

Balancing act: Exploring the impact of work-life balance issues on dimensions of wellness among women professionals. A multi-profession study

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Abstract: *This empirical research paper investigates the repercussions of work-life balance issues on various dimensions of wellness among women professionals in academia, law, medicine, and engineering. Utilizing a sample size of 211, including 62 academicians, 55 lawyers, 38 doctors, and 56 engineers, this study assesses dimensions such as physical, social, mental, psychological, spiritual, environmental, and occupational wellness. The findings provide insights into the multifaceted challenges faced by women professionals in achieving work-life balance and its implications for their overall wellness.*

Keywords: *Work-life balance issues, women professionals, wellness dimensions.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The pursuit of work-life balance has emerged as a critical issue in contemporary professional environments, particularly for women who often face unique challenges in balancing career aspirations with personal responsibilities. While existing literature acknowledges the importance of work-life balance for individual well-being, limited empirical research has explored its impact on diverse dimensions of wellness among women professionals across different professions. This study aims to address this gap by examining the repercussions of work-life balance issues on physical, social, mental, psychological, spiritual, environmental, and occupational dimensions of wellness within academia, law, medicine, and engineering.

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The sample was conducted in vijayapur district comprising of 5 talukas. The sample consisting four types of professionals comprising of academicians, doctors, lawyers, and engineers.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To assess the prevalence of work-life balance issues among women professionals in academia, law, medicine, and engineering.
2. To examine the relationship between work-life balance issues and dimensions of wellness including physical, social, mental, psychological, spiritual, environmental, and occupational wellness.
3. To identify specific challenges faced by women professionals in maintaining work-life balance and their impact on wellness.
4. To explore coping mechanisms employed by women professionals to manage work-life balance issues and mitigate their effects on wellness.
5. To provide recommendations for organizational policies and interventions to support women professionals in achieving better work-life balance and enhancing overall wellness.

4. HYPOTHESIS FOR THE STUDY:

H0: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance issues and dimensions of wellness among women professionals in academia, law, medicine, and engineering.

H1: There is a significant relationship between work-life balance issues and dimensions of wellness among women professionals in academia, law, medicine, and engineering.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Sample size: The sample consisted of 211 women professionals, including 62 academicians, 55 lawyers, 38 doctors, and 56 engineers.

Sampling technique: Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across professions.

Method of collection of data : A self-structured questionnaire approach was employed, combining quantitative qualitative information to gather comprehensive insights.

Statistical tools: The following statistical tools and techniques were adopted.

- Correlation coefficient
- ANNOVA
- T-test
- Regression and
- chi-square. Test.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING:

Dimension	Statistical Test	Statistical Value	p-value	Interpretation
Physical	Correlation	r = -0.32	< 0.05	Significant negative correlation between work-life balance and physical wellness
Social	ANOVA	F(1, 209) = 12.76	< 0.01	Significant effect of work-life balance on social wellness
Mental	ANOVA	F(1, 209) = 24.59	< 0.001	Significant effect of work-life balance on mental wellness
Psychological	Regression	$\beta = -0.35$	< 0.001	Negative relationship between work-life balance and psychological wellness
Spiritual	Chi-square	$\chi^2 = 18.23$	< 0.001	Significant association between work-life balance and spiritual wellness
Environmental	T-test	t = 4.56	< 0.001	Significant difference in environmental wellness between groups with and without work-life balance
Occupational	Logistic Regression	OR = 2.87	< 0.001	Significant predictor of occupational wellness Work-life balance issues increase likelihood of dissatisfaction with career advancement and fulfillment

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS :

- **Physical Dimension:**
 - Statistical analysis revealed a significant correlation between work-life balance issues and physical wellness (p < 0.05). Women professionals reported higher levels of stress (Mean = 4.2, SD = 0.76), fatigue (Mean = 3.8, SD = 0.68), and physical health problems (Mean = 3.6, SD = 0.72) compared to those with better work-life balance.

- Work-life balance issues were found to negatively impact physical wellness, with women professionals reporting higher levels of stress, fatigue, and physical health problems due to long working hours, irregular schedules, and difficulty in managing personal and professional demands
- **Social Dimension:**
 - Work-life imbalance was associated with a decrease in social wellness scores ($p < 0.01$). Participants experiencing work-life balance issues reported lower levels of participation in social activities (Mean = 3.9, SD = 0.62) and strained interpersonal relationships (Mean = 3.7, SD = 0.58) compared to those with balanced work-life arrangements.
 - Work-life imbalance often led to strained interpersonal relationships, social isolation, and limited participation in social activities, affecting social wellness among women professionals and their ability to maintain meaningful connections outside of work.
- **Mental Dimension:**
 - Analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated a significant effect of work-life balance issues on mental wellness ($p < 0.001$). Women professionals facing work-life imbalance reported higher levels of anxiety (Mean = 4.1, SD = 0.72), depression (Mean = 3.9, SD = 0.68), and burnout (Mean = 4.0, SD = 0.75) compared to their counterparts with better work-life balance.
 - Women professionals experienced heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and burnout as a result of work-life balance issues, highlighting the detrimental effects on mental wellness and overall psychological well-being.
- **Psychological Dimension:**
 - Regression analysis demonstrated a negative relationship between work-life balance issues and psychological wellness ($\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.001$). Women professionals experiencing work-life imbalance exhibited lower levels of self-esteem (Mean = 3.5, SD = 0.67) and satisfaction (Mean = 3.6, SD = 0.71) compared to those with balanced work-life arrangements
 - The study revealed a significant impact on psychological wellness, with women professionals grappling with feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and imbalance in fulfilling their roles both at work and in their personal lives, leading to diminished self-esteem and satisfaction.
- **Spiritual Dimension:**
 - Chi-square tests revealed a significant association between work-life balance issues and spiritual wellness ($\chi^2 = 18.23$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$). Participants reporting work-life imbalance expressed higher levels of disconnection from personal values ($n = 124$, 58.8%) compared to those with balanced work-life arrangements ($n = 86$, 40.8%).
 - Work-life balance challenges undermined spiritual wellness by disrupting individuals' sense of purpose, fulfillment, and alignment with personal values, often resulting in existential questioning and disconnection from meaningful aspects of life
- **Environmental Dimension:**
 - T-tests indicated a significant difference in environmental wellness scores between women professionals with and without work-life balance issues ($t = 4.56$, $df = 210$, $p < 0.001$). Individuals experiencing work-life imbalance reported lower engagement in self-care practices (Mean = 3.8, SD = 0.64) and relaxation activities (Mean = 3.7, SD = 0.59) compared to those with balanced work-life arrangements.
 - Women professionals reported feeling overwhelmed by competing demands and responsibilities, leading to neglect of environmental wellness factors such as self-care practices, relaxation, and engagement in activities that promote holistic well-being
- **Occupational Dimension:**
 - Logistic regression analysis revealed that work-life balance issues were a significant predictor of occupational wellness (OR = 2.87, 95% CI [1.82, 4.52], $p < 0.001$). Women professionals experiencing work-life imbalance were three times more likely to report dissatisfaction with career advancement opportunities and fulfillment of professional goals compared to those with balanced work-life arrangements.
 - Work-life balance issues had profound implications for occupational wellness, with women professionals facing obstacles in career advancement, job satisfaction, and fulfillment of professional goals due to competing demands and role conflicts.

7. STRATEGIES OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE:

- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Encourage employers to offer flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks. This allows women professionals to better manage their work schedules around personal commitments and responsibilities.
- **Clear Boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries between work and personal life. Encourage women professionals to set designated work hours and avoid checking emails or taking work-related calls outside of those hours to ensure time for personal activities and relaxation.
- **Supportive Policies:** Advocate for the implementation of supportive policies such as paid parental leave, childcare assistance, and eldercare support. These policies help alleviate the burden of caregiving responsibilities and enable women professionals to focus on their careers without compromising their personal lives.
- **Promote Self-Care:** Emphasize the importance of self-care and well-being. Encourage women professionals to prioritize activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional health, such as regular exercise, adequate sleep, mindfulness practices, and hobbies.
- **Time Management Skills:** Provide training and resources on effective time management skills. Teach women professionals how to prioritize tasks, delegate responsibilities when necessary, and set realistic goals to manage their workload efficiently.
- **Peer Support Networks:** Foster peer support networks and mentorship programs within organizations. Encourage women professionals to connect with colleagues who share similar challenges and experiences, providing a supportive environment for sharing advice, resources, and encouragement.
- **Communication Skills:** Develop communication skills to effectively communicate boundaries and expectations with colleagues and supervisors. Encourage women professionals to assertively communicate their needs, preferences, and limitations regarding work-life balance to ensure mutual understanding and respect.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Implement regular check-ins or performance reviews to assess workload and stress levels. Provide opportunities for women professionals to discuss any work-life balance concerns or challenges they may be facing and collaborate on solutions to address them.
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** Offer professional development opportunities that focus on work-life balance, time management, stress management, and resilience-building skills. Empower women professionals with the knowledge and tools they need to effectively manage their work and personal lives.
- **Lead by Example:** Promote a culture of work-life balance from the top down. Encourage leaders and managers to role model healthy work-life balance behaviours and support initiatives that prioritize employee well-being, creating a positive organizational culture that values both professional success and personal fulfilment.

8. CONCLUSION:

This study underscores the pervasive impact of work-life balance issues on diverse dimensions of wellness among women professionals in academia, law, medicine, and engineering. Addressing these challenges requires multifaceted interventions encompassing organizational policies, supportive work environments, flexible work arrangements, and individual coping strategies to promote holistic well-being and ensure the optimal functioning of women professionals in their personal and professional lives. Future research could explore longitudinal effects, comparative analyses across different demographic variables, and interventions aimed at mitigating work-life balance issues to enhance the overall wellness of women professionals across various professions.

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