

# DETERMINANTS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN IT SECTOR

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The IT sector has seen significant growth in recent years and an increasing number of women are pursuing careers in this industry. However, women employees in the IT sector often face unique challenges when it comes to maintaining a healthy work-life balance. This abstract provides an overview of the key factors influencing the work-life balance of women in the IT sector, with a focus on the various aspects that impact their personal and professional lives. The work-life balance of women employees in the IT sector is a subject of growing importance, as it not only affects the well-being of these individuals but also influences organizational productivity and diversity. This abstract summarizes the findings of existing research and identifies several key factors that contribute to the challenges and opportunities for women in this field.*

**Key words:** work-life balance, women employees, IT sector and challenges

## **INTRODUCTION**

Work-life balance is a concept that refers to the equilibrium between an individual's professional life and their personal life. It involves effectively managing the demands and responsibilities of one's job, career, or business while also tending to personal and family-related needs, hobbies and well-being. Achieving a healthy work-life balance is essential for promoting physical and mental health, reducing stress and enhancing overall quality of life. In this demanding world, maintaining work-life balance has become a significant challenge for many people. It's not just about the number of hours spent at work; it encompasses how well one can disconnect from work-related concerns, focus on personal and family life and engage in activities that bring joy and fulfilment. A well-balanced work-life approach acknowledges the importance of individual well-being, relationships and personal interests alongside professional and career goals. It recognizes that a person's life is not solely defined by their job, and that dedicating time to personal growth, family, leisure and health is just as vital. Effective work-life balance is a dynamic and personalized pursuit, as it varies from person to person and it may also evolve over time. It involves setting boundaries, making conscious choices about how time is allocated and seeking support when needed. Ultimately, achieving a

satisfactory work-life balance can lead to increased job satisfaction, improved relationships and a healthier, more fulfilling life.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The pursuit of work-life balance requires setting boundaries, prioritizing self-care and managing time efficiently to ensure that work commitments do not overshadow personal life and well-being. Striking the right balance can enhance productivity and job satisfaction while fostering healthier and more fulfilling personal lives, Satish Puranam (2016).

Maintaining work-life balance is a crucial aspect of modern life, particularly in today's demanding work environments. It involves effectively managing the time and energy invested in one's professional responsibilities and personal life, such as family, leisure and personal well-being. Achieving work-life balance is essential for reducing stress, preventing burnout and nurturing physical and mental health, Bimaldeep Kaur (2014).

Flexible working arrangements have become a vital component in the quest for work-life balance. These arrangements encompass various scheduling options, such as telecommuting, part-time work, compressed workweeks and job-sharing. They provide employees with the flexibility to adapt their work hours and locations to better align with their personal needs and responsibilities, Geetha Subramaniam, John Overton, and Bala Maniam (2015).

Work-life balance and job satisfaction are closely intertwined aspects of an individual's well-being in the modern workplace. Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between one's professional commitments and personal life, while job satisfaction relates to an employee's contentment and fulfilment in their role, K. Agha, F. T. Azmi, and A. Irfan (2017).

An effective work-life balance is essential for nurturing job satisfaction. When employees can manage their work responsibilities in a way that allows them to meet their personal needs, spend time with their families, pursue hobbies and maintain their health. On the other hand, an imbalance between work and personal life, characterized by long hours, high stress and limited time for personal pursuits, can lead to job dissatisfaction and even burnout, Jagruti Sandeep Patil (2017).

## **WORK LIFE BALANCE**

The IT sector is notorious for long working hours, tight project deadlines and high expectations for performance. Women often find it challenging to balance their professional responsibilities with their personal lives, leading to potential burnout and stress. Stereotypes and biases persist in the IT industry, which can create a hostile work environment for women. Overcoming these biases and advancing in their careers can be additional stressors for women in IT. Many organizations have recognized the importance of offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible hours, which can greatly enhance the work-life balance of women employees in the IT sector. Companies that prioritize gender diversity and implement policies that support women in the workplace tend to have better work-life balance for their female employees. Access to mentors and networking opportunities can help women in the IT sector navigate their careers and obtain valuable guidance, which can contribute to better work-life balance.

Balancing work and family life is a significant concern for women in the IT sector. Policies that support parental leave, childcare assistance and other family-friendly initiatives can alleviate the challenges they face.

The mental health and well-being of women in the IT sector are crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Employers should prioritize employee mental health programs and stress management support. Achieving a work-life balance for women in the IT sector is a multifaceted challenge influenced by working conditions, company culture and societal expectations. Recognizing these challenges and implementing strategies to support women in this field is essential for promoting diversity, improving well-being and ultimately enhancing the productivity and success of the IT industry. Balancing work and personal life is a challenge for many employees, particularly in the IT sector, regardless of gender. In Chennai, a prominent IT hub in India, women employees face unique challenges in achieving work-life balance.

The IT sector is known for its demanding work hours, especially during project deadlines. Women often find it challenging to manage their personal and family responsibilities with these long hours. Commuting in a city like Chennai can be time-consuming and women may have to deal with safety concerns while traveling to and from work. This can add to the stress of their daily routine. Gender stereotypes and traditional societal expectations can put additional pressure on women to manage both their career and home life effectively. They may be expected to fulfil domestic roles and responsibilities in addition to their work duties. The availability of a support system, such as family, friends, or professional help (like childcare services), can greatly influence a woman's ability to maintain work-life balance.

The extent of this support can vary widely. Some IT companies in Chennai offer flexible work arrangements like remote work or flexible hours, which can be beneficial for women trying to balance work and family life. Maternity and parental leave policies, as well as the culture around taking such leaves, can impact women's career trajectories and work-life balance. The work culture in the IT sector can vary from company to company. A supportive and inclusive workplace culture that values work-life balance can make a significant difference for women employees. Juggling work and personal life can take a toll on mental and physical health. Stress management and self-care are important for women in the IT sector.

Balancing work and life may sometimes impact career progression for women in IT. Some may opt for a slower career trajectory to have more time for family, while others may prioritize their career. Building a strong professional network can be beneficial for women to find support, advice, and potential mentors who have successfully managed work-life balance in the IT sector. Achieving work-life balance for women employees in the IT sector in Chennai, as in many other places, can be challenging due to long hours, societal expectations and other factors. However, it's not impossible and various strategies and support systems can help women strike a balance that suits their individual needs and aspirations. Companies that prioritize diversity and inclusion often work to provide resources and policies that support their female employees in this regard.

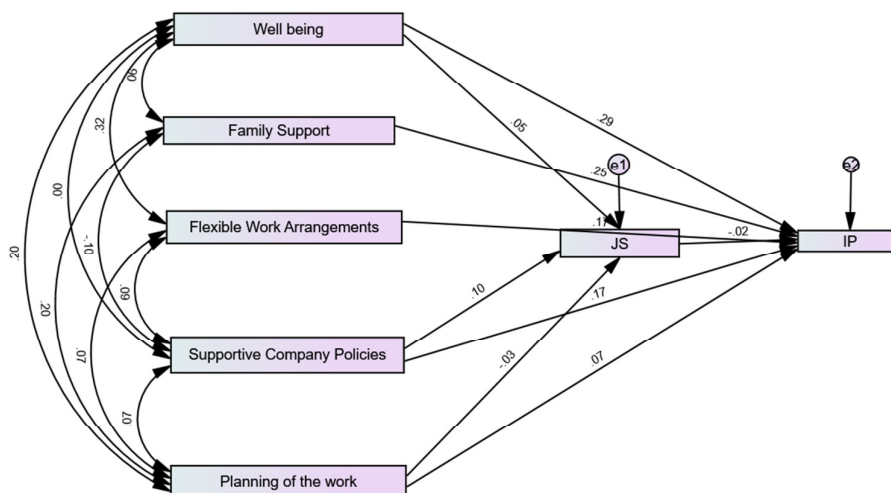
## OBJECTIVES

- To analyse the WLB of IT sector women employees
- To find out the facilities available with the organization

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING

Figure 1.1



### GOODNESS OF FIT TEST FOR SEM

Table 1.1

| S.NO | Measure | Recommended value | Observed Values | Interpretation |
|------|---------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1    | CMIN/DF | Between 1 and 3   | 1.845           | Excellent      |
| 2    | CFI     | >0.95             | 0.964           | Excellent      |
| 3    | GFI     | >0.90             | 0.991           | Excellent      |
| 4    | AGFI    | >0.80             | 0.918           | Excellent      |
| 5    | NFI     | >0.90             | 0.940           | Excellent      |
| 6    | IFI     | >0.90             | 0.972           | Excellent      |
| 7    | RMSEA   | <0.08             | 0.069           | Excellent      |
| 8    | RMR     | <0.05             | 0.008           | Excellent      |

Source: Primary Data

The model fitness CMIN/DF= 1.845, the discrepancy divided by degrees of freedom is 5.534 / 3 = 1.845, CFI = 0.964, GFI= 0.991, AGFI= 0.918, NFI= 0.940, IFI = 0.972, RMSEA= 0.069 and RMR = 0.008.

## FINDINGS

The work-life balance of women employees in the IT sector has been the subject of various studies and research, which have yielded several findings. Women in the IT sector often report working long hours, including overtime and on weekends. This can lead to challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance,

as extended work hours can encroach on personal and family time. The IT industry is known for its demanding work environment. Women employees may face high levels of stress and pressure due to the need to meet tight project deadlines, resolve technical issues, and adapt to rapidly changing technologies. Gender stereotypes and biases persist in the IT sector, affecting women's experiences. Some women may encounter discrimination or a lack of recognition for their skills and contributions, which can create additional stress and hinder work-life balance. Companies that offer flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options or flexible hours, can significantly improve the work-life balance of women in the IT sector. These arrangements provide more control over their schedules and the ability to juggle personal and professional responsibilities. Organizations that prioritize diversity and inclusion tend to have better work-life balance for women employees. Supportive policies, such as paid parental leave, childcare assistance and wellness programs, can alleviate the challenges women face in balancing work and personal life. Access to mentors and networking opportunities is essential for women in the IT sector. Having guidance and a strong professional network can help them navigate their careers more effectively, leading to a better work-life balance.

The mental health and overall well-being of women in the IT sector are vital for maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Stress management programs, counseling services, and a culture that prioritizes employee well-being contribute to a more balanced and sustainable work life. Some women in the IT sector emphasize the concept of work-life integration over the traditional work-life balance. This approach acknowledges that personal and professional life are interconnected and rather than strict separation, individuals seek ways to integrate work and personal responsibilities. Women in IT may find that career advancement can be challenging due to gender-related biases. Addressing these biases and ensuring equal opportunities for growth can positively impact work-life balance by reducing job insecurity and stress. Supportive partners and families play a crucial role in helping women in the IT sector maintain work-life balance. A strong support system can enable women to pursue their careers without feeling overwhelmed by family responsibilities.

These findings underscore the complicated nature of work-life balance for women employees in the IT sector. While progress has been made in addressing some of the challenges, there is still work to be done to create an inclusive and supportive environment that allows women to thrive in their IT careers while also enjoying a fulfilling personal life.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

Improving the work-life balance of women employees in the IT sector requires a concerted effort from both organizations and individuals. Addressing unconscious bias and discrimination is key to creating a more equitable workplace. Encourage open communication within the workplace, allowing employees to voice their concerns and suggest improvements related to work-life balance and overall job satisfaction. Recognize the concept of work-life integration, where personal and professional lives are harmoniously combined rather than strictly separated. This approach can reduce stress associated with trying to balance the two.

1. Encourage and provide flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options, flextime, and compressed workweeks. This allows women to adapt their work schedules to better accommodate personal and family responsibilities.
2. Ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work and have the same career growth opportunities as their male counterparts. Address gender disparities in promotions and leadership positions.
3. Implement family-friendly policies, such as paid parental leave, on-site childcare facilities, and flexible healthcare benefits. These policies can alleviate the burden of balancing work and family life.
4. Establish mentorship and sponsorship programs to help women advance in their IT careers. Senior employees can provide guidance, networking opportunities and support for professional development.
5. Provide training and education on unconscious bias and gender diversity for all employees. Creating a more inclusive workplace culture can reduce discrimination and bias against women. Promote diverse and inclusive leadership at all levels of the organization. Diverse leadership teams can help address gender biases and create more inclusive workplace cultures. Personal Time Management: Encourage employees to develop effective time management skills, set boundaries, and prioritize tasks to balance their professional and personal lives.
6. Offer employee assistance programs that provide mental health support and resources for stress management and well-being. Promote a culture that values mental health and provides resources to address work-related stress.
7. Encourage open and honest communication within the organization. Create channels for employees to voice their concerns and suggest improvements in work-life balance and workplace conditions.
8. Monitor workloads and project deadlines to prevent excessive overtime. Ensure that employees are not consistently overworked and can maintain a reasonable work schedule.
9. Promote wellness initiatives, such as exercise facilities, mindfulness programs and health incentives, to help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance.
10. Facilitate the formation of networking and support groups for women in the IT sector. These groups can provide a sense of community and offer guidance on work-life balance. Invest in leadership training for both women and men in the organization. Cultivate leadership skills and promote a more inclusive and supportive work environment.
11. Highlight successful women in the IT sector as role models. Sharing their experiences and stories can inspire other women and show them that career advancement is possible. Encourage the concept of work-life integration, where personal and professional lives are harmoniously combined rather than strictly separated. This approach can reduce stress associated with trying to balance the two.
12. Establish clear policies on overtime and ensure that extra work hours are compensated fairly. Avoid creating a culture of "always on" that can lead to burnout. Regularly gather feedback from women employees about their work-life balance and overall job satisfaction.



## CONCLUSION

Achieving a healthy work-life balance for women employees in the IT sector is a critical issue with far-reaching implications for both individuals and organizations. While significant progress has been made in recent years, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to create a more inclusive and supportive work environment for women in technology-related roles. Improving work-life balance for women in the IT sector not only benefits these employees but also contributes to organizational success, innovation, and employee retention. It's essential for companies to create an inclusive and supportive environment that values diversity and prioritizes the well-being of all employees. The IT sector offers exciting career opportunities but can also be demanding and stressful, with long working hours, high workloads, and gender biases posing unique challenges for women. To improve the work-life balance of women in the IT sector, it is essential to implement a multifaceted approach that involves organizations, policymakers, and individuals themselves.

Companies should adopt and promote family-friendly policies, including flexible work arrangements, paid parental leave, and childcare support. These policies can help women balance their professional and personal lives more effectively. Ensure that women have equal opportunities for career advancement, receive equal pay, and have access to leadership positions. Addressing gender disparities is essential for creating a fair and inclusive workplace. Establish mentorship and sponsorship programs to help women grow in their IT careers. Support from experienced professionals can provide guidance, boost confidence, and offer opportunities for professional development. Prioritize employee mental health and well-being with resources and programs designed to manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Encourage effective time management and boundary setting for employees. Personal time management skills can help women balance their responsibilities and reduce stress. Promote a cultural shift within organizations that values diversity and fosters an inclusive environment. Adopting a work environment that supports women's work-life balance not only benefits the employees themselves but also leads to increased diversity, innovation and overall organizational success. By implementing the suggestions outlined and actively working toward gender equality and work-life balance, the IT sector can create a more equitable and thriving industry for women employees. It is a shared responsibility to ensure that women in the IT sector can pursue fulfilling careers while enjoying a fulfilling personal life.

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