Professor	33	23.6
Professor	18	12.9
Educational Qualification	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Post Graduate	65	46.4

M.Phil.	34	24.3
PhD	22	15.7
Graduate	19	13.6
Total years of work experience	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Less than 5 years	41	29.3
5 - 10 years	37	26.4
10 - 15 years	35	25
Above 15 years	27	19.3

From table 1, it is noted that 33.6% of the respondents were in the age group of less than30 years, 37.1% were working as Assistant Professors in colleges / universities, 46.4% of them have completed post-graduation and 29.3% of the respondents were having work experience of less than 5 years

Challenges influencing work life balance

The next part of the frequency distribution is involved in understanding the various challenges faced by women academicians in balancing work and personal life. The major factors considered are: Excess Work load; Job Insecurity; Strict rules and High Time pressure.

Table 2: *Major Challenges*

Challenges in WLB	SDA	DA	N	A	SA
Excess Work load	10	7	20	37	66
Job Insecurity	10	14	18	57	41
Strict rules	11	14	9	50	56
High Time pressure	10	7	17	71	35

Based on table 2, it is noted that the major challenges which are impacting the work life balance of the worm academicians are excessive work load and strict rules framed by the educational institutions. The respondents have mentioned that there is excessive work load for the academicians as they need to focus on various aspects like class preparation, counselling, research works and other academic responsibilities. Furthermore, it is noted that strict rules framed by the educational institutions are also impacting the work life balance as there is no flexibility on working hours, no work from home options or extended leave period etc. these aspects impact the work life balance of women academicians. The other major challenges faced by women academicians which impact the work life balance were job insecurity and higher time

pressure as they need to perform various activities in short period of time.

Regression analysis

The next step of the analysis is involved in measuring the relationship between the independent variables like: Cognitive Training; Uses of technology; Supportive work environment and Flexible Working Hours and dependent variable is Strategies of Work Life Balance

Table 3: *Regression analysis*

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	
0.899	0.809	0.803	
ANOVA	**Sum of Squares**	**F**	**P sig**
Regression	138.274	142.725	.000b
Residual	32.697		
	B	t	P sig
(Constant)	0.364	2.175	0.001
Cognitive Training	0.396	4.68	0.00
Uses of technology	0.422	4.061	0.00
Supportive work environment	0.251	3.299	0.001
Flexible Working Hours	-0.181	-1.743	0.084
a Dependent Variable: Strategies of Work Life Balance			

Based on table 3, it is noted that the R squared value is 0.809 hence the model is a best fit, the regression equation can be stated as follows

Strategies for Work life balance = 0.364 + 0.396 x Cognitive Training + 0.422 x Uses of technology + 0.251 x Supportive work environment -0.181 x Flexible Working Hours

Test of hypothesis

The last step of the analysis is involved in testing the hypothesis of the study, the chi square test is considered as key statistical tool which supports in analysing whether the variables are statistically significant.

Hypothesis 1

Null: There is no statistical difference between cognitive training and better work life balance among women academicians.

Table 4: *Chi square analysis between Cognitive training and Work life balance*

Chi-Square Analysis	Value	df	P value
Chi-Square	290.435a	16	0.00
Likelihood Ratio	205.049	16	0.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	103.216	1	0.00

From the analysis it is identified that the p value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05, hence it is concluded that there is a statistical difference between cognitive training and better work life balance among women academicians.

Hypothesis 2

Null: There is no statistical difference between usage of technology and better work life balance among women academicians.

Table 5: *Chi square analysis between usage of technology and Work life balance*

Chi-Square Analysis	Value	df	P value
Chi-Square	287.630a	16	0.00
Likelihood Ratio	192.895	16	0.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	104.51	1	0.00

From the analysis it is identified that the p value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05, hence it is concluded that there is a statistical difference between usage of technology and better work life balance among women academicians.

Hypothesis 3

Null: There is no statistical difference between Supportive work environment and better work life balance among women academicians.

Table 6: *Chi square analysis between Supportive work environment and Work life balance*

Chi-Square Analysis	Value	df	P value
Chi-Square	289.112a	16	0.00
Likelihood Ratio	180.159	16	0.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	94.399	1	0.00

From the analysis it is identified that the p value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05, hence it is concluded that there is a statistical difference between Supportive work environment and better work life balance among women academicians.

Hypothesis 4

Null: There is no statistical difference between Flexible Working Hours and better work life balance among women academicians.

Table 7: *Chi square analysis between Flexible Working Hours and Work life balance*

Chi-Square Analysis	Value	df	P value
Chi-Square	271.016a	16	0.00
Likelihood Ratio	187.574	16	0.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	90.356	1	0.00

From the analysis it is identified that the p value is 0.00 which is less than 0.05, hence it is concluded that there is a statistical difference between Flexible Working Hours and better work life balance among women academicians.

The concept of balance between work and private life mainly refers to the distribution of time between work and family and leisure activities. While work life balance is the opposite of WLB where individuals can not focus on their private lives due to high work-related stress, long working hours and several areas of responsibility. Imbalances between work and private life often have serious consequences for an individual's general health and well-being. In India, primary education is largely regulated by the state government and higher education is mainly regulated by the University Support Committee, which is considered to be the central regulator. There has been a widespread argument that the balance between work and private life is considered to be better in education, but it is sad that this is not entirely true. Researchers have found that faculties and faculties at colleges and universities often face significant workloads due to course management, course preparation, registration, publication of research articles,

preparation of project reports, publication of books and compliance. as specified by the regulatory authorities. The general faculty responsibility generally covers a wide range of education of teachers and students, provides guidance and advice, focuses on research and supports the strengthening of the credibility and image of educational institutions, participation in social activities and other aspects. . Therefore, there is a wide range of roles in the career goals of teachers in different disciplines, and these aspects often affect the balance between work and private life for individuals working in education. It is therefore necessary to understand the most important challenges and strategies for overcoming the balance between work and private life among academics.

Conclusion

In a modern work environment, it is very important for employees and employers to find the right balance between work and private life. Increasing demands and expectations for the role of educators have resulted in an important balance between their responsibilities at work and at home. Previous research has shown that graduates need to focus on lesson preparation, lesson planning, participating in student counselling and guidance, and more. and they must also take care of their privacy and other activities at home. In addition, I support the ever-changing trends in higher education, such as the use of technology, forms of online courses and the improvement of the institutional brand image. The increased professional responsibility in the work area often has an impact on the management of women's student life. This can lead to unpleasant problems in the family, while at the same time greatly affecting their health and well-being. Therefore, overcoming these extremes is not an easy task, and this study better addresses the challenges and strategies for overcoming work-life imbalances among university students.

Today's business environment needs people with good qualities, better education and excellent skills and abilities to meet the growing demands. Therefore, it is very important to develop a critical schedule for individuals after they graduate from school to develop their skills and have a greater responsibility. It is estimated that India will meet the demand of more than 400 million skilled people by 2023, but the country continues to face a shortage of skilled labor.

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