

SOURCES ACCOUNTABLE FOR WORK LIFE STABILITY AMONG MARRIED IT WOMEN EMPLOYEES AND SCHOOL TEACHERS IN CHENNAI

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Abstract *Work-life balance (WLB) is the maximum level balance attained between work and personal life. Numerous factors which influence work-life balance were identified through review of literature review, however for this study, work-family conflict, family-work conflict, work environment, and feelings about work have been taken as they are antecedents, most influencing and have not been paid much concentration by earlier researchers as far as IT employees' and school teachers' work-life balance is concerned. This study has taken samples from 69 IT employees and 104 school teachers through simple random sampling. The data were evaluated using percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, correlation and multiple regression. It has been found that the feelings about work (FAW) is significantly correlated with work-life balance among both IT employees and school teachers. Multiple regression analysis reported that there is a strong and significant relationship among the work-life balance and work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC), work environment (WE), and feelings about work (FAW) with a R value of 0.851. From the analysis, it has been discovered that feelings about work is the most influencing factor of work-life balance with a coefficient of 0.380 significant at .01 level. Hence, enriched FAW, conducive WE, reduced WFC, and reduced FWC result in stable WLB and ultimately on job satisfaction for the employees.*

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Work-Family Conflict, Family-Work Conflict, Work Environment, Feelings About Work*

INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance refers to achieving the optimum level of balance between work and personal life. The term work-life balance is defined by various researchers in different ways. Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003) defined it as the level of satisfaction a person receives through proper functioning of personal life and work. Work-life balance can be defined as the satisfaction a person receives from the engagement levels of the individuals into various domains of life such as work and home (Clark, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 2000). Reddy, Vranda, Ahmed, Nirmala, and Siddaramu (2010) have said that work-life balance is the maintenance of the balance between responsibilities of the work and personal life.

Generally, the term work-life balance is influenced by various factors such as demographic variables and many other independent factors which influence the work-life balance either positively or negatively. The demographic profile of the employees affects the work-life balance of the employees in both positive as well as negative manner (McElwain, 2005). There is a significant relationship between the work-life balance and the age of the employees (Delina & Raya, 2013). There is a significant difference between job

stress and age of the employees (Maiya & Bagali, 2014). Similarly, the work-life balance of the employees depends upon the experience of the employees in an organisation. More number of years of experience increases the work-life balance level of the employees in an organisation (Namayandeh, Yaacob, & Juhari, 2010). The income of the employees has a stronger impact on the proper work-life balance (Chatterjee & Mahidhar, 2014).

The factors such as work environment, feelings about work, role conflict, and much more affect the work-life balance of the employees in an organisation. The work environment as an independent variable has a direct impact on the dependent variable of work-life balance. The pleasant work environment is necessary for the positive work-life balance level of the employees (Sundaram & Panchanatham, 2012). The work environment affects the work-life balance both positively (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000) and negatively. The term role conflict includes both work-family conflict and family-work conflict which have an inverse relationship with the work-life balance (Frone, Marcia, & Cooper, 1992) and they also have a direct relationship with work-life balance (Malhotra & Sachdeva, 2005). When the employees are highly ambitious on their job and get moral support from the

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family and organisation, they attain a higher level of work-life balance (Marcinkus, Whelan-Berry, & Gordon, 2007).

But for this study, work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC), feelings about work (FAW), and work environment (WE) have been undertaken to analyse the level of work-life balance among married women employees working in IT and school sectors, by empirical investigation since they are the most persuading and forerunners.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have already been conducted on work-life balance of married women employees of IT and school sectors independently. Some of those studies have provided various results as follows. In information technology sector, there remains a high level of stressful environment among the employees which as a result affects the work-life balance of those techies negatively and it can be avoided through the better family and organisational support (Maran *et al.*, 2014). In a study conducted by Doble and Supriya (2010), they found that there exists a negative relationship between work-life balance and organisational policies. In 2011, Mohan *et al.* have reported that the women IT techies have 85% higher work pressure than their male counterparts and as a result, it ends up in low level of work-life balance.

Teaching profession, especially school teaching, is considered to be women-centred profession and it is also stated that there exists a high degree of work-life balance for the teachers. In 2013, a research work done by Uddin and Hoque (2013) founded out that the women teaching professionals in Bangladesh had a moderate work-life balance. According to a study by Mohanty (2014), there exists a normal work-life balance level for the school teachers and it is also reported that it can be better improved through the organisational policies. Anuradha and Pandey (2015) have reported that the 50% of the school teachers in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu were suffering from stress on the job and at home. As a result, there is a decline in their work-life balance.

RESEARCH GAP

Tewathia (2014) and Pandu, Balu, and Poorani (2013) have conducted research on work-life balance of IT employees, by taking variables such as work from home, flexi time, workload and responsibilities, family dependents and absence from job. Maeran, Pitarelli, and Cangiano (2013) and Irfan and Azmi (2015) have done research on work-life balance of school teachers, by considering the constructs namely work-family enrichment, family-work enrichment, work autonomy, gender, and work-life interference. However, very few researchers like Reddy *et al.* (2010) and Delina and Raya (2013) have made comparative study on

work-life balance of IT employees and school teachers with factors like job satisfaction, work performance, working hours, and job demands. In spite of comparative studies that were being conducted on these sectors, the most significant factors such as work-family conflict, family-work conflict, work environment, and feelings about work have not been taken into account. Subsequently, to fulfill this gap, this study has been conducted on work-life balance of married women employees working in IT sector and as school teachers with the perspective of above mentioned factors.

Secondly, the women in IT sector and schools were from typical south Indian family setup. They have chosen different fields as their career choice and moreover, the women employees working in both the set-ups have different problems responsible for poor work-life balance. Hence, this study has been undertaken in order to identify the problems accountable for work-life imbalance among IT employees and school teachers and to offer solution to remove the same.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

On the basis of above statement of problem, the solitary objective undertaken for the study is to identify the factors that induce work-life balance of married women IT employees and school teachers, among four variables namely work-family conflict, family-work conflict, work environment, and feelings about work. The ancillary objective of this study is to ascertain the relationship between the above-mentioned factors and work-life balance of the respondents.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

On the basis of above objectives, the following hypotheses have been framed for the study to address the research gap.

H1: There is a positive relationship between work-family conflict and work-life balance.

H2: There is a significant association between family-work conflict and work-life balance.

H3: There is an affirmative affiliation amid work environment and work-life balance.

H4: Feelings about work has a constructive correlation with work-life balance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since the study is an empirical investigation, the data is collected from primary sources through questionnaires and also from secondary sources. The data is collected from 173 samples, out of which 69 samples were collected from IT

employees and remaining 104 samples were gathered from school teachers. The data is collected only from those married women employees who satisfy the following conditions. The married women respondents aged within 25-50 years had lived with her spouse for the past three years with one dependent children and had been employed on the current position for at least one year. The collected data is analysed using Pearson's correlation to establish the relationship

among the variables. Multiple regression analysis is used to find out the most significant variable.

CONCEPTUAL COMPOSITION OF THE STUDY

The variables considered for the study are depicted in the flow-chart shown in Fig. 1.

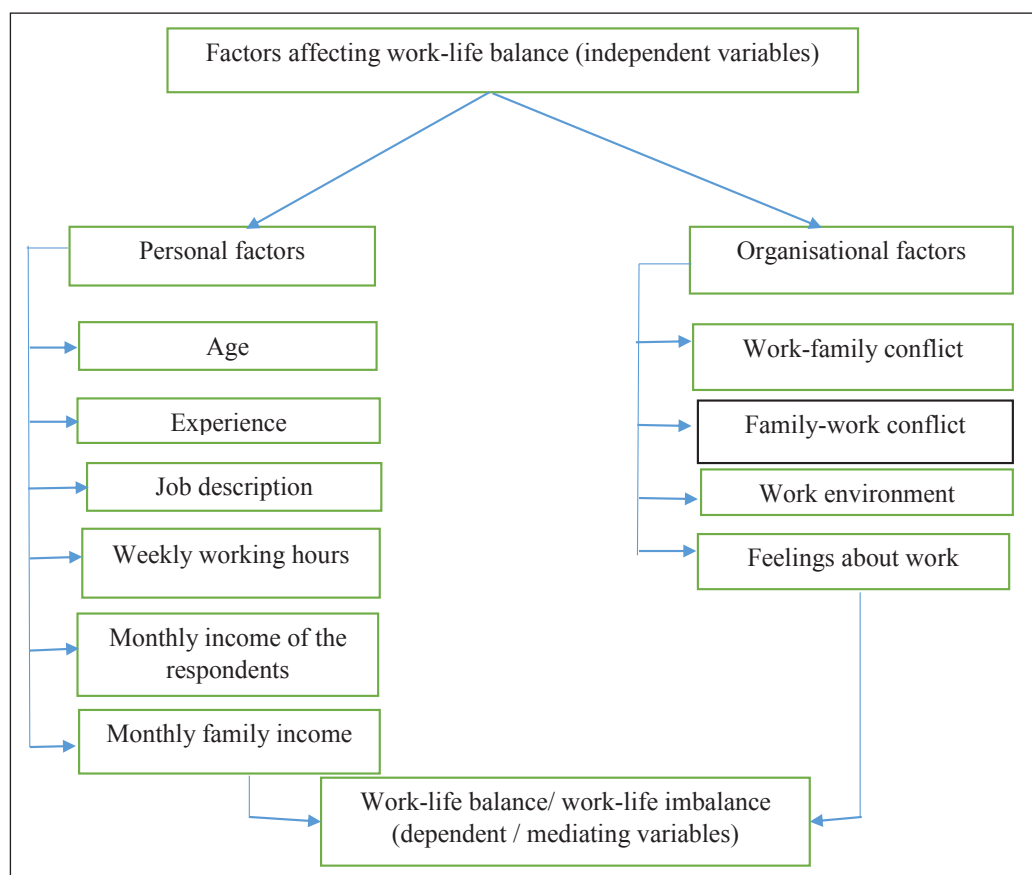


Fig. 1: Factors Taken for the Study

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The factors influencing the work-life balance of employees are discussed below.

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance refers to maintenance of optimum level of the balance between multiple domains of life, namely work and personal life (Clark, 2000; Ungerson & Yeandle, 2005). Work-life balance also refers to that satisfaction level of the employees which is obtained from the balance

between work and family (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Padma & Reddy, 2013).

Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance

Work-Family Conflict

Conflict which arises due to interference of the demands of work into family life is known as work-family conflict. The root cause for work-family conflict is the work-family interface. Major reasons for the work-family conflict are work pressure, job stress, and prolonged working hours

because these factors are responsible for failure in fulfilment of family demands by the employees. The pressure arising from work-family interface is known as work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Generally, work-family conflict reduces work-life balance of employees (Reddy *et al.*, 2010). The work-family conflict affects the well-being of employees in an organisation (Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980).

Family-Work Conflict

Conflict which arises as a result of interference of demands of family in the work of employees is known as family-work conflict. Family-work interface is responsible for the family-work conflict. Family dependents, health of family members, number of children, and spousal career are the factors responsible for the family-work conflict (Klein, Dansereau, & Hall, 1994). When there is more family-work conflict, then low work-life balance exists (Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005).

Work Environment

Working condition, also known as work environment, refers to that condition or atmosphere under which the employee carries his work. It includes the factors such as co-workers' support, organisational policies, workplace relationships, work pressure, and workload. If the working environment is favourable towards the employees, then there exists a positive work-life balance (Yadav & Dabhade, 2014; Kumari *et al.*, 2015). The monetary benefits play a mediating role between work-life balance and work environment (Sundaram & Panchanantham, 2012).

Feelings About Work

Every employee has a feeling towards their job; it may be either positive or negative. If that feeling is positive, it is due to job satisfaction and the organisation's commitment towards employees, but at the same time, if it is negative, it is due to job dissatisfaction and organisational detachment of the employees (Hann *et al.*, 2013). Based on the type of feelings, the level of work-life balance of the employees' changes.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Based on the objectives of the study, an analysis has been made for the primary data collected. The collected data have been tested using the different statistical techniques, namely mean, standard deviation, correlation, and multiple regression analysis. Based on the findings of the study,

interpretations and conclusions were arrived. The reliability coefficient through Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.779.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Information

Demographic Variables	Mean	Standard deviation
Job Description		
IT Employees	69	39.9%
School Teachers	104	60.1%
Age group		
25-30	34	19.7%
31-40	92	53.2%
41-50	47	27.2%
Experience		
1-3	22	12.7%
4-7	38	22.0%
8-10	25	14.5%
11-13	24	13.9%
14-16	38	22.0%
17 and above	26	15.0%
Weekly working hours		
0-29	2	1.2%
30-39	16	9.2%
40-49	67	38.7%
50-59	60	34.7%
60 and above	28	16.2%
Individual's Monthly Income		
Up to Rs. 20,000	56	32.4%
Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 30, 000	21	12.1%
Rs. 30, 001 – Rs. 40, 000	61	35.3%
Above Rs. 40,000	35	20.2%
Monthly Family Income		
Up to Rs. 40,000	39	22.5%
Rs. 40, 001 – Rs. 60, 000	32	18.5%
Rs. 60, 001 – Rs. 80, 000	22	12.7%
Rs. 80, 001 – Rs. 1,00,000	53	30.6%
Above Rs.1,00,000	27	15.6%

The analysis shown in Table 1 shows the frequency distribution level of job description, age group, experience, weekly working hours, monthly salary, and family income of the respondents. From the total 173 samples collected, 104 respondents (60.1%) were IT employees and 69 respondents (39.9%) were school teachers. As far as age of the respondents is concerned, 92 respondents' age lies between 31-40 years and only 34 respondents' age comes under the age group of 25-30 years.

38 respondents (22%) each have reported that they have worked for 4-7 years and 14-16 years respectively. 22

respondents (12.7%) had experience from 1 to 3 years. When it comes to the hours worked per week by the respondents in an organisation, 40-49 hours per week was reported by 67 respondents (38.4%) and 0-29 hours was reported by only 2 respondents (1.2%).

61 respondents' (35.3%) monthly income was in the range from Rs. 30,001 - Rs. 40,000. While, the lowest salary income range is Rs. 20,001 - Rs. 30,000 which was reported by 21 respondents (12.1%). 53 respondents (30.6%) have stated that their monthly family income were ranged from Rs. 80,001 - Rs.1,00,000 and 22 interviewees (22.7%) have admitted that their monthly family income varied from Rs. 60,001 - Rs.80, 000.

Descriptive Statistics on Factors Affecting Work-life Balance

The factors affecting work-life balance as per this study were work-family conflict, family-work conflict, work environment, and feelings about work. They have been examined using mean and standard deviation.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance

Factors Affecting Work-life Balance	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D)
Work-family conflict	16.18	5.09
Family-work conflict	16.38	4.65
Work environment	15.34	4.11
Feelings about work	18.79	5.20

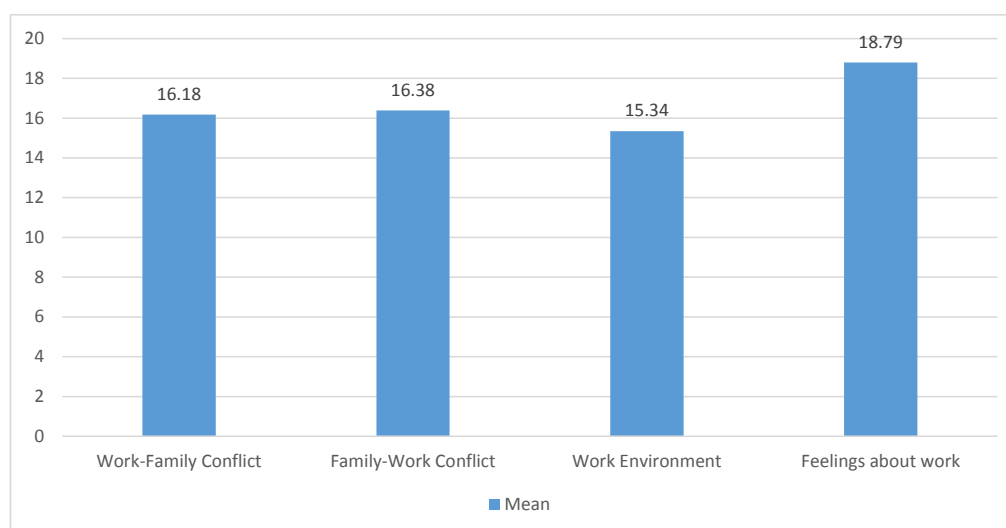


Fig. 2: Mean Score of Factors Affecting WLB among IT Employees and School Teachers

From Table 2, it is very clear that the feelings about work is the most influencing factor of WLB as its mean score is 18.79, because the passion and the interest towards the job is the major driving factor for an employee to work and this passion in turn avoids the various problems such as conflict in the workplace. It also helps in coping with the WE and has a huge impact on the WLB of the employees. Secondly, FWC is the most influencing factor with 16.38 mean score, thirdly the most influential factor is WFC with a mean score of 16.18. Lastly, the least influential factor is WE as its mean score is 15.34.

Descriptive Statistics for IT Employees and School Teachers

All the variables taken for the study have been analysed on the basis of the job description of the samples. They have been analysed using descriptive statistics to find out the most frequent variable reported by majority of the respondents in each setting.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of IT Employees and School Teachers

Factors	IT Employees		School Teachers	
	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D)	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D)
Work-family conflict	17.51	5.40	15.31	4.71
Family-work conflict	16.83	5.08	16.09	4.34
Work environment	14.14	3.75	16.13	4.16
Feelings about work	17.54	5.63	19.62	4.74
Work-life balance	31.35	4.99	34.12	4.82

Table 3 clearly shows the most frequent variable reported by the majority of the samples in each setting. In IT employees setting, the most frequent factor is WLB as it has a mean score of 31.35. Among the factors influencing work-life balance, FAW is the highest influencing factor of work-life balance with a total mean score of 17.54, then by WFC with a mean score of 17.51 and then FWC with a mean score of 16.83. Lastly, WE is reported by 14.14 mean score.

In school teachers setting, the most frequent variable is WLB with a mean score of 34.12. Out of the factors influencing

work-life balance, FAW is the most influential variable as it is reported by majority of school teachers with 19.62 mean score, followed by WE with a mean score of 16.13, and thirdly by FWC with a mean score of 16.09. Lastly, it is the WFC which is reported by a mean score of 15.31.

Here, the work-life balance is reported by majority of the respondents both in IT setting and in school teachers setting because as mentioned earlier, feelings about work has a positive impact and as it rises, in turn it influences the WLB of the employees.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis Among Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance

Factors affecting work-life balance		Work-family conflict	Family-work conflict	Work environment	Feelings about work
Work-family conflict	Pearson correlation	1	.641**	-.435**	-.560**
Family-work conflict	Pearson correlation	.641**	1	-.399**	-.539**
Work environment	Pearson correlation	-.435**	-.399**	1	.640**
Feelings about work	Pearson correlation	-.560**	-.539**	.640**	1

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

Table 4 shows the Pearson correlation coefficient among the various factors affecting the WLB of the employees in an organisation. The correlation coefficient between WFC and FWC is 0.641 and it indicates a positive relationship between WFC and FWC at .01 significant level, while there exists an inverse relationship between WFC and WE with -.435 correlation coefficient and it is statistically significant at .01 level. There also exists a negative relationship between WFC and FAW at -.560 correlation coefficient and it is also significant at .01 level.

It is evident from the table that there is a positive relationship between FWC and WFC with a correlation coefficient of 0.641 and they are significant at .01 level. There is a negative relationship between FWC with that of WE with a correlation coefficient of -.399 and it is significant at .01 level. FWC and FAW have a negative relationship between

them with -.539 correlation coefficient and it is statistically significant at .01 level.

The correlation coefficient between WE and WFC shows that there is a negative relationship between them at -.435 and it is statistically significant at .01 level. There is a negative relationship between WE and WFC with -.399 correlation coefficient and it is significant at .01 level. WE and FAW have a positive relationship with a correlation coefficient of .64 and it is significant at .01 level.

FAW has a negative relationship with the WFC as its correlation coefficient is -.56 and it is significant at .01 level. There is a moderate negative relationship between the FAW and FWC with a correlation coefficient of -.53 and it is significant at .01 level. FAW and WE are correlated positively with correlation coefficient of .64 and it is significant at .01 level.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis Among Factors Affecting Work-life Balance and Work-life Balance

Factors affecting work-life balance		Work-life balance
Work-family conflict	Pearson correlation	-.718**
Family-work conflict	Pearson correlation	-.603**
Work environment	Pearson correlation	.630**
Feelings about work	Pearson correlation	.755**

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

Table 5 clearly shows the relationship between the factors affecting work-life balance and work-life balance. It is explained clearly as follows.

H1: There is a positive relationship between the work-family conflict and work-life balance.

The correlation coefficient between WFC and WLB is -.718, but the p value 0.000 is less than 0.001. Thus, it is said to be highly significant at .01 level and accordingly, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is concluded that there is a positive relationship between WFC and WLB.

H2: There is a significant association among family-work conflict and work-life balance.

Correlation coefficient of FWC and WLB is -.603 and its p value is 0.000. Since the p value is less than 0.001, the hypothesis is accepted. So, there is a significant association among FWC and WLB at .01 level.

H3: There is an affirmative affiliation amid work environment and work-life balance.

.63 is the correlation that exists between WE and WLB. The P value 0.000 is less than 0.001, therefore the hypothesis is accepted and it is summed up as there is an affirmative affiliation amid WE and WLB and it is significant at .01 level.

H4: Feelings about work is having a constructive relationship with work-life balance.

FAW is significantly correlated with WLB at .755 correlation coefficient, its p value is 0.000 less than 0.001, subsequently it's significant at .01 level. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. So, it is evident from this result that FAW is most significantly inducing factor of WLB. FAW is followed by WFC, the WFC is followed by WE and FWC is the least influencing factor of WLB.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis of Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance and Work-Life balance

Factor	Unstandardised Coefficient (B)	Standard Error of B	B	t Value	P value
X1	-0.364	0.056	-0.366	-6.519	0.000
X2	-0.094	0.060	-0.086	-1.568	0.119
X3	0.238	0.065	0.193	3.635	0.000
X4	0.370	0.058	0.380	6.411	0.000
Constant	29.834	1.794	-	16.626	0.000

In the analysis shown in Table 6, the dependent variable is WLB and the factors influencing work-life balance i.e., WFC, FWC, WE, and FAW are the dependent variables.

The value of multiple regression coefficient is exactly 0.851 and it examines the relationship between the actual values and the predicted values of the work-life balance. This coefficient value indicates that strong positive relationship exists between WLB (dependent variable) and factors affecting the work-life balance (independent variables). The value of R square is 0.724 that is 72.4%.

Then, the multiple regression equation would be

$$Y = 29.834 + (-.364X1) + (-.094X2) + (.238X3) + (.370X4)$$

$$Y = 29.834 - .364X1 - .094X2 + .238X3 + .370X4$$

In the above equation, the coefficient of X1 is -.364 implying a negative relationship, that is WLB increases by -.36.4% for every decrease in the WFC and it is significant at .01 level.

Similarly, the correlation coefficient of X2 is -.094 which also shows that there is a negative relationship as the WLB rises by - 9.4% for every fall in the FWC variable and is significant at 5% level. The next correlation coefficient of X3 is .238 and it shows that there is a positive relationship stating that WLB rises by 23.8% with every rise in the WE variable and it is significant at .01 level. The correlation coefficient of X4 is .370 and it is showing a positive relationship explaining that the WLB variable increases by 37% for every increase in FAW and it is significant at .01 level.

From the above standardised coefficient, FAW is the most important factor with a coefficient of .380, then by WE with 0.193, thirdly with FWC at -.086, and eventually by WFC with -.366. The FAW is important because employees' interest and passion towards their job increase WLB by reducing the conflict and avoiding unpleasant WE.

DISCUSSIONS

It is established that FAW is reported by both IT employees and school teachers as a highly affecting factor of WLB. On the other hand, when the work-life conflict reduces, the WLB increases. The surprise fact is that a favourable WE plays crucial role in maintaining WLB. WFC and FWC are inversely correlated with WLB. It means when WFC is minimised, WLB is enhanced and vice versa.

Here, the compelling conclusion emerged is that FAW could be enhanced through the employee's emotional intelligence. So, if the worker has a strong emotional intelligence on the job and also on their life then they can be successful on increasing organisational productivity and their mental well-being by managing the work-life balance (Shylaja & Prasad, 2017; Gupta, 2016; Sharma, 2014). The emotional intelligence can be improved firstly through observing the way in which a respondent reacts to a person or situation mainly during stressful times, secondly by examining others' reactions from their actions, and lastly via self-evaluation of their actions and reactions by themselves.

The employers can make the WE more interesting and challenging generally by reducing the monotonous work and by adding additional assignments to their existing job. The additional assignment could be either adding up of same assignments that are relevant to their job or piling different tasks which were irrelevant to the work. By doing so the jobs will be further fascinating and exciting for the employees in order to have better WLB through maintaining conducive WE.

From the study, it is obvious that work-life conflict is triggered chiefly due to the lengthy working hours in a week for school teachers and lack of advantageous organisational policies for IT employees. Hence, this extended weekly working hours can be reduced from 60 hours to 48 hours a week for school teachers. As far as IT employees are concerned, employees' centred policies like investing on the health, education and paid vacation to the employees can be extended while offering the same to their families as well.

CONCLUSION

The compelling conclusion derived from the study on the basis of above analysis and discussions is that there is a need for policies and practices pertaining to WLB of IT employees and school teachers. Bearing this in mind, the employers need to design, develop and implement the WLB policies and practices which can help the employees to have balanced personal and professional life and consequently employees can contribute to the organisations for the attainment of ultimate object. Therefore, the study recommends that the top management should implement

the policies such as conducting emotional intelligence tests at regular intervals, removing boredom tasks & assigning additional tasks which are more interesting, removing working hours from 60 hours to 48 hours for school teachers and offering employee centric welfares like health insurance, free education and paid vacation to the IT employees as well as to their family members. Hence, it is concluded that if the organisations follow the above mentioned policies, it could eventually improve the WLB of the employees and in turn, the employees can contribute to the organisation to reach its ultimate destiny of profit maximisation and wealth maximisation besides helping the employees in having contended professional and personal life.

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