

Work-Life Balance: A Study on Female Workers in CEPZ

Rumana Sultana & Ripan Chatterjee

Abstract

This paper has been conducted with an objective to explore the work-life balance of female workers in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ). Different facets is important tools to guide the female work-life balance in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ). This survey studies demographic information and personal life factors, support from family, workplace problem arising, workplace support, workload, and others aspects. By using simple random sampling technique, the data has been collected from 200 respondents. Data are analyzed using frequency and percentage. From the frequency and percentage analysis, demographic information and personal life factors, support from family, workplace problem arising, workplace support, workload, and others aspects as the important factors, which significantly effect on female work-life balance in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ). In the perspective of Bangladesh, female employees face more hurdles in balancing work and personal life than male employees. This study focuses on female workers experiencing work and personal life conflicts. The significances of this study can be beneficial for both investigators and specialists. For inspectors', it provides guidelines for thoughtful consciousness designs, level, and their virtual status. Also, this study offers real-world direction and applicable acclamations to the work-life balance and employments experts to inspire the strategies for improving working environment as female working balance subjects are chances to create employment in Export Processing Zone (EPZ). The researchers strongly believe that this paper will create awareness among Export Processing Zone, female workers, government, academicians, politicians, international investors, and the stakeholders.



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1. Introduction

Work-life balance is the act of having a positive balance between one's personal and professional life. It has been one of the major factors of job satisfaction for female workers. The status of women has been changed significantly over the past few decades. In olden days while women were supposed to be at home and raise their children, men were considered as breadwinner. But gradually that mainstream scenario as well as the role of females has been changed throughout the world due to changing economic conditions and social demands. Today women have proved their worthiness by holding higher positions in almost every field of occupation. Therefore female workers are facing tremendous pressure to develop a career as vital as their male counterparts while sustaining serious involvement in personal life. In this challenging era there has been a growing concern to maintain equilibrium between the work and family life. Such a discussion rarely comes in case of men. Work-life balance (WLB) is a concept comprising the proper prioritization between work (career and ambition) and lifestyle (health, pleasure, leisure, family). The work-leisure dichotomy was invented in the mid-1800s. Paul Krassner, an American journalist, observed that anthropologists define happiness as having as little separation as possible between your work and your play. The expression "work-life balance" was first used in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life.

2. Literature Review

The effect of gender and life cycle stage on three apparatuses of work family conflict like role overload, interference from work to family and interference from family to work. The results designated important alterations for gender and life cycle. Females described undergoing considerably greater role overload than men. Once more females were found to experience greater work to family interference than men. Interference was highest when the children were young, and lowest in families with older children Higgins (1994). A number of studies have been addressed this issue in different perspectives. Work-life balance is about effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and other activities that are important to us - including spending time with family, taking part in sport and recreation, volunteering or undertaking further study. It can help to build strong communities and productive businesses. In a society filled with conflicting responsibilities and commitments, work-life balance has become a predominant issue in the workplace (Dhas & Karthikeyan, 2015). According to Dissanayaka & Hussain Ali (2013), work-life balance is most frequently used to describe the equilibrium between responsibilities at work and responsibilities at home; having a work-life balance means that this equilibrium is in the right position for the individual concerned. Kumar, et.al (2009) revealed that demographic variables have significant effect on work-life balance of women like age, income, experience and marital status. Dubey, et.al (2010) found that personal factors as well as factors at workplace significantly affect the work-life of female employees. Thus the amalgamation of organization and family support can help working women balance their personal and professional life. Doble & Supriya (2010) analyzed that both men & women strongly believe that flexible hours will enhance the work-life balance. According to Greenhaus, et al., (2008), work-life assimilation is a result of the compound relationship between the dynamics of employment and personal factors. They found that the balance between work and life is attainable through the funding and synchronization of multiple activities that included the organization's interest.

Kinnunen & Mauno (2007) collected data from a sample of 501 employees working in four organizations like municipal and social healthcare, manufacturing for exports, a bank and a supermarket. The consequences designated that interference from work to family was more prevalent than interference from family to work among both sexes. However, there were no gender differences in experiencing either work to family or family to work conflict. The findings of the studies reported above suggest that work to family conflict is more frequent than family to work conflict. Hymans & Summers (2004) analyzed major problems associated with practical implementation of work-life balance i.e inequality of adoption across different sectors and organizations, lack of formalization of policies at organization level, restricted employee's voice, primary focus on business needs than on employees, no evidence of reduction in working hours, tangible and intangible work interruptions into domestic life. Finally, domestic responsibilities are still conducted primarily by women irrespective of their employment status. Frone (2003) explored that work-life balance occurs when there is a lack of conflict or interference between the work and family role. Vittal (2003) emphasized that the dropout rates of women have increased with their marriage and childbirth as childcare and housework remain women's responsibilities, irrespective of her income, educational level or employment. Studies also revealed that there is a great burden on women which restrict their choices in terms of better job opportunities.

3. Objective of the Research

The *Broad objective* of this research is to explore the work-life balance of female workers in Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ). There are some *Specific objectives* of this study, which are given below:

- a. To study the dominance of work-life balance problem among the female workers in CEPZ.
- b. To find out the factors that causes work-life imbalance.
- c. To explore the probable measures that can be taken to help the female workers to balance their work and personal life.

4. Methodology of the Research

The research method which is adapted for the study is quantitative. For collecting data both primary and secondary sources are used. The primary data is gathered from the field through the administration of a structured questionnaire and personal interview. The literature review has been developed from the secondary sources like Textbooks, journals, published articles and research papers were used as secondary data sources. The target population is the female workers in the various companies of CEPZ. Now, section 1 is composed of demographic variables are consisting of six issues including age group, marital status, type of workers, duration of employment, family type, No. of Children. Thus, section 2 is composed of female work-life balance in CEPZ measures by using five point Likert scales (from 1= 'Strongly disagree' to 5= 'Strongly agree'). And five factors are regarding female work-life balance in CEPZ. Those factors are support from family, workplace problem arising, workplace support, workload, and others aspects. Questionnaires were the main instrument for collecting responses from the sample selected for the study. By using simple random sampling method, the data has been collected from 200 respondents. Data are analyzed using frequency and percentages. To investigate the real picture of work-life balance of female workers in CEPZ, a survey has been conducted.

5. Results and discussions

Table-1: Demographic information and personal life factors

Variables	Range	Percentage
Age group	18-25 years	33% (66)
	26-30 years	29% (58)
	30-35 years	21% (42)
	36-40 years	17% (34)
Marital Status	Unmarried	21% (42)
	Married	67% (134)
	Divorcee	5% (10)
	Widowed	7% (14)
Type of workers	Manual workers (Blue collar)	65% (130)
	Professional workers (White collar)	35% (70)
Duration of employment	Less than 1 year	15% (30)
	1-3 years	27% (54)
	3-5 years	41% (82)
	More than 5 years	17% (34)
Family type	Nuclear family	57% (114)
	Joint family	43% (86)
No. of Children	0	33% (66)
	1-3	49% (98)
	More than 3	18% (36)

5.1 Demographic information and personal life factors

Table 1 summarizes demographic information and personal life factors about the 200 respondents. It is seen that 33% (66), 29% (58), 21% (42) and 17% (34) of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-25 years, 26-30 years, 30-35 years and 36-40 years respectively. It also shows the output of 200 samples regarding their marital status. It is seen that out of 200 respondents, 21% (42) respondents are unmarried whereas 67% (134) respondents are married in the sample. Only 12% (24) respondents are divorced and widowed. Out of 200 respondents 65% (130) respondents are blue collar workers and 35% (70) respondents are white collar workers. The data regarding duration of employment of those workers shows that, 15% (30), 27% (54), 41% (82) and 17% (34) workers have worked for 0-1 years, 1-3 years, 3-5 years and above 5 years respectively. Out of 200 respondents, 57% (114) respondents are members of nuclear family and 43%

(86) respondents are members of joint family. Among them 33% (66) do not have children. 49% (98) have 1-3 children and 18% (36) have more than 3 children.

Table-2: Support from Family

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Percentage
Get support from elder family members.	22.5% (45)	28.5% (57)	9% (18)	27% (54)	13% (26)	100% (200)
Get support from my spouse.	16% (32)	12% (24)	11% (22)	34% (68)	27% (54)	100% (200)

5.2 Support from Family

Table-2 shows the frequency percentage of family support of female workers. Support from elder family members and support from spouse has been considered as factors for determining the level of support from family. It is seen that, Out of 200 respondents whereas 22.5% (45) and 28.5% (57) respondents respectively 'strongly agreed' and 'somewhat agreed' to the fact that they get support from the elder family members, 40% (80) said that they do not get support from elder family members. The table exhibits that 16% (32) and 12% (24) respondents respectively showed 'strong agreement' and 'agreement' toward the fact that they get support from their spouse. But 61% (122) respondents said they do not get support from their spouse. Thus it is found that most of the female workers do not get adequate support from their spouse.

Table-3: Problems arising at workplace that causes work life imbalance

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Percentage/ Frequency
Long hours of work causes problem in my personal life.	68% (136)	12% (24)	2% (4)	13% (26)	5% (10)	100% (200)
The distance of my workplace to home causes problems.	23% (46)	13% (26)	4% (8)	37% (74)	23% (46)	100% (200)
Face difficulties in availing leaves.	37% (74)	25.5% (51)	13% (26)	17% (34)	7.5% (15)	100% (200)
The relationship with my supervisors creates difficulties.	42% (84)	27% (54)	15% (30)	9.5% (19)	6.5% (13)	100% (200)
The relationship with peers creates difficulties.	18% (36)	12% (24)	11% (22)	46% (92)	13% (26)	100% (200)

5.3 Problems arising at workplace that causes work life imbalance

After reviewing several research papers, a number of factors have been identified that are responsible for creating work life imbalance. The above table shows the response regarding the factors that creates problems in balancing work and personal life. Out of 200 respondents, 68% (136) and 12% (24) respondents respectively 'strongly agreed' and 'somewhat agreed' to the fact that the working hours create problems in their family life. Only 18% (36) respondents think that the hours of work do not interfere with their family life. The table also reveals that 36% [23% (46) and 13% (26)] respondents think the distance of workplace creates problems in balancing their work and family life. About 60% [37% (74) +23% (46)] respondents think distance does not matter at all. Out of 200 respondents 62.5% [37% (74) and 25.5% (51)] respondents think they face difficulties in availing leaves that causes work

life imbalance respectively whereas 24.5% (49) do not agree to such factor. The table also shows that 42% (84) and 27% (54) respondents 'strongly agreed' and 'somewhat agreed' respectively to the fact that their relationship with supervisors creates problems in maintaining work life balance. Only 16% (32) of the respondents did not agree in this regard. The table also shows that, 18% (36) and 12% (24) of the respondents feel that their relationship with peers causes work life conflicts whereas about 59% (118) of the respondents do not feel so.

Table-4: Workplace Support

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Percentage/ Frequency
Give attention to family issues immediately.	16.5% (33)	22.5% (45)	16% (32)	31.5% (63)	13.5% (27)	100% (200)
Organization supports the employees in terms of combining professional life with family life.	17% (34)	21.5% (43)	11% (22)	33.5% (67)	17% (34)	100% (200)
Discuss issues relating to work life balance with my co-workers.	36% (72)	29% (58)	6% (12)	21% (42)	8% (16)	100% (200)

5.4 Workplace Support

Table 4 shows the responses regarding the support from workplace. Whereas, 39% [(16.5% (33) +22.5% (45)] respondents think that they can give proper attention to their family immediately whenever any need arise, 45% (90) respondents responded negatively to this issue. It indicates that most of the female workers cannot provide attention to their family and personal issues at proper time. As regards the statement, "My organization supports the employees in terms of combining professional life with family life", 50.5% (101) respondents respectively showed 'disagreement', whereas 38.5% (77) respondents agreed to the statement. Out of 200 respondents, about 36% (72) and 29% (58) respondents respectively 'strongly agreed' and 'somewhat agreed' to the fact that they can openly discuss issues relating to work life balance with their co-workers. Only 29% respondents disagreed and 6% were neutral to the statement.

Table-5: Workload

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Percentage/ Frequency
Job keeps me away from my family too much.	27% (54)	43% (86)	14.5% (29)	11.5% (23)	4% (8)	100% (200)
Work more than responsibilities	22% (44)	34% (68)	11% (22)	15.5% (31)	17.5% (35)	100% (200)
Come home late in the evening.	32% (64)	54% (108)	9% (18)	5% (10)	0% (0)	100% (200)

5.5 Workload

Table 5 shows the responses regarding workplace support in case of workload and responsibilities. Whereas, 27% (54) and 43% (86) respondents showed respectively 'strongly agreement' and 'agreement' and, it means, 70% of the respondents think that their job interferes with their family. It indicates that most of the female workers are facing severe

problem in balancing their work and personal life. Out of 200 respondents, 22% and 34% respondents showed 'strongly agreement' and 'agreement' respectively to the statement, "I work more than my responsibilities at workplace", where 33% respondents showed their disagreement toward the statement. About 86% [32% (64) and 54% (108)] of the respondents said they often come home late in the evening, whereas only 5% disagreed to the fact. This reveals that most of the female workers often come home late which is responsible for creating work life imbalance.

Table 6: others aspects

Others aspects	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Percentage/ Frequency
The supervisors should be more supportive.	21% (42)	41% (82)	10.5% (21)	16.5% (33)	11% (22)	100% (200)
The working hours should be more flexible.	31.5% (63)	43% (86)	14.5% (29)	6.5% (13)	4.5% (9)	100% (200)
Organization should be more concerned about employee's job satisfaction factors.	23% (46)	47.5% (95)	10% (20)	12% (24)	7.5% (15)	100% (200)
Organization should not burden employees with excessive responsibilities.	27% (54)	39% (78)	12% (24)	9% (18)	13% (26)	100% (200)
Co-workers need to be cooperative.	22% (44)	43.5% (87)	9.5% (19)	12% (24)	13% (26)	100% (200)
Open discussion between workers and management should be arranged.	23.5% (47)	41% (82)	13.5% (27)	15.5% (31)	6.5% (13)	100% (200)
Child care facilities should be initiated.	19% (38)	56% (112)	8.5% (17)	13.5% (27)	3% (6)	100% (200)
Residential facilities near workplace could be arranged by the organization.	13.5% (27)	38% (76)	11.5% (23)	17% (34)	20% (40)	100% (200)

5.6 others aspects

Table 6 exhibits the responses regarding the probable measures that can be taken to reduce work and personal life conflicts. Whereas, 21% and 41% respondents showed respectively 'agreement' and 'strongly agreement', it means, 62% respondents think that their supervisors should be more supportive. Out of 200 respondents, 74.5% [31.5% (63) + 43% (86)] respondents think the working hours should be more flexible, whereas only 11% respondents do not think so. About 70.5 [23% (46) + 47.5% (95)] respondents think their organization should be more concerned about employee's job satisfaction factors. Whereas,

27% (54) and 39% (78) respondents showed respectively 'strongly agreement' and 'agreement' to the statement "organization should not burden employees with excessive responsibilities" it means, 66% respondents think their organization should Out of 200 respondents, 65.5 % [22% (44) +43.5% (87)] respondents feel that their co-workers need to be cooperative towards them and 64.5 % [23.5% (47) and 41% (82)] respondents feel that organization should open discussion session between workers and management. In addition to the above suggested steps, 75% [(19% (38) and 56% (112)] respondents think child care facilities should be initiated in their organizations. And 51.5% [13.5% (27) and 38% (76)] respondents feel that residential facilities near workplace could be arranged by the organization.

6. Conclusion and Implications

From the survey it is found that most of the respondents do not get proper support from their family and organization. Most of the working women are facing difficulties in maintaining work life balance due to long working hours, relationship with supervisors and difficulty in availing leaves. Some of them identified distance of their home to workplace is also responsible in creating work life imbalance. The study also reveals that the female workers also suffer in balancing work and personal life due to excessive responsibilities at work and their job interfere in providing proper concentration to family life. Therefore, the study reveals that both family and job of female workers of CEPZ are being affected due to work-life balance situation. Thus, work interference with family is more of an issue than family interference with work for the female workers in Bangladesh because women still perform the bulk of household tasks. Women in the work force can be blessings only when they will be receive proper family and organizational support that will help them to be able to balance their work and personal life. Indeed, an organization can ensure work-life balance situation of female workers. The study investigated the steps that can be taken to improve the family and personal life conflicts. By ensuring flexible working hours, reduced work load, residential facility near to workplace, child care center organization can play an effective role in this regard. The respondents agreed to the fact that proper support from supervisor as well as the organization as a whole is mostly expected by them. For ensuring such support organization should be more concerned about the job satisfaction factors and arrange an open session to get feedback from the employees that will in turn motivate them to share their problems and expectations to the management. This study focuses on female workers experiencing work and personal life conflicts. The significances of this study can be beneficial for both investigators and specialists. For inspectors', it provides guidelines for thoughtful consciousness designs, level, and their virtual status. Also, this study offers real-world direction and applicable acclamations to the work-life balance and employments experts to inspire the strategies for improving working environment as female working balance subjects are chances to create employment in Export Processing Zone (EPZ). The researchers strongly believe that this paper will create awareness among Export Processing Zone, female workers, government, academicians, politicians, international investors, and the stakeholders.

7. Limitations and further of the Research

This data may not be the true representative of all Bangladeshi female workers in EPZ due to sample size (200) and area (CEPZ). The outcome is achieved based on the respondents' opinion. So, there is a chance of offender's bias. The sample size is only two hundreds. Future research is commended to improve the importance of the sampling by expanding the sample size and carrying out the survey in all EPZ in Bangladesh. The paper is conducted in five

factors only as the independent variable. Thus, there may be some other variables which may influence on female workers in CEPZ.

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