

# Work-Life Balance Among Dual-Earner Couples in the Organized Sector

**Devika Maitra**

Christ University, Bangalore

**Dr. Hemalata K**

Associate Professor, Christ University, Bangalore

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## Abstract

*Women in the workforce, at one time, were the rare exception but today dual earner couples are the norm. Social roles and expectations are undergoing a change and hence understanding work-life balance is important in today's day and age. The study focuses on working couples across various sectors, where both partners hold a full-time job in the organized sector. Understanding effects of work-life imbalance of wife on husband's life is also equally important in the social scenario today. Organizations also need to cater to these needs of work-life balance of their employees.*

*The snowball technique was used to collect the sample, for ease of reaching dual earner couples. The study focused on married working people with working spouses, with a targeted sample of 30 couples. The questionnaire was administered through email to these couples and a total of 23 complete responses were received. It was found that no significant difference exists between the score of either domain of Work-Life Balance of spouses.*

**Key Words:** Work Life Balance, Inter-Role Conflict

## I. Introduction

Fifty years ago, the concept of work-life balance among couples did not exist due to well defined roles of a husband and a wife in a family system. The number of working women was very low as compared to today. Since the inception of women in the workforce is

relatively recent, changing family roles is a new development in our society. Recently these changing roles have been seen to have a negative impact on working professionals in terms of role confusion leading to stress. Thus the concept of work-life balance came about very recently and thus is a highly researched topic, with a large number of studies trying to define the parameters of work life balance.

Work-life balance began to be understood as a conflict of roles between work and family and thus was referred to as work-family conflict. A role is defined as ‘a set of activities or behaviours that others expect an individual to perform’ (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal, 1964). The term ‘inter-role conflict’ was termed in the same study to describe when expectations and pressures in one role become incompatible with those of another role.

Based on the work of Kahn, et. al.(1964), Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work family conflict 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 is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role.”

The current understanding of work life balance is in terms of ‘domains’ of one’s life. Earlier it was thought that the major domains of life are work and family, and hence the term ‘work-family balance’ came about. Today over 170 domains have been recognized by Warren (2004), among them work, financial resources, leisure, dwelling and neighbourhood, family, friendships, social participation and health. Neglecting one domain leads to a negative impact on others, since they are closely related.

Work life balance is a challenge for the professionals themselves, their families as well as industry today. In the current economic scenario, organisations are hard pressed for higher productivity and need employees with improved work-life balance as an employee with better work-life balance will contribute more meaningfully towards the organisational growth and success (Naithani, 2010). This issue has come to the fore due to multitude of changes in the work place, in employee demographics and in the family sphere. This paper discusses differences in scores of work-life balance and its various domains among both partners of a dual-earner couple in the organized sector.

## **II. Review of Literature**

Chitra Devi, A., & Sheela Rani, S. (2012). Work Life Balance as a determinant of life satisfaction and family satisfaction-A study among women in BPO. The results show that there is a positive relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction and work-life balance and family satisfaction. Shimazu, A., Kubota, K., Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., Shimada, K., & Kawakami, N. (2013). Work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict among Japanese dual earner couples with preschool children: A Spillover Crossover Perspective. They found that wives whose husbands experience work-family conflict and family-work conflict simultaneously were most likely to experience psychological distress.

## **III. Methodology**

The research was descriptive in nature. The participants consisted of married couples where both partners working full time in the organized sector. The questionnaire was administered in the form of an online questionnaire, using snowball sampling technique. Complete responses were received from a total of 23 couples which have been used as

the sample for the study. The study hypothesizes that there is no significant difference between the values of Work-Life Balance and its domains between husbands and wives.

#### IV. Findings and Discussion

**Table 1: Average Values and p-values of WLB and its Domains**

	<b>WIPL</b>	<b>PLIW</b>	<b>WPLE</b>	<b>WLB</b>
<b>Avg.</b>	23.5271552	11.8038	16.77775	52.09068
<b>Sigma(2-tailed)</b>	0.96915239	0.233097	0.891474	0.670323

The above table shows the average scores of Work-Life Balance and its individual domains.

**Table 2: Average Values of WLB and its Domains Among Males**

<b>MALES</b>				
	<b>WIPL</b>	<b>PLIW</b>	<b>WPLE</b>	<b>WLB</b>
<b>Mean</b>	24.6087	13.3478	16.1739	54.1304
<b>SD</b>	7.56630	3.96127	4.87714	7.93326

Comparing the values in the above table to those in table 1, it can be seen that the values of WIPL, PLIW and WLB are slightly higher than the average. WPLE is seen to be very slightly lower.

**Table 3: Average Values of WLB and its Domains Among Females**

<b>FEMALES</b>				
	<b>WIPL</b>	<b>PLIW</b>	<b>WPLE</b>	<b>WLB</b>
<b>Mean</b>	24.1304	11.1739	17.4347	52.7391
<b>SD</b>	7.02789	4.92352	5.53358	7.94422

Comparing the values in the above table to those in table 1, it can be seen that the values of WIPL, WPLE and WLB are slightly higher than the average. PLIW is seen to be slightly lower.

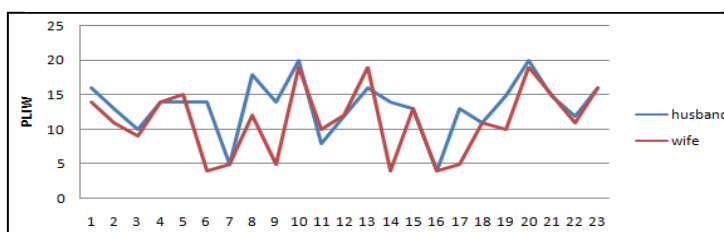
Between husband and wife, WIPL values are slightly lower in wives. PLIW values show the same trend. The value of WPLE, however, seems to be higher among women. However total WLB score is seen to be lower.

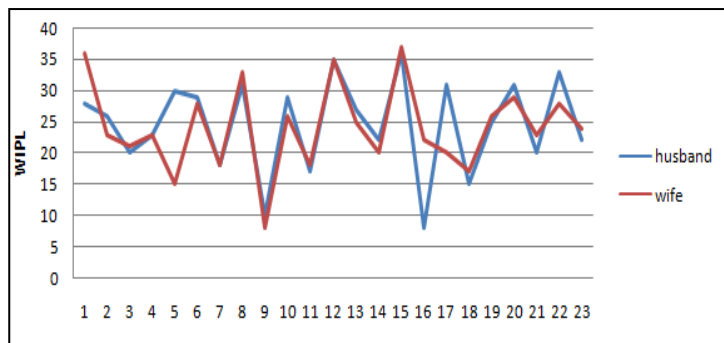
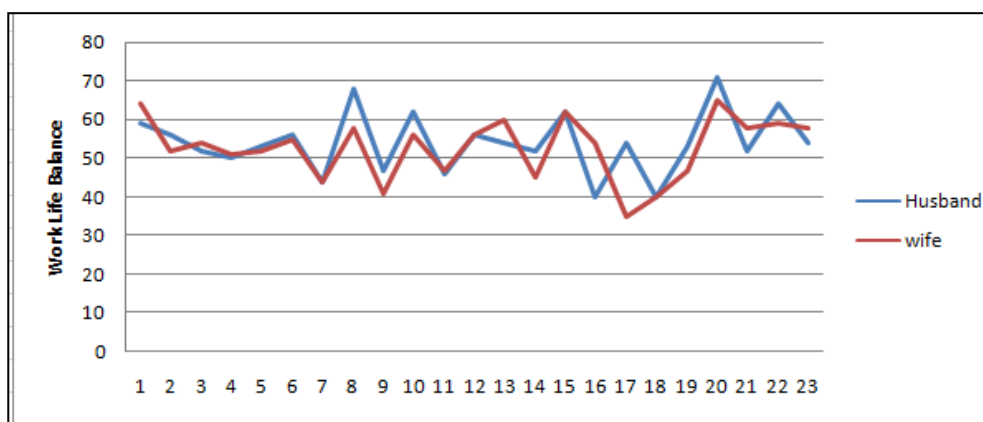
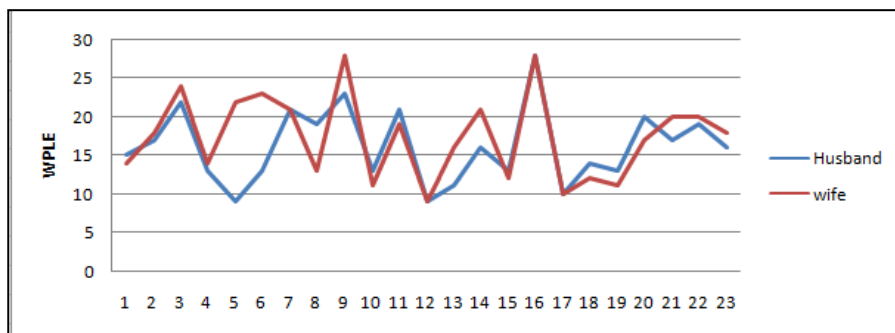
The p-values, outcome of the student's t-test applied to the data, shows that differences in scores of a husband and a wife of all domains as well as of WLB show no significant difference statistically.

Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 pictorially represent the trend between Work-Life Balance and each of its domains of the husband and the wife.

Previous studies have shown that there is no gender difference among WLB scores, or the scores of any of the domains of WLB. Very few studies have been conducted with couple as a unit of the sample, and hence this study aims to take the gender difference forward to the difference in scores between working couples.

**Table 4: Gender Differences in Personal Life Interference in Work**



**Table 5: Gender Differences in Work Interference in Personal Life****Table 6: Gender Difference in Work-Life Balance****Table 7: Gender Difference in Work-Personal Life Enhancement**

## V. Conclusion

Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in Work-Life Balance along any of its dimensions among working couples in the organized sector.

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