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An Empirical study of the Factors of Work-Life Balance Among IT Professionals in Chennai

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Abstract: Work–life balance has become a critical concern for employees in the IT sector due to increasing work demands, technology-driven work environments, and extended working hours. This study examines the key factors influencing work–life balance among IT professionals in Chennai, focusing on workload, job stress, organizational support, work hours, and demographic characteristics. A sample of 208 IT employees was surveyed using a structured questionnaire, and statistical tools such as Chi-square and ANOVA were used to identify significant relationships between demographic variables and work–life balance perceptions. The findings reveal that factors such as workload manageability, tight deadlines, ability to disconnect from work, and organizational policies significantly differ across educational qualifications and gender groups. The study highlights the need for targeted and employee-centric work–life balance strategies to reduce stress, enhance well-being, and improve productivity in the IT sector. Recommendations emphasize the importance of supportive organizational culture, workload management, and flexible work arrangements.

Keywords: *Work–life balance, IT professionals, workload, stress, organizational support, Chennai, ANOVA, Chi-square*

I.INTRODUCTION:

The rapid growth of the Information Technology (IT) sector in India has transformed work patterns, employee expectations, and organizational structures. Chennai, being one of the major IT hubs in the country, hosts a large workforce engaged in software development, business process services, technical support, and digital operations. While the sector offers lucrative opportunities and dynamic career growth, it also demands long working hours, continuous connectivity, high project expectations, and tight deadlines. These characteristics have intensified the need to understand and address work–life balance among IT professionals.Work–life balance refers to an individual's ability to manage work responsibilities alongside personal and family commitments without experiencing excessive stress or conflict. In the IT industry, maintaining this balance is often challenging due to factors such as workload pressure, demanding client requirements across global time zones, and organizational expectations for high performance. Multiple studies have shown that poor work–life balance leads to increased stress, reduced job satisfaction, burnout, and declining productivity. Conversely, a well-balanced work environment enhances employee morale, motivation, and long-term organizational commitment. In recent years, organizations in Chennai have introduced several work–life balance initiatives, including flexible working hours, remote working options, employee assistance programs, and wellness initiatives. Despite these efforts, discrepancies remain in how different employee groups experience these policies. Demographic factors such as gender, educational qualification, and years of experience influence employees' perceptions of workload, stress, and the effectiveness of organizational support systems.This study aims to empirically investigate the major factors affecting work–life balance among IT professionals in Chennai and to examine how these factors vary across demographic groups. By analysing perceptions related to workload manageability, overtime work, stress due to deadlines, ability to disconnect from work, and organizational support, the study provides deeper insights into the challenges faced by IT employees. The results contribute to a better understanding of work–life balance issues in the IT context and offer valuable recommendations for organizations to develop more effective and inclusive employee well-being strategies.

Review of Literature

Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) found that employees in technology-intensive jobs experience higher levels of work–family conflict due to extended working hours and constant connectivity. This aligns with later findings by Lingard and Francis (2005), who reported that excessive workload leads to stress and inability to disengage from work, particularly in project-based environments. Gender differences are widely discussed in the literature. **Rajadhyaksha and Smita (2004)** observed that women often struggle more with work–life balance due to dual responsibilities at work and home. Similar findings were reported by **Kumari and Devi (2013)**, who highlighted that female IT employees in India experience greater stress due to societal expectations and organizational demands. Organizational support is another major factor influencing WLB. Studies by **Haar (2013) and Allen (2001)** suggest that flexible work arrangements, supportive supervisors, and family-friendly policies significantly improve employee satisfaction and reduce burnout. In the Indian IT context, **Jyothi and Jyothi (2012)** confirmed that the availability of flexible policies, including work-from-home options and flexible schedules, plays an important role in enhancing work–life balance. Educational background and job roles also influence employees' perceptions of WLB. According to **Mohan and Karthikeyan (2015),** highly qualified employees in IT tend to occupy better job positions with more autonomy, reducing their work pressure. Conversely, lower-qualified employees experience higher workload and stress due to limited control over tasks and tight deadlines.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the key factors influencing work–life balance among IT professionals in Chennai.

2. To analyse the relationship between selected demographic variables and employees' perceptions of work–life balance

Methodology

The study follows a descriptive research design to analyse the factors affecting work-life balance among IT professionals in Chennai. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, administered to 208 respondents selected through convenience sampling. Secondary data were gathered from journals and reports. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Chi Square Test and ANOVA to identify significant relationships and variations. Reliability of the instrument was ensured through Cronbach's alpha.

Statement of the Problem

The Information Technology sector in Chennai has grown rapidly, creating a highly competitive and demanding work environment. While the industry offers attractive career opportunities, employees often face long working hours, project deadlines, continuous connectivity, and high-performance expectations. These pressures have increasingly affected employees' ability to balance their professional responsibilities with personal and family commitments. Despite the introduction of work–life balance initiatives by many IT companies, employees' perceptions of workload, stress, organizational support, and overall well-being continue to vary significantly across different demographic groups. This raises critical questions about the effectiveness of existing work–life balance practices and the factors that most strongly influence employee satisfaction and well-being. The present study seeks to identify the major determinants of work–life balance among IT professionals in Chennai and to assess how demographic characteristics shape their experiences, thereby providing insights that can guide organizations in formulating more effective and inclusive employee support strategies.

Analysis and Interpretations

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from IT professionals in Chennai to understand the factors influencing work–life balance. Using statistical tools such as frequency analysis, Chi-square, and ANOVA, the results highlight demographic patterns and significant variations in employees' perceptions of workload, stress, and organizational support.

Table 1 Frequency Distribution of Gender

S. No	Gender	Frequency	Per cent
1	Male	122	58.7
2	Female	86	41.3
Total		**208**	**100.0**

Table 1 gender-wise distribution of respondents indicates that male IT professionals constitute the majority of the sample, representing 58.7% (122 respondents), while female IT professionals account for 41.3% (86 respondents). This shows that the participation of men is slightly higher than that of women in the IT workforce represented in this study. The distribution also reflects the general gender pattern in the IT sector, where male employees often outnumber female employees. This demographic insight is essential for analyzing whether gender differences influence the factors affecting work-life balance among IT professionals in Chennai.

Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Educational Qualifications

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Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Educational Qualifications

S. No	Educational Qualifications	Frequency	Per cent
1	Under Graduate	119	57.2
2	Post Graduate	49	23.6
3	Diploma	24	11.5
4	Professional	16	7.7
Total		**208**	**100.0**

majority of the IT professionals surveyed (57.2%) are Under Graduates, indicating that many employees enter the IT sector with basic degree-level qualifications. Post Graduates constitute 23.6% of the respondents, reflecting a significant segment with advanced academic backgrounds. Meanwhile, Diploma holders represent 11.5%, showing that technical diploma qualifications also provide access to IT jobs. A smaller group of 7.7% have professional degrees, such as engineering or specialized certifications. This educational profile highlights the varied academic backgrounds of IT professionals in Chennai. It also suggests that work-life balance experiences may differ across qualification levels due to variations in job roles, responsibilities, and career expectations. Such demographic patterns are useful for understanding how educational attainment influences employees' work-life balance perceptions in the IT sector.

Table 3 Frequency Distribution of Years of Experience in IT

S. No	Years of Experience	Frequency	Per cent
1	Below 1 year	88	42.3
2	1 to 3 years	80	38.5
3	4 to 7 years	16	7.7
4	8 to 12 years	16	7.7
5	Above 12 years	8	3.8
Total		**208**	**100.0**

Table 3 distribution of work experience reveals that a significant majority of respondents are early-career IT professionals. Employees with less than 1 year of experience constitute 42.3%, followed by those with 1 to 3 years of experience at 38.5%. Together, these two groups account for more than four-fifths of the sample, indicating that the IT workforce represented in this study is predominantly young and relatively new to the industry.Meanwhile, respondents with 4 to 7 years (7.7%) and 8 to 12 years (7.7%) form much smaller segments, and only 3.8% have more than 12 years of experience. This suggests that long-tenured employees are fewer, which may reflect the high mobility and rapid career transitions commonly observed in the IT sector. The predominance of early-career professionals is an important factor when analysing work-life balance, as employees with less experience may face higher workloads, adaptation stress, and changing work demands, which could influence their overall work-life balance perceptions.

Null Hypothesis: There is no association between Gender and My work–life balance has improved over the past year.

Table 4 Chi-square test for association between Gender and My work–life balance has improved over the past year.

Gender	My work–life balance has improved over the past year.					Total	Chi Square Value	P Value
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree			
Male	8 (6.6%) [100.0%]	10 (8.2%) [41.7%]	2 (1.6%) [8.3%]	38 (31.1%) [79.2%]	64 (52.5%) [61.5%]	122 (100.0%) [58.7%]	42.240	<0.001 **
Female	0 (0%) [0%]	14 (16.3%) [58.3%]	22 (25.6%) [91.7%]	10 (11.6%) [20.8%]	40 (46.5%) [38.5%]	86 (100.0%) [41.3%]		
Total	8 (3.8%) [100.0%]	24 (11.5%) [100.0%]	24 (11.5%) [100.0%]	48 (23.1%) [100.0%]	104 (50.0%) [100.0%]	208 (100.0%) [100.0%]		

Note: 1. The value within ( ) refers to Row Percentage
2. The value within [ ] refers to Column Percentage
3. ** Denotes significant at 1% level

Table 4 Chi-square analysis examines whether gender is associated with respondents' perception that their work–life balance has improved over the past year. The results reveal a Chi-square value of 42.240 with a p-value of <0.001, indicating a highly significant association at the 1% level. This means that gender plays a statistically meaningful role in shaping how employees perceive improvements in their work–life balance.The response patterns show notable differences between male and female IT professionals. Among males, the majority fall under the 'Agree' (31.1%) and 'Strongly Agree' (52.5%) categories, suggesting that a large proportion of male employees feel their work–life balance has improved. In contrast, female respondents display a more mixed perception. While 46.5% of females 'Strongly Agree,' a significant share falls under 'Disagree' (16.3%) and 'Neutral' (25.6%), reflecting relatively lower levels of satisfaction compared to their male counterparts.These findings imply that men in the IT sector of Chennai perceive greater improvement in work–life balance than women, possibly due to differences in job roles, workloads, domestic responsibilities, or organizational support systems. The statistically significant association highlights the need for organizations to adopt gender-sensitive work-life balance initiatives to ensure equitable improvement across all employee groups.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference among Education Qualification with respect to Factors of Work Life Balance

Table 5 ANOVA for significant difference among Education Qualifications with respect to Factors of Work Life Balance

Work Life Balance Factor Statement	Educational Qualifications				F Value	P Value
	UG	PG	Dip	Professional		
My workload is manageable within regular working hours	3.84 (1.50)	3.22 (1.25)	3.04 (0.46)	5.00 (0.00)	10.010	<0.001**
I often work beyond office hours to complete tasks	3.7479 (1.37)	3.78 (1.10)	4.04 (1.40)	3.00 (0.73)	2.239	<0.001**
Tight deadlines increase my work stress	3.9412 1.21637	3.5102 1.19238	4.7083 .46431	4.88 (0.50)	9.856	<0.001**
I find it difficult to disconnect from work after hours	3.6218 (1.17)	3.33 (1.68)	4.96 (0.20)	3.94 (0.25)	10.535	<0.001**
My organization provides adequate policies supporting work–life balance	3.53 (1.35)	4.20 (1.22)	3.08 (0.88)	4.75 (1.00)	9.072	<0.001**
My company encourages work–life balance among employees	3.97 (1.11)	3.88 (1.25)	3.46 (1.69)	4.44 (0.63)	2.261	0.83

Note: 1. The value within bracket refers to SD
2. ** denotes significant at 1% level.
3. * denotes significant at 5% level.

The ANOVA results presented in Table 5 reveal how perceptions of various work–life balance factors differ significantly across respondents with different educational qualifications (UG, PG, Diploma, and Professional). The findings indicate notable variations in most of the factors assessed. For the statement "My workload is manageable within regular working hours," the ANOVA result ($F = 10.010$, $p < 0.001$) shows a statistically significant difference at the 1% level. Professional degree holders report the highest satisfaction (mean 5.00), while diploma holders report the lowest (mean 3.04), suggesting that higher qualifications may be associated with better job roles and manageable workloads. Similarly, the factor "Tight deadlines increase my work stress" exhibits a significant difference ($F = 9.856$, $p < 0.001$), with diploma holders reporting the highest stress levels (mean 4.71), indicating that lower-qualified

employees may experience more pressure due to demanding tasks or limited autonomy. The factor "I find it difficult to disconnect from work after hours" also shows significant variation ($F = 10.535$, $p < 0.001$). Diploma holders again report the highest difficulty (mean 4.96), reflecting greater challenges in maintaining boundaries between work and personal life. Significant differences are also found in perceptions of organizational support. For "My organization provides adequate policies supporting work–life balance" ($F = 9.072$, $p < 0.001$), postgraduate and professional respondents express higher agreement than UG and diploma holders, indicating that employees in higher positions may have better access to supportive policies. Interestingly, the factor "I often work beyond office hours to complete tasks" shows a significant difference ($F = 2.239$, $p < 0.001$), although the variations are narrower. Diploma holders report the highest frequency (mean 4.04), while professionals report the least (mean 3.00), suggesting differences in task demands across educational levels.However, the final factor, "My company encourages work–life balance among employees," shows no significant difference ($F = 2.261$, $p = 0.83$). This implies that regardless of educational background, employees share a similar perception about their company's efforts to promote work–life balance. Overall, the ANOVA results demonstrate that educational qualifications significantly influence employees' experiences related to workload, stress, after-hours disconnection, and organizational support. These insights highlight the need for organizations to tailor work–life balance strategies to suit employees across different qualification levels, particularly focusing on diploma and undergraduate employees who appear to experience greater work pressures.

Findings

- The study reveals that a majority of respondents are male IT professionals, and most belong to the early stages of their careers with less than three years of experience.
- ANOVA results indicate significant differences across educational qualifications on factors such as workload manageability, tight deadlines, difficulty disconnecting from work, and organizational support.
- Employees with professional and postgraduate qualifications expressed greater agreement regarding adequate work–life balance policies provided by their organizations, while diploma holders felt less supported.
- There is a significant variation in after-hours work across qualification levels. Diploma holders reported the highest frequency of working beyond office hours, while professionals reported the least.
- The chi-square test showed a strong and significant association between gender and perception of improvement in work–life balance.

Practical Implications

The findings of the study highlight the need for IT organizations in Chennai to design more inclusive and employee-centric work–life balance strategies. Since employees with lower educational qualifications and early-career professionals experience higher stress levels, tight deadlines, and difficulty disconnecting from work, companies should implement targeted interventions such as structured workload allocation, realistic timeframes, and stress-management programs. The significant gender differences observed also call for gender-sensitive policies, including flexible work arrangements, childcare support, and initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by female employees. Organizations must strengthen communication about existing work–life balance policies to ensure all employees benefit equally, while also fostering a work culture that encourages healthy boundaries between work and personal life. By addressing these areas, IT companies can enhance employee satisfaction, reduce burnout, and improve overall productivity and retention.

Conclusion

The study underscores that work–life balance among IT professionals in Chennai is influenced by multiple factors including workload, deadlines, organizational support, gender differences, and educational qualifications. While companies in the IT sector have introduced several works–life balance initiatives, their effectiveness varies across employee groups. Diploma and undergraduate employees report greater stress and less manageable workloads, while employees with higher qualifications experience better work–life balance. Additionally, male employees perceive greater improvement in their work–life balance compared to female employees, signalling the need for more inclusive and gender-responsive strategies.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of developing employee-centric work–life balance programs that address the diverse needs of the workforce. By refining policies, enhancing support mechanisms, and fostering a culture that prioritizes employee well-being, organizations can improve productivity, reduce turnover, and create a healthier, more sustainable working environment for IT professionals in Chennai.

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