

**NAVIGATING WORK-LIFE BALANCE: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR
WORKING WOMEN IN AHMEDABAD**

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ABSTRACT

In today's Ahmedabad, achieving work-life balance is a significant challenge for working women. This paper delves into this complex issue, exploring the disparities they face and the strategies they employ to navigate work and personal commitments. The research investigates the key factors that contribute to the difficulty of achieving balance, such as long working hours, household responsibilities, and societal expectations. It further examines the impact of work-life balance on the well-being of working women in Ahmedabad.

The study employs a descriptive research design and utilizes a self-designed questionnaire to gather data from working women in the city. The research has three primary objectives: to identify the key determinants of why some women struggle more than others to achieve work-life balance, to analyse the effects of work-life balance on their overall well-being, and to explore the correlation between existing work-life balance practices and their sense of well-being.

Through this research, the paper aims to shed light on the experiences of working women in Ahmedabad. By understanding the challenges they face and the strategies they utilize, the research hopes to contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge on work-life balance. Ultimately, the goal is to inspire positive changes in both workplaces and society to create a more supportive environment for working women in Ahmedabad, enabling them to achieve greater well-being and flourish in both their professional and personal lives.

Keywords:

Work-life balance, Working women, Ahmedabad, Gender equality, Well-being

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and competitive world, achieving a healthy work-life balance has become increasingly challenging, especially for working women. Juggling a career, family responsibilities, and personal commitments can be overwhelming, leading to stress, burnout, and poor physical and mental health. In a city like Ahmedabad, where the demands of work and personal life often collide, navigating work-life balance can be particularly daunting for women who are striving to excel in their careers while also fulfilling their roles as wives, mothers, and caregivers.

Ahmedabad, the largest city in the state of Gujarat, is a bustling metropolis known for its thriving industrial and commercial sectors. With a rapidly growing economy, opportunities for career advancement abound in various industries, from finance and IT to healthcare and education. As more women enter the workforce and pursue their professional goals, they are faced with the formidable task of balancing their professional and personal lives in a city where traditional gender roles and societal expectations can pose additional challenges.

The challenges that working women in Ahmedabad face in achieving work-life balance are diverse and multifaceted. From long working hours and demanding job responsibilities to household chores, childcare, and eldercare responsibilities, women often find themselves pulled in multiple directions, leaving little time for self-care, relaxation, and pursuing personal interests. Moreover, cultural norms and expectations regarding women's roles in the family and society can add to the pressure, making it difficult for women to assert their own needs and priorities.

Despite these challenges, there are strategies and resources available to help working women in Ahmedabad navigate the complexities of work-life balance and lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. By prioritizing self-care, setting boundaries, delegating tasks, seeking support from family members,

friends, and colleagues, and practicing effective time management, women can create a harmonious balance between their professional and personal responsibilities. Additionally, employers can play a crucial role in facilitating work-life balance for their female employees by offering flexible work arrangements, parental leave policies, childcare assistance, and wellness programs.

In this paper, we will explore the various challenges that working women in Ahmedabad face in achieving work-life balance and examine the strategies and resources that can help them overcome these challenges. Through interviews, surveys, case studies, and literature reviews, we will delve into the experiences of working women in Ahmedabad and analyze the factors that contribute to their success or hinder their ability to balance work and personal life. By shedding light on this important issue, we hope to raise awareness, spark conversation, and inspire positive changes in the workplace and society to support the well-being and success of working women in Ahmedabad.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

The background of the study on work-life balance of working women in Ahmedabad is rooted in the growing importance of gender equality in the workforce and the evolving nature of family dynamics in modern society. Historically, women have faced challenges in balancing the demands of their careers with their responsibilities at home, leading to increased stress and burnout. In recent years, there has been a shift towards recognizing the value of work-life balance, not only for the well-being of individuals but also for the overall productivity and success of organizations. Research in this area has highlighted the need for tailored interventions and policies to support working women in achieving a harmonious equilibrium between work and personal life. By delving deeper into the specific challenges faced by women in Ahmedabad, this study aims to contribute valuable insights to the existing literature on work-life balance and provide evidence-based recommendations for both employers and policymakers to create a more supportive and inclusive work environment for women (Vanitha & Meenakumari, 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Achieving work-life balance is crucial for working women to maintain a good quality of life and prevent social hazards such as divorces and infertility due to high stress levels. The challenges faced by working women in balancing personal and professional life highlight the need for organizations to implement policies and practices that support work-life balance to ensure the well-being and satisfaction of female employees (Katait & Phule, 2018). Working women in Ahmedabad manage work-life balance by juggling their professional responsibilities with personal commitments, supported by evolving workplace policies and societal changes. The quest for work-life balance has become crucial in the 21st century, emphasizing the need for prioritizing between career and personal life (Rajesh & Rajini, 2022). In India, including Ahmedabad, the issue of work-life balance is gaining prominence, especially among women employees who face challenges in balancing full-time work with household responsibilities (Vijayaraghavan & Martin, 2020). Factors affecting work-life balance for women in the IT sector include working hours, job satisfaction, and working conditions, with job satisfaction being crucial for employee loyalty and satisfaction (Jalaja, 2020). Additionally, the perception of women employees in public sector banks in Ahmedabad regarding work-life balance initiatives and policies plays a significant role in managing their equilibrium between work and personal life (Balamurugan & Sreeleka, 2020).

The work-life balance of working women in Ahmedabad is influenced by various factors such as urban proximity, job satisfaction, and gender balance. Research in the Ahmedabad region indicates that Female Work Participation (FWP) in surrounding villages decreased from 38 percent in 2001 to 23 percent in 2011, with a significant number of women engaged as agricultural labourers (Rajesh & Rajini, 2022). Additionally, studies emphasize the importance of women-centric policies to support working women in managing their personal and professional lives effectively (Sikarwar, Chattopadhyay, Jaiswal, & Rani, 2020). Gender balance analysis in Gujarat reveals unfavourable conditions for females in terms of work opportunities, especially in urban areas like Ahmedabad (Balamurugan & Sreeleka, 2020). It is crucial for organizations in Ahmedabad to prioritize work-life

balance initiatives to ensure the well-being and satisfaction of their female employees, ultimately enhancing productivity and overall quality of life (Mehta, 2015).

Working women in Ahmedabad manage work-life balance by juggling their professional responsibilities with personal commitments, supported by initiatives like work-life benefits and programs (Jalaja, 2020). The changing dynamics of family structures, the rise of dual-career families, and the entry of more women into the workforce have heightened the importance of achieving this balance. Factors such as job satisfaction, working conditions, and support from both family members and employers play crucial roles in how women navigate these demands. Research emphasizes the significance of work-life benefits and programs in facilitating women's attainment of personal and professional goals, ultimately benefiting both the individual and the organization. By addressing issues like health concerns, pregnancy discrimination, and ensuring equal pay, women in Ahmedabad's workforce strive to maintain equilibrium between their work and personal lives, contributing to their overall satisfaction and well-being. The changing dynamics of work and family structures, especially with the rise of dual-career families, have emphasized the importance of achieving a work-life balance (Balamurugan & Sreeleka, 2020). In India, including Ahmedabad, women face challenges such as health issues, pregnancy discrimination, and unequal pay, impacting their work-life balance (Maiya & Bagali, 2014). The entry of more women into the workforce has led to a greater need for balancing work and home responsibilities, with human resource professionals seeking ways to support employees in achieving this equilibrium (Balamurugan & Sreeleka, 2020). Research on public sector banks in India, including Ahmedabad, highlights the significance of work-life balance policies in enhancing women's satisfaction and overall well-being (Yadav & Dabhade, 2013).

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Investigating the key determinants of work-life balance disparity among working women in Ahmedabad.
- 2) To analyse the effects of work life balance on working women of Ahmedabad.
- 3) Examining the correlation between work-life balance practices and well-being among working women in Ahmedabad.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study is descriptive in nature. The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather data from Ahmedabad city's working women.

Primary source of Data – Questionnaire

Secondary Source of Data – Research Papers, Articles, Thesis, Books

The study seeks to examine the impact of the quality of work life on the work-life balance of employed women in Ahmedabad, India. The variables examined in the study include the quality of work life and work life balance. A total of 51 employed women from Ahmedabad were surveyed for the study. Data was collected using a self-designed questionnaire. Pearson's correlation and linear regression were employed to assess the impact of quality of work life (QWL) on work-life balance (WLB).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

1. Normality Test:

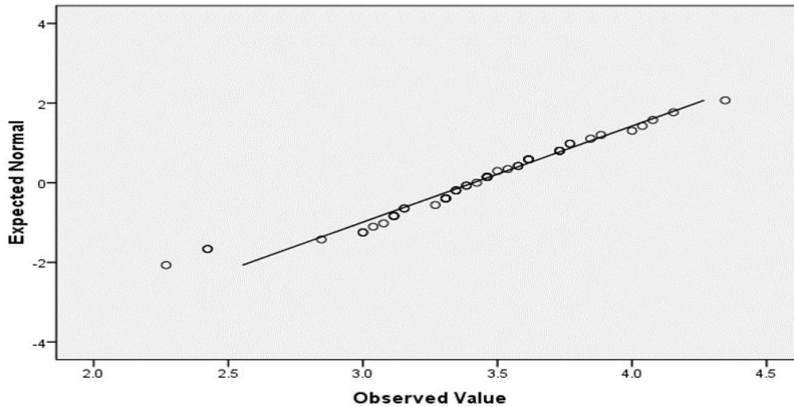
H0 Data is normally distributed. As per Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk test the value is more than 0.5 so null hypothesis is not rejected as well as Q-Q plot also show the normality of data. So, it is interpreted that data is normally distributed.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Happiness index	.108	51	.193	.966	51	.145

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Normal Q-Q Plot of Happiness index



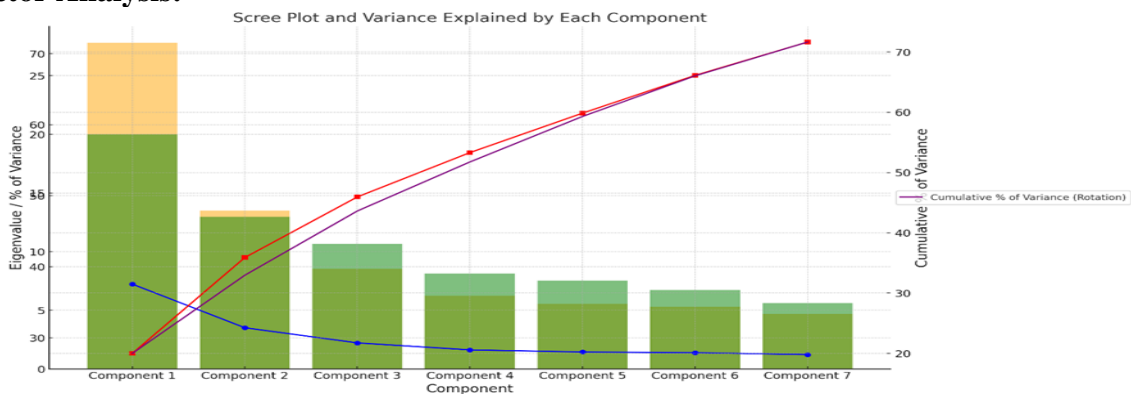
2. Reliability Test:

The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The constructs were determined to have good reliability (>0.70) as measured by Cronbach's Alpha.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.768	.769	26

3. Factor Analysis:



Graph: Scree Plot and Variance Explained

The scree plot visually represents the eigenvalues for each component, showing how much variance each component explains. The bar charts show the percentage of variance explained by each component before and after rotation. The line plots show the cumulative percentage of variance explained.

Blue Line with Circles: Represents the initial eigenvalues for each component.

Orange Bars: Represent the percentage of variance explained by each component before rotation.

Green Bars: Represent the percentage of variance explained by each component after rotation.

Red Squares Line: Represents the cumulative percentage of variance explained before rotation.

Purple Crosses Line: Represents the cumulative percentage of variance explained after rotation.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues (Total)	% of Variance (Initial)	Cumulative % (Initial)	% of Variance (Rotation)	Cumulative % (Rotation)
Component 1: Happiness [My job is most significant factor to my happiness]	7.229	27.804	27.804	20.008	20.008
Component 2: Happiness [My salary is most significant factor to my happiness]	3.51	13.502	41.306	12.966	32.974
Component 3: Happiness [My family is most significant factor to my happiness]	2.219	8.536	49.842	10.659	43.633
Component 4: Work satisfaction [I feel fulfilled by my work(business)]	1.622	6.24	56.082	8.131	51.763
Component 5: Work satisfaction [I enjoy my business]	1.444	5.555	61.637	7.544	59.308
Component 6: Work satisfaction [My work(business) positively contributes to my overall happiness]	1.383	5.318	66.954	6.729	66.037
Component 7: Work environment satisfaction [Co-workers/Team positively contribute to my work environment]	1.222	4.699	71.653	5.616	71.653

The table above summarizes the variance explained by each of the first seven components in the PCA, showing the initial eigenvalues, percentage of variance explained, and cumulative variance explained both before and after rotation.

CONCLUSION:

Finding a healthy balance between work and personal life (work-life balance) has become a top priority for both employers and working women in Ahmedabad. Businesses are creating and implementing various programs to support this goal. However, the responsibility doesn't solely fall on companies. Women themselves need to develop effective strategies to manage the demands of work and family. By working together on these coping mechanisms, employers and employees can address work-life balance challenges and achieve greater well-being. Ultimately, achieving work-life balance benefits everyone. It leads to happier, more satisfied employees, which translates to a more positive and productive work environment. This, in turn, strengthens the organization's competitive edge. Recognizing the importance of work-life balance is a significant shift for businesses in Ahmedabad, and its successful implementation has the potential to unlock the full potential of their female workforce.

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