



IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AFFECTING THE WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG THE FEMALE NON-ACADEMIC STAFF IN A UNIVERSITY IN SRI LANKA

Vijitha Prasath*

University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

A person's control over the amount of time spent at work and the amount of time spent outside of work is referred to as work life balance (WLB). Work is just one aspect of life. It should not interfere with personal time. When someone works willingly, attains satisfaction, and is bound to succeed not only at work but also in family life, there is WLB. There are various factors of WLB that influence an individual's personal and work life. The purpose of this study was to examine demographic factors and how they affect the WLB of female non-academic staff in the University of Jaffna. The study adopted a non-parametric approach and a cross-sectional survey design was used. A primary data collection, using modified questionnaires was distributed among a sample of 73 management assistants using the simple random sampling technique from a total population of 150. The measuring tool was a modified WLB questionnaire of Hayman (2005) consisting of 15 questions. The questionnaire was pre-tested. Cronbach's alpha was calculated, which is greater than 0.7, meaning the instrument is reliable. Statistical analysis of Spearman correlation was done using SPSS. The study aims to investigate the relationship between demographic factors such as income, age, experience, number of children, marital status, type of family, and level of education with WLB. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between WLB and demographic factors. Higher income can provide more financial freedom and options whereas lower income challenges females to meet family needs. More children can complicate WLB due to increased responsibilities and financial strain. Unmarried females have a WLB greater than married women. The type of family structure can significantly influence WLB, in terms of the support received from family members. Nuclear families often experience more stress whereas extended families can provide support to working females. The relationship of age, experience, and level of education is not statistically significant, having p-values greater than 0.05, which are 0.61, 0.82, and 0.64, respectively.

Keywords: work life balance, demographic factors, female, university

**Corresponding Author: vijithakarunanithy@gmail.com*



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1. INTRODUCTION

The composition of work and family life spheres has undergone substantial transformation over time. Today, working men and women encounter a diverse array of daily challenges that disrupt the equilibrium between their professional responsibilities and family obligations. These evolving demands often lead to heightened work–family conflict, adversely affecting both individual well-being and organizational outcomes (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The competing responsibilities that today’s workers must deal with include work, kids, household duties, volunteering, caring for a spouse, and aging parents, etc. Women joining the workforce has not been accompanied by a change in their household responsibilities, resulting in additional roles for working women. An individual’s well-being reduces when an additional role is added to a societal role that already includes many demands and hassles. Working women experience the same situation while meeting the demands of high performance at work as well as managing children and the household. Although men and women enter the workforce with comparable qualifications and ambitions, women often face built-in barriers at work that make it harder and slower for them to reach management positions, widening gender disparities at higher levels (Chaudhary & Suri, 2024). The relationships in the workplace, fair treatment, and work environment may be more important to the well-being of women than that of men. Stress is likely to become worse due to a poor WLB, especially among women who are still tasked with the duty to manage the household and work. Research shows that balancing work and family, feeling financially secure, and having support from others greatly improve how people feel about their lives (Gardiner et al., 2024; Liu, Qian, & Mooney, 2025). Sen’s capability approach also helps explain what people can do and achieve, not just what resources they have (Sen, 1993). Thus, this research aims to study the female staff from the university as a study sample, since women are more prone to managing WLB.

1.1. Objectives

The study intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the demographic factors affecting the WLB of female employees.
2. To find out the relationship between demographic factors such as income, age, experience, number of children, marital status, type of family and level of education with the WLB of female employees.



1.2. Research Questions

1. What are the specific demographic factors affecting the WLB of female employees?
2. What is the relationship between demographic factors such as income, age, experience, number of children, marital status, type of family, and level of education with the WLB among female employees?

1.3. Conceptual Framework

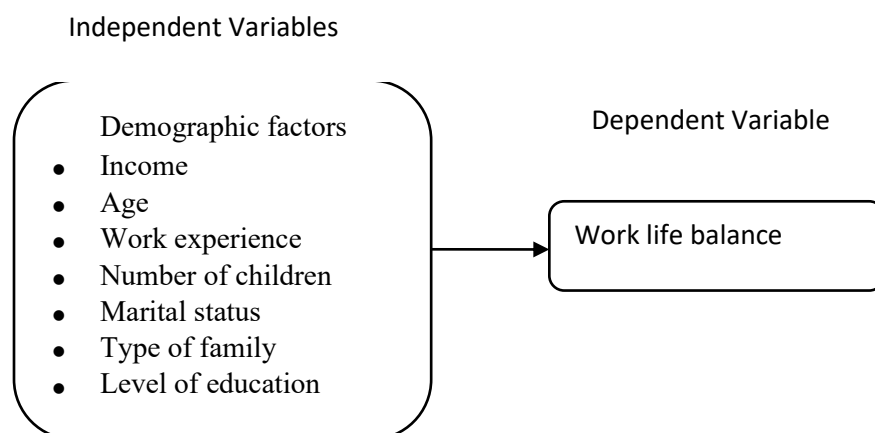


Figure 01: Conceptual framework, Source: Developed for this study

1.4. Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses were formulated for this study.

- H1: There is a positive relationship between income and WLB.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between age and WLB.
- H3: There is a positive relationship between work experience and WLB.
- H4: There is a negative relationship between the number of children and WLB.
- H5: There is a negative relationship between marital status and WLB.
- H6: There is a positive relationship between type of family and WLB.
- H7: There is a positive relationship between the level of education and WLB.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a non-parametric approach to research and a cross sectional survey design was used for the study. This study was descriptive and was undertaken to describe and understand WLB and investigate the relationship between the factors affecting the WLB among the management assistants working in the University of Jaffna. The total population of management assistants is 260; among them 150 are female employees. In this study, the sample drawn for analysis were 73 female management assistants employees who are working in the University of Jaffna. Simple random sampling was used to select participants. To collect data, the primary data collection method of questionnaires were distributed. Seventy-three



questionnaires were collected from female management assistants of the University of Jaffna. Data were collected on important biographical data and demographic characteristics of the participants and a WLB questionnaire (Hayman, 2005) was used to collect data on the variables. The WLB questionnaire consisted of 15 statements on WLB, scores ranging from 1 to 5 assigned to each response (1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly agree).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The computer programme SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used for data analysis. The reliability test was done for the instruments. The Cronbach Alpha value for all variables were more than 0.7, which means the reliability of the instrument was in the satisfactory level.

3.1. Correlation Matrix between WLB and Demographic Information

Independent Variables	Dependent variable	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.(2tailed)
Income	WLB	0.74	0.05
Age		-0.59	0.61
Experience		-0.17	0.82
No. of Children		-0.23	0.01
Marital status		-0.04	0.04
Type of Family		0.1	0.03
Level of education		0.05	0.64

Table 01: Correlation matrix between WLB and demographic information

Based on the findings shown in Table 1, the relationship between WLB and demographic factors such as income, number of children, marital status, and type of family are significantly related to work-life balance. This means these factors do have an important impact. The correlation between income, number of children, marital status, and type of family with WLB having a correlation coefficient of 0.74, -0.23, -0.04, and 0.12 respectively along with the significance values of 0.05, 0.01, 0.04, and 0.03. The number of children in a family is negatively correlated. It explains that when the number of children in a family increases, WLB of the mother will decrease. More children can complicate WLB due to increased responsibilities and financial strain. Income has a positive relationship which means higher income can provide more financial freedom and options, whereas, lower income challenges females to meet family needs. The type of family structure can significantly influence WLB, in terms of the support received from family members. Nuclear families often experience more stress, whereas, extended families can provide support. On the other hand, age, experience, and level of education are not significant as the significance values are greater than 0.05 which are 0.61, 0.82, and 0.64, respectively. It means that these factors do not affect how well someone manages her work and personal life. Whether a person is young or old, has little or lots of work experience, or has different levels of education, it does not make a big difference in her work life balance.



3.2. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequency analyses, were used to summarize participant characteristics. The sample had 75% of married female employees. Among the married employees, 76% had children. Family structure explained that 42% of them were joint families and 58%, nuclear families. It showed an increase in nuclear families which might make changes in perpetuating gender roles of parents in the future. More employees have a bachelor's degree even though the entry requirement to the job is G.C.E (A/L). It shows that the female level of education is increasing over time.

Around 10% of the respondents reported that they always feel tired/stressed and they miss out on quality time with family or friends because of work pressure. Support from family members (73%), support from colleagues (34%) and technology like cell phone or laptop are helping them to balance work and family commitments. 27% of respondents stated that frequent traveling away from home hinders them from balancing WLB, whereas, if the university provides transport, it may help them to balance WLB. 66% of the respondents stated that their spouses are helping them with household chores, while 73% of respondents reported that their parents support them in balancing their work and family. Mostly, around 44% reported that the parents are looking after the children and around 5% of the respondents get the help from domestic helpers and a very few respondents send the children either to tuition classes or leave them in the child care centres or leave them alone in the house while they are in the office.

4. CONCLUSION

Achieving WLB for women is shaped by demographic factors. The findings suggested that demographic factors such as income, number of children, marital status, and type of family are significantly related to WLB. Demographic factors such as age, experience, and level of education are not significant means that this relationship could be influenced by other factors.

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