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Original Research Article

A Study on the Work-Life Balance of Female Employees at University in Sultanate of Oman

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Abstract

A study was conducted to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by female employees in education institutions and how well the female employees can manage their professional life and personal life. Research is steered at one of the University in Sultanate of Oman. It is a descriptive study conducted to find the opinions of female employees towards work life balance at University in Oman. The population of the proposed research include all female teaching staff of the University (population is 83) by including all the departments (BSD, ELC, Engineering and IT). The sample size is 68 with (95% confidence level). To know the intentions and opinions of female employees a structured questionnaire is administered for collecting primary data. Stratified proportionate convenient sampling method is used to collect data from female teaching employees of the University. Parametric test ANOVA is used for analysis. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the opinions of female employees towards work environment. The employees' targets that create tension shown a statistically significant difference among four departments. The employees' responsibility at work create stress shown a statistically significant difference among four departments. The employees not able to spare time for research activities shown a statistically significant difference was found among four departments. It is observed that there is a difference of opinion among female employees of the university towards work environment. Similarly, there is a difference of opinion among female employees of the university towards home environment (family) and regarding work life balance among four departments. Post-Hoc test was conducted to know the actual difference of their opinions with reference to other departments and found that IT and engineering has a difference of opinion regarding work life balance. Hence, we can say that some female employees are not comfortable with work life balance at the University. **Keywords**: Opinions; challenges; employees; departments; stress; work environment; family; work life balance.

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INTRODUCTION

In the past, women were controlled to domestic tasks such as cooking, washing, cleaning, and caring children. They were labeled as home mothers and were denied the right or opportunity to leave the home. But things have changed recently. They have a significant function to engage in even outside the home, in addition to being a homemaker. Due to the increase in the number of nuclear families and rising living costs on the one hand and better education and employment prospects on the other, both husband and wife began to work, and many families became dual earners. Higher

education has enhanced women's work chances, allowing them to transition from home mothers to successful working professionals. Women have achieved significant progress in every profession and have left a permanent mark in their respective fields over time. However, there is no major difference in the way she performs her duties as a homemaker. In the vast majority of households, women continue to handle housework, cooking, care for family members and administer the household. Balancing both office work and family is a challenging task facing by women in the present scenario. The work-life balance of women employees is jeopardized when pressures at work and at

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home increase. The organization's expectations of its personnel are rising in this aggressive competitive environment. To meet the demands of the business, employees must extend themselves and focus more on their work, resulting in unbalanced work-life. In reality, establishing a balance between work and personal life is one of the most difficult situation that women employees facing in the twenty-first century. Many female professionals in numerous industries are believed to have a disturbed work-life balance, which is contributing to an increase in divorces, worried family relationships and organizational conflicts. In today's world, the problem of work-life balance has become a burning topic. Changes in technology, values, and demographic trends all led to the growing importance of work-life balance in an industrialized cultures. Other reasons, such as the rising complexity of job, the changing role of family and the increased number of women entering the workforce also contribute to this. The difference between the demands of the workplace and the demands of personal life is referred to as worklife balance. Individuals and businesses suffer greatly as a result of a lack of synchronization between their personal and professional lives. Organizations are under pressure to attain high productivity in the competitive period and individuals with a healthy work-life balance are required, since an employee with a good work-life balance will be able to contribute more to the organization's growth and success. As a result, it is the moment for businesses to devise measures to assist female employees in liking their work and living life to the fullest. Any improvements in the workplace for female employees will benefit both the organization and also the employee.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Once upon a time, the lines between work and family life were very clear. But today, work is about to occupy personal life and maintaining a balance between work and personal life is no longer an easy task. The reason for choosing this topic is to know the work environment and the personal environment of female employees and how they are able to manage both to perform their duties effectively at work place. Also to know the challenges they face at workplace.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the work environment of female employees at University in Oman
- To understand the personal environment (home environment) of female employees.
- To analyse the work life balance of female employees at University in Oman

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is confined to one of the University in Oman during the semester two academic year 2021-2022. The respondents are female faculties from different departments (i.e., Business, Engineering, Information Technology and English language center). The study is confined to the work life balance of female employees. This study will emphasize the various factors that will influence the female employees at work and also at home and subsequently how that influence will be on the work life balance.

SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

To understand and evaluate the existing work environment of female employees at one of the University in Oman. The outcomes of the study may be beneficial for policy makers and university administrators for modifying existing work environment to be more effective for the benefit of the employees of the University. It is also significant for female faculties to understand the existing environment at work as well as at home and the required measures to improve their work life balance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr. Renu parek, Nimmi Singh (2016), in his study titled "Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction among the Women Employees in Education sector", the main aim of this research was to administer an exploratory survey on work-life balance to teachers and analyze their relationship with job satisfaction. Specifically, we wanted to investigate whether teachers" job has a detrimental (work-family conflict) or beneficial effect (work-family enrichment) on family life, and vice versa (family-work conflict, family-work enrichment). The study is a descriptive survey study. Primary data is collected through self-structured questionnaire Standard Deviation is applied in this paper to check the authenticity of data given by the respondents of both sectors. The final questionnaire Consists 19 questions/statements, each with four options. Finding of this study recognizing what is important and necessary and striving for what is valued will make a work-life balance feasible. Utilizing management skills will enable you to have job satisfaction and a balance between work and home life.

Loana lupu and Mayra Ruiz Castro (2021), in their study titled, "Work-life Balance is a Cycle, Not an Achievement". Working long hours can be harmful to employees and employers, many professionals struggle badly to overcome their assumptions and their bad habits which are deeply ingrained around work hours. This research includes 200 in depth interviews with 78 professionals from London offices of a global law firm and an accounting firm. The research found that changing work patterns or taking on a new role that's designed to be less time consuming can both be effective strategies, as long as they're implemented in a sustainable manner. Such as, self-imposing boundaries, choosing not to work on certain days, weekends or during holidays, refusing to accomplish the duties given to you, for example, new projects, and travel requests. Asking your supervisor to give you more flexible working hours is likely to result in more lasting change.

Kakul Agha (2019), in her study titled "Work Life Balance among Teachers Employed in Higher Education in Oman: Emerging Issues & Challenges". This study focuses on the work life balance issues of the university teachers and contextual factors. It has attempted to capture work life balance among the university teachers across the Sultanate, and finds out the impact of the difference in gender, nationality Omani or non-Omani, private or public sector institution. The study consists of a cross sectional design, the data was collected from 621 teachers employed across Omani higher educational institutions based in Muscat and other cities in the Sultanate. The research shows that significant differences lie among genders, nationalities and place at work. Also, work practices need to be managed in the correct way to create an efficacy of Work Life Balance program.

K. Agha, F. T. Azmi, and A. Irfan (2017), in their research study titled "Work-Life Balance and Job Satisfaction: An Empirical study focusing on Higher Education Teachers in Oman". The objective of study is to measure work-life balance, teaching and job satisfaction of teachers in the higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman to explore the relationship between work-life balance, teaching satisfaction and job satisfaction. A total of 1769 teachers from private institutions were contacted, and out of the total of 2717 employees in the government institutions, 1500 could be approached owing to a refusal of certain institutions to participate in the survey. Data was collected from the sample organizations primarily through postal mails, e-mails (2000) and personal visits (1269). The mail methodology has also been used by other researchers in this area of study. Findings of the study revealed that while work interference with personal life and personal life interference with work had a negative relationship with job satisfaction, work and personal life enhancement had a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Thus, the findings of the present study corroborate with previous research evidence. Thus, we can safely conclude that work and personal life needs to be integrated and balanced by organizations through work-life balance initiatives.

Rakesh Belwal, Shweta Belwal (2017), in their study titled," Employers' perception of women workers in Oman and the challenges they face". The aim of this study is the participation and productivity of women in Oman's labor force are very low and heavily skewed toward the government sector. There are few women in the private sector and the reasons for this are not well-known. Data collected by interviewing the top executives (employers) from 28 organizations in two major cities in Oman were analyzed qualitatively, grouped into emerging themes, triangulated, and discussed. The results indicated that employers, in general, are impressed by women workers in Oman. However, they identify a number of challenges women

face. This study synthesized and grouped employers' perceptions of these challenges in the following categories: women's natural and physiological composition, their attitude at work, post-marital challenges, socio-cultural barriers, nature and place of work, organizational preparedness and governance, biases or prejudices of employers, and work-life balance (WLB) issues facing them.

Laxmi Devi Sharma & Nisha (2021), in their "WORK-LIFE study titled BALANCE: LITERATURE REVIEW", The aim of the paper is to understand firstly the concept of work-life balance, the effect of work-life balance in various professions mainly focusing on education sector and also to know the influence of work-life imbalance on the well-being of the teachers. The study reviews literature from articles, book, journals, conference proceedings etc. It has been tried to find out the concepts and areas where studies were reviewed on work-life balance and its future scope for research. They found the proper balance between work and personal life help in attaining both organizational and personal goals. The -life imbalance affects negatively professional and personal life, leading to decrease in the productivity of the employees. The work -life balance has become an issue both in manufacturing and academics' sector. The teachers are also facing the problem of work -life imbalance.

Dr. Ahmed M. Asfahani1, (2021), in his study titled "Work-Life Balance and Role Conflict among Academic Staff in the Middle East", The main aim of this research was to find balance between work and life. An imbalance in the work-family relationship can cause health problems and decrease performance outcomes at work. The information for this study was collected from past studies and reviews on WLB and Role Conflict among academicians from Middle East. This study finds out, the levels of work-life balance and role conflict vary with culture. The change in levels is influenced by gender equality, individualism/collectivism, and the power distance dimension of culture.

Dr. G. Balamurugan, M.Sreeleka (2020),in there study titled "a study on work life balance of women employees in it sector", the purpose is how the women employees are balanced and Satisfied in IT sector and the factors that affect the work life balance of women employees are working hours, Job satisfaction, working condition, etc. and find out the women employee job satisfaction were analyzed by using statistic al method that is Chisquare and Correlation test. The primary data were collected through the structured questionnaire. The study found the work life balance of women employees plays a vital role in IT sectors. So, mostly in IT sector the women employee faces more difficulties in managing their personal life and professional life. The work life balance is influenced by different factors are demographic variables, individual variables.

Ms. Vani Bharadwaj, Dr Meera Shanker (2019, in there study titled "Women at Workplace and Work Life Balance: A Literature Review", the purpose of this study is the various aspects of work life balance of working women. This literature review throws light on definitions and theories related to work life balance, variables of work life balance, challenges related to working women, work life initiatives and strategies for work life balance and outcomes of work life balance. The study reviews literature from articles, book, journals, conference proceedings etc. It has been tried to find out the concepts and areas where studies were reviewed on work-life balance and its future scope for research.

S.Hashimi (2021), in his study revealed that the research is to evaluate the factors impacting work-life balance of female employees in private higher education institutions in Kabul, Afghanistan. A sample of 219 female employees were targeted and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) has been employed in order to ascertain the factors impacting the work- life balance. The study found seven factors like, non-supportive job environment (job nature), poor family and work support system, working hours, work overload, family domain, burdened role and job sharing and ineffective WLB policy as the antecedents impacting work life balance of female employees in private higher education institutions in Afghanistan.

Radha. A (2015), in his study revealed that researchers and experts have focused on difficulty that working women face in balancing office work and household work to achieve some degree of "work-life balance" in today's organizations. This research focuses on the problem of work-life balance and how it affects women employed as teaching professionals. It is an attempt to identify whether it is as easy as it is assumed for women to balance between work and life in the socalled conventionally suitable profession called "teaching" A Questionnaire was used as an instrument for gathering data. A total of 250 questionnaires were various colleges in Coimbatore. In the total sample, 200 were women faculty members. The data collection period fell between April and August, 2013. The sample consisted of 100 respondents, all women employed as faculty in various colleges in Coimbatore. The sampling

technique used was purposive quota sampling. The findings of the study can justify its utility since knowing the faculty members precisely and reaching out to them in the effective way, is the key to minimize stress.

A.I.Sutha (2019), in her study enlisted that certain dimensions and its implications over work life balance were identified. It also learnt from the present study that managing work life balance is channelized by the psychological makeup of an individual's especially women and that is purely as an attitude based issue. The questionnaire was distributed to the women faculty of the various colleges in person. A total of 50 questionnaires were collected. Chi-square test is used to know the significant impact of work life balance among working women faculties. The study concludes that work life balance practices improve the quality of work life of working women. Now the women's are occupy almost all categories of positions in the workplace. Among other occupations, teaching is reported to have positive and negative experiences about work life. The paper takes an in-depth look at work life balance considering in view of Balance in work and family life is an emerging challenge for both employees and employers.

METHODS

Research design and methodology

This study is about work life balance of female Employees. It is conducted at one of the University in Oman. It is a descriptive study and is conducted to find the opinions of female employees towards work life balance at University. The data is collected from the female employees of the University. To know the intentions and opinions of female employees a structured questionnaire is administered for collecting primary data. The researcher collected secondary data from college registration department, previous studies, newspapers and magazines. The study area selected for the research are the female employees of various departments at University covering Business, Engineering, Information Technology and English Language Centre. The population of the proposed research include all female teaching staff of the University (population is 83) which includes all the departments (BSD, ELC, Engineering and IT). The sample size is 68 with (95% confidence level).

Sampling Frame

Table-1.1: Stratified proportionate convenient sampling method is used to collect data from female teaching employees of the University

Department	Population	Samples	Percentage
Business	16	14	20.6
Engineering	17	18	26.5
Information Technology	16	13	19.1
English language center	34	23	33.8
Total	83	68	100

Source: HR Department-University

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data is collected from primary and secondary sources. The supportive literature review and the conceptual framework are taken from secondary sources. This study relies on the primary data of the University to achieve the objectives of the study. For collecting the primary data, a structured questionnaire is administered. The instrument consists of demographic variables and Likert five point scale to know the opinions of female employees and some closed and open-end questions were used to get proper responses.

Hypotheses

Ho: There is no difference of opinion among female employees of the University towards work environment. Ho: There is no difference of opinion among female employees towards home environment.

Ho: All female employees are comfortable with work life balance at the University.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table-1.2: Reliability of questionnaire

Reliability Statistics					
Cronbach's	Cronbach's	N of Items			
Alpha	Alpha Based on				
	Standardized				
	Items				
.762	.757	25			

Reliability is the measure of internal consistency of the constructs in the study. A common reliable if thee Alpha (α) value is greater than .70 (Hair *et al.*, 2013). Construct reliability was assessed using

Cronbach's Alpha. The results revealed that the scale with 25 items ($\alpha = .757$). Hence, the instrument items have reliable and consistent.

Table-1.3: Opinion of female employees towards work environment at University

Female employees of towards work	Sum of	df	Mean	F	Sig.
environment at University.	Squares		Square		
Comfortable working hours	15.981	3	5.327	5.16	0.003
Targets create tension	12.881	3	4.294	3.376	0.024
Responsibility at work create stress	24.598	3	8.199	6.938	0.000
Feel tired due to long working hours	20.549	3	6.85	5.395	0.002
Lunch time not fixed due to busy schedule	6.871	3	2.29	3.032	0.036
Not able to spare time for research activities	11.067	3	3.689	3.714	0.016
worry about work when you are not at work	11.681	3	3.894	3.161	0.03

Table-1.4: Opinion among female employees towards home environment

Opinion among female employees towards home		df	Mean	F	Sig.
environment	Squares		Square		
Family is satisfied with your working hours	17.948	3	5.983	4.918	0.004
You are given cooperation by your family	9.381	3	3.127	2.763	0.049
The care of family members/spouse/ children create pressure	12.781	3	4.26	3.415	0.023
Lack of coordination in the family cause stress	13.628	3	4.543	3.073	0.034
You feel that you need a break/ vacation	14.68	3	4.893	3.467	0.021

Table-1.5: Comfortable with work life balance at University

Tuble 112. Completable with work me buttinee at emverbity						
Comfortable with work life balance at	Sum of	df	Mean	F	Sig.	
University	Squares		Square			
You prepare work schedule to fulfil both your personal and family commitment	6.975	3	2.325	2.86	0.044	
Responsibility at workplace and family increases the workload	13.129	3	4.376	3.214	0.029	
To maintain balance between personal and professional life creates stress	10.043	3	3.348	2.765	0.049	

Table-1.6: Department wise Satisfaction of female employees at University

Department wise Satisfaction of female	Sum of	df	Mean	F	Sig.
employees at University	Squares		Square		
Satisfied with professional life	4.455	3	1.485	1.314	0.277
Satisfied with the personal life	3.967	3	1.322	0.82	0.488
Satisfied with your work life balance	12.1	3	4.033	2.963	0.039

Table-1.7: PostHoc Test Multiple Comparisons between the female employees of different departments at University

Dependent Variable		Mean	Std.	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
		Difference	Error		Lower	Upper	
		(I-J)			Bound	Bound	
	Engineering	0.762	0.416	0.268	-0.33	1.86	
Business	ELC	0.429	0.395	0.701	-0.61	1.47	
	IT	-0.418	0.449	0.789	-1.6	0.77	
	Business	-0.762	0.416	0.268	-1.86	0.33	
Engineering	ELC	-0.333	0.367	0.801	-1.3	0.64	
	IT	-1.179 [*]	0.425	0.035	-2.3	-0.06	
	Business	-0.429	0.395	0.701	-1.47	0.61	
ELC	Engineering	0.333	0.367	0.801	-0.64	1.3	
	IT	-0.846	0.405	0.167	-1.91	0.22	
	Business	0.418	0.449	0.789	-0.77	1.6	
IT	Engineering	1.179 [*]	0.425	0.035	0.06	2.3	
	ELC	0.846	0.405	0.167	-0.22	1.91	

After collecting the data, SPSS-22 is used for analysing the data by using parametric tests. A one way ANOVA was conducted to compare the opinions of female employees towards work environment. The employees targets that create tension shown "A significant difference statistically among department employees F(3, 64) = 3.376, P = .024," (significant at P<.05), The employees responsibility at work create stress shown "A statistically significant difference among four department employees F (3, 64) = 6.938, P = .000," (significant at P<.05) and The employees not able to spare time for research activities shown "A statistically significant difference was found among four department employees F(3, 64) = 3.714, P= .016," (significant at P<.05). From the analysis it is evident that there is a difference of opinion among female employees of the University towards work environment. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and we accept the alternate hypothesis.

A one way ANOVA was conducted to compare the opinions of female employees towards home environment. The employees that cares family members create pressure shown "A statistically significant difference among four department employees F (3, 64) = 3.415, P = .023," (significant at P<.05), The employees that lack of coordination in the family cause stress shown "A statistically significant difference among four department employees F (3, 64) = 3.073, P = .034," (significant at P<.05) and the employees feel that they need a break shown "A statistically significant difference among four department employees F (3, 64) = 3.467, P = .021,"(significant at P<.05). From the analysis it is evident

that there is a difference of opinion among female employees of the University towards home environment. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and we accept the alternate hypothesis.

A one way ANOVA was conducted to compare the opinions of female employees about their comfort with work life balance at University. The employees that cares family members create pressure shown "A statistically significant difference was found among four department employees F(3, 64) = 2.860, P= .044," (significant at P<.05), the employees' mentions that the responsibility at workplace and family increases the workload shown "A statistically significant difference was found among four department employees F(3, 64) = 3.214, P = .029," (significant at P<.05) and the employees' mentions that to maintain balance between personal and professional life creates stress shown "A statistically significant difference among four department employees F(3, 64) = 2.765, P= .049," (significant at P<.05). From the analysis it is evident that there is a difference of opinion among female employees of the University towards work life balance. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and we accept the alternate hypothesis.

A one way ANOVA was conducted to compare the opinions of female employees about their satisfaction regarding work life balance at University. The employees that are satisfied with work life balance shown "A statistically significant difference was found among four department employees F(3, 64) = 2.963, P = .039," (significant at P < .05), Post-Hoc test was conducted to know the actual difference of their

opinions with reference to other departments and found that IT and engineering with (Mean-1.179 and S.D..425) P = .035 (significant at P<.05). Hence, we can conclude that there is a difference of opinion regarding work life balance among IT and engineering.

CONCLUSION

This study is conducted to explore the worklife balance of female employees at one of the University in Oman. The researcher selected this topic because women were constrained to domestic tasks such as cooking, washing, cleaning, and caring children. The work-life balance of women employees is jeopardized when pressures at work and at home increase. The purpose of our study is to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by female employees in education institutions and how well the female employees can manage their professional life and personal life. The researchers observed that the Employee's perception and experience of working by academic staff at University will change based on factors as Leadership, Teamwork, Communication and environment in measuring the impact of working on employee's performance. By developing questionnaire, researcher conducted a one way ANOVA was conducted to compare the opinions of female employees towards home environment. From the analysis it is evident that there is a difference of opinion among female employees of the University towards home environment. One way ANOVA was conducted to compare the opinions of female employees towards work environment. There is a difference of opinion among female employees of the University towards work environment. In addition, a one-way ANOVA to compare the opinions of female employees about their comfort with work life balance at University. From the analysis it is evident that there is a difference of opinion among female employees of University towards work life balance. Hence, we can conclude that employees from various departments have a mix opinions regarding their work environment and they have mix opinions towards their family environment and also towards their work life balance. Even though the employees express their satisfaction towards work environment and family environment, but there is dissatisfaction towards their work life balance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After analysing the data, the researcher proposed some recommendations to improve the work life balance among female employees at University. The University should encourage his employees to take breaks, walking tracks or even work in an entirely different part of the office so they will not feel that there is a pressure in work. The Department should allocate the workload equally i.e. balancing the academic, research and other professional development activities. Allocating a resting place for female employees equipped with some recreational games such as

bowling, tennis and other games, as well as some sports equipment that helps them reduce stress and fatigue.6. Periodic interaction with psychologist should be arranged in order to know the stress levels of the employees. Accordingly appropriate measures can be initiated for reducing stress of employees. Annual physical medical examinations to be conducted to identify their tension levels (Blood pressure) and diabetic levels which are the root causes of stress. Counselling session to be arranged with experts to manage the stress at work and develop a positive work life balance. If possible try to provide accommodation inside the campus for the employees who are facing difficulty in travelling and managing their time. Arrange at least one informal gathering for the employees with their families at university level and arrange few gatherings at department level like small trips, excursions, outings etc. Encourage the employees to attend national and international conferences, seminars and workshops etc. Yoga and meditation sessions to be arranged for employees to manage their stress. Provide a canteen with hygienic and healthy food for the employees that support them in working comfortably without bothering for food at workplace.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Present study is conducted in one of the University in Oman by considering only the female teaching employees. This study can be extended to all the female employees in the University including administration employees and further it can be conducted by including even the male employees as a part of study. This study can also be conducted to all the institutions in Sultanate of Oman to get a clear and more elaborated view about the stress management at workplace and work life balance.

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