

REVIEW ARTICLE

Work Life Balance: A Conceptual Review

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Abstract

Individual perception of high Work life balance (WLB) and sense of well being among employees has become imperative for any organization in order to ensure enhanced performance efficiency, particularly in this era of highly competitive business environment. It is no wonder that the work life balance has attracted numerous contributions from researchers and HR practitioners that attempt to investigate on various factors influencing WLB, their interrelationship and possible outcomes of different levels of WLB prevailing among employees. This paper is an attempt to compile the notable research reported on WLB studies undertaken as a prelude to search for newer and deeper avenues of future research.

Keywords: Work Life Balance, Measurement Scales, Factors of Work Life Balance, Outcomes of Work Life Balance.

Introduction

Ever since the advent of Liberalisation, Privatization and Globalization, India has come to be recognized as one of the major emerging economies of the world, necessitating momentous paradigm shifts in business processes that compel organisations to transform the way in which they function compared to earlier days. Increased emphasis on competition and radical technological advancements has resulted in organizations to be more competitive, agile, flexible and customer focused. Consequently organisations require, empowered employees possessing higher competencies and multitasking skills in order to ensure sustained growth at minimum operational costs. Employees working in organisations of the modern era most often encounter eternal challenge of performing well and are forced to devote most of their time at work in this enhanced competitive work setting. However, commitment towards self development, allegiance to family and social life in order to fulfil the demands and duties along with organisational obligations are imperative for any individual employee. The balancing act of an individual in this three dimensional aspects of life namely organisational, societal and employee’s personal life as depicted in the diagram is termed as work life balance (WLB).

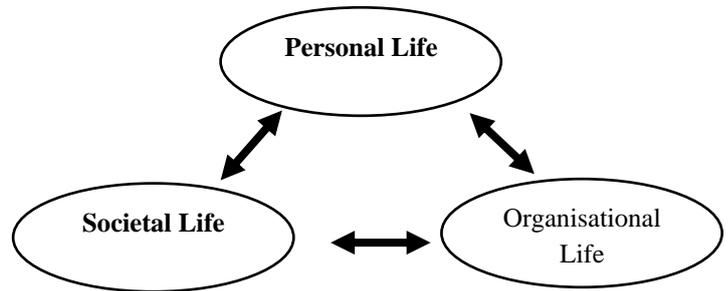


Fig.1: Work life balance

inefficient management of life priorities can lead to serious consequences in each or all of these domains. The consequences may in general manifest as diminished job satisfaction, poorer productivity and performance, lower organisational commitment, inferior career ambitions & success, increased absenteeism & intention to leave, as well as employee burnout, job stress, poorer physiological and psychological health, and diminished performance in personal life & family. Thus, WLB and employee perception of well being have come to be recognized to be vital for the organisational growth and effectiveness. Human resource management practices in modern organizations emphasize effective strategies that ensure employee well being reflected in terms of organizational commitment through initiatives referred to as employee engagement. The

importance of work life balance of the employees and the parameters that influence WLB in modern work and life settings cannot be over emphasized in this era of acutely competitive business environment and dwindling skilled manpower combined with ever increasing costs of employment. It is no wonder that this area of HR management has received great deal of focus from researchers, management, government and the media over the past few decades. This paper attempts to bring together salient and notable contributions on WLB and influence of different parameters influencing WLB in different organizational sectors not only towards presenting better conceptual understanding of work life balance through various, theories propounded and the measurement scales used in

a range of studies, but also to identify possible directions for further research.

Organization of Literature

Organisation of literatures on work life balance has been conceptualised mainly under four parts. Initially theoretical background of the subject is elicited through various definitions and theories pertaining to the area. The second part presents, various scales for measurement of work life balance while the third and fourth part is devoted to discussion on the various factors influencing WLB and their consequences. Studies undertaken in this direction internationally and nationally are presented separately.

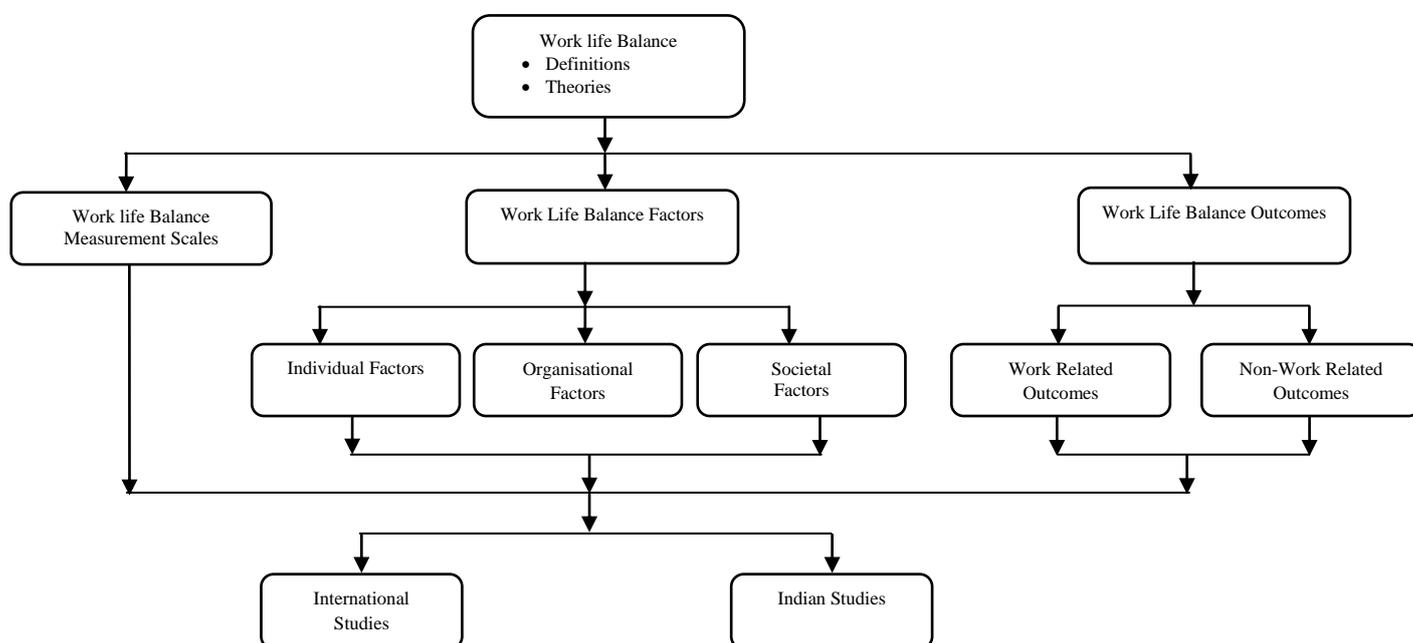


Fig.2: Organisation of Literature

Work Life Balance

Theoretical Definitions

Work-life balance is a broad concept, defined in different ways by different researchers using diverse dimensions. The origins of research on work-life balance can be essentially traced back to studies on women having multiple roles. Work life balance was initially termed as work family conflict, Kahn et al. [46] defined as “a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role being made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role” [30]. Marks and Mac Dermid [62] defined role balance as “the tendency to become fully engaged in the performance of every

role in one’s total role system, to approach every typical role and role partner with an attitude of attentiveness and care. Put differently, it is the practice of that even handed alertness known sometimes as mindfulness”. In simple terms, work–life balance is defined as “the extent to which individuals are equally engaged in and equally satisfied with work and family roles” [13]. Kirchmeyer [52] also defined a balanced life as achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains. He stated that to achieve satisfying experiences in all life domains requires personal resources like energy, time and commitment to be well distributed across domains. Subsequently, Clark [14] modified the definition as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict. Hill, et al. [36] defined, work-life balance as the extent to which a person can concurrently balance the emotional,

behavioural and time demands of both paid work, personal and family responsibilities.

Traditionally, and most often, researchers have opined that work–family balance to be the nonexistence of work–family conflict, or the rate of recurrence and intensity with which work interferes with family or family interferes with work [31]. Duxbury [18] had defined work life balance as a combination of role overload, work to family interference and family to work interference. Role overload refers to having too much to do in a specified time leading to feeling of stress, fatigue and time crunch. Work to family interference occurs when demands and responsibilities of work rendering fulfilment of family demands and responsibilities of individuals difficult. Family to work interference occurs when family demands and responsibilities make it more difficult for an individual to fulfil work demands and responsibilities. According to Voydanoff, [108] work life balance is a global assessment of work and family resources to meet the work and family demands so that individual could able to discharge effective participation in both the domains. Greenhaus and Allen [29] defined work–family balance as the degree to which an individual’s effectiveness and satisfaction in the roles of work and family domain are well-matched with the individual’s life priorities.

Many of the studies recognize that an individual’s life involves multiple domains and is not restricted to work and home domains alone. Warren [113] identified over 170 different life domains based on the previous studies. Notable among them include domains of work, financial resources, leisure, dwelling and neighbourhood, family, friendships, social involvement and health. These domains of life have been observed to be very closely interrelated, implying ignorance or inappropriate preference to any one life domain may have significant impact on other areas of life resulting in overall imbalance in the life of individuals. Grzywacz and Carlson [33] define work/life balance as “accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role-related partners in the work and family domains”. Swami [101] defined work life balance as a practice that is concerned with providing scope for employees to balance their work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside work. “Work-life balance is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities” [47].

While definitions and explanations differ, work/life balance can be generally associated with equilibrium, or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life [15].

Theories of Work Life Balance

Zedeck and Mosier [117] and later O’Driscoll [72] identified typically five main models used to explain the relationship between work and life of an individual. The first model is known as segmentation model, which hypothesizes that work and non-work are two distinct domains of life that are lived quite independently and have no influence on each other. This appears to be presented as a theoretical prospect rather than a model with practical support. In contrast to the first model, a spill over model put forward suggested that one domain can influence the other domain in either a positive or negative way. While, sufficient research to support this model has been reported, need exists for more comprehensive propositions about the nature, causes and consequences of spillover. The third model, termed as compensation model proposes work and family as to be two spheres of life and what may be lacking in one sphere, in terms of demands or satisfactions may be derived from the other sphere of life. For example, albeit work being regular and unchallenging, this could be compensated for by a key role in local area activities outside work. A fourth model referred to as an instrumental model, proposes that activities of one sphere may facilitate success in the other sphere, classically exemplified by, an instrumental worker may explore ways to maximize earnings by undertaking hectic overtime work lasting several days against a routine job to purchase a home or a car for their family. Another model referred to as conflict model suggests that individuals encountering high levels of demand in all spheres of life and compelled to make difficult choices may end up in experiencing psychological conflicts with significant overload.

Clark [13] proposed a new theory about work family balance known as work/family border theory states that, every person’s role differs with specific domains of life such as work/family domains, generally separated by physical, temporal or psychological borders. The theory describes individuals to be daily border crossers as they move between home and workplace having significant implications on level of integration, easy movements and the degree of conflict between domains based on the nature of borders such as, flexibility and permeability

between work and family life boundaries. Morris and Madsen [67] proposed a new perspective of balance between work and family roles in terms of Resource drain theory and Enrichment theory that supplement the existing theories. According to resource drain theory, limited availability of resources such as time, energy, money and attention leads to reduction of the resource in its original domain as it is shared with another domain. The phenomenon can be exemplified by, when an employee invests larger portions of time at work; the time available for family or for other non-work roles diminishes. In contrast, Enrichment theory refers to the degree to which experiences from instrumental sources (skills, abilities, values) or affective sources (mood, satisfaction) augment the worth of the other domain or in other words, experiences in one domain complimenting the quality of live in the other domain. Most of the studies in work life balance have been underlined by the above theories in spite of explanations and contents may vary between individual studies.

Work Life Balance Measurement

Developing and validating a measure of work life balance is a critical element for mapping of work environment prevailing in any organization has been recognized to be essential tool for researchers, management practitioners to facilitate advanced research in this area. Initially, work life balance was estimated in terms of work family conflict, in line with the model proposed by Greenhaus and Beutell [30] that include different types of conflict such as time based conflict, strain based conflict and behaviour based conflict. The model hypothesised that any role attribute that influences individual's time involvement, strain or behavior within a role, can generate conflict between that role and the other roles played by the individuals. Time based conflict occurs when time devoted to one role makes it difficult to fulfil the demands in another role. Strain based conflict exists when psychological strain produced within one role have an effect on the functioning of individual's another role. The model also indicated that strain based work family conflict was likely to be the most intense for employees exposed particularly to extensive physical, emotional, or mental work demands. Behaviour based conflict occurs when specific behaviours effective in one role are inappropriate with behavioural expectations in another role.

Marshall and Barnett [63] proposes a scale comprising four dimensions to measure work-family gains and strains among earning couples, which includes a measure of work-family strains

and gains along with work-parenting strains and gains. While, work-family gains represent positive gains from work and family roles, work-family strains relates to the extent to which the individuals experienced contagion or spill over of stress between different roles. Work-parenting strains and gains depict the gains and strains of combining work and parenting roles of an individual.

The work-life balance construct has been measured in a variety of ways. Clark [14] proposed that the concept of work-life balance may be somewhat misleading, suggesting that the "synergistic relationship between work and home that balance implies may be, at most, a rare occurrence". The study used five different scales to represent work-life balance namely, role conflict, work satisfaction, home satisfaction, family functioning and employee citizenship. According to Fisher [25] work life balance comprised of four parts namely, (i) time, i.e., a comparison between amount of time spend at work and time engaged in other activities, (ii) individual's behaviour at work and in personal life, (iii) Strain being a source of inter role conflict and (iv) Energy being a limited resource and relevant for employees to accomplish work and/or non work related goals. In addition, a scale to measure three dimensions of work life balance namely, Work interference with personal life (WIPL), Personal life interference with work (PLIW) and Work/Personal life enhancement (WPLE) was also included. Hayman [34] validated the scale with 15 items for assessing the construct of work life balance instead of 19 items in the original scale.

Tausig and Fenwick [102] measured perceived work-life balance using two items: the extent to which workers feel successful in balancing work and personal life, and the amount of conflict they face in balancing work and personal life. Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw [31] identified three components to measure work-family balance namely, time, involvement, and satisfaction. The study used direct measures of work family balance to avoid the limitations of individual judgments about balance. The first component time relates the amount of time spent at work with the amount of time spent on home and family activities. The second component evaluates the involvement in work compared to involvement in family, and the third component measures the satisfaction from work and satisfaction with family. Grzywacz and Carlson [33] developed the four components of balance known as work-to-family conflict [WFC], family-to-work conflict

[FWC], work-to-family enrichment [WFE], and family-to-work enrichment [FWE]). Work-family balance results from high levels of work-family enrichment and low levels of work-family conflict. In Indian context, Pareek & Surabhi [76] developed a scale to measure work life balance as perceived by employees in terms of personal needs, social needs, time management, team work, compensation and Work. Social and personal needs included activities such as exercise, investing time for planning financial matters and enjoying the activities of interest of the individual. Time management component dealt with individual's ability to utilise and divide time between work and life domains. Work environment and culture have been used to measure the team work at workplace. Compensation and benefits dimension have incorporated benefits and privileges offered by the organisation. The dimension work included the nature of the work to be performed. Rincy & Panchanatham, [84] had developed a work life balance scale comprising four components namely, Intrusion of work into personal life, Intrusion of personal life into work, Work enhancement by personal life and Personal life enhancement by Work. The scale consisted of 42 items for measuring the work life balance of employees working in the service sector. The study demonstrated that intrusion of personal life into work (IPLW) and intrusion of work into personal life (IWPL) were negatively related, while Work enhancement by personal life (WEPL) and personal life enhancement by work (PLEW) were positively related to work life balance.

Factors of Work Life Balance

Many studies have been devoted in search of antecedents influencing perception of work life balance among individuals. These antecedents can be broadly grouped based on the major dimensions of WLB namely, individual, organizational and societal factors. The following sections present notable contributions of the researchers in these directions.

Individual Factors Influencing WLB

The studies undertaken in determining the Individual factors influencing the perception of work life balance among employees is explained in terms of personality, well-being and emotional intelligence.

Personality and WLB

McCrae & John [65] proposed Big Five factor model of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions namely: (i) Extraversion - describing

active, assertive, energetic, enthusiastic and sociable individuals, (ii) Agreeableness—characterising cooperation, forgiveness, kindness and trust, (iii) Conscientiousness—pertaining to achievement orientation, dependability, orderliness, efficiency, responsibility and hardworking, (iv) Neuroticism—referring to anxiety, insecurity, tension, and worry, and (v) Openness to Experience - characterized by intelligence, imagination, curiosity, creativity, and originality. In general personality can be defined as the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts to and interact with others [85].

Parasuraman and Greenhaus [74] suggested that personality characteristics could be influenced by the ability of individuals to interact and react to a situation and also help to proactively shape the environment. Wayne, Musisca and Fleeson [114] investigated the relationship between each of the Big Five personality traits and conflict & facilitation between work & family roles. The study identified significant negative relationships between conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, and work-family & family-work conflict, while a significant positive relationship between neuroticism and work-family & family-work conflict. The findings showed that extraversion is related to greater facilitation between work & family roles and do not relate to conflict, while neuroticism is related to conflict by a greater extent but only weakly related to facilitation. Aryee, Srinivas and Tan [4] observed that individuals with proactive personalities may take steps to obtain support and engage in role reformation or negotiation to minimize work-family conflict and encourage work-family facilitation. The study also revealed that neuroticism is positively correlated to work-family conflict and negatively correlated to work-family facilitation. In addition, optimists would have the ability to extract social support and implement appropriate coping strategies to cope up with stressful circumstances, demonstrated by negative relation with work-family conflict and positive relation with work-family facilitation.

Kaur [48] assessed the relationships between work life balance, big five personality dimensions and life satisfaction among government college teachers of Chandigarh, India. The results revealed that there exists significant positive correlation between work life balance, life satisfaction and Extroversion dimension of personality owing to the ability to build strong networks of social support which help them to maintain better work life balance. Results showed

that there is no gender differences reported on all the variables except one, conscientiousness where females scored significantly higher than males. Devadoss & Minnie [16] studied the influence of big five factors of personality on work-life balance based on experts' opinion. The data analyzed using Fuzzy Relational mapping (FRM) model revealed that the personality type openness exhibit greater ability to strike a proper balance between work and life domains, owing to positive impact of the personality at work and family, while, neuroticism is more vulnerable to maintain a balance between work and life roles.

Well-being and WLB

Psychological well-being refers to positive psychological traits, such as self-acceptance, satisfaction, hope or optimism [87]. GrÖpel and Kuhl [32] observed that need fulfilment plays a mediating role in the relationship between work life balance and subjective well-being. The study utilised two components of subjective well-being namely, a cognitive component (life satisfaction) and an affective component (emotional wellbeing). Findings reported that females experience higher well being compared to males and consequently exhibit higher work life balance in terms of lower work-family & family-work conflict. Wilkinson [115] examined the relationship between work-life balance and psychological well-being among a non-random sample of participants chosen from three companies in the South eastern United States and observed that work-life balance and psychological well-being to be positively correlated. The study showed that gender to be a moderator between work-life balance and psychological well-being.

Soin D [97] examined stress, psychological well-being, and work life balance among full-time female managers of public sector banks and part-time teachers from senior secondary government schools in three cities of India. The measure Psychological Well-being Scale constructed using six dimensions namely; autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, self-acceptance, personal relations with others and personal growth based on Ryff's psychological well being scale. The results revealed that while; full-time working women reported relatively higher levels of stress with lower levels of psychological well being and consequently lower levels of WLB compared to the part-time working women.

Emotional Intelligence and WLB

According to Schutte et al. [90] Emotional intelligence is defined as the "ability to adaptively recognize emotion, express emotion, regulate

emotion and harness emotions". Affandi and Raza [2] investigated the association between leader's emotional intelligence and its impact on quality of work life, burnout and employee performance among medical doctors working in various hospitals across Pakistan. Results indicated that leaders' emotional intelligence is positively linked with quality of work life and can be considered as a strong predictor of quality of work life, and employee performance while it is not associated with employee burnout.

Rangreji [79] found that IT employees in Bangalore city, India exhibited higher regulation of emotion in the self, followed by appraisal and recognition of emotion in others, use of emotion to facilitate performance & appraisal and expression of emotion in the self. The influence of emotional intelligence on work life balance dimensions was observed to be weakly related but significant, while Appraisal & expression of emotions in self and use of emotions to facilitate performance displayed larger influence. Among the work life dimensions the usage of work life balance programs was maximally influenced by emotional intelligence.

Organizational Factors influencing WLB

The studies undertaken in determining the work related factors influencing the perception of work life balance among individuals is explained in terms of flexible work arrangements, work life balance policies and programmes, work support, job stress, technology and role related factors.

Work Arrangements and WLB

Many studies have suggested that flexible work arrangements would help the employees to attain a better blend between work and non work activities and help the organisations to recruit, retain and motivate their employees [6, 49]. Christensen and Staines [12] identified that flexitime work arrangement reduced late comings, absenteeism, and turnover. The study concluded that flexible time strategy improved employee productivity by minimising absenteeism, turnover and work family conflict. Hill et al [36] conducted a study on 6,451 employees of IBM in USA and the study empirically suggested the importance of flexible work timings and location of work place to reduce employee's work life imbalance. The study demonstrated that individual with the perceived job flexibility have the benefit of good work life balance and were capable of working longer hours. Wayne et al. [114] suggested that limiting work hours may benefit workers to increase the level of work family balance because fewer work hours may contribute to reduction in work family

conflict. Hill et al. [35] propounded that, flexi time helps employees to manage their work and family responsibilities effectively there by allowing them to minimize work family conflict and to improve the performance at work & home. Lingard, Francis and Turner [58] conducted a study among project-based construction workers in a large civil engineering construction project in Melbourne, Australia. The study captured data with regard to the number of hours worked, satisfaction with work life balance and capacity to complete required tasks at work & at home. Results demonstrated a strong correlation between hours worked each week and participants' work & life experiences. The time series modelling revealed that workers taking a short, temporary break from work can contribute to improve work life balance. Julien, Somerville and Culp [45] had examined the role of alternative work arrangements that helps to reduce work life conflict in the public sector. The Results revealed that a compressed work week is considered as an alternative work life arrangement that reduces work-life conflict and helps to enhance work-life balance. High levels of management & superior support of flexible work arrangements such as flexible hours and compressed work week were positively related with the ability to balance personal, family and work demands. Recent days, most of international studies have laid higher emphasis on flexible work arrangements and new working conditions compared to other work life balance initiatives [54, 36, 26, 111, 9].

In Indian context, Madipelli, Sarma & Chinnappaiah [60] investigating on factors influencing work life imbalance among female teachers at home and at work place observed that, organizations having ineffective work arrangements, poor working conditions, long working hours, lower income, pressurized work environment etc., may be responsible for monotony, frustration and stress towards work and home among employees, which leads to work life imbalance. Marital relationship, attitude and cooperation of husband and family members were the other factors may also relate to WLB amidst working women.

Work Life Balance Policies and Programmes and WLB

Straub [100] had investigated the contribution of work life balance practices and policies in 14 European countries towards enhancing the career advancement of women to senior management positions. The study identified that only the payment of additional emoluments during

maternity leave had a positive impact on WLB. Hyman & Summers [41] demonstrated that employees in financial service sector of Scotland were prone to work-life balance issues and emphasised the need for organisations and unions to develop a focus on work-life balance programmes. Lieva et al. [56] explored the impact of the availability of work life balance practices on organisational outcomes in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) representing the metal industry sector of Southeast Spain. The results showed that a WLB supportive culture mediates the availability of WLB practices.

Singh [95] measured perceived importance of WLB policies in two prominent IT based companies in India. Induru and Pathan [43] reviewed possible alternatives for employers and employees in the pharmaceutical sector to link work life balance practices for organizational and personal performance. Rajadhyaksha [78] observed that commonly practised work-life interventions by Indian companies have been mainly oriented towards addressing issues such as gender equality, flexibility, stress reduction, health awareness and childcare. Miryala & Chiluka [66] highlighted the importance of designing work life balance policies and programs for teachers at different levels with respect to government and private institutions in India. Purohit [77] had carried out a study among employees of leading corporate entities representing, manufacturing, information technology, educational and banking sectors in Pune region, India, on organizational policies & provisions for work-life balance and emphasised the importance of effective work-life programs for maintaining symbiotic relationship between the employee and employer to achieve mutual benefits.

Work Support and WLB

Thompson, Kirk, and Brown [104] showed that supervisors have significant influence on professional stress of female police officers and they can reduce moral exhaustion and contribute to a better work-life balance. Warner and Hausdorf [112] conducted a study on work life issues among health care workers in Canada. The results indicated that a positive relationship exists between the organization and supervisor support for work-life issues and reduction of work-to-family conflict. Tremblay, Genin & Loreto [106] illustrated the importance of organisational support to work-life balance in a demanding work environment among police officers and agents in Québec using case study methodology involving a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The

findings substantiated the importance for organisations to offer formal and informal support to employees in the work environment to balance their work and family aspects. Fathima & Sahibzada [23] had identified colleague support and job resources to be positively related with the work life balance while unfair criticism at job has negative relation with work life balance among university teachers in Pakistan.

Job Stress & WLB

According to Stanton, et al. [99] job stress can be defined as individual's perception about work environment as threatening or demanding, or discomfort experienced by an individual in the work place. Work life balance has been linked to the varied levels of job stress among employees in different occupations [109, 116]. Bell, Rajendran & Theiler [8] investigated the relationships between job-related stress, health, work-life balance and work-life conflict among Australian academia. The results indicated that high levels of job stress to be positively associated with increased work family conflict and ill-being, while negatively correlated to work life balance and wellbeing. Over the past few decades, substantial research has demonstrated that anxiety related job stress has a negative effect on wellbeing amongst academia [5, 28, 51]. Devadoss & Minnie [17] investigated the influence work related stressors on work life imbalance based on experts' opinion. The data analyzed by means of Combined Overlap Block Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (COBFM) model and identified a work related stressor that exhibit greater ability to strike a proper balance between work and family domains.

Technology and WLB

Lester [57] identified that technology can either facilitate or hinder work life balance by creating a more accessible and flexible environment at all times of day and night enabling individual to work anywhere, any time. Waller and Ragsdell [110] investigated the impact of organizations dominated with e-mail culture up on employees' lives outside working hours. The study observed both positive as well as negative impact of the culture on employees.

Role Related Factors and WLB

Greenhaus and Beutell [30] had identified that work domain factors such as, role conflict, role ambiguity, working hours and inflexibility of the work schedule have a vital role in developing work family conflict. Role conflict is the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of pressures, such that adaptation with one role makes adjustment with the other more difficult

[46] while role ambiguity refers to the lack of clarity about the expectations of the role which may arise out of lack of understanding [76].

Jayanthi and Vanniarajan [44] had investigated the effect of work life imbalance on organizational and family domain performance among executives employed in service industry in southern part of India. The study identified that Organisational role stress factors exert significant influence up on work life imbalance. The investigators also observed that the level of these factors to be higher in private sector as compared to public sector organizations and also higher among female executives than male executives.

Societal Factors Influencing WLB

The studies undertaken in determining the societal factors influencing the perception of work life balance among individuals is explained in terms of childcare responsibilities, family & social support along with other societal factors.

Childcare Responsibilities and WLB

Various studies had suggested that family related factors such as number of children and childcare responsibilities lead to imbalance in work and family roles. Fathers experienced stress in child caring during the absence of employed wives from home [27]. Increased number of children at home results in increased home demands causing additional stress and work family conflict [59]. Elliott [21] investigated on major difficulties faced by the employed parents of small children particularly of age below six years, in providing adequate child care. Additionally, child care as well as care for elderly, imposes more emotional burden on females compared to males. Ross and Mirowsky [86] showed that employed mothers finding difficulties in child-care arrangements experienced high depression.

Padma and Reddy [73] conducted a study among teachers from various schools located in Hyderabad and Andhra Pradesh, India to investigate the influence of child demographics namely; number of children and their age on WLB. The results revealed that school teachers with more number of children (three children) and also the childless teachers perceived similar WLB.

Family Support and WLB

Societal factors namely family support including spouse support was observed to have an impact on work life balance of individuals. Adams et al. [1] in his studies observed that emotional and instrumental support from family as well as society was associated with lower levels of work

family imbalance. Edralin [20] investigated on balancing work demands with personal needs and family responsibilities by Filipina entrepreneurs (EntrePinays), in order to sustain their business and at the same time live a meaningful and happy life. Findings revealed that both positive and negative spillover effects of work-life relationships. Negative spillover stimulates stress among the entrepreneurs while positive spillover can lead to their elevated levels of life satisfaction. The results demonstrated various strategies to balance work and life such as personal planning with proper time management, the magnitude of spouse support for married entrepreneurs or the extent of support of the family members for non-business work responsibilities and activities, and delegation of routine jobs to trusted employees, usually a family member, having a flexible work schedule.

Other Societal Factors and WLB

Greenhaus and Beutell [30] had identified family domain factors that have a vital role in developing work family conflict and these factors comprised of the number of children, spouse employment, family quarrel, low spouse support and expectations for affection and openness. Parasuraman and Simmers [75] studied the relationship between parental responsibilities and time obligation to family and work-family conflict among self- and organisationally employed individuals. The results showed that the outline of work-family conflict predictors in the family domain varied according to employment status. Parental demand was positively related to work-family conflict among self-employed individuals, while family involvement was negatively correlated with work-family conflict among individuals employed in organisations.

Nathani and Jha [68] had identified various family related factors such as, increasing participation of women, child bearing women and dual career women in workforce, increasing single-parent/ single person households and increased child-care/ elder care burden to be significantly influencing WLB of employees. Mathew & Panchanatham [64] demonstrated the important factors influencing work life balance of women entrepreneurs in South India. The study had observed that dependent care issues, quality of health, and lack of appropriate social support as some of the major factors influencing the WLB among women entrepreneurs.

Other Factors influencing WLB

Many studies had explored the influence of demographic variables and attitudinal issues on

work-life balance within the working population. Duxbury and Higgins [19] observed significant increases in work-life conflict were observed regardless of gender, job type and parental status as compared to studies in the year 1991 among large sample of employees in Canada. Parasuraman and Simmers [75] revealed that gender and job type had significant influence on work-family issues, job involvement and job satisfaction. The influence of gender on work-life issues was reported in many literatures. The studies have also indicated that the major stress experienced by females experience arises from family demands rather than work demands particularly when the family has children [102]. Emslie, Hunt and Macintyre [22] identified that factors affecting work and family life did vary by gender. Nurturing children and being in a senior position were more strongly related to work-home conflict for women than men. Barnett et al. [7] identified the relationship of income of employees and balancing work and family responsibilities. Employees with lower income, particularly single mothers, have more difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities.

Thriveni and Rama [105] examined a significant relationship between demographic variables namely; age, experience, marital status, income, type of family, number of dependents and perception of work-life balance among women employees in Bangalore city, India. They also articulated the importance of these relationships for designing appropriate policies for employees to deal with work life balance issues. Nathani and Jha [68] explored some of the factors influencing WLB namely, ageing population, emergence of service sector industries, technological advancement of work, skill shortages, loss of social support network, globalisation and demographic shift of workforce.

Outcomes of Work Life Balance

The impact of perceived WLB on employees can result in varied consequences in the work place as well as in the personal and societal life. The literature reported on studies undertaken in investigating the outcomes of WLB is broadly categorized in to work related outcomes and non-work related outcomes and are highlighted in the ensuing sections.

WLB and Work Related Outcomes

Hobson, Delunas and Kesic [37] proposed that the continuous inability of employees to balance work and life responsibilities may contribute to organizational performance in terms of increased absenteeism & turnover, reduced productivity and

decreased job satisfaction. Howard, Donofrio and Boles [38] conducted a study among police personnel and revealed that work-life balance significantly related to job satisfaction. Many researchers have established that the wellbeing practices of management towards their employees helps to achieve higher levels of job satisfaction and stronger commitment to their organization [82, 83]. Hughes and Boziones [39] conducted a study among bus drivers and identified that work-life imbalance to be a major source of dissatisfaction for the participants rather than a source of concern. In addition, participants demonstrated appreciable association between work-life imbalance and withdrawal behaviours, including turnover and non-genuine sick absence. Keeton et al. [50] explored the factors influencing career satisfaction, work life balance, and burnout among physicians. They observed that both women and men to be highly satisfied with their careers while only moderately satisfied with work life balance and emotional resilience. The findings of the study revealed that work life balance was significantly associated with career satisfaction and the relationship is mediated by key factors namely, control over schedule, total work hours, marital status, and having child dependents in the household. In addition, generational and gender shifts also strongly and significantly contribute to career satisfaction, work-life balance, and burnout, while, older age was consistently associated with more work-life balance and less burnout. Ilies, Wilson, & Wagner [42] examined the role of work-family integration in the spillover of daily job satisfaction upon daily marital satisfaction and emotional states experienced by employees at home. The samples chosen from university employees including administrative professionals, supervisors, and clerical-technical employees, indicated that employees with higher daily job satisfaction to experience lower negative effect at home. Smith K. T [96] in his study on work-life balance perspectives of Millennial (those who born between 1980 and 1995) job candidates observed that work-life balance to have higher priority for current generation of workers in comparison to previous generation. Results of the study indicated that the incumbents consider healthy work-life balance as a vital source for person's quality of work, job performance, ethical decision making, and long-term job satisfaction and generally declined extra pay in lieu of vacation and flex time. Saif, Malik & Awan [88] examined the relationship of employee work satisfaction and prevalence of work life balance (WLB) practices among layoff survivors in two big organizations operating in Pakistan. The results of regression

analysis showed a positive relationship among the variables without any significant differences between top, middle and lower level management. Noor [71] identified the relationship between perceived work-life balance and the intentions to leave among academia in Malaysian public higher education institutions. The results indicated that perceived satisfaction with work life balance was negatively correlated to intention to leave the organisation partially mediated by job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Maeran, Pitarelli & Cangiano [61] conducted an exploratory study to analyse the relationship between work life balance and job satisfaction among teachers in Italy. The study investigated the role of work family conflict and work family enrichment and vice versa to the job. Authors report a negative correlation between work-family conflict and family-work conflict to job satisfaction, similar to previous research in this area [10, 53, 70].

Shankar & Bhatnagar [92] examined the literature in the field of Work-Life Balance and proposed a conceptual model. The model focused on the correlation of Work- Life Balance construct with other variables namely employee engagement, emotional consonance/dissonance and turnover intention. The study demonstrated that higher work life balance leads to high employee engagement, and low intention to quit. Rani, Kamalanabhan & Selvarani [80] demonstrated the relationship between employee satisfaction and work life balance among employees working in IT organizations in Chennai, India. The study revealed high correlation between work task and employee satisfaction with WLB being a mediator variable. The results demonstrated positive relationship between employee satisfaction and variables such as career opportunity, recognition, work task, benefits, work/life balance and superior subordinate relationship while being negatively associated with pay. The study proposed a SEM model in which the observed endogenous variables were employee satisfaction and the work/life balance and the observed exogenous variables were career opportunities, recognition, work task, pay and superior subordinate relationship. Varatharaj & Vasantha [107] conducted an exploratory study among women service sector employees with reference to Chennai city, India to demonstrate their work life balance as source of job satisfaction. Their study revealed that greater part of the women employees feel comfortable in their work place irrespective of their personal and work place disturbances and demonstrated ability to balance their duties & responsibilities both in job as well as families.

Nayeem & Tripathy [69] examined the relationship of Job satisfaction with Work-Life Balance (WLB), turnover intentions and burnout levels among teachers in technical Institutions. The study pointed out that WLB to be a major contributor toward Job satisfaction and males experience higher degree of burnout compared to female teachers. The study identified that WLB and Burnout had positive relationship with Job satisfaction. Sakthivel & Jayakrishnan [89] demonstrated that work life balance and organizational commitment were positively correlated among the nursing professional and can act as a predictor. Shree [93] identified significant relationship between work life balance and career satisfaction among Critical Care Nurses in Private Hospitals at Coimbatore, India. Rathi & Barath [81] conducted a study among 148 police personnel based in India. Their study demonstrated that work-to-family and family-to-work conflict to be negatively correlated with job satisfaction. They identified a significantly moderate relationship of social support from co-workers to work-to-family and family-to-work conflict and family satisfaction. Chimote & Srivastava [11] conducted a survey on call center employees in Gurgaon, in India and identified that organizations could benefit in terms of reduction in absenteeism and turnover, improvement of productivity and image, and assured loyalty and retention, while, employees perceived increased job satisfaction, job security, autonomy, reduced stress and improved health out of WLB. However, correlation analysis indicated that while organizational perspective of WLB benefits significantly correlated with absenteeism, employee perspective of WLB benefits exhibited significant correlation with job satisfaction and autonomy.

WLB and Non-Work Related Outcomes

Better work-life balance and minimal work-life conflict can also be related to non-work related outcomes namely, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, marital and leisure satisfaction and family performance [3]. Hobson, Delunas and Kesic [37] identified consequences of work-life imbalance as increased level of stress and stress-related illness, reduced life satisfaction and heightened family conflict often resulting in divorce. Hyman et al. [40] indicated that interference of work demands into personal life could be related to the development of severe stress, sleeplessness and emotional exhaustion among employees in UK call-centres and software development sectors. Additionally, employees perceived that interference of work obligations into their personal lives negatively affected

health. The literature also proposes that imbalance between work and non-work activities reduce psychological and physical well-being [103, 98, 24]. Shanafelt et al. [91] conducted study on burnout and satisfaction with work life balance among large sample of US physicians in all specialty disciplines relative to the general US population. The results indicated that burnout was more common among physicians as they tend to work longer hours and have greater struggles with work-life integration. Physicians in general surgery, general surgery subspecialties, and obstetrics/ gynaecology were identified to suffer from low levels work life balance.

Lakshmi, Ramachandran and Boohene [55] identified the issues connected with work life balance of female nurses in government and private hospitals in Tamil Nadu, India and the results also indicated that both government and private hospital nurse's work life balance is a challengeable one. The study suggested that government and private hospital management need to be conscious of the status of female nurses and periodically review their work and personal life satisfaction. Shree [94] identified the relationship between work life balance and marital satisfaction among Critical Care Nurses in Private Hospitals at Coimbatore, India.

Comments on Literature and Future Directions

By reviewing the measurement scale, factors and outcomes of work life balance in the international and national level studies, researchers have made a primary discovery on factors of work life balance in the personal, organisational and societal level of an individual and the possible outcomes, as the table shows (see Table 1 & 2). The salient areas of contributions of the various studies and investigations undertaken in one of the most vital feature of effective performance management in any organization have been compiled in order to elicit possible directions for furthering research in this potential area is attempted.

- Initial research in work life balance measurement was based on work family conflict namely time, strain and behaviour based conflicts. Subsequently researchers recognized the role of conflict and enhancement from the work and family domains and developed scales accordingly. Few researchers had employed factors like time and satisfaction for the measurement of work life balance. One of the scales developed in Indian context employs team work, compensation and benefits to estimate employee work life balance. Most of scales have

been concentrated on interference and enrichment between work and family domains

rather than focused towards individual and personal interference and enrichment.

Table 1: Factors of WLB

Individual Factors	Organisational Factors	Societal Factors	Other Factors
1. Personality 2. Well being 3. Emotional intelligence	1. Work arrangements 2. Work life balance practices & policies 3. Organisation support 4. Superior support 5. Colleague support 6. Job stress 7. Role conflict 8. Role ambiguity 9. Role overload 10. Technology	1. Child care arrangements 2. Spouse support 3. Family support 4. Social support 5. Personal & family demands 6. Dependent care issues 7. Family quarrel	1. Age 2. Gender 3. Marital status 4. Parental status 5. Experience 6. Employee level 7. Job type 8. Income 9. Type of family

Table 2: Outcomes of WLB

Work related outcomes	Non work related Outcomes
1. Job / Work satisfaction 2. Career satisfaction 3. Organisational commitment 4. Employee turnover 5. Absenteeism 6. Retention of employees 7. Job performance	1. Marital satisfaction 2. Family satisfaction 3. Life satisfaction 4. Leisure satisfaction 5. Burnout 6. Health outcomes 7. Family performance

- Majority of the scales have been developed on the foundation of the western societal and work context. Most of the instruments developed possess high degree of validity and reliability in their context. Nevertheless the organizational cultures, customs, values in India differ from that of the western countries. The scales developed in Indian context have been only a few and hence capturing all the dimensions proposed for western context may not be possible.
- Among the studies relating to individual factors influencing WLB, the major focus had been on the factors such as personality, well being and emotional intelligence. Studies carried out in India as well as in other countries focus essentially to explain the relationship between personality and WLB, while few studies had been reported in Indian arena to elucidate the relationship between psychological well being and emotional intelligence on WLB. Fuzzy relationship mapping model was reported in one of the studies to determine the personality dimension that exhibit greater ability to balance between work and life. International studies have been concentrated on corporates and hospitals while, Indian studies hover around educational and IT sectors.
- Studies reported in organisational factors influencing WLB, the key focus had been given to flexible work arrangements, work life balance

policies and programmes, work support, job stress, technology and role related factors. International studies reported had been mostly concentrated on flexible work arrangements while Indian studies mainly focus on work life balance policies and programmes. Combined Overlap Block Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (COBFCM) model was reported in one of the studies to identify major work related stressor on WLB. Studies in International arena had focused on sectors namely; IT, construction, public sector, SMEs, health care, financial service and police while, Indian studies on education, IT, pharmaceutical and service sectors. Multi sector comparisons of WLB have also been reported.

- Societal factors of WLB had been reported in various literatures focused on childcare responsibilities, family & social support along with other societal factors such as spouse employment, family quarrel, parental responsibilities, dependent care issues etc. Entrepreneurs had been the key area of focus for both Indian and international studies, while one of the studies reported compare between self employed and organisationally employed individuals.
- Demographical factors such as age, gender, marital status, experience, income, type of family etc; had been reported to be influencing WLB in addition to individual, organisational and societal factors. Studies carried out in both Indian and foreign countries attempts to elucidate the relationship of the factors jointly or individually with WLB. Literature had been more focussed onto organisational or work related factors influencing WLB rather than individual and societal factors. Hence the factors

pertaining to individual and societal aspects can be a potential area for future research.

- WLB has been recognised to contribute to work related consequences such as reduced work satisfaction, employee turnover, increased absenteeism, diminished organisational commitment & performance and non work related consequences namely reduced marital, family & life satisfaction and poorer health outcomes. Studies have given higher concentration towards organisational consequences both in Indian and international arena. Studies in foreign countries had focused on police personnel, bus drivers, physicians, teachers and call centre & software employees while, Indian studies dwell on nurses, teachers, IT & call centre employees. Few studies had been reported on employing Structural equation modelling (SEM) to visualise the relationship between the different factors and WLB.
- International studies on WLB had been carried out in various sectors namely, IT, health care, financial service, SMEs, police, transportation, education, call centres etc. In similar lines, Indian studies could also be undertaken in estimation of WLB in health care, police and transportation sector.
- Numerous studies reported on WLB pertain to education and IT sectors in both India and abroad. Detailed Investigation in this direction may be undertaken for understanding the similarities and differences of results in these sectors in an attempt to explain the reasons for variations if any. Particularly, India in itself being a diversified country, huge potential exist in identifying regional differences in perceiving WLB.
- A very few studies reported have employed mathematical modelling techniques to interrelate parameter influencing WLB both in

Indian and international arena. Future research work can be devoted towards employing different modelling techniques such as Fuzzy neural models towards better insight in to the interrelationship existing between the various parameters influencing WLB leading to accurate estimation.

- It can also be observed that while most International studies have covered different economic strata from lower level to higher level income group, Indian studies have been carried out among middle income groups and have been less focused particularly on lower income employees.

Conclusion

The concept of work life balance has attracted the attention of not only different organizations but also researchers and HR practitioners. This mainly could be attributed to ever increasing demands of work along with increased family demands owing to the necessity of spouses to be employed and quest for personal achievements in personal life. This paper is an attempt to compile together salient investigations on work life balance undertaken nationally and internationally across different sectors of employment towards identifying intricate interrelationships existing between different life and employment parameters, to provide a conceptual understanding through various theories propounded and the measurement scales used in a range of studies, along with various factors and possible consequences of WLB. Additionally, the paper also attempts to explore possible scope for further research in the area for achieving better modelling and thereby enable accurate estimations of WLB among employees towards ensuring higher performance deliverance.

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