

Work–Life Balance Of Single Parents Working In Educational Institutions

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Abstract:

It is rightly said that productivity in any organization depends upon the effective utilization of human resources of an organisation. The performance of an employee depends upon several factors including personal factors. It is really difficult to balance work and family life in today's times especially when they are single parents. It is very difficult for single parents to maintain the balance between personal and professional life. The purpose of this study is to find out the challenges faced by single parents working in educational institutions that may affect the productivity at their work place. It is also important to find out the strategies that may help them to achieve work life balance. The target population for this research was the single parents working in educational Institutions including schools of Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, India. Data were taken from primary and secondary sources. This study would help prospective researchers to know various challenges faced by single parents working in educational institutions, likely to affect their productivity. The results of this study may vary from one sector to other sectors like the industrial sector or service sectors. Further research can be done by the researchers in other sectors and they can also find out the solutions to meet the challenges faced by single parents in different regions of the country.

Key Words: Productivity, Single Parents, Work-Life Balance (WLB), Work-Life Conflict (WLC), Work-Life Enrichment (WLE), Work-Life Interface (WLI)

Introduction:

In today's digital society, employees are continuing to face the challenges in their work and family life. The impact of imbalance in any role creates conflict among them regardless of their family status, demographic conditions, marital status, income or socio-economic status. The issue becomes more critical in case of single parents to handle the pressure of job and taking

care of the responsibilities of their children. If it is not dealt carefully, it will create negative outcomes and affect the performance in the organisation as well as affect their family life. There are different perspectives of Work-Life Balance and its interrelated domain like Work-Life Integration, Work-Life Interface, and Work-Life Harmony in the literature which are discussed as follows:

Perspectives of Work-Life Balance, Work-Life Integration, Work-Life Interface, Work-Life Harmony in the Literature

Work-Life Balance (WLB)

Work-life balance is also known as life balance or lifestyle balance and generally understood as sufficient time for work and personal life separately. Work-life balance is crucial issue to every employee of an organisation either private or public organisation. It is equally important at different levels of organisation. (Abioro, Oladejo & Asogbon, 2018). According to Hall & Richter (1988), work-life balance is an important issue which is faced by the workforce. Any imbalance in work and personal life affect the performance negatively. In the long run, the productivity of an employee can be affected if they are unable to maintain the balance between their professional and personal life (Ojo, Salau & Falola 2014). There are many changes including societal changes at local and global level which affect the lifestyle of a person (Haddon, Hede, & Whiteoak, 2009).

There is no difference between work-life balance and work-family balance. Work-life balance is a detailed concept which includes family, friends, neighbor, etc. while the work-family concept focuses only on the family role (Rantanen, Kinnunen, Mauno, & Tillemann, 2010). The concept of work-life balance is an older concept but has equal importance in every era especially in the USA either Agricultural (1800–1850), Industrial (1850–1970), Informational (1970–2000) or Digital era (2000–present), work-life balance conflicts continued till present time. There are various studies which define the work-life balance concept in its own way (Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Poulouse & Sudarsan, 2014). According to Clark (2000: 751) it is related to satisfaction from work and life. There must be minimum conflict related to personal and professional life. It can also be defined as when a person experiences little conflict in professional work and family life. (Frone 2003). While Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003: 513) have their own opinion. According to them, work-life balance is related to an equal level of satisfaction from their work and family responsibilities.

Work-Life Integration:

Ecological Systems Theory and the Boundary Theory is used by Voydan off (2005) to define the relationship between professional work and personal life. According to Ecological System Theory, the development of any human being is affected by its nearby environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). So professional work and personal life of a person is directly affected by its surrounding environment. Work and life both are interrelated to each other. Any positive or negative experiences in life will affect work and vice versa. In work-life balance, people

devote their time home and office separately. They draw boundaries between their professional and personal life. Work-life integration is a synergistic, blended and harmonious approach which considers professional, personal, health, well-being, etc. together. It create more synergies between the different areas of life.

Work-Life Interface:

It is an interchange of work and personal life. There are several factors of life that can intersect with work like family, health, etc. There are many theories that explain the relationship between personal and professional life (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). These theories were summarized by Zedeck and Mosier (1990) into different categories as follows:

- Spillover Theory
- Compensation Theory
- Segmentation-Integration Theory
- Work–Life Conflict Theory
- Work–Life Enrichment Theory

Spillover Theory: It explains the effect of work and life on each other. It may be positive spillover or negative spillover (Sumer & Knight, 2001; Grzywacz, Almeida, & Mcdonald, 2002).

Compensation Theory: It is related to the offset of the dissatisfaction in one role by obtaining positive satisfaction from another role (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000).

Segmentation-Integration Theory: Segmentation is related to clear division of work and family domains separately and it does not mix the role of each other (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). It is easier to understand the role of work and family domains when the boundary is clear. (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). When work and family roles are flexible, integration occurs (Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). In fact, it is really difficult to have complete segmentation or integration between work and family domains (Baltes, Clark, & Chakrabarti, 2009). Segmentation and integration depend upon several factors like personal, micro & macro environment, etc. (Basile, 2014). Organizational factors play a very crucial role in determining the segmentation or integration between work and family domains (Baltes, Clark, & Chakrabarti, 2009). If any organisation is providing flexibility to its employees, it will lead to integration otherwise it will cause segmentation. An organisation can manage it according to the requirements to each employee (Mellner, Aronsson, & Kecklund, 2015).

Work-Life Conflict Theory: According to Desrochers & Sargent (2004) Work and life domains are dependent on each other with certain boundaries. A person has to play more than a role in his/her life either personal or professional one and society expects right behaviour from them in each role (Jang & Zippay, 2011). It is also possible that there may be certain conflicts when these roles may not meet the expectations and it is termed as Work-Life conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Jang & Zippay, 2011).

Work–Life Enrichment Theory: As time passes, experience of a person in a professional role improves the quality of life in a personal role and vice versa, commonly known as Work-life Enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). There may be Work to family enrichment or Family to work enrichment. There may be some dimensions like developmental, efficiency, affective and capital gains to measure work-life enrichment (Carlson et al. 2006).

Work–Life Harmony

Work-Life Harmony is defined as a pleasurable, smooth positioning of personal and professional roles which can be described into a single statement of life (McMillan et al., 2011). Work and life roles are not competing rather complementing each other. It demands understanding and sharing of job and family responsibilities with minimum conflict.

Research Gaps and Objectives:

Because most of the existing studies are related to developed countries, it seems that literature related to the topic and its related aspects in Indian context, especially related to educational institutions of Rohilkhand Region is lacking. Viewing this important yet largely ignored research gap, following research objectives are developed:

To find out the challenges faced by single parents working in educational institutions that may affect the productivity at their work place. It is also important to find out the strategies that may help them.

Research Methodology

The study has research objectives which require the collection of data on a diversity of aspects associated with the work-life balance and interrelated elements. Accordingly, the researcher has obtained the information through primary and secondary data. For this study, the required information is collected through preparing the questionnaire having different open ended and closed ended questions. The target population for this research was the single parents working in educational Institutions including schools of Rohilkhand region of Uttar Pradesh, India. Survey method was used to collect the information for the study from 150 respondents which were chosen through a convenient random sampling method. The researchers faced certain types of problems in obtaining information. Thus some of the desired information could not be obtained. However the researchers did their best to obtain as far as possible accurate information. Only 100 respondents provided the complete information which was used for analysis purposes. Majority of the respondents were between 25 and 45 years of age group, with at least one dependent child. Rest of the questionnaire from 50 respondents were not used as they did not provide all the information either they were not willing to disclose their personal information or they did not fill the questionnaire completely.

Data Analysis & Findings

The received data through questionnaire is analyzed and interpreted with appropriate methods. Following tables provided the insights about the findings of the study. Table 1 provides socio-demographic information about the respondents.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Sample (100)

Male		35%
Female		65%
Mean Age		35
Educational Level	Graduate	12%
	Postgraduate	81%
	Doctorate	7%
Marital status (Divorcee/Widow/ Widower)		100%
Parental Status (Have children either son or daughter)		100%
Occupation (Service)		100%
Work Activities	Intellectual & Physical	100%
Working Hours	Full Time	90%
	Part Time	10%

Table 2 depicts the monthly earnings of the respondents.

Table 2 : Monthly Earnings

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 15,000	14	14	14	14.0
	15,000-25,000	66	66	66	80.0
	25,000- 50,000	17	17	17	97.0
	More than 50,000	3	3	3	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

In an attempt to know the other sources of income of the respondents, Table 3 depicts the responses received from them.

Table 3 : Other source of Earnings

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	No alternate source	19	19.0	19.0	19.0
	Pension	23	23.0	23.0	42.0
	Agriculture	21	21.0	21.0	63.0
	Support of Family	23	23.0	23.0	86.0
	Rent	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 represents the accommodation status available to the respondents.

Table 4 : Accommodation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rent	23	23.0	23.0	23.0
	Own Property	46	46.0	46.0	69.0
	Dependence on relatives and others	19	19.0	19.0	88.0
	Accommodation given by employer	12	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Respondents were also asked about their working experience to get the greater insights about the readiness to face the challenges and maintain the work-life balance. It is shown in the below table 5.

Table 5 : Working experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NO	21	21.0	21.0	21.0
	1-3 years	28	28.0	28.0	49.0
	3-5 years	29	29.0	29.0	78.0
	5-10 years	16	16.0	16.0	94.0
	10 years	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 represents the working hours of the respondents. Maximum respondents work around six to eight hours in their organizations. Few respondents also reported about overtime due to the excessive work pressure.

Table 6 : Job Hours

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Up to 4 hours	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	4-6 hours	33	33.0	33.0	93.0
	6-8 hours	57	57.0	57.0	60.0
	More than 8 hours	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 depicts the working geography of the respondents.

Table 8 : Working Geography

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rural	67	67.0	67.0	67.0
	Urban	33	33.0	33.0	100
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

It is also observed in the study that single parents who lost their life partner due to death or whatever may be a reason, felt depression, isolation, and loneliness. Respondents felt aggression, anxiety and irritation in case of separation from their partner. Financial issues, emotional issues, and concern for their future are mentioned by almost every respondent. Further, they also observed frequent mood swings, short temperedness, change in their behaviour and lifestyle, lack of concentration in their work, lack of interest in social gathering, functions and parties. Few female respondents reported that single parenting is most difficult for them as they did not work earlier and were not prepared to handle the dual responsibilities. Other respondents have the opinion to become independent and ready to face the challenges of their life. They are also trying to cope with the situation with a positive attitude. Some common challenges felt by the respondents are given below:

- To come out with the loss of life partner in case of death or divorce and manage with this situation which may take month to years even whole life
- Mentally preparedness for doing the job and become independent person to take care of their children by their own
- Adjusting themselves for unforeseen circumstances and new roles & responsibilities at work and life
- Handling societal pressure and rebuild self-confidence
- Make the balance between job and family
- Additional responsibilities of work and family both
- Keep physically, mentally and emotionally fit at home and workplace
- Meet out the financial needs
- Feeling loneliness and boredom
- Excessive work pressure
- Concern about the financial condition
- Worry about the education, career and future of their children and self
- Concern about their dependence on their parents, brother or sister or relatives
- Difficulty in preparing themselves mentally for marriage again
- Tedious and exhausting work-life
- Ceaseless feeling of guilt in case of giving weightage to other role
- Pressure to become multi task person
- Difficult to find time for their own life or no time for themselves

- Unwanted proposals/ illicit approaches from co-workers, society, etc.
- Difficulty in getting trustworthy babysitters for their children and childcare support
- To overcome from anxiety and depression
- Difficulty in taking leaves for the children for their day to day work or school work like parent meeting, annual fest, result declaration timing, or health check when they are sick, etc.
- Less interested in attending parties, functions or to be a part of social gatherings
- Difficult to ensure that their children do not feel isolated when they are out of home due to work
- Complete the task of their children or assisting them in their routine work like school activities, project works or any other specially when single parent are getting tired
- Physical presence in case of their children need them
- Control the behaviour of their children when they are out of home
- Difficult to maintain discipline of the children, behavioral issue
- Lack of time to spend with their children
- Difficulty in building new relationship and gain trust
- Helping the children to cope the present situation
- Change of marital status and sexual problems
- Economic, Social, Emotional, Psychological, Sleep, Health, Behavioral, Relationship problems
- Societal Stigmas and living arrangements
- Legal issues, court cases, courtroom handling, court proceedings negotiating custody of their children, Child-rearing issues, etc.
- Issues in Co-parenting especially in case of divorce
- Pressure to improve their image at home and workplace

Strategies to Achieve Work Life Balance for Single Parents

- Prepare themselves to face the challenges with courage and confidence
- Avoid negative persons around you and talk to positive minded persons
- Adopt positive attitude and don't concern much about what others are thinking or talking about you and your family status
- Explore the opportunity to find time for themselves and do the work which they like to do the most.
- Take the help from counsellor, doctor, family, relatives and true friends without hesitation
- Set new priorities of life and don't try to become perfect
- Don't take much tension, try new activities like sports, yoga, music, etc.
- Accept the things as they are as soon as possible
- Regular checkup of own health and children
- Take the advantages of digital world to connect with children and family member when at work place
- Learn new skills to complete the task at workplace and home

- Don't forget to ask from employer to get relaxation in working hours or other facilities like transportation, flexible working schedule, etc. if organisation is having certain policies for single parents
- Take help from financial consultant, senior family members for future financial planning
- Find out the time to take part in social activities, family functions
- Spend some time with nature
- Set priorities for work, change your nature of postponing today's work for tomorrow if any
- Report the progress of daily work to your reporting officer and write down the pending work in your diary and complete it as soon as possible to avoid unnecessary tension of forgetting the work
- Admit the mistake if any at work place but don't have the guilt for the same for ever
- Try to complete the work of office in office only, don't bring office to your home on daily basis, similarly there is no need to bring home at workplace
- Don't be the part of gossip at workplace every time
- Avoid unnecessary use of mobile, social sites at work place
- Be ready to take new challenges at workplace, no need to say "No to every work given to you", similarly you can also say politely "No" in case of having excessive work but don't give false excuses
- Be punctual and disciplined
- No need to become perfect in every task
- Spend as much as time with children and family members
- Try to do dinner all together with your family
- Change your daily habits, try to sleep on time, similarly wake up early in the morning
- Don't skip your breakfast, change your food habits too
- Plan and schedule of your work in advance
- Delegate the responsibilities
- Try to take the help from experts in case of stress, anxiety, loneliness
- Be extrovert rather introvert, talk with family and friends, discuss your problems with them, might be they do not have the solutions of your problems but it will reduce your stress

Conclusion & Future Work of Scope

It is said that every parent loves their son or daughter and wants the best for them, but why families become separated and their children and family members suffer, is a matter of serious concern. Parenting is tough but single parenting is truly a tough task. It is a juggling act of blending personal and professional life together for single parents as they face several challenges. The intensity of a challenge varies from person to person and one environment to another either in combination or even alone. Whatever may be the situation or organisation, the truth is that single parenting is full of challenges. Single parents require firm determination, courage and strength to face all these challenges at work or personal level.

This study would help prospective researchers to know various challenges faced by single parents working in educational institutions, likely to affect their productivity. The results of this study may vary from one sector to other sectors like the industrial sector or service sectors. Further research can be done by the researchers in other sectors and they can also find out the solutions to meet the challenges faced by single parents in different regions of the country.

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