

**DECIPHERING THE CRITICAL INTERSECTION OF MARITAL STATUS AND
WORK-LIFE HARMONY- A RIGOROUS ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL, CULTURAL,
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS FACED BY WOMEN PROFESSIONALS**

**Ms. Priyanshi Mishra, Dr Priyanka Pandey, Dr Shruti Pandey, Ms. Shalini
Srivastava, Mr. Shobhit Agarwal**

Research Scholar, Shri ram Swaroop Memorial University, Barabanki, Deva road,
email id- mishrapriyanshi814@gmail.com

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Shri Guru Nanak Girls PG College
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, email-drpandey10@gmail.com

Assistant Professor School of Management, Babu Banarasi Das University,
Lucknow email id- Shrutipandey.lucknow@bbdu.ac.in

Assistant Professor School of Management, Babu Banarasi Das University, Lucknow
email id- Shalini.sitm@bbdu.ac.in

Ms. Marisha Soni- Assistant Professor School of Management, Babu Banarasi Das
University, Lucknow, email id- marishasoni1@gmail.com

Assistant Professor Sherwood College of Professional Management ,Indra Nagar,
Lucknow, shobhitagarwal712@gmail.com (Corresponding author)

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Women's increased engagement as working professionals makes it more difficult for them to reconcile career and family responsibilities and it becomes more complicated when they are married. Due to women's conventional home roles, religious mandates, and cultural norms and beliefs, the situation gets more complicated in patriarchal nations like India. So this study aims to determine the effect of marital status in managing work life balance among women professionals of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Design/Methodology: The sample population of this study is full-time working women from Uttar Pradesh, India. Responses from 90 women serving in both public and private sector in Uttar Pradesh were investigated by applying descriptive and inferential analysis. Karl Pearson Co-efficient and linear regression analysis are used to test the hypotheses.

Findings: The findings show that work-life balance and work-family conflict of single women is more stable in comparison with married women. Work Family Conflict and Family Work is significantly different in both the marital statuses. It is more in married women and comparatively less in single women because they have lesser family responsibilities.

Keywords: Work life Balance, Marital Status, women professional, Married, Single

1. Introduction

Owed to the enhanced speed of urbanisation and industrialization, Indian families are undergoing reckless changes. Women from all social classes in India have taken up paid jobs. Women in India currently have significantly more educational opportunities than they had decades ago, particularly in metropolitan areas. This has given rise to fresh viewpoints, enhanced awareness, and elevated personal development goals. Women's decisions to work

have been influenced by this, as much as financial stress. Economic necessity has been cited as the key reason for working in most studies of employed married women in India.

Working outside the house has usually favourable rather than negative impact on marriage. Campbell and her specifically found as to how family life affected women's performance at work and perspectives. Contrary to expectations, women with children exhibited lesser occupational engagement than women without children, and those with babies and toddlers outperformed those with school-aged children. Makowska looked at the psychosocial factors that influence stress and well-being in working women. Despite the fact that there was a strong link among family involvement, tension, and well-being, work-related stressors were obviously more important than stressors linked to family function.

The above-mentioned studies justify conducting a separate study on women employees regarding work-family conflict and family-work conflict in relation to their marital status as a moderating variable among these variables. Therefore, the target population sample of this study is women professionals who are working in public and private sector in Uttar Pradesh.

The following is the outline of the paper. To build its hypotheses, it begins with a survey of relevant literature. The research methods used in the study is explained in the next section. The research findings are reported in the third part, and the study concludes with a discussion of the findings, conclusions and limitation.

2. Literature Review

Increased female involvement as professionals introduced a variety of issues. One of the major obstacles women are facing is balancing job and family duties (Frone et al., 1992; Shelton, 2006; Welter, 2004). Women have begun self-employment in order to acquire greater flexibility and control over their professional and home lives in order to improve work-life balance (Baber and Monaghan, 1988; Machung, 1989; Ward, 2007). Because of the unequal load of family obligations, balancing work and family is generally more challenging for women than for males (Bird, 2006).

Women endure an unequal share of childcare and other household duties, which creates significant impediments to their professional success (Cross and Linehan, 2006). Work Life balance became a major concern for the women professional and it gets affected with the demographic factors associated with them one of which is their marital status.

Work life Balance

Work-life balance is defined as a balance between two fundamentally distinct roles that a person plays, namely work and family duties, that offers happiness to the holder of the positions (Rothbard, 2001; Greenhaus et al., 2003, p. 526). Work-life balance refers to how much time an employee has invested to balance home and work obligations. As a result, work-life balance is a ratio of an employee's time spent between work and family. When work spills over into the home sphere or family troubles spill over into the work realm, it's a possible source of stress and unconstructive work attitudes, both of which are linked to burnout (Tziner et al., 2015; Rubio et al., 2015).

Because work-life balance and imbalance may have a positive or negative impact on employee

performance (Anwar et al., 2013), a study of work-life balance and imbalance in connection to employee performance as an outcome variable is necessary (Konrad and Mangel, 2000; Ahmad, 2008, p. 178). Work-life balance may have serious consequences for businesses, such as decreased production and performance (Konrad and Mangel, 2000; Cohen and Liani, 2009). The importance of workers in achieving a work-life balance has been thoroughly documented in the literature (Rotondo and Kincaid, 2008). Individual workers and companies have a variety of alternatives for determining the balance, such as flexible work schedules to compensate for overtime.

Work family conflict (WFC) & Family Work Conflict (FWC)

The process of maintaining the equilibrium between duties at work and at home is known as work life balance. Work and family have become more antagonistic spheres, absorbing equal levels of energy and effort and producing work–family conflict (WFC). Women are increasingly pushed to achieve self-fulfilment in demanding occupations while simultaneously being driven to dedicate oneself for their children via "intense parenting," or highly active child rearing and development. Working women often have difficulties in securing suitable and affordable child and elderly care.

WFC has been described as a cross functional conflict in which some work and family commitments is incompatible and negatively affect an employee's job performance. The scarcity hypothesis, which presents individuals with a limited amount of energy, is its theoretical base. These responsibilities tend to exhaust people and produce tension or conflict between duties. Previous research has linked WFC to a range of unfavourable work attitudes and outcomes, including worse overall job satisfaction and a higher likelihood of leaving a job. FWC is a sort of cross-functional engagement in which the obligations of family and job are incompatible. As per prior research, FWC is more likely to have adverse consequences at home, such as lower overall happiness and far more family dysfunction. FWC, on the other hand, is linked to job or workplace attitudes. Both WFC and FWC are the outcome of a person attempting to fulfil an excessive number of contradictory expectations from the several areas in which women operate.

3. Problem Statement

The extensive review of literature clearly indicates that there is a need of study specifically focusing on the importance of work life balance of women professional. So the problem statement of this study is to analyse the effect of marital status of working women professionals on their work life balance.

4. Objectives

On the basis of the problem statement following objectives has formulated:

- To explore the relationship between marital status and work life balance of women professionals
- To analyze the effect of marital status on work life balance among women professionals of Uttar Pradesh

5. Research Methodology

A total of 90 working women aged 20 to 50 years old were included in the study. Thirty married working women were chosen from each environment, i.e., industrial, school, and hospital, using a simple random sample procedure. The research included women who had been married for at least three years, lived with their husband for at least one year, and worked for at least one year. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the data. The association between the several variables was discovered using Karl Pearson's Correlation and Regression Analysis. Netemeyer et al WFC and FWC Scale is used for formulating the questionnaire for this study. The WFC and FWC Scale consist of ten items in a scale. It is based on seven point Likert scale which gauges working people's WFC and FWC. The participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with each item. In the scale weightage of 1 point is given for strongly disagree and weightage of 7 point is given for strongly agree. Higher scores imply more work/family conflict, and lower scores suggest less work/family conflict. The scale's coefficient alpha varied from 0.82 to 0.90. The content, construct, and predictive validity of the measure were all determined to collect relevant data.

In order to achieve the objectives' of the study following hypotheses has been formulated:

- *H1 – There is no significant relationship between marital status and work life balance of women professional*
- *H2- There is no significant impact of marital status in managing work life balance of women professional.*

6. Findings

Table 1 shows the mean ratings of married and single women employed in various public and private sector of Uttar Pradesh region on different dimensions of WLB such as social needs, compensation & benefits, time management, team work, personal needs, and work is 113.83 and 127.10, respectively. The t-value found between married and single was (0.375 & 0.002 respectively, $P > 0.01$). It's important to note that overall association of marital status with work-life balance facets was not statistically relevant for married women while it is statistically significant in case of single women, so the null hypothesis (H1) was rejected and alternate hypothesis was accepted. It is observed that overall mean score is highest for the singles women as they have less responsibilities towards the family in comparison to the married women.

Table 1: *t*-Value, Mean and Standard Deviation of Marital Status on various dimensions of Work Life Balance

MaritalStatus	N	Mean ofWLB	Std. Deviation	t-value
Married	55	113.83	14.182	0.375
Single	35	127.10	19.424	0.002

Table 2 shows that in the first step, women with single status emerged as a significant variable having maximum correlation with work life balance. Married women with toddler children were the second group who has strong correlation with work life balance after single women.

Married women with teenage children were having least correlation work life balance because of their huge responsibilities towards their personal life.

Table 2: Showing Correlations Matrix of Work Life Balance (through WFC & FWC) and women with different marital status

	Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	S. D.
1	Single	-	0.125*	0.113**	0.013**	0.011**	0.001**	19.94	3.117
2	Married (with Toddler Children)		-	0.751**	0.615**	0.763**	0.086**	18.86	3.074
3	Married (Teenage Children)			-	0.600**	0.654**	0.643**	19.49	3.250

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table 3 highlights that the correlation coefficient between work life balance and women with single marital status ($R = 0.720$) exhibited that single women are more inclined towards WLB. The regression model's value of R^2 indicates the variance of work life balance of unmarried women. In the dependent variable of work life balance of single working is found 74.1% variations, with the F change value ($F = 185.504$, $P > 0.01$).

In the second step, women with married marital status emerged as the most dominant predictors of work life balance of complete population. The coefficients of correlation between predictors and WLB ($R = 0.786$) showed the relationship existed. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.62$) accounted for 62.6% variation which include the predictors, the value of F-change is ($F = 30.749$, $p > 0.01$) in terms of married status. The R square change (.076) estimated for 7.6% variation among independent variables with dependent variable.

The determined F-ratio for predictors a & b ($F = 185.504$, $p > 0.01$ & $F = 126.280$, $p > 0.01$) is highlighted in Table 4 and is considered significant and provided that the women with single marital status has less WFC & FWC and more stable WLB while married women has more WFC & FWC and less stable WLB. Thus, the assumed null hypothesis (H_2) was rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3: Model Summary Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis for Work Life Balance Dimensions and Marital Status of Women Professionals.

Model Summary					
				Std.	Change Statistics

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> Square	Adjusted <i>R</i> Square	Error of the Estimate	<i>R</i> Squa re Chan ge	<i>F</i> Change	df1	df2	Sig. <i>F</i> Chang e
1	0.720 ^a	0.55	0.547	2.483	0.55	185.504	1	152	0.000
2	0.786 ^b	0.62	0.621	2.270	0.07	30.749	1	151	0.000

^aPredictors: (Constant), Women with single status.

^bPredictors: (Constant), Women with married status.

Table 4: ANOVA of Multiple Regressions of Different Aspects of *WLB* with Marital Status of Working Women.

ANOVA ^c						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	Regression	1143.459	1	1143.459	185.504	0.000 ^a
	Residual	936.937	152	6.164		
	Total	2080.396	153			
2	Regression	1301.974	2	650.987	126.280	0.001 ^b
	Residual	778.422	151	5.155		
	Total	2080.396	153			

^aPredictors: (Constant), Women with single status.

^bPredictors: (Constant), Women with married status.

^cDependent Variable: Work Family Conflict (WLC) & Family Work Conflict (FWC).

7. Conclusion

The present study was intended to explore the relationship between marital status of working women and their work life balance in context of WFC and FWC. WFC and FWC were shown to be more prevalent among mothers with an oldest child aged 6 to 10. Furthermore, among working women, the age of their children was substantially linked to FWC. The results of the study is supported with previous research that shows that having higher WFC and FWC among married women workers is connected to their children's age.

As per Chassin et al., mothers with pre-school children confront a range of challenges, and self-role congruence in women leads to better mental health. To predict WFC, some research looked at maternal overburden, which included the proportion of kids, while others looked at family pressure and other factors.

As per Higgins, family participation and expectations were associated to family conflict, but not to WFC. High levels of family duty result in increased time demands and pressure on the family, interfering with the employee's job responsibilities. The need to address the needs of children and older family members may influence family roles, causing inter-role conflict and affecting family roles, resulting in FWC. According to studies, moms with younger children have higher role difficulties.

WFC levels are also influenced by workplace variables. WFC was found to be greater among women employed in the private sector, whereas FWC was found to be higher among women employed in the public sector. The average hours worked each week, the portion and occurrence of overtime, a rigid working time, a non - supportive boss, and an inhospitable organisational culture for adjusting work and family roles all increased the chances of women employees experiencing work-family conflict, according to researchers.

8. Limitations

A small sample of 90 women from one geographical region in India (Uttar Pradesh) was employed in this research. A bigger sample size from diverse geographic locations might enable the results to be generalised to wider groups of women professionals. This research focused only on women's experiences. Men being included in the sample to compare their experiences with those of women might provide an intriguing perspective on the gender problem of managing work and family. The present research looked at the WLB of women of various marital statuses and established the differences in WLB of married and unmarried women based on the results of this study.

Other characteristics that might help researchers better understand working women's WLB should be included in the study. As of now, the inquiry is based on a questionnaire, and occasionally the respondents' prejudicial approach cannot be excluded. Researchers may extend this study in the future by investigating the WLB and other demographic characteristics using various questionnaires and other scientific methodologies.

9. Practical Implications

Employers should recognize that working mothers with children aged 6 to 10 are more likely to experience both work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC). To address this, organizations could develop targeted support programs and policies that specifically cater to the needs of this demographic. These programs might include flexible work hours, on-site childcare facilities, or assistance with family-related responsibilities.

For working women, the age of their children significantly influences family-work conflict. Employers can consider offering different levels of support and benefits based on the age of employees' children. For instance, mothers with pre-schoolers might benefit from more generous parental leave policies and flexible scheduling options. Recognizing the link between

self-role congruence and better mental health, organizations should prioritize the mental well-being of working mothers. Offering resources such as counselling, stress management programs, and mental health days can help alleviate the stress associated with work-family conflicts.

Organizations should assess their workplace variables to minimize work-family conflicts. This includes reviewing working hours, overtime policies, and the flexibility of working arrangements. A supportive and adaptable organizational culture is essential to reduce WFC and FWC among employees. Acknowledging that WFC is more prevalent in the private sector while FWC is higher in the public sector, organizations should adopt sector-specific strategies. Private sector employers may need to focus on increasing flexibility and reducing workload expectations, while public sector organizations might need to address family pressures and expectations more effectively.

Training for managers and supervisors should include modules on work-family balance and understanding the challenges faced by working mothers. This can help create a more supportive and empathetic work environment, reducing conflict for employees. Organizations should encourage a culture of work-life integration, where employees can seamlessly balance their work and family responsibilities. This might involve promoting remote work options, encouraging employees to set clear boundaries, and emphasizing the importance of family time. Regularly collecting feedback from employees, especially working mothers, can help organizations fine-tune their policies and programs to address evolving needs and concerns. This ensures that support mechanisms remain effective over time.

Consider revising parental leave policies to better accommodate the needs of working mothers with children of different age groups. Offering extended leave options for mothers with younger children and flexible return-to-work arrangements can be beneficial. Encouraging the development of support networks and communities for working mothers can be valuable. This can include internal employee resource groups, mentorship programs, and forums where working mothers can share experiences and advice.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that organizations need to be proactive in recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by working mothers. By implementing targeted policies and fostering a supportive work culture, both WFC and FWC can be minimized, leading to happier, more productive employees.

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Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the authors.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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