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## **Chapter-5**

# **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

- *Introduction*
- *Brief Description of Findings*
- *SEM Findings and Conclusions*
- *Suggestions*
- *Implications*
- *Limitations*
- *Directions for Future Research*

## Chapter – 5

# FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

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*The previous chapter presented data analysis, results and subsequent discussions on the findings using suitable statistical tools and techniques. This chapter is an attempt to summarize the main findings, conclusions and suggestions in the light of deductions derived from the results. The chapter closes with limitation of the present study and directions for further research.*

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### 5.1. INTRODUCTION



Life of a modern woman has become hugely demanding. In order to gain a landmark for a great home and a successful profession at the same time; a lot is lost. Research regarding the impact of an array of factors on the Work-Life Balance on working women is relatively new in the context of academics, particularly in J&K. The study of Work-Life Balance also gains importance in the light of challenges faced by teachers working in colleges and universities while managing job and home. Therefore, the present study was set out to elevate our understanding of this complex relationship. The results of the study provide some meaningful insights about the state of Work-Life Balance of college and university teachers and also help probe various factors influencing it.

### 5.2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

Work-Life Balance has become a buzz word and sensation in contemporary workplaces. It has given rise to a new generation of employees especially female professionals who want the best of both the worlds. Findings of the study are mainly based on psychometric and socio-demographic measurement of various indicators.

### **5.2.1. University-College Dichotomy**

The study has observed that there exists a significant difference in the mean score across university and college respondents towards Work Load. Compared to Universities, higher mean score was observed for Colleges. The rationale behind this being that the work load in terms of number of classes is more in colleges compared to universities. Also, college teachers often complain of being involved in administrative work more than university teachers due to which they have to put in extra hours.

### **5.2.2. Rural-Urban Dichotomy**

The study observed that there exists no significant difference in the mean score across respondents working in rural and urban areas towards any variable.

### **5.2.3. Age**

- The study observed that there exists a significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Family Responsibility w.r.t Age. The study found a high mean score for Above 50 years, followed by Up to 30 years and 41-50 age groups. A low mean score was observed for 31-40 years age group. These results reveal that age group Above 50 is the prime group with the highest number of respondents who shoulder family responsibility in form of domestic chores, care of kids and the elderly. It must be noted that care of kids does not only mean care of infants and very young kids. It also means looking after grown up children. This finding has a cultural undertone to it since kids do not fly the nest as soon as they attain adulthood in this part of the world. Dependent Care is also an important contributor towards Family Responsibility. Care of infants, young children as well as elderly contribute to it. The findings clearly show that Family Responsibility is shouldered by women across all age brackets and is more pronounced in extreme age brackets. However, the nature can be different for young and old women.
- The study observed a highly significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Work-Life Balance on the basis of Age. Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance also seems to fall with age and is the least for older women especially in the Above 50 age bracket. The finding is completely in

tune with the earlier finding which says that Family Responsibility does not decrease with progression in age. It must be noted that Family Responsibility has a negative relationship with Work-Life Balance. Hence, the latter tends to fall with increase in family responsibilities viz-a-viz age. As far as women below 30 years are concerned; they are either newly wed or yet to have children. Besides, they are still to take up the full charge of their new homes. So, they do not find themselves bogged down by domestic obligations compared to women in age bracket of Above 50. Therefore, they enjoy a better Work-Life Balance.

#### **5.2.4. Division**

The study observed that there exists no significant difference in the mean score across various divisions of the erstwhile state towards any variable.

#### **5.2.5. Designation**

- The study observed that there exists a significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Family Responsibility w.r.t Designation. The highest mean difference is observed for Professor-Family Responsibility combination as career progression does not seem to lessen a woman's share of familial duties and obligations. As a matter of fact, family responsibilities tend to grow with promotions and advances in career. This is closely followed by Associate Professor/ Administrator-Family Responsibility combination.
- The study has found a highly significant mean difference across different levels of Designation for Work Load. The highest mean score is observed for Associate Professor and the lowest for Administrator post. Low mean score is also recorded by Professors. The reason being that women at the start of their career feel the most jittery and often succumb to pressures of work load compared to women who are perched higher. Professors and Administrators find themselves more secure and less vulnerable to tension and strain of academic work compared to the other groups.
- The study observed a highly significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Work-Life Balance on the basis of Designation. Other posts e.g. Scientist etc. seem to show the highest level of agreement towards

satisfaction with Work-Life Balance. Professors and Administrators are among the lowest scorers. It must be noted that Family Responsibility has a negative relationship with Work-Life Balance and as per the previous findings, Professors carry most of the Family Responsibilities. Therefore, their satisfaction with Work-Life Balance is the least.

#### **5.2.6. Number of Children**

- The study observed that there exists a significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Family and Social Support w.r.t Number of Children. Women having Two or More than Two children tend to seek and get more Family and Social Support than women with One or No kids. This finding can be attributed to a cultural factor of looking up to family after having kids. A lot of women prefer putting young kids with mothers and mothers in law rather than getting paid help in form of baby sitters and nannies. The system of creches is picking up at a fast rate in cities however women in villages are still unconvinced about this arrangement. Moreover, paid help in form of nannies and baby sitters is not only expensive but highly unreliable in this part of the world.
- The study observed that there exists a significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Work Load w.r.t Number of Children. Respondents with More than Two children demonstrated the highest mean score. The reason being that more children mean more work for a woman. This is closely followed by women with One and Two children, standing at the same level. The work load is least for childless women.
- The study observed that there exists a significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Organizational Support w.r.t Number of Children. It was found that respondents with Two children received the most Organizational Support. Strangely, respondents with More than Two children received least support. This clearly indicates an unconcern in organizational support for the third child e.g. no maternity leaves, child care provisions etc. are provided for the third baby. The finding is further reinforced by the fact that Govt. of India and all the organizations working under it are not

supportive to the idea of more than two children because of population control awareness and sensitivity.

#### **5.2.7. Type of Family**

The study observed a highly significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Family Responsibility on the basis of the type of family. The study has found that women living in nuclear families show a high level of agreement towards Family Responsibility. Women living alone tend to carry least family responsibilities because of obvious reasons.

The results of the study also depict that women living in nuclear families bear the overall familial responsibilities more than the other two groups. Clearly, joint family acts like a cushion where responsibilities tend to be divided. Household chores as well as dependent care issues are taken care of mutually by all members in a joint arrangement but this does not happen in a nuclear family. A woman living in a nuclear family finds herself wholly and solely responsible for everything.

#### **5.2.8. Annual Income**

The study observed a significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Work-Life Balance on the basis of Annual Income. Women earning between 5, 00,000-6, 99,999 per annum tend to be the most satisfied with their Work-Life Balance. Strangely, women falling in the higher earner category of Above 9, 00,000 per annum show the lowest agreement indicating that there is more to attainment of an amicable equilibrium between work and life than a mere paycheque.

#### **5.2.9. Working Hours per Week**

- The study observed a highly significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Family Responsibility on the basis of the Working Hours per Week. Strangely, the highest mean score was observed for women working Up to 40 hours per week. In other words, women putting in reasonable working hours tend to be more weighed down by Family Responsibilities than women who tend to stay at workplaces longer. The reasons for this can be very obvious. Women who tend to leave by or at stipulated hours are often consumed by worries at home. They either want to rush home to catch up the pending household assignments awaiting them or

have to be there on time for the dependents e.g. children coming back from school. This explains the unconventional relation that has been found between Working Hours per Week and Family Responsibilities. Women working between 49-60 hours tend to be the least burdened ironically.

- The study observed a significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Work Load on the basis of the Working Hours per Week. Highest mean was observed for women who put in Up to 40 hours per week. This was closely followed by women who work for 41-48 hours per week. This finding is completely in line with the previous one and can be explained similarly. Women who spend lesser time on work compared to women who stay at workplaces longer tend to complain of Work Load more. This finding although baffling can be elucidated by the fact that women who are time bound act this way because they know that they have to rush home to attend to kids, other dependents or household chores.

#### **5.2.10. Total Work Experience**

- The study observed a highly significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Family Responsibility on the basis of the Total Work Experience. The highest mean score was observed for women with an experience Above 15 years. The rationale behind this being that as a woman keeps on working, she willingly or unwillingly tends to assume more and more Family Responsibilities. It must be noted that her work experience is also linked with her designation as well as age. A demographic comparison with age and designation supports the same. A working woman is not relieved of the huge task of domestic responsibilities as she would have expected.
- The study observed a highly significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Work-Life Balance on the basis of Total Work Experience. It has been observed that women with the highest work experience of more than 15 years tend to be least satisfied with their Work-Life Balance. Again, this finding is in tune with the previous one where it was observed that women with more work experience find themselves further caught up in family responsibilities. It must be noted that Family Responsibility has a negative relationship with Work-Life Balance.

### **5.2.11. Travel Time to Work Place**

- The study observed a significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Work Load on the basis of the Travel Time to Work Place. Highest mean was observed for teachers who travel for 2-3 hours daily and lowest mean was observed for teachers who travel for less than an hour. It is important to note that time spent travelling is exhausting and adds to ones work load worries. Time spent travelling is time completely lost. This time could have been put to better uses like spending time with family, friends or other pursuits. A woman who has to travel a lot daily cannot afford these luxuries and is left completely drained and over loaded at the end of the day.
- The study observed a highly significant difference in the mean score across respondents towards Work-Life Balance on the basis of Travel Time to Work Place. Reaction towards Work-Life Balance is completely in sync with the previous finding. More time a woman spends travelling, less satisfied she seems with her Work-Life Balance since travel consumes her leisure; thereby disturbing her Work-Life Balance.

## **5.3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Results have found that Work-Life Balance is essential for women to strike a balance between work and non-work spheres of her life. A poor Work-Life Balance can impede a working woman's peace of mind at home and progress at work. To maintain a positive Work-Life Balance, women as well as organizations employing them need to realize its utmost importance.

- The study has found that Family and Social Support has a significant and positive impact on the Work-Life Balance of a working woman. Thus, women whose families are supportive and empathetic towards their multiple roles and responsibilities are able to achieve a good balance between home and job. Further, it was found that role of spouse also emerged as an important factor that influences Work-Life Balance in a positive manner.
- It has also been found that presence of a social support network in terms of friends, relatives, well-wishers etc. is also essential for attaining Work-Life



Balance. Such kind of a support can help women maintain a positive emotional health besides being helpful otherwise.

- The study has found a negative link between job and homely responsibilities. Demands of work often interfere with family responsibilities and vice-versa. Inability to manage both the fronts disturbs Work-Life Balance.
- The study found that family duties also hinder the balance between work and life. Family duties like household chores of cooking, cleaning, washing etc. take up a good proportional of the time a woman can devote to her family and leisure. It must be understood that a working woman also spends a good portion of her time at work, henceforth getting less time for household chores compared to a stay-at-home woman. Thus, the time she could devote to spending quality time with spouse, kids etc. or get some 'me-time' is taken up doing the pending domestic chores.
- It has been found that Family Responsibility in form of dependent care has a negative impact on Work-Life Balance of working women. A great potential conflict between work and family roles results due to the difficulty in managing children especially young children besides having to go to work. Women often report concentration issues at work due to the presence of young kids at home. The study also examined the association between Work-Life Balance and care of dependents like elderly parents or parents in law. This worry back home tends to bring in unintended and undesirable consequences of the balance between work and life.
- The study has found that Work Load has a negative influence on Work-Life Balance. The results support the fact that working hours and work pressure are important determinants of Work Load. However, working hours is a stronger predictor than work pressure. Prolonged work hours and pressure to meet deadlines and tight schedules affect the home life of a woman. Further, women often feel pressured while working on deadlines because taking additional work home is also a problem. Accommodating additional work is a problem because pending household chores are already lined up.
- The study has found that Organizational Support has a positive effect on the Work-Life Balance equation. The findings unfold that supportive and emphatic workplaces assist women in handling multiple roles and

responsibilities better. Be it supportive supervisors or friendly colleagues; women are able to manage time, get more control over their work schedules, complete tasks and most importantly manage both work and life efficiently. This indicates the importance of organizational support in helping women maintain professional and personal balance.

In conclusion, the themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis of Work-Life Balance highlight important factors that impact the Work-Life Balance of a working woman. The traditional role expectations from a woman, her career aspirations and challenges of profession, all comes in the way a woman tries to manage her personal and professional life. Besides being a teacher, a woman is also a homemaker and a primary care provider. These divergent identities can create friction between work and life. Negotiation, patience and understanding, both at home and work front is essential. Many women reported career breaks or slow-paced careers mainly because they had to prefer family needs over professional growth at some point in their careers. Many agreed that women cannot have best of both the worlds. With a large number of women professional working in our higher education sector, it becomes absolutely imperative to understand the essential roles they perform at work as well as family.

With increasing female working population, Work and Life Balance is a real issue. The fact that work and family both are integrated in a woman's life in this contemporary era must be accepted. The performance of the education sector can see remarkable improvement with efficient employees. Females form a sizeable number of the employees working as teachers and academicians. Balanced and contented employees can go a long way in developing the education sector of the state. Therefore, a good correlation between a woman's Work-Life Balance with family, societal and organizational support will help women employees to increase the quality, productivity and efficiency of work.

## 5.4. SUGGESTIONS

In the light of findings and conclusions drawn thereof, the study provides an understanding of Work-Life Balance in general and its impact on the teachers working in J&K in particular. Setting priorities in personal as well as professional life can help women reach the desired Work-Life Balance. Presence of support systems both at work as well as family can go a long way. The findings raised issues that need to be addressed from an academic as well as practical perspective. Finding plausible solutions to this issue will make women better workers committed to their homes, workplaces and society as a whole. In the light of this, the following suggestions have been put forth: -

- The study has found that Family Support positively influences Work-Life Balance. Among the dimensions of Family and Social Support, Family Support has the highest contribution than the other two dimensions. It is thereby suggested that women should never ignore family for the sake of work and vice-versa. A successful working woman needs to set her priorities straight. This sorting has to be done both on professional as well as personal fronts. Nothing great can be achieved at work front without the back of family.
- The study has found that Family Duties and Dependent Care influence Work-Life Balance inversely. In the light of the stated finding, it is suggested that a woman needs to figure out her responsibilities at various levels and make compromises in certain areas of her life completely non-negotiable. It must be understood that if a woman equally values family duties and dependent care as important commitments; then she must have a proper planning of how to handle them or else she will find herself badly entangled and not able to give her fullest anywhere.
- The study found that Work Hours is a significant dimension of Work Load. It is suggested that it's important for women to keep communication lines open with family, spouse, peers, superiors etc. It's always good to be honest and transparent about the issues confronted at work or home e.g. it's better to discuss the problem of being a little late home because of an upcoming important event at the work place rather than brushing the problem under the carpet and creating issues for oneself later on.

- It has been observed from the study results that Organizational Support is an important influence of the Work-Life Balance assessment. Organizations must extend all possible support to women workers not only to get the best out of them but also to improve their bottom-line in the long run.
- It is strongly suggested for women who are looking for work to choose only those organizations for working which have supportive organizational policies for women employees.
- System of crèches must be introduced wherever needed. Such facilities will go a long way in helping women focus at work and not be baffled by the unavailability of help with children. As a matter of fact, Section 48 of Factories Act, 1948 clearly specifies about the provision of creches at workplaces employing women.
- Female teachers must send suggestions or actively participate in policy formulation. Policies sensitive to the issue of Work-Life Balance are centric to the success of women and have a huge impact on their working lives.
- Teachers working in rural areas but commuting from cities must be given special allowances to motivate them to work in different and difficult work settings. Besides allowances, the importance of good working conditions, better facilities and sympathetic attitudes cannot be over-looked. It must be understood that the working conditions of teachers are the learning conditions of the students. Faculty housing within the campus is another good idea.
- Higher education policy makers need to lead efforts in creating positivity in the environment of universities and colleges towards women faculty members. Efforts should be made to give behavioural orientation to those who are insensitive to women.
- Policy makers should also develop female faculty development provisions tailored to the specific needs of women employees. Women should be able to avail scholarships, training, counselling, mentoring and other such programmes designed to help them cope with a career break/slow-paced career and put them at par with their male counterparts.

## **5.5. IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of the current study will make academic as well as practical contribution. The scholarly contribution will highlight how the dominant constructs of Work-Life Balance will play an important role in shaping attitudes towards the dual roles played by women teachers in universities and colleges.

On the practical front, the study outlines the possible implications of the present state of Work-Life Balance of teachers in universities and colleges and the spill over effect of work on life and vice-versa. The study results are expected to help decision makers in higher education in J&K to understand and consequently formulate robust procedures towards enhancing the Work-Life Balance of women. There is a need for the development of a positive attitude towards issues faced by women at work. In view of various findings and suggestions, it is believed that the issue can be understood from different perspectives and people will start viewing working women in a more positive light. The study intends to appeal to the senses and emotions of all stakeholders who are willing to accept and make a change.

## **5.6. LIMITATIONS**

Although precautions were taken while developing the research model in order to maintain its objectivity, reliability and validity, yet the study could not be free from some unavoidable limitations. Therefore, some caution needs to be exercised while interpreting the findings. Some observed limitations are presented below: -

- The study has used quantitative methodology for data collection and the questionnaire has been framed with a restrictive set of questions. To get a holistic and wider picture of the given subject, qualitative methods like content analysis and case study could have been adopted in addition to the already adapted methodology. Moreover, in this case, data has been collected from a single source (teachers) and at the same time. Thus, leading to a possibility of a common method bias.
- The study studies Family and Social Support, Family Responsibility, Work Load, Organizational Support and their relationship with Work-Life Balance. This has been measured on the basis of the teacher's responses. Therefore, a certain degree of subjectivity is unavoidable.

- The current study has been conducted in J&K. The findings are applicable to women teachers working in higher education sector. Hence, caution may be exercised while generalizing the inferences beyond higher education sector and the erstwhile state of J&K.
- The focus of this work was limited to women. More research is needed to determine the generalizability of results in J&K across genders, particularly in higher education.
- A self-administered questionnaire was used to measure variables. Hence, the inherent deficiencies that are present in every questionnaire could not be overcome. This happens mainly because answers are dependent on respondent's perception of the questions. It is quite likely that respondent bias might have occurred during the course of the survey.
- Some additional empirical inquiry with regard to variables that are not considered must be taken up to deepen the understanding of this particular topic. Due to paucity of time, the present study didn't focus on examining the links between Work-Life Balance and role overload, religiosity and similar other variables. Therefore, it is suggested that the causal relationship between these variables may be analysed for future research in this area. The study of the antecedents of Work-Life Balance and variables (ones that have not been covered in this work) that influence it may yield more robust findings on continued investigation.
- The study has not considered the entire population because of time constraint.
- The quality of work could be improved by the availability of more time and finances.

## **5.6. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

An attempt has been made to cover all the aspects of Work-Life Balance, but due to time, space and out of scope limitations; some room is always left for the future researchers. The directions for future research have been briefly discussed below: -

- The current study is focussed on the Work-Life Balance in Jammu and Kashmir. However, it opens further avenues to conduct similar studies outside J&K in other states of India.

- Further studies in this area could be directed to examine the present relationships, however from different perspectives and contexts. This will help in enhancing the generalizability of the results.
- Future studies could use a longitudinal design to increase the dynamicity of the work. This will help in providing more robust relationships and will also lessen the effect of common method bias. Data could be collected from multiple sources e.g. information regarding Work-Life Balance can be obtained from other stakeholders like spouses, other family members etc.
- Future research could be undertaken to replicate the model on which this study is based. Validation and replication could be done at some different location in order to determine the generalizability of the current findings. Model and hypothesis could be extended to banking, health and other sectors.
- The study mainly considers Family Social Support, Family Responsibility, Work Load and Organizational Support. In this view, future researchers can examine the effect of some other variables and their moderating roles. Some more understanding with regard to the moderating role of demographic variables can also be explored.
- This study considers women only. It can be extended to men as well since they also report Work-Life Balance issues. This can help give a holistic view of the problem.