



Challenges Faced by Working Women in Balancing Career and Family

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Abstract

Women's participation in the modern workforce has increased significantly, but working women still face challenges in juggling their personal and professional obligations. This study examines the main obstacles working women encounter while juggling their duties to their families and their jobs. An extensive assessment of the literature focuses on earlier research on work-life balancing tactics, workplace regulations, and gender roles. This study uses a mixed-method approach, collecting data from working women in a variety of occupations through surveys and interviews. Statistical investigations, such as ANOVA and regression models, look at how work-life balance is affected by spousal support, childcare availability, and workplace policy. The results indicate that women's capacity to successfully manage both domains is strongly influenced by organizational assistance, cultural norms, and flexible work schedules. In order to establish a more equal workplace, this study offers suggestions to organizations and legislators.

I. Introduction

In addition to performing traditional caregiving duties, women today make a substantial contribution to economic growth. But juggling a family and a work presents significant difficulties. These difficulties include discrimination at work, a shortage of maternity leave, and cultural norms that put family obligations ahead of career goals. The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges that working women encounter, examine statistical data to pinpoint key contributing elements, and suggest ways to close the gap between work and life.

Objectives of the study

- to investigate the difficulties working women encounter in juggling their personal and professional lives.
- to evaluate the contribution that corporate policies make to work-life balance.
- to look into the impact of spouse involvement, childcare support, and family dynamics.
- to offer suggestions for improved integration of work and life.

Historical context of the women in Workplace

Over the past century, women's employment involvement has gradually increased. Early in the 20th century, women were expected to take care of the home according to social conventions. Nonetheless, a significant number of women joined the employment during World War II to cover the vacancies created by men who left for the conflict. Many women kept working after the war, but they encountered prejudice and were frequently told to put their families before their careers. The participation of women in a variety of professional professions was further accelerated by the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Work-life balance is a major difficulty because, despite these advancements, women are still expected to be the primary caregivers.

Challenges faced by working women

1. Social Expectations and Gender Roles

- Even with full-time careers, women are still expected to perform the majority of caregiving duties and household chores.
- Women are frequently discouraged from putting their jobs ahead of their family responsibilities by cultural and traditional attitudes.
- The "double burden" or "second shift" phenomenon refers to the way in which working women balance their obligations to their families and their jobs.

2. Discrimination and Gender Bias in the Workplace

- In industries where men predominate, women frequently face discrimination, limited possibilities for advancement, and gender wage discrepancies.
- Biases associated to maternity, such the "motherhood penalty," limit prospects for career progression.
- absence of female role models and leadership participation in upper management.



3. Absence of Workplace Policies Favoring Families

- Women who struggle with postpartum issues are partly caused by inadequate maternity and paternity leave policies.
- Many women are forced to compromise their careers due to a lack of remote work options or flexible work schedules.
- Women find it challenging to concentrate on their professional development due to a lack of access to reasonably priced childcare facilities.

4. Mental and Physical Health Implications

- The burden of juggling both professional and family duties can lead to burnout, anxiety, and despair.
- Overall health and productivity can be impacted by sleep deprivation and physical tiredness brought on by an excessive workload.
- Emotional distress and self-doubt are frequently exacerbated by guilt feelings and social pressure.

5. Economic Dependence and Financial Constraints

- Financial limitations keep many women from obtaining essential resources like childcare and household assistance, especially those in low-income groups.
- In some societies, women are discouraged from working or earning more than their male counterparts,

Possible solutions to work like balance

1. Legal safeguards and policy interventions

- To promote shared responsibility, governments should enact stricter labor rules that protect working moms, such as paid maternity and paternity leave.
- In addition to addressing gender-based discrimination in leadership chances and promotions, organizations should implement equal pay rules.

2. Workplace Support Systems and Flexibility

- To accommodate working mothers, employers should implement flexible work arrangements including remote work and adjustable schedules.

- Working parents' stress levels can be considerably reduced by offering on-site childcare services and parental support initiatives.
- promoting a work-life balance culture through managerial assistance and leadership advocacy.

3. Promoting Shared Accountability in the Home

- using awareness-raising activities and educational initiatives to advance gender equality in domestic responsibilities.
- To lessen the load on women, males should be encouraged to actively participate in childcare and household duties.

4. Initiatives for Mental Health and Well-Being

- Businesses must to offer stress management courses, counseling services, and mental health support.
- encouraging workplace wellness efforts, such as paid mental health days and physical health programs.

5. Social and Community Support Systems

- creating networks and support groups where working women may exchange stories and get advice.
- promoting mentorship programs in which seasoned female professionals assist younger women in overcoming obstacles related to their families and careers.

Literature Review

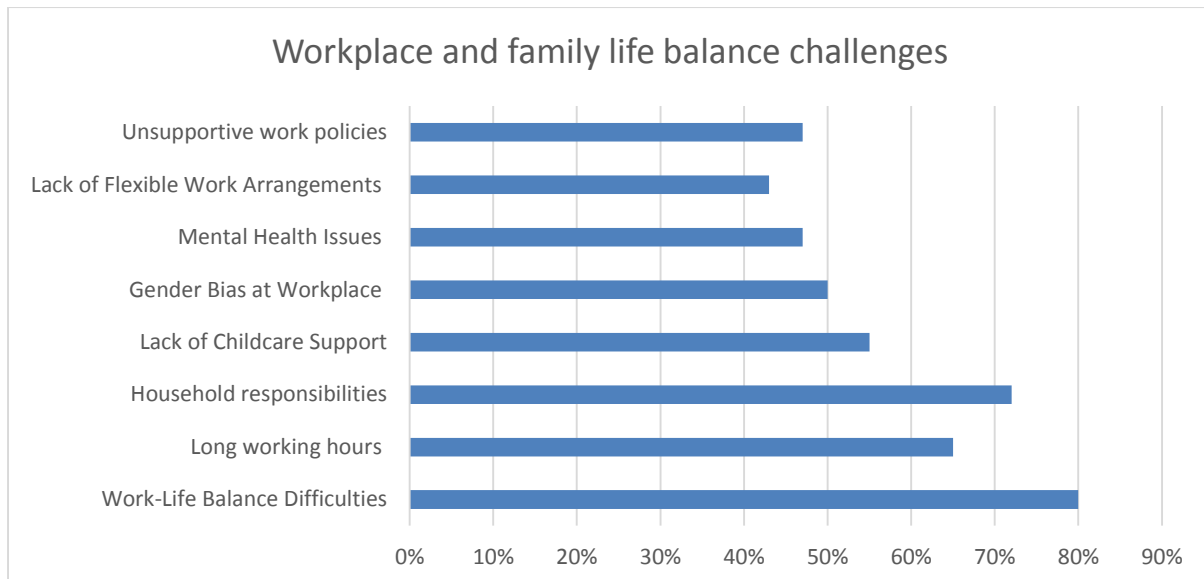
Work-Life Balance Theories

Work-life balance is attempted to be explained by a number of theories, including:

- **Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985)** theory of work-family conflict states: claims that obligations to one's family and one's job frequently conflict, causing stress and discontent.
- According to the **Role Overload Theory (Goode, 1960)**, balancing several responsibilities—wife, mother, and employee—leads to both physical and emotional tiredness.
- **The Boundary Theory (Ashforth et al., 2000)** looks at how people handle the divisions between their personal and professional lives.



Gender Roles and Expectations in Society



- Women should be the primary caregivers, according to traditional gender conventions, which puts extra strain on those who want to pursue employment. The "second shift," as defined by **Hochschild and Machung (1989)**, is when working women continue to handle the majority of household duties after work hours.

- According to more recent research, women continue to bear a disproportionate amount of household work, even though men's participation has increased (**Bianchi et al., 2012**).

Organizational Support and Work-Life Balance Policies

- Work-life balance may be facilitated by remote work choices, flexible work schedules, and maternity leave, according to research. Organizations that adopt flexible policies report higher job satisfaction and lower rates of burnout among female employees (**Allen et al., 2013**).

- However, a lot of women are reluctant to use these policies because they are afraid of the ramifications for their careers (**Williams, 2010**).

Support for Families and Childcare

- The availability of childcare has a significant impact on women's employment rates. Research by **Gornick and Meyers (2003)** highlights that nations like Sweden and Denmark, which have robust childcare support programs, have greater rates of female workforce retention. On the other hand, women in many poor countries are forced to take pauses from their careers due to a shortage of cheap childcare.

The given data represents the percentage of respondents who face various challenges in their professional and personal lives. These challenges are likely gathered from a survey or study on workplace difficulties, work-life balance, and gender-related issues. Each percentage indicates the proportion of respondents who identified a specific issue as a challenge.

Research methodology

Research Design

This study uses a mixed-method approach, integrating qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to fully comprehend the difficulties faced by working women.

Techniques for Gathering Data

- Survey:** Five hundred working women from a range of industries were given a standardized questionnaire. Workplace rules, working hours, childcare assistance, and family relations were the main topics of the questions.

- Interviews:** To learn more about the life experiences of thirty women, in-depth interviews were undertaken with them.

Method of Sampling

To ensure diversity in occupation, marital status, and socioeconomic background, a stratified random selection procedure was employed.

Methods of Data Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics:** For important variables, the mean, median, and standard deviation were computed.

STATISTICAL FINDINGS:



- iii. Regression analysis was used to look at the connection between job satisfaction and workplace support.
- iv. Work-life balance disparities across industries were examined using ANOVA (Analysis of Variance).

• **Organizational Guidelines and Their Performance**

Flexible work policies and job satisfaction were found to be positively correlated ($r = 0.62, p < 0.05$) by regression analysis. But just 40% of women said they had access to these policies, suggesting a disconnect between the creation and application of policies.

• **Effects of Spousal and Family Support**

Work-life satisfaction was higher among women who had significant family support (Mean Score: 4.2/5) than among those who had minimal support (Mean Score: 2.9/5). Stress levels were considerably lowered when spouses helped out around the house. The findings of the ANOVA on mental health and burnout revealed that burnout levels varied significantly by profession ($F = 5.12, p < 0.01$). Compared to women in more flexible occupations (like academics), those in high-stress areas (like healthcare and finance) expressed higher degrees of tiredness.

Key challenges identified in Previous Research

- **Gender bias in the workplace:** Women are subjected to discrimination in terms of compensation, promotions, and hiring practices (Eagly & Carli, 2007).
- **Lack of Support for daycare:** Working women typically face challenges due to the lack of accessible and high-quality daycare (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010).
- **Mental and Physical Health Problems:** Burnout, depression, and physical illnesses are caused by elevated stress levels (Hochschild, 1989).

Key Finding

- Traditional gender norms, long hours, and childcare are the main causes of work-life conflict, which is still a significant problem.
- Effective implementation of organizational policies can greatly lower stress and increase retention.
- Support from family and the spouse is essential for juggling obligations.

Recommendations

1. **Flexible employment Policies:** Companies ought to encourage part-time, remote, and hybrid employment arrangements.
2. **Inexpensive Childcare Options:** Businesses and governments alike ought to fund workplace daycare centers.
3. **Gender-Neutral Policies:** Shared parenting guidelines and paternity leave encourage men to assume equal responsibility.
4. **Mental Health Support:** Counseling and wellness initiatives for working mothers should be offered by organizations.
5. **Workplace Awareness:** Sensitization initiatives to lessen discrimination against women who put their families first.
6. **Limitations and Future Research:** Women in rural areas and those working in the unorganized sector should be included in future studies, as this one concentrated on urban professionals. Longitudinal research can shed more light on the difficulties working mothers encounter as they advance in their careers.

II. Conclusion

For working women, juggling work and family obligations continues to be a major obstacle. Traditional expectations, workplace prejudices, and a lack of support systems still impede women's career development and personal wellbeing despite the advancements made in gender equality. Policymakers, employers, families, and society at large must work together to address these issues. In the future, women will not have to choose between a great job and a happy family life thanks to the implementation of fair policies, cultural changes, and friendly work settings.

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