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WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG WORKING WOMEN FOR HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

KEY WORDS: women; work-life balance; factor analysis

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ABSTRACT

World over, there has been a change in the percentage distribution among work force. Women are entering every field. The cost of living especially in India is found to increase. After entering the work domain, several issues hinder women from performing at their best. Research is carried out to find the items that influence the work life balance of women. Some of the issues include family culture, family back biting, bringing up children, taking care of elders, doubting husbands, ego problems, transferable jobs, job involving travel, fear of new responsibility, freedom, loneliness. Factor analysis is carried out to find the major dimensions of work life balance among women. 320 responses was collected from employees working in various organizations. The factor analysis revealed four factors namely nature of job, gender issue, attitude of women towards work and bondage with home affairs.

INTRODUCTION

Industrialization has brought in automation in several fields. This has helped in reducing physical labour and hence women considered the weaker sex are able to handle machineries and equipment easily. Also at the home front, automation has relieved our women folk with certain household chores and has helped in offering additional free time. Automation is one reason-which has helped women in stepping out into the corporate arena. The shift from an industrial age to a knowledge age has been advantageous to women.

A significant number of these skilled qualified women either drop out or start business on their own. It is high time, women work force are trained and employed, since it is one potential source which is lying dormant and needs to be tapped. How do business houses train these women, on which areas they need to concentrate upon is a question. For this purpose, the issues related to women have to be determined and tackled. Factor analysis have been carried out to find the predominant factors affecting work life balance among women employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of literature have been done to identify the major issues affecting the work life balance of working women.

Bacik and Drew (2006) have explored the work life balance in legal profession. Adame et al. (2016) have reported that a positive relationship exist between the presence of female employees in the organization and the implementation of work life balance measures. Birimisa (2016) have determined the influence of flexibility in work life balance. Brown et al. (2019) have examined the influence of societal and organizational culture on the work life balance. They have done a comparative analysis between US and Korea.

With the advent of technology there has been a major shift in the style of working. This has been dealt detail by Haeger and Lingham (2014). Haar et al. (2014) have investigated how a good work life balance influences job satisfaction, life satisfaction and mental health. They have done a cross sectional study examining seven cultures by collecting data from 1416 employees

Southworth (2014) have stressed the importance of shedding gender stigmas and its importance in the 21st century. Organizations need to re-create the workplace with stigma free work life balance policies. Flexible work options will be required for which organizations need to embrace

participative work culture across gender.

Based on the review of literature, the following issues were identified to be influencing working women in their work life balance : legal issues, promotion methods, sabbatical leave, means of transportation, attitude of working women, flexible working hours, provision for accommodation, treatment of women against men, challenging versus secured jobs, family, peer, boss pressures, role of women in today's IT world, society, governmental policies, cultural factors, traditional bottlenecks, the need for education and training.

Factor analysis is a very versatile tool which has been applied in different applications of management, life sciences, quality etc. Several researchers have applied factor analysis in medicine, market research, sociology and environmental pollution.

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted using 60 variables among 320 respondents. The respondents belonged to both sex working class. The respondents were asked to rank on a five point scale – 1 Strongly Agree to 5 Strongly Disagree. Factor analysis was done after checking for sampling adequacy and significance. Principal component analysis was used with varimax rotation. The factors were extracted. Eigen values above 1 was used in extracting factors and communalities of the items was above 0.5. The factor loading above 0.3 was considered. The reliability of the factors was checked using Cronbach alpha. Based on the above analysis factors were extracted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was found from the mean score that among the sixty variables respondents strongly agreed to the following. Effectiveness will improve when proper accommodation and transportation is arranged or when women are treated on par with men. Job security and financial independence boosts effectiveness. Spending time effectively at home and office will increase the effectiveness of women. In recent times, women can no longer stay at home, but need to come out to work, to improve economy as well as to fulfill their inner urge of being useful.

Factor Analysis was performed starting with 10 factors for eigen value above 1. However after several rounds, it was found that four factors yielded good results on all front namely, factor loadings above 0.3, reliability of all the factors between 0.7 to 0.9. The final factors extracted along with the items in presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Factor analysis

Items	Factors	Factor Loadings
	Nature of job : Cronbach Alpha = 0.90	
30	Women prefer operations level job (clerical), as there is no responsibility.	0.715
27	Women prefer talking to working.	0.663
47	Women cannot look after both family and office matters simultaneously.	0.659
44	Women are not emotionally strong, so are not suitable for top bracket jobs.	0.656
41	Women feel cut throat competition / heartlessness are needed for people at the top and hence avoid positions of top bracket.	0.630
3	Gender-specific training is needed for women to enter executive cadre	0.611
31	Women are not interested in going up the ladder to become managers.	0.597
40	Fear of failing causes women to stay behind at home.	0.562
24	Women find it difficult to accept change	0.562
50	Career has never been a motivator to women.	0.561
46	Tradition dictates men work - women stay at home; women cannot break it.	0.559
59	Women feel shy or delicate to boss over men.	0.527
2	Only rules will induce women to take up responsibility	0.516
53	Financially well off women only take risks – become entrepreneurs	0.485
10	Women by nature are sincere & hardworking	0.480
12	Women cannot work as a team	0.479
49	Women take up job only as a time passing venture.	0.474
29	Women like only desk job which involves mental than physical exercise	0.478
54	Women refrain from entrepreneurship because of risk involved.	0.462
51	Older women with well-settled family become career oriented and ambitions.	0.451
55	Women, however educated, still believe in age old superstitions.	0.439
34	In recent times, women can no longer stay at home with purdahs but must come out to work in the society to fulfill their inner urge of being useful.	0.4
23	Problems at home disturb work at office	0.389
	Gender issue : Cronbach Alpha = 0.72	
26	Job security gives happiness to women.	0.642
11	Women by nature are loyal	0.571
7	Women when treated equal with men improve their effectiveness	0.562
4	Jobs for women should be non-transferable	0.530
18	Transfer should be given to a women only when a request is made	0.476
39	Lack of training to women is the stumbling block for the effectiveness.	0.428
1	Enforcing quota for women by the govt. will increase the effectiveness	0.426
19	Women with school / college going children are better workers	0.426
5	Sabbatical leave need to be given	0.418
32	Computers have brought most of the women into the work place.	0.385
58	Spending time effectively at home and at office (quality time spending) is necessary to improve the effectiveness of women.	0.383
45	Even literate women like to stay at home after marriage.	0.380
	Attitude of women towards work: Cronbach Alpha = 0.66	
14	Women by nature are good managers	0.597
48	Women are judgmental in nature.	0.588
21	Mental and physical agility of women improves their productivity in office	0.537
13	Women by nature are entrepreneurs	0.509
6	Leave with pay for 6 months to be given – after marriage and pregnancy	0.475
16	Working hours for women should be work-based not hours-based	0.442
17	Women should be allowed to do office work from their houses	0.434
36	Women want to be financially independent.	0.401
	Bondage with home affairs : Cronbach Alpha = 0.66	
37	Family pressures prevent women from climbing up the managerial ladder.	0.650
33	In today's e-world women are found equal to men since the competition is now between intelligence(mental) and not between labour(physical).	0.626
38	Men – women ego clash prevents women from climbing to the top.	0.565
22	Unmarried women work better	0.489
56	The society prevents women leading a liberated life.	0.485
20	Women with little ones at home find it difficult to concentrate in office work	0.484
43	Women giving orders to men (at work) are not liked by men.	0.457

From the results, the following inferences are drawn.

Factor 1: Nature of Job

Women are suited in handling multi-faceted jobs at home. They have been good managers at home. Their inherent skills can be made use of, by allotting challenging work which involves intricate details, tight budgeting, satisfying everyone.

Factor 2: Gender issue

This covers the external issues having an impact on women effectiveness. When it comes to promotion to the top executive cadre though women get similar education, work in similar industries, yet they are found lacking somewhere against their male counterparts and hence they are left behind. This should be analysed and solutions are to be framed.

Factor 3: Attitude of women towards work

The internal (self related) issues of women are grouped under this. Women are found to be entering almost every profession. Attitudes need to be changed. Working in a male dominated business arena is expected to boost their self esteem. Demonstrating their competence at the work field apart from home and winning the respect and recognition officially has now become a motivator among women executives.

Factor 4: Bondage with home affairs

It is a well known fact that Indian women have a high affinity for family. This bondage is good. It is an important constituent in building citizens of tomorrow. Their role in society is recognized as crucial as they contribute to the future. Yet, the bondage should never become a bottleneck (stranglehold).

CONCLUSION

Society, Government and business houses are recognizing the need for women in business as a potential labour sector, and realizing the strengths of a multi-faceted women. The number of such women in the higher echelons of business, are increasing. Yet they are not in direct proportion to the present global scenario. Research indicates that it is not only the men of the family or the society that impede the development of women, but women themselves – their attitude. The women employees will serve the business better and rise further depending on the type of job entrusted to them. Women employees need to go for attitudinal change, to rise further in their career. They are mostly responsible for their professional development, with necessarily a little support from family, government and society.

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