

Work-Life Balance Challenges and Organizational Support for Women in the Healthcare Sector: A Study of Private and Trust Hospitals in Vadodara District

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Abstract

Background: Work life Balance is an important phenomenon concerning a lot of working employees. Females form a major proportion of the works force in the healthcare industry and the policies should focus on their well-being for a stress free environment. Many of research has been carried out focusing on work life balance. However, there has been very few research concerning the work life balance of female healthcare professionals working in private and trust hospitals. Therefore, this study aims to assess the challenges and organizational support for the female healthcare professionals working in hospitals of Vadodara district (India).

Methodology: The data collection tool is a structured close ended questionnaire where in the respondents were asked to choose their option pertaining to various parameters of work life balance. The data collected from 867 female healthcare professionals working in private and trust hospitals of Vadodara (India). The data collected were analyzed using SPSS version 23. The statistical test used was Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney test at 95% confidence level.

Major Results: There were 304 female doctors and 563 nurses in the study. among 288 female healthcare professionals under 30, 270 had personal life expectations and workplace support, while 18 did not. Of the 161 aged 41-50, 160 had personal life expectations and support, and only 1 did not. A chi-square test confirmed a significant association between age and personal life expectations & workplace support ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: Work life balance is a critical area of concern for employers within human resource area, therefore this study highlights a key issue that need to be address to enhance the satisfaction and well-being of female healthcare professionals.

Keywords: *WLB, working women, family size, age group, marital status*

Introduction:

World Health Organization defines Health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely by the absence of disease or infirmity”. Thus “health” becomes the parameter to measure the overall well being of the family, the society, the country and the at large. Women forming almost 50% of the world population, their health hereby become crucial for a stable and strong society. A changing mindset has enabled the society to arm both men and women with equal opportunities, particularly in gaining education and skills. Rapid urbanization has led to women becoming more exposed to job opportunities in various sectors they have become an integral part of the workforce in most industries. At this juncture in their life, women need to juggle between work and home. No doubt women’s participation

is important for their own personal advancement and improvement of status in society but a good work life balance is needed for working women, for them to be healthier and at peace. Work life balance thus refers to an individual's ability to schedule their professional and personal time to have a healthy and serene life. The questions now arise whether women are able to do so.

Female's employees occupy positions and handle responsibilities at all levels in an organization, across sectors like healthcare, agriculture, technology, etc. the reason behind this are manifold. Some women work to contribute to the economy of the family while others look towards a career and ambition to fruitfully utilize the skills set they have. Whatever be the reason for this entry into the workforce, they have a lot on their platter. Their greatest struggle is balancing their responsibilities of family and employment. Career progress, work stress, career aspirations, personal expectation, financial assistance and self management are some of the factors that affect the work life balance of women. Several studies on these factors have been conducted and research shows that there are ways and means which can bring about positive changes.

Although private companies are providing more health programs, stress free games, WLB programmes still there is a lack of understanding. Sangeeth (2020) in her international studies on WLB emphasized that although the gender quality is increasing promoted both in the workplace and in societies, yet work life balance affects women well being more significantly than that of men. (Pace & Sciotto 2021) Remote work has also created obstacles for married employed women as indicated by a latest study of the Arab region (Alfarran 2021) the scenario is much the same as in other Asian countries, but working from home, (as many were compelled to do so during the Covid-19 outbreak), helped women to achieve a stable work life balance. A study conducted by Dr. C Kathiravan (2019) in hospitals at Chennai has revealed that females are found more suitable in services for healthcare sector as it more about healing and caring which is innate in women. With such nature women employees are managing their aging factor and their family commitment too. Women doctors and nurses, according to Addagabottu & Battu (2015) undergo the pressure of multitask and multi demand and command. They also face the situation of carrying the work responsibilities to the home. These avenues encounter the imbalance among them to manage work and family. As the healthcare sector carries heavy responsibility and accountability, women in this sector have to face more work life balance related issues. They undergo insurmountable work pressure due to the prevailing competitions in the modernized working systems and need to contribute timeless jobs for the organizational benefits.

In the study of female nurses at Mysuru District, the researcher have found that the respondents of Government hospitals enjoyed better WLB compared to the private hospital. As there is a need to explore further, this study more focused on women doctors and nurses working with private and trust hospitals in the category of medium and large hospitals.

Need of the hour for WLB in women employees of the healthcare sectors:

Organizational support, WLB and job satisfaction are important areas where considerable attention is warranted. Work life balance is the mediator between organizational support and job satisfaction (Dubey and Riasudeen 2021). Hence female employees in the healthcare sector needs to be provided with organizational support at work such as decent work environment, rewards and reorganization, social and moral support from supervisors, adequate leaves, timely breaks during work hours so that they experience balance and satisfaction on the job and family front.

It is very necessary to understand that working women doctors and nurses required more organizational support than before. So, it is prime responsibility of the employer to take care while designing the human recourse policies so that they best utilize the employee's potential thereby ensuring their overall wellbeing. Unbalance coordination and support from family and work environments affect both as they mutually influence each other, at times it may lead to undesirable consequences. Females, because of their educational background, logical thinking and emotional balances try to balance both work and personal related conflicts.

Therefore, several strategies need to be proposed on the factors affecting the work life balance for improving the work life balance of female healthcare workers. This will attract and retain highly skilled and experienced medical and paramedical staff that will be more efficient and effective while working in a flexible and employee-friendly environment. In addition to this in this competitive world, it is essential for every healthcare sector to create a delightful

atmosphere which can help the female employees to balance their personal and professional roles. The present study is conducted in Vadodara District, to assess the factor affecting work life balance among working women of healthcare sectors of private and trust hospitals.

Aim:

To assess the Work-Life Balance Challenges and Organizational Support for Women in the Healthcare Sector of Private and Trust Hospitals in Vadodara District

Objectives of the Study:

1. To assess the factors affecting Work Life Balance (WLB) of the different healthcare professionals in selected hospitals.
2. To analyze the differences in work life balance of the different healthcare professionals according to their various demographic characteristics.
3. To analyze the association of factor affecting the work life balance of the different healthcare professionals.

METHODOLOGY:

The study design is cross sectional. The study population is female nurses and doctors of Vadodara city from which the sample size of 867 is taken using the following formula:

$$Sample\ Size = \frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N}\right)}$$

Where, Population Size = N | Margin of error = e | z-score = z of Error is 5% and Confidence Interval is 95% and hence corresponding z-score is 1.96. The data from 867 samples were collected through primary mode of data collection using structured close ended questionnaire where in the respondents were asked to choose their option pertaining to various parameters of work life balance on a two-point scale.

The ethical approval was obtained from the ethical committee of the institution name Sumandeep Vidyapeeth Deemed to be University viz. SVIEC/ON/MBA/PhD/21005. The respondents who are willingly and wanted to participate in the study were included for data collection after obtaining informed consent. The data collected from 867 female healthcare professionals working in private and trust hospital of Vadodara City. The datasets are with the corresponding author as a privacy concern of the participants and can be available on the request of the publisher with the specific reason. The questionnaire was designed with an aim to assess the factor affecting the work life balance as per personal life expectations and work place support. The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

A pilot study was conducted to check for the validity and reliability of the data collection tool. The Cronbach's alpha value was 0.91 indicating high internal consistency of the tool. The data was analysed using SPSS version 23. The statistical test used was Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney test at 95% confidence level.

RESULTS:

The analysis was done on 867 respondents of female healthcare professionals of 8 hospitals of Vadodara (India).

Table 1: Frequency distribution of work profession of respondents		
Work Profession	Frequency	Percentage
Doctor	304	35.1
Nurse	563	64.9
Total	867	100

The above table 1 shows that among 867 respondents, 563(64.9%) were female nurses and 304(35.1%) were female doctors.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 30 Years	288	33.2
30-40	348	40.1
41-50	161	18.6
Above 50 Years	70	8.1
Total	867	100

The above table 2 shows that among 867 respondents, 348 (40.1%) were of age group of 30-40, 288 (33.2%) were age below 30, 161(18.6%) were between 41 to 50 and 70(8.1%) were above 50 years of age.

Table 3: Difference between the factors affecting WLB as per personal life expectations and work place support according to age

Statements	Age	N	Mean Rank
I need to relax for a minimum of 2 hours per day and nice sleep of minimum 8 hours at night.	below 30 years	288	454.67
	30-40	348	421.19
	41-50	161	431.93
	Above 50 years	70	417.39
	Chi Square Test (P Value)	17.043 (.001)	
I want to have my breakfast in the morning without hurry.	below 30 years	288	431.09
	30-40	348	435.14
	41-50	161	447.08
	Above 50 years	70	410.19
	Chi Square Test (P Value)	5.785 (.123)	
I want to go for family trips during vacation atleast once in a year.	below 30 years	288	413.23
	30-40	348	446.40
	41-50	161	445.12
	Above 50 years	70	432.20
	Chi Square Test (P Value)	6.473 (.091)	
I wish to cook and serve to my family members a balanced, healthy diet.	below 30 years	288	435.21
	30-40	348	436.04
	41-50	161	439.62
	Above 50 years	70	405.96
	Chi Square Test (P Value)	2.802 (.423)	
I should have relaxed weekend shopping and outing with my family.	below 30 years	288	442.21
	30-40	348	430.33
	41-50	161	437.04
	Above 50 years	70	411.46
	Chi Square Test (P Value)	3.005 (.391)	
I want to spend Quality time my family/partner, children and myself.	below 30 years	288	406.65
	30-40	348	450.45
	41-50	161	447.97
	Above 50 years	70	432.62
	Chi Square Test (P Value)	13.473 (.004)	
	below 30 years	288	437.30

To do an Exercise for at least half an hour is necessary for me every day.	30-40	348	434.71
	41-50	161	428.08
	Above 50 years	70	430.51
	Chi Square Test (P Value)	.334 (.954)	
I want to enjoy and celebrate well my children birthdays, shopping for festivals.	below 30 years	288	407.28
	30-40	348	430.64
	41-50	161	484.86
	Above 50 years	70	443.66
Chi Square Test (P Value)	17.973 (.000)		
I want to engage myself in Social activities at least twice a week.	below 30 years	288	416.43
	30-40	348	438.49
	41-50	161	458.44
	Above 50 years	70	427.74
Chi Square Test (P Value)	4.692 (.196)		
I want to have regular contact with the relatives of my family members and friends.	below 30 years	288	429.87
	30-40	348	433.87
	41-50	161	449.55
	Above 50 years	70	415.89
Chi Square Test (P Value)	1.864 (.601)		
I need my family/partner to pick up and drop me at my office.	below 30 years	288	434.02
	30-40	348	426.75
	41-50	161	439.67
	Above 50 years	70	456.90
Chi Square Test (P Value)	1.411 (.703)		
I want to be more cheerful and wish to live as ideal life as planned.	below 30 years	288	425.16
	30-40	348	449.76
	41-50	161	423.08
	Above 50 years	70	417.16
Chi Square Test (P Value)	7.214 (.065)		
I wish to maintain good quality of family life strongly built by right Work life balance.	below 30 years	288	439.68
	30-40	348	435.84
	41-50	161	431.58
	Above 50 years	70	407.08
Chi Square Test (P Value)	3.515 (.319)		
All the employees are treated equally if they request assistance with work and family related matters.	below 30 years	288	425.34
	30-40	348	438.11
	41-50	161	439.09
	Above 50 years	70	437.47
Chi Square Test (P Value)	.923 (.820)		
The organization makes the employees very clear about the expectations to be fulfilled.	below 30 years	288	436.74
	30-40	348	433.52
	41-50	161	440.20
	Above 50 years	70	410.85
Chi Square Test (P Value)	1.880 (.598)		
	below 30 years	288	437.81

My superior gives more importance towards the well-being of the employees.	30-40	348	434.95
	41-50	161	443.24
	Above 50 years	70	392.35
	Chi Square Test (P Value)	4.709 (.194)	
I can give my attention for urgent family or personal issues immediately.	below 30 years	288	434.80
	30-40	348	433.71
	41-50	161	445.93
	Above 50 years	70	404.74
Chi Square Test (P Value)	2.801 (.423)		
My organization supports the employees in terms of combining professional life with family life.	below 30 years	288	419.29
	30-40	348	443.38
	41-50	161	440.01
	Above 50 years	70	434.09
Chi Square Test (P Value)	2.977 (.359)		
I am encouraged to take own decisions.	below 30 years	288	436.77
	30-40	348	442.22
	41-50	161	424.62
	Above 50 years	70	403.35
Chi Square Test (P Value)	3.965 (.265)		
I get high degree of respect and fair treatment from my boss.	below 30 years	288	441.25
	30-40	348	432.53
	41-50	161	436.31
	Above 50 years	70	406.16
Chi Square Test (P Value)	2.962 (.398)		
My supervisor gives me more guidelines to perform my work.	below 30 years	288	432.23
	30-40	348	433.27
	41-50	161	446.78
	Above 50 years	70	415.54
Chi Square Test (P Value)	2.058 (.506)		
I receive good quality of supervision.	below 30 years	288	439.70
	30-40	348	426.10
	41-50	161	449.81
	Above 50 years	70	413.46
Chi Square Test (P Value)	5.121 (.163)		
My colleagues understand others non-work situation and work accordingly.	below 30 years	288	450.81
	30-40	348	419.05
	41-50	161	449.35
	Above 50 years	70	403.85
Chi Square Test (P Value)	9.845 (.020)		
My subordinates assist me for successfully completing my work.	below 30 years	288	435.19
	30-40	348	432.07
	41-50	161	448.31
	Above 50 years	70	405.77
Chi Square Test (P Value)	4.481 (.241)		
	below 30 years	288	445.17

I have good relations and understanding among the employees in my workplace.	30-40	348	426.64
	41-50	161	443.97
	Above 50 years	70	401.69
	Chi Square Test (P Value)	9.447 (.024)	

The above table 3 highlights that the mean rank of factor affecting work-life balance related to personal life expectations and workplace support does not vary significantly across the age groups of female doctors and nurses, except for a few parameters. However, some factors affecting WLB do differ according to age. For instance, support from colleagues in managing non-work situations, participation in family celebrations, time for self and family, the need for daily relaxation, and adequate sleep of at least 8 hours per night are all viewed differently by age groups. Good relations and understanding among colleagues in the workplace also show differences in mean rank.

Table 4: Association between personal life expectations & work place support and age

Personal life expectation & Work Place Support	Age (Year)				Total
	Below 30	30-40	41-50	Above 50	
Yes	270	346	160	70	846
No	18	2	1	0	21
Total	288	348	161	70	867
Chi Square (P Value)	26.827 (.000)				

The above table 4 shows that among 288 female healthcare professionals under 30, 270 had personal life expectations and workplace support, while 18 did not. Of the 161 aged 41-50, 160 had personal life expectations and support, and only 1 did not. A chi-square test confirmed a significant association between age and personal life expectations & workplace support ($p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION:

In this study it is found that there is an association between the type of age and family care, self-management, personal life expectations & work place support, WLB Policies and workload as the chi square test of association was statistically significant as the p value was less than 0.05 and the chi square test of association was statistically not significant as the p value was more than 0.05 indicating that there is no association between the age group and work expectation, personal life & work satisfaction, financial assistance and family support. Women who are working have multiple responsibilities to do, right from home to professional work that is from doing the best in managing the home, priority towards family and love ones, work load in the organization and organizational trips. It is being observed that working females scarifies her career because of children care and aging parents. In addition to this need to have patience and have a perfect balance life (A Amir 2016). Work place support, supervisor and co-worker support has been identified as an important contributing factor influencing attitudes, and expectations and shaping their capability to attain balance as per Baral and Sampath, 2019 & Ferri et al., 2018; Talukder, 2019 and same found in this study that personal life expectations and work place support is not different according to the type of organization of female employees of doctors and nurses in not all parameters as the p value is more than 0.05.

CONCLUSIONS:

Female healthcare professionals, especially doctors and nurses, face significant challenges in balancing their professional and personal lives due to dual responsibilities at work and home. Studies show that work-life balance is strongly influenced by workplace support and personal life expectations. Women in private healthcare organizations tend to have a better work-life balance compared to those in trust hospitals, and older women report better balance as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This study has covered the healthcare segment and the factors relating to work life balance affecting the satisfaction level and the factors affecting in work life balance of the women in the healthcare sector and it is believed that a comparative study could be performed by comparing and contrasting the work-life balance scenario in different professions where females are working. This will not only help the women to compare and choose their preferred professions, given they prioritize work life balance, but also help the management of different corporate sectors to understand the importance of work life balance and its impact on job satisfaction which in turn affects the employee performance. At the same time, they can include the necessary mechanisms considering the right balance between work and personal life as it can attract a greater number of potential female employees to work with them.

The healthcare organizations comprise of majority of females (doctors and nurses) and hence dedicated work life balance policy may be introduced and implemented. It is suggested that the distress workshops, stress relief games activities and meditation sessions may be organized for the welfare of the healthcare professionals. Special duty offs may be given to female for a healthy work life balance. The healthcare organizations can provide family health insurance policies which reduce the burden their financial income. The research can also be expanded with respect to the healthcare professionals irrespective of gender and type of healthcare professional considering the dynamic nature of the healthcare sector.

Limitations:

The present study is constrained with time and cost. The area of the study is limited to Vadodara district.

- **Financial support and sponsorship**
Nil
- **Conflicts of interests**
The authors have no conflict of interest.
- **Clinical Trial Number**
Not Applicable

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