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A Study on Work Life Balance and Occupational Engagement among Women Entrepreneurs in Coimbatore City

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Abstract

Occupational Engagement is the individuals engagement in work, play or activities of daily living that are part of individuals' socio-cultural context and that are desired and necessary to individual's well-being. It helps in maintaining the identity of an individual and gives a sense of usefulness to persons. Engaged employees tend to have a better work life balance compared to others, since their engagement in their job helps them devise innovative measures in managing their work and family. Work-Life Balance is the capability to schedule the hours of professional and personal life so as to lead a healthy and peaceful life. It emphasizes the values, attitudes and beliefs concerning their age to work in organizing and balancing their work and personal life. Work life balance is the concept that has been predominantly discussed among women. When a woman achieves a successful work-life balance, she has job satisfaction and becomes highly committed and productive and succeeds in her career, it will show they are more engaged in their occupation. This study investigates the influence of Work life balance on Occupational Engagement among women entrepreneurs. Results reveal that women employees are having the tendency to balance both their work and family life has a high level of engagement in their occupation.

Keywords: work life, occupational engagement, women entrepreneurs

1. Introduction

Engagement in occupation is defined as the activities that are correlated to one's life roles and plays a major role in the maintenance of health and wellbeing. If the individuals are engaged with their occupation the individual believes that he or she can successfully complete tasks necessary to make career decisions. Motivation to complete tasks has also been suggested as important when looking at the relationship between occupation and life satisfaction. The issue of work-life balance has developed out of demographic and social changes that have resulted in a more diverse and diminishing workforce and different family and work models. Supportive work-life balance is seen as a way of attracting and retaining the labour force needed to support economic well-being. Work life balance is a concept that been researched quite a lot and needs further investigation especially among women and more specifically among women entrepreneurs, since they have multiple roles to play which are equally demanding. Women who are likely to strike a balance between work and life are likely to be more engaged in their occupation. This paper presents the results of the study undertaken to investigate the influence of Work life Balance on Occupational Engagement among women entrepreneurs in Coimbatore city.

Literature Review

This section presents the reviews related to Occupational Engagement and Work life Balance. Reviews relating to Occupational Engagement are presented below.

Nilson *et al.*, (2007) ^[1] study evaluates the relationship between Occupational Engagement and life satisfaction among the north Sweden citizens who are above 85 years. The study accomplishes that depression is the main cause for both lower life satisfaction and lower Occupational Engagement. The study also discusses that motivation and performance is important in their occupation. The study concludes that the type of occupation is associated with life satisfaction. The study gives a clear understanding that the types of occupation will connect with their life performance of daily tasks for each and every individual.

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Law (2002) ^[2] explores about the daily task performance and its importance for individuals in the organization. Occupation is important and it is to improve both the life satisfaction and health. Each individual have unique performance in their daily life task. The study concludes that the life satisfaction and Occupational Engagement will be based on types of task performance of an individual.

Lennartsson & Silverstien *et al.*, (2001) ^[3] in their study states that motivation plays an important role to perform tasks and it provides the relationship between Occupational Engagement and life satisfaction. The life satisfaction of the older adults is based on the task performance within the family and social areas.

Gabriel and Bowling (2004) ^[4] in their study found that there is a least association between life satisfaction and task performance. The study shows that the life satisfaction is more correlated with the leisure task performance. The higher the task performance, higher will be the satisfaction among the individuals in their organization.

Watters *et al.*, (2012) ^[5] explores the Occupational Engagement among the Ikebana practitioners. The study shows about the subjective experiences of occupation and characteristics like personal meaning and engagement. Occupational engagement helps Ikebana practitioners to improve their well being in their occupation. The study also shows about the ongoing engagement in their occupations, and the support they receive, the high involvement and satisfaction in their occupation. This study concludes that engaging in occupations is a means to promote well-being within a broader population of adults. Social connections and encouragement from others are strongly endorsed by participants as promoting ongoing engagement in Ikebana. Individuals are motivated to continue engagement as a means to maintain positive feelings.

Ohman and Nygard (2005) ^[6] conduct a study among Alzheimer's disease individuals regarding their everyday life and provided them with an opportunity to be in a coherent context. The occupations also allowed them to experience and communicate autonomy and certain characteristics of their identity and provided them with a private sphere. The study reveals that there is a double edged environmental key to occupation. By identifying and supporting everyday occupations with personal meaning and value, therapists and caregivers may contribute to the well-being of individuals with Alzheimer's disease living in their own homes. The study concludes that choosing occupations with the motive of maintaining one's abilities can be understood to demonstrate an awareness of the consequences of the disease. Further the study concludes that possible understanding of the motives and meanings that everyday occupations have, could make a contribution in developing supportive interventions for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and for the people caring for them.

Lexell *et al.*, (2011) ^[7] study focuses on the people with Multiple Sclerosis and the constant struggle they have to maintain engagement in occupations, which, to a large extent, is influenced by societal regulations and other people's attitudes. Persons with Multiple Sclerosis experience a change in their sense of self and in their identity, owing to their decreasing engagement in occupations and the struggle they undertake to maintain their engagement. They experience their adaptation of engagement in occupations as an ongoing, non-linear process, involving both themselves and their family, and they consider who

would benefit the most, before they choose their adaptation of engagement in occupations. The authors states that all areas of occupations can be affected and hence the need to be addressed is within occupational therapy and rehabilitation. Clients' own experiences needs to be elucidated in order to facilitate the reconstruction of self, identity and support the process of adaptation of occupations. The study shows that employees with engagement in occupation will adopt work life balance; also supporting work life balance is seen as way of attracting and retaining the labour force needed to support economic well-being. There will be greater problems with performance in occupations compared to the problems encountered in healthy people of a similar age. In addition, problems in the performance of occupations cannot be explained by age, disease severity, or living arrangements, alone. The study concludes that the persons with Multiple Sclerosis can perceive problems related to all areas of occupations, and at different hierarchical levels. They can be dissatisfied with performance in occupations, especially related to self-care and household occupations and observational assessments confirm that performance in these occupations is impacted on.

Rettew (2011) ^[8] explores about Occupational Engagement, as a component of the trilateral model for adaptive career decision, since it is an important construct for the modern world of work where job change is the norm and career paths are nonlinear. The study shows the importance to develop and evaluate cost-effective career development interventions that reflect modern career development theory and the current economic climate. Occupational Engagement consists of behaviors that inform decision makers about themselves and or the world of work. Within occupational engagement, the concern is for adaptive career decision. By having many different experiences, people create more relationships and have more knowledge to draw from in order to optimize their experience of life.

Study by Smythe (2012) ^[9] focuses on the recovery from mental illness and has been described as a process of healing physically and emotionally and of adjusting one's attitudes, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, roles, and goals in life. Research findings suggest that it is the interactions of everyday life, rather than particular interventions in mental health settings that are the primary medium through which recovery occurs. The notion of occupational engagement refers to the subjective state of being involved or occupied in everyday activity, and occupational therapists have an interest in understanding the nature, intensity, and meaning of people's engagement. The descriptions of everyday and full engagement in this study provide insights into both average and desirable modes of occupational engagement and build on other research that emphasizes the importance of routine engagement in recovery. The everyday world also holds possibilities in which one's unique way of being can be discovered and maintained in states of full engagement. The study concludes by indicating the dynamics of different states of Occupational Engagement and suggests that all modes of doing are potentially meaningful in relation to the recovery process. It is also essential that occupational therapists strive to understand the experience and meaning of people's engagement and support recovery by opening up the interplay of the person and his or her world in different modes of Occupational Engagement.

Ogunduyile (2008) ^[10] explores about the role of women in rural communities of South-Western Nigeria in

entrepreneurial engagement through craft practice. The women of rural communities in Southwestern Nigeria as a factor in the remilitarization of traditional crafts through occupational engagement in craft practice. Craft practice has been a potent economic weapon in the rural areas of Nigeria; it is the next Occupational Engagement for the rural people after farming, whereas the urban dwellers are engaged in white collar jobs, merchandising, unskilled labor in factories and contemporary vocations. Each major town in Nigeria has its peculiarity when it comes to occupational distribution of the dwellers.

It could be summarized from the reviews that occupational engagement helps in making a person better engaged in their job and enhances their performance.

Reviews relating to Work Life Balance are presented below

Cieri *et al.*, (2002) ^[11] in their study state that Work Life Balance is very important for each and every person. The authors' states that organization need to motivate and provide awareness and make themselves attractive for their employees to enhance employee's performance. The study is conducted among the Australian organizations from 1997 to 2000. The study shows that there are challenges for implementation and management of Work Life Balance strategies. The study concludes that the employees need more insight about Work life Balance strategies. The attitude of management needs to change and must develop innovative Work Life Balance strategies to increase the morale of employees, employee satisfaction, commitment and reduction of stress level thus improving the employees' ability, attitudes towards the organization.

Clark (2005) ^[12] concludes in his study that Work Life Balance helps in maintaining healthy relationships between employer and employee, maintaining the employee health, improving the productivity, and organizations productivity and performance. The study further reveals that employees' satisfaction in their work gives the energy to them and it comes from achievement in their work.

Mehtha (2012) ^[13] explores about the work life balance among women and state that their participation is increased and are having many responsibilities and are also expected to undertake the unpaid caring work in the organization. 8% of the female respondents said that their life is heavily weighted toward work and 4% of the female employees said that their life is balanced. The work life balance helps to reduce the health problems and increase the well being among individual and families. The study concludes that organizations should introduce work life balance policies and women employees shall follow the practices to manage their profession and their personal life.

Connick (2014) ^[14] proposes that the study about satisfaction will differ from employee to employee. The author discusses about the factors that contribute to employee achieving the managerial standards, the factors that motivate them, factors that enhance their commitment, and time spent at work and employee evaluations. The study is conducted among the hotel employees. The study shows that better work life balance among employee leads to higher level of job performance and higher level of job satisfaction and lower level of intention to leave. The study also shows that there is a poor work and home life balance among the hotel employees. The study concludes that the employees in the hotel will have to improve and maintain work and home life

balance and also to encourage the employees who are highly engaged while at work, since they are more likely to become loyal valued employees and create a better working environment. The study also shows that employees seek to increase their personal time and wellness. The employee who achieves good Work Life Balance will be more satisfied employee and it will lead to improvement productive at work.

Lakshmi and Gopinath (2013) ^[15] states that the Work Life Balance among women employee is not about balancing both work and personal there is also scheduling their hours for professional and personal life. The study shows that when women achieve the Work Life Balance, their job satisfaction and also the productivity increases. The study also shows about the specific counseling given to all women employees to manage both their Work and life. The authors say about poor Work Life Balance among women employees leads to poor performance at their work place. The study concludes that more than 30% of women staff needs to have the instruction, guidance and support to manage their work life balance and to improve the performance of these staff members.

Ahmad (2013) ^[16] investigates about the influence of implementing Work Life Balance Practice on employee quality of life through the findings conducted in other research studies in Malaysia. It offers a model depicting the importance of putting the Work Life Balance practices as one of the organizational policy as it helps to promise return on investment in the long term and contribute to the social well being as a whole. Quality of life is best defined as multidimensional categorized by five dimensions: physical wellbeing, material wellbeing, social wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, and development and activity. The study shows that workplace and private life impact positively on Work Life Balance satisfaction except for flexible work arrangements and informal or paid household help, suggesting that both instrumental and emotional support are needed for higher Work Life Balance satisfaction.

Branch *et al.*, (2003) ^[17] conducts a study to investigate how people manage the multiple demands of paid work, home and personal life, and the consequences of failure to achieve 'balance' between these domains may have on the health of individuals. Results reveal that imbalance was worsened by gender norms and expectations women have the major responsibility for caring and domestic work and hence represented that this dominant responsibility as a burden, while women who were able to make a balance between work and life were able to control and hence has satisfaction. Respondent who were not able to strike balance expressed health issues and the study found association between work life imbalance and poor health.

Williams (2008) ^[18] proposes that the Work Life Balance is a self-defined, self-determined state reached by a person's ability to effectively manage multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and in the community. It supports physical, emotional and family health and does so without grief, stress or negative impact. Individuals with high levels of life stress had significantly lower odds of being satisfied with their work-life balance or being able to achieve role balance. The study shows about the Work Life Balance and role overload are measures of well-being. They were also significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with their Work Life Balance than regular day workers. They were also more likely to suffer from role overload. For women, family type was a

significant factor in both satisfaction with Work Life Balance and avoidance of role overload.

Gregory and Milner (2009) [19] states that the traditional employment has broadened to include men as well as women’s negotiation of the demands of paid employment and personal and domestic life. The study shows that holistic approach is more likely to mobilize workplace support and effect wider organizational change than policies aimed solely at women or those with childcare responsibilities. Employees’ work–life balance priorities are considered to fall within three general categories: working time arrangements (total working hours and flexibility); and, for those with parenting or other care responsibilities, parental leave entitlements (maternity, paternity, parental and careers) and childcare (subsidies or direct provision). The study that Work Life Balance is felt to be a matter of individual organization and boundless work is seen as a problem that individuals must resolve. They work part-time and experience satisfactory work life balance by spending more time with their family, but at the cost of lower wages, poor career opportunities and reduced job security.

Reviews indicate that few women need counseling and support to strike a balance work and life and few are able to manage based on their experiences. The everyday experience that they gain in their lives helps them balance better their work and life.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the level of Work Life Balance on Occupational Engagement among women entrepreneurs
- To find the association between Work Life Balance and Occupational Engagement among women entrepreneurs
- To find the influence of Work Life Balance on Occupational Engagement among women entrepreneurs

Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and adopted survey strategy. Data was collected from women entrepreneurs. The study adopted convenience sampling in selection of respondents. Data was collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained details pertaining to the demographic profile of the respondents and questions related to Work life Balance and Occupational Engagement which were measured on a 5 point Likert Scale ranging from 1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree. The questionnaires were distributed and collected from 300 women entrepreneurs of which 281 were complete (response rate 93.67%). Therefore the sample size for the study is 281 respondents. The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire and secondary data from Journals, books and websites. The collected data was analyzed using Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis and Regression Analysis.

Table 3: Regression Analysis - Model Summary and ANOVA

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.544 ^a	.296	.293	.17372	117.216	.000 ^a
2	.774 ^b	.600	.597	.13124	208.106	.000 ^b
3	.813 ^c	.662	.658	.12088	180.445	.000 ^c
4	.863 ^d	.744	.739	.10552	159.778	.000 ^d
5	.891 ^e	.793	.789	.09499	175.203	.000 ^e
6	.910 ^f	.828	.823	.08687	187.326	.000 ^f
7	.942 ^g	.887	.884	.07038	267.723	.000 ^g
8	.949 ^h	.900	.897	.06628	272.298	.000 ^h
9	.954 ⁱ	.910	.907	.06312	248.376	.000 ⁱ

Source: Primary Data Dependent Variable: Occupational Engagement

Analysis and Discussion

Analysis is presented in three parts. The first part presents the descriptive statistics, second part that of correlation and the third part that of regression analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is carried out for the variables Occupational Engagement and Work Life Balance by calculating their average values. Table 1 gives the descriptive scores.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Dimensions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Occupational Engagement	281	4.3937	.20664
Work Life Balance	281	4.4352	.19421

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from the above table 1, the mean value for Work Life Balance is 4.4352. The women entrepreneurs are having the tendency to balance their family role and life role. The mean value of Occupational Engagement is 4.3937 which indicate that the women entrepreneurs have high level of engagement in their occupation. Since they would have chosen a profession of their choice, which lays foundation on their capabilities and skills their engagement levels are high.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is the method used to estimate the association between the variables. Correlation analysis is carried out between the variables Work Life Balance and Occupational Engagement.

Table 2: Correlation analysis for Work Life Balance and Occupational Engagement

Construct	Work Life Balance	Occupational Engagement
Work Life Balance	1	
Occupational Engagement	.889**	1

From table 2 it is inferred that there exists high correlation($r=0.889$; $p<0.000$) between Work Life Balance and Occupational Engagement. This indicates that Women entrepreneurs who have tendency to balance both their work life and family life will be engaged more in their occupation since majority of them would have opted for ventures in their area of passion. The correlation is significant at 5%.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is carried out by taking the average of Occupational Engagement as the dependent variable, and the individual items of Work Life Balance as the independent variables. Stepwise regression is carried out.

Table 4: Regression Analysis Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.422	.108		3.892	.000
W8- Personal demands takes away my work time	.149	.009	.390	17.495	.000
W5- Job interferes with my responsibilities	.168	.008	.481	21.381	.000
W1- Likes to do work at home	.074	.007	.245	10.851	.000
W9- Personal life takes uptime	.095	.006	.345	16.504	.000
W6- Like to spend with my family	.097	.009	.236	11.244	.000
W7- Too tired at work	.187	.012	.489	16.081	.000
W4- My work takes uptime	.080	.007	.248	11.912	.000
W3- Preoccupied with my work	.052	.009	.144	6.054	.000
W10- Like to spend on job related activities	.062	.017	.194	3.710	.000

Dependent Variable: Occupational Engagement

The P value is less than 5% ($F= 248.376$ & $p<0.000$), which indicates that the model is statistically significant. The adjusted R square value for model 9 is 0.907, which indicates that 90.7% variability in the dependent variable is predicted by the independent variables- Personal demands takes away my work time, Job interferes with my responsibilities, Like to do work at home, Personal life takes uptime, Like to spend with my family, Too tired at work, My work takes uptime, Preoccupied with my work, Like to spend on job related activities

From table 4 it is inferred that W8 has an influence of 39% ($\beta= 39\%$ positive, $t= 17.495$ positive, $p<0.00$), W5 has an influence of 48.1% ($\beta= 48.1\%$ positive, $t= 21.381$ positive, $p<0.00$), W1 has an influence of 24.5 % ($\beta=24.5$ % positive, $t= 10.851$ positive, $p<0.00$), W9 has an influence of 34.5 % ($\beta=34.5$ % positive, $t= 16.504$ positive, $p<0.00$), W6 has an influence of 23.6% ($\beta= 23.6\%$ positive, $t= 11.244$ positive, $p<0.00$), W7 has an influence of 48.9% ($\beta= 48.9\%$ positive, $t= 16.081$ positive, $p<0.00$), W4 has an influence of 24.8% ($\beta= 24.8\%$ positive, $t= 11.912$ positive, $p<0.00$), W3 has an influence of 14.4% ($\beta= 14.4\%$ positive, $t=6.054$ positive, $p<0.00$), W10 has an influence of 19.4% ($\beta= 19.4\%$ positive, $t=3.710$ positive, $p<0.00$) on Occupational Engagement.

Conclusion

Women comprise an important section of the workforce. However, the present conditions of a Large number of well-qualified women who due to different circumstances have been left out of their jobs needs to be addressed. The problems faced are numerous, most often the break in their profession arises out of motherhood and family errands. Achieving a good balance between work and family commitments is a growing concern for modern employees and organizations. Results reveal that occupational engagement among women entrepreneurs is high and are balancing with their profession and family life.

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