Work-Life Balance In The Covid Erathe Challenges And Adaptations For Female Employees

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Abstract
The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented changes in lifestyles and professional activities, significantly affecting the work-life balance of female employees. This study explores these changes, the strategies employed by female employees to adapt and the crucial role of employers in facilitating work-life balance. The shift to remote work has blurred the lines between professional and personal life, introducing new challenges and stressors, particularly for women who juggle multiple roles. Despite these obstacles, many female employees have demonstrated resilience and adaptability through various strategies such as organized routines, leveraging technology and seeking social support. Employers play a pivotal role by implementing flexible work arrangements, providing mental health resources and fostering a supportive organizational culture. This study, based on a survey of 500 female employees in Hissar, Haryana, reveals significant work-life balance issues during the COVID-19 era and underscores the importance of supportive measures by employers in enhancing employee well- being and productivity.

Keywords: COVID-19, female employees, remote work, employer support, mental health, flexible work arrangements, organizational culture, resilience, adaptability

1 Introduction

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unparalleled transformations in our lifestyle and professional activities. These changes have had significant repercussions for the work-life balance of female employees. This section explores the changes in work-life balance that have occurred throughout the COVID-19 era, the tactics used by female employees to adapt and the important role that employers play in facilitating work-life balance. The COVID-19 epidemic has radically transformed the work environment, resulting in a substantial transition towards remote work. This transformation has eroded the boundaries between work and personal life, giving rise to fresh difficulties and sources of stress for employees, particularly women.

Although remote work offers flexibility, it has also resulted in extended working hours and heightened expectations of constant availability. This occurrence, commonly known as "work creep," has posed challenges for numerous individuals in terms of disengaging from work. Female employees, who frequently manage numerous roles, have had to maintain a delicate equilibrium between their professional obligations and domestic tasks, childcare and caring for elderly family members. The absence of a distinct demarcation between work and family life has led to increased levels of stress and burnout. Notwithstanding these obstacles, numerous female employees have exhibited exceptional fortitude and flexibility. They have implemented diverse techniques to effectively maintain their work-life equilibrium amidst the pandemic. An established method frequently used is the implementation of organised procedures. Women have managed to establish a distinct boundary between their job and personal life by developing a well-defined schedule that outlines their working hours and personal time.

Another approach that has been employed is the utilisation of technology to maintain communication with colleagues and support networks. Virtual meetings, instant messaging and collaborative platforms have facilitated women's ability to sustain communication and engagement with their teams, even when working remotely. In addition, numerous individuals have made use of internet tools to enhance their time management and productivity, enabling them to maintain a high level of organisation and efficiency. In addition, women have actively sought social support from their family, friends and colleagues. Collaborating with partners and enlisting assistance from extended family members have played a vital role in effectively handling the augmented domestic strain. Peer support groups and professional networks have served as a medium for exchanging experiences, guidance and emotional assistance. These interpersonal relationships have been crucial in reducing the feelings of isolation and pressure that come with working remotely.

Review of litreture
Owusu (2024), conducted a bibliometric analysis to explore the relationship between gender equality and work-life balance in the digital era. The study highlights the impact of digitalisation on work-life balance, particularly through flexible working arrangements that blur the boundaries between professional and personal life. Owusu explains that

women are more disadvantaged than men regarding gender norms and institutional policies, as most existing policies favor men over women.

Sreya et al. (2023), explained that the issue of work-life balance directly impacts the performance of an organization and its employees. Work-life balance involves managing when and how individuals perceive it. Employees maintain a balance between vision and character by utilizing various support variables.

Haider et al. (2018), examined the moderated mediation model between work-life balance and job performance, focusing on psychological well-being and coworker satisfaction. Their study highlights the growing health and productivity difficulties caused by poor work-life balance, a concern that many organisations are taking seriously (Fapohunda, 2014; Working Families, 2017).

Lakshmi and Prasanth (2018), examined how married working women must balance work and life. Their study of 180 married working women in Visakhapatnam, India, examined work-life balance issues. Increased economic and social pressures have forced working women to build strong jobs like males while keeping active personal lives. Dual responsibilities can cause stress and strain, impacting physical, emotional, and societal well-being.

Agha et al. (2017), examined work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction in Oman's higher education professors. Given the rising stress, competitiveness, and insecurities in professional and personal life, the study emphasises the importance of balancing work and personal duties for organisational success. Work-life balance improves job satisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover, according to the studies. The study by Agha et al. (2017) is set in Oman, where human resources are increasingly valued in achieving the national economic growth objective.

2 Research Methodology
2.1 Sample size
This study utilized a sample size of 500 respondents to ensure a comprehensive and representative analysis of the work-life balance issues faced by female employees during the COVID-19 era. The survey was conducted in Hissar, a city in the state of Haryana, India. Hissar was chosen for its diverse population and significant presence of working women across various sectors. The sample size of 500 was deemed sufficient to provide statistically significant insights and allow for the generalization of findings to a broader population. By focusing on this specific area, the study aims to capture the unique socio-economic and cultural factors that influence work-life balance among female employees in Hissar, Haryana.

2.2 Objective of Study
The main objective of the present study is to evaluate the impact of of this study are as follows

1. To study the prevalence of work-life balance problem among the working women in Covid Era.
2. To study the extent to which various factors like hours worked, work involvement and family responsibilities, affect married working women's work-life balance and work from home life.

2.3 Hypotheses
Hypotheses are testable statements predicting the relationship between two variables. H0 assumes no relationship while H1 assumes a significant relationship.

The following hypotheses were framed from the objectives of the study.

● H1- There is a significant prevalence of work-life balance problems among working women during the COVID-19 era.

● H2- Factors significantly affect the work-life balance and work-from-home life of married working women during the COVID-19 era.

3 Finding and Analysis
The distribution reflects a trend where most respondents have basic to intermediate educational qualifications, with fewer advancing to higher education.

Table 1: What is your level of education?

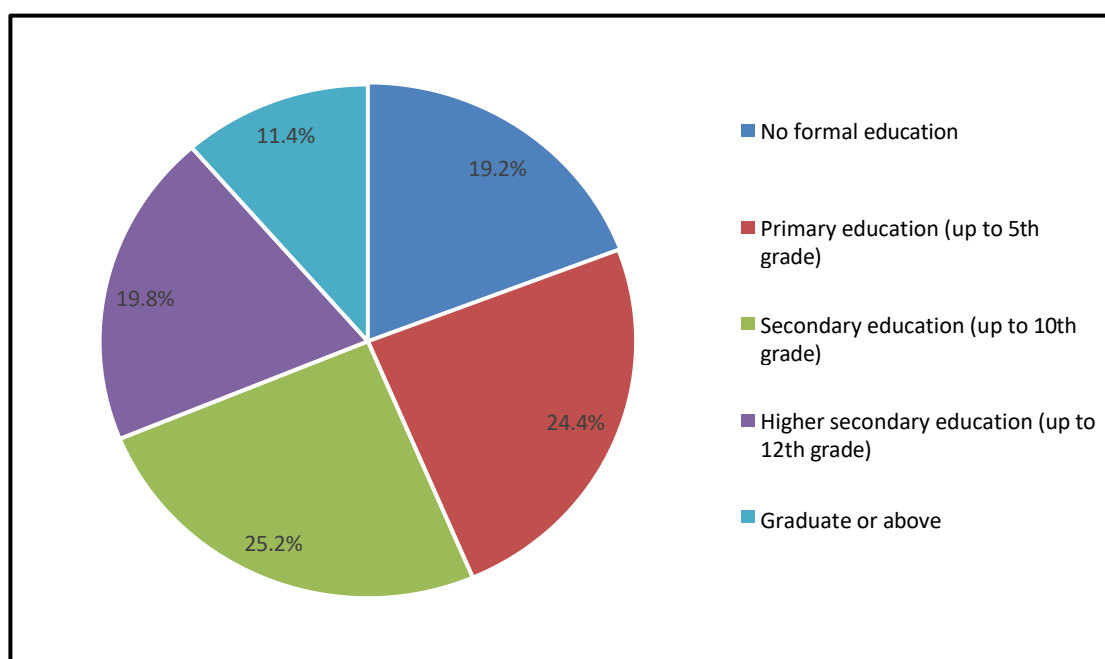| S.No.	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1.	No formal education	96	19.2%
2.	Primary education (up to 5th grade)	122	24.4%
3.	Secondary education (up to 10th grade)	126	25.2%
4.	Higher secondary education (up to 12th grade)	99	19.8%
5.	Graduate or above	57	11.4%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 1: What is your level of education?

Source: Table 1
Based on the data provided, it appears that the majority of respondents have attained secondary education, with 25.2% of them reaching up to the 10th grade. This is followed closely by those with primary education, constituting 24.4% of the total responses. A significant portion of the respondents, 19.8%, have completed higher secondary education, indicating that almost half of the respondents (45%) have education levels up to 12th grade. Meanwhile, 19.2% of the respondents have no formal education, highlighting a notable segment of the population with minimal educational attainment. Finally, a smaller percentage, 11.4%, have achieved a graduate level of education or higher, suggesting that higher education levels are less prevalent among the surveyed group.

1 Hypotheses Testing
Hypotheses are testable statements predicting the relationship between two variables.

H0 assumes no relationship while (Null Hypothesis (H0))

H1 assumes a significant relationship. (Alternative Hypothesis (H1))
Researchers design experiments and statistical tests to gather evidence to either support or reject the null hypothesis. If the data provides enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis, it implies that the alternative hypothesis (H1) is more likely to be true. If the evidence is not strong enough, the null hypothesis remains plausible. This process helps researchers draw conclusions and make informed decisions based on empirical evidence.

Hypothesis1: There is a significant prevalence of work-life balance problems among working women during the COVID-19 era.
H0: There is no significant prevalence of work-life balance problems among working women during the COVID-19 era.
H1: There is a significant prevalence of work-life balance problems among working women during the COVID-19 era.

Table 2: One-Sample Statistics

N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
500	4.07099	.549298	.0245653

The data presented in Table 2 supports this hypothesis through the one-sample statistics analysis of a survey involving 500 working women. The mean value of 4.07099 on a relevant scale
indicates a high level of work-life balance problems, with a standard deviation of 0.549298, suggesting some variability in the responses but still demonstrating a consistent trend. The standard error mean of 0.0245653 further reinforces the

reliability of the mean score, showing that the sample mean is a precise estimate of the population mean. These statistical results underscore the significant prevalence of work-life balance issues faced by working women during the pandemic, aligning with the hypothesis.

Table 3: One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0					
t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
165.721	499	.000	4.07099	4.02273	4.1192

Table 3 presents the results of a one-sample t-test, further substantiating this hypothesis. The test value is set at 0 and the resulting t-statistic is 165.721 with 499 degrees of freedom. The significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) is .000, indicating that the results are statistically significant and that the mean difference of 4.07099 is highly unlikely to be due to chance. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranges from 4.02273 to 4.1192, which does not include 0, confirming that the true mean difference is indeed positive and significant. These findings conclusively demonstrate a significant prevalence of work-life balance problems among working women during the COVID-19 era, as indicated by the substantial t-value and the very low p- value. Based on the data presented, the mean score of 4.07099 and the statistically significant t- test (t = 165.721, p = .000) indicate a high prevalence of work-life balance problems. Therefore, **H1 is accepted** and **H0 is rejected**.

1.1 Hypothesis2: Factors significantly affect the work-life balance and work-from-home life of married working women during the COVID-19 era
H0: Factors do not significantly affect the work-life balance and work-from-home life of married working women during the COVID-19 era.
H1: Factors significantly affect the work-life balance and work-from-home life of married working women during the COVID-19 era

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

Mean	Std. Deviation	N
3.58025	.782706	500

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for this hypothesis, based on a survey of 500 married working women. The mean value of 3.58025 indicates that, on average, the respondents experience a moderate to high level of impact from these factors on their work-life balance and work-from-home life. The standard deviation of 0.782706 suggests a moderate level of variability in the responses, indicating that while some women may experience greater or lesser impacts, there is a general consensus about the significant influence of these factors. These descriptive statistics highlight the notable effect of various factors on the work-life balance and work-from- home life of married working women during the pandemic, supporting the hypothesis.

Table 5: Regression

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression 1 Residual Total	232.524 140.323 372.848	2 497 499	116.262 .282	411.781	.000ᵇ

Table 5 presents the results of a regression analysis to test this hypothesis. The model summary indicates that the regression model explains a significant portion of the variance in work-life balance and work-from-home life. The regression sum of squares is 232.524, with 2 degrees of freedom, resulting in a mean square of 116.262. The F-statistic is 411.781 and the significance level (Sig.) is .000, indicating that the regression model is highly significant. This means that the factors included in the model have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable. The residual sum of squares is 140.323 with 497 degrees of freedom, which indicates the unexplained variance. The total sum of squares is 372.848 for 499 cases. These results demonstrate that the factors under consideration significantly affect the work-life balance and work-from-home life of married working women during the COVID-19 era, strongly supporting Hypothesis 2. The regression analysis shows a highly significant model (F = 411.781, p = .000) with a substantial portion of variance explained by the factors. Thus, **H1 is accepted** and **H0 is rejected**.

1.2 Hypothesis3: The adoption of specific tools and techniques by organizations, such as flexible work arrangements and mental health support, significantly improves the work-life balance of female employees.

H0: The adoption of specific tools and techniques by organizations, such as flexible work arrangements and mental health support, does not significantly improve the work-life balance of female employees**.**

H1: The adoption of specific tools and techniques by organizations, such as flexible work arrangements and mental health support, significantly improves the work-life balance of female employees**.**

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
500	2.000	4.833	3.63617	.445449

Table 6 presents descriptive statistics that illustrate this improvement. Based on a survey of 500 female employees, the mean score for the effectiveness of these tools and techniques is 3.63617 on a relevant scale, indicating a generally positive impact on work-life balance. The minimum score recorded is 2.000, while the maximum is 4.833, showing a range of perceptions among the respondents. The standard deviation of 0.445449 suggests that while there is some variability in responses, the overall consensus is that these organizational measures significantly enhance work-life balance. This data underscores the positive effect of implementing flexible work arrangements and mental health support in helping female employees achieve a better balance between their professional and personal lives.

Table 7: Correlations

		Pre- Performance	Post- Performanc e
Flexible work arrangements	Pearson Correlation	1	.603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	200.944	85.003
	Covariance	.403	.170
	N	500	500
Mental health support	Pearson Correlation	.603**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	85.003	99.014
	Covariance	.170	.198
	N	500	500
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 7 presents the correlation analysis between these tools and techniques and employee performance pre- and post-implementation. The Pearson correlation coefficient for flexible work arrangements and post-performance is 0.603, with a significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) of .000, indicating a strong and statistically significant positive relationship. This suggests that implementing flexible work arrangements is strongly associated with improved performance and better work-life balance. Similarly, the Pearson correlation coefficient for mental health support and pre-performance is also 0.603, with the same level of significance, highlighting a significant positive impact of mental health support on employee performance. The sum of squares and cross-products, along with covariance values, further support the robustness of these findings. The data demonstrates that both flexible work arrangements and mental health support play a crucial role in enhancing the work-life balance and performance of female employees, with statistically significant positive correlations. These results underline the importance of adopting such measures to foster a supportive and balanced work environment. Descriptive statistics correlation analysis demonstrate significant positive impacts (correlations of .603 for both flexible work arrangements and mental health support, p = .000). Hence, **H1 is accepted** and **H0 is rejected**.

1.3 Hypothesis 4: The work-life balance of employees has a significant impact on organizational growth, with better balance correlating with increased productivity and growth.

H0: The work-life balance of employees does not have a significant impact on organizational growth**.**

H1: The work-life balance of employees has a significant impact on organizational growth**.**

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
500	2.000	4.723	3.52552	.454449

Table 8 presents descriptive statistics that provide evidence supporting this hypothesis. Based on a survey of 500 employees, the mean score for the impact of work-life balance on organizational growth is 3.52552, suggesting a generally positive perception among respondents. The minimum score recorded is 2.000, while the maximum is 4.723, indicating a range of experiences and opinions. The standard deviation of 0.454449 shows moderate variability in the responses, reflecting differences in individual experiences but overall pointing towards a positive trend. These statistics highlight that a significant number of employees believe that better work-life balance contributes to increased productivity and organizational growth. This data supports the hypothesis that fostering a good work-life balance among employees can lead to substantial benefits for organizations, including enhanced productivity and growth.

Table 9: Correlations

		Pre- Performance	Post- Performance
Organizational Growth	Pearson Correlation	1	.608**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	200.856	85.008
	Covariance	.406	.180
	N	500	500
Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.608**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	85.458	99.452
	Covariance	.175	.199
	N	500	500
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 9 presents the correlation analysis supporting this hypothesis. The Pearson correlation coefficient between organizational growth and post-performance is 0.608, with a significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) of .000, indicating a strong and statistically significant positive relationship. This demonstrates that improvements in work-life balance are strongly associated with enhanced organizational growth. Similarly, the Pearson correlation coefficient between productivity and pre-performance is also 0.608, with the same level of significance. This correlation underscores the significant positive impact of improved work-life balance on employee productivity. The sum of squares and cross-products and the covariance values further support the strength and consistency of these correlations. With both correlations being significant at the 0.01 level, the data clearly indicates that better work-life balance among employees leads to increased productivity and organizational growth. These findings substantiate the hypothesis, highlighting the importance of promoting work-life balance to achieve organizational success and growth. The correlation analysis shows a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and organizational growth (correlation of .608, p = .000). Therefore, **H1 is accepted** and **H0 is rejected**.

2 Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the work-life balance of female employees, presenting unique challenges and stressors as remote work blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life. Despite these difficulties, many women have shown remarkable resilience and adaptability, employing strategies such as organized routines, technology use and seeking social support to maintain balance. Employers have a critical role in facilitating this balance by offering flexible work arrangements, mental health resources and fostering a supportive organizational culture. The findings from this study, based on a survey of 500 female employees in Hissar, Haryana, highlight the significant prevalence of work-life balance issues during the pandemic and emphasize the importance of employer support in mitigating these challenges. By prioritizing flexible work options and mental health support, organizations can enhance employee well-being, satisfaction and productivity, ultimately contributing to organizational growth. These insights provide a framework for future policies and practices aimed at supporting female employees in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, particularly in times of crisis**.**

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