

The Impact of Time Management Strategies on the Work-Life Balance of a Career Woman

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Work-life balance has become a significant concern for women in recent years as they try to balance their professional obligations and personal responsibilities. Career women play a crucial role in human progress and hold a significant place in the society. In the past, man played a dominant role in the society and provided all the resources required for the family, while woman was responsible for household chores like caring, nurturing children and managing home. However, due to higher education and socioeconomic developments, women have entered into different fields to build robust careers at par with men. Today's career women are facing conflicting demands from both work and life domains. Finding a good work-life balance is still a tough problem. They find it difficult to manage and balance between the pressures of work place and duties belonging to home and family. Effective time management has emerged as one of the most important techniques in improving this balance. This paper examines the role of time management techniques in helping career women achieve a sustainable work-life balance. Women with careers often have to juggle unique demands between their work and home lives. Being able to manage time well is key to getting things done at work effectively and is important for balancing work and life better. This paper looks at how using time management methods helps create a balanced life making both work performance and personal life better. By looking at the specific ways career women manage their time, this study wants to find practices that lead to a more satisfying and less stressful life. By examining various time management strategies including priority, delegation, target setting, and boundary settings, the purpose of the study is to highlight their impact on reducing stress, increase productivity, and promote personal well-being. This paper also looks at the challenges career women face in effectively managing time. Conclusions underlined the importance of adopting time management approaches that serve the unique challenges of career women, which promotes long-term success at work and home.

Keywords: time management, work-life balance, work-life integration, career women, productivity, stress management, personal well-being

Introduction

Work-life balance is typically defined as the amount of time you spend doing your job versus the amount of time you spend doing what's important to you outside of work, whether that is with loved ones or pursuing personal interests and hobbies. When work demands more of your time or attention, you'll have less time to handle your other responsibilities or passions.

Many people want to achieve a greater balance between their work life and their personal life. But in practice, it can be difficult to achieve. Sometimes, a demanding job means more money to support a family. Sometimes,

a job contributes to deteriorating your mental health, which then leaves you drained in personal relationships.

The concept of Work-life balance supports employees' attempts to split their time and energy among work, family, and other parts of their lives. In recent years, Work-life balance has taken on a key role in organizations. This allows employees to focus on personal, social, and job-related aspects of their lives too. Companies have recognized the need to create and push work-life balance policies to boost both quality and quantity of output. Steps companies have taken include job sharing, flexible hours, and family events at work. They've done this to close the gaps between work, personal, and social lives of employees. The goal is to make the workplace culture and performance better.

The Concept of Work-Life Balance for Career Women

Work-life balance is defined as a balance between professional responsibilities and time and energy spent on personal or family obligations. Work-life balance of women employees has become a critical subject of discussion as we see women working in different areas of profession and sharing responsibilities equally with men both at work and at home for the betterment of their family life. Various studies over the past three decades have stated that work-life balance has gained attention from organisations, employees, and researchers (Taylor, 2001; Felstead et al., 2002). For women of career, achieving this balance can be challenging especially due to social expectations. In addition to professional duties, women are often expected to manage domestic responsibilities, such as childcare and domestic management. This dual responsibility creates constant need for effective time management strategies.

Finding a balance between work and personal life is one of the most important aspects of career fulfillment and personal wellbeing, especially for women navigating career paths. Today working women are constantly challenged by the demands of work and family. Their lives are a "juggling act" between work and home that includes responsibilities at work, long business trips and meetings and fulfilling daily needs of the family and home (Sudha & Kartikeyan, 2014). Due to rapid cultural and economic development, the priorities of women employees have also changed. Women employees have started looking for a better quality of life and a healthy work life balance (Revathy & Geetha, 2013).

The Importance of Work-Life Balance for Career Women

The importance of work-life balance for career women cannot be over-emphasized; these include:

1. **Reduced stress:** Work-life imbalance can result in burnouts, anxiety, and other mental health challenges as a result of chronic stress. By effectively managing time, career women can manage their workload more effectively, minimizing stress related to juggling multiple responsibilities.
2. **Improved productivity:** The environment of a balanced work-life allows women to focus, increase creativity, and promote better job performance without distracting personal issues.
3. **Better family time:** Allocating enough time for family helps to nurture relationships and maintain a sense of fulfilment outside the work, which is integral to long-term happiness.
4. **Enhanced self-care:** By consciously scheduling time for personal needs, like exercise or relaxation, working mothers can better manage their mental and physical health.
5. **Greater flexibility:** Utilizing time management tools and techniques can allow for adjustments to schedules based on family needs, enabling flexibility in work arrangements.

Therefore, the problem statement revolves around what time management strategies can be implemented to improve career women's ability to manage both professional and personal responsibilities.

Literature Review

Most previous research on the ability to balance work and family indicates that because women typically maintain major responsibility for the home and the family, they have greater difficulty in balancing work and family than men (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991). Spill over theory asserts that there is similarity between what occurs in a family environment (Staines, 1980), such that happiness at work leads to happiness at home. In addition, a person's work experiences are assumed to influence what he/she does away from work (Champoux, 1978). It is also assumed that attitudes at work become ingrained and are carried over into home life (Kando & Summers, 1971) or that work attitudes affect a basic orientation towards the self, others, and children (Mortimer et al., 1986). Spill over is generally discussed in terms of positive relationships, but it is also possible to have negative spill over (Piotrkowski, 1978).

Hochschild (1989) explored that women were more deeply torn between the demands of work and family than their husbands. Carli (2010) stated women sacrifice leisure and sleep in order to meet the needs of their families and jobs. Broadbridge (2009) analysed that women suffered from role overload and made more sacrifices with respect to children as compared to men. Barnett et al. (1993) stated that working women experienced higher work to family conflict compared to men. According to Nair (2010), women employees work and family lives are just like the two sides of the same coin. Devoting more time to one domain than to the other can lead to negative outcomes.

Work-life balance assumes great significance for women as they are virtually in two full time jobs—one at home and the other at office. Working mothers often have to challenge perceptions and stereotypes that evolve as a working woman becomes a working mother... When a woman seeks a position of power within an organisation, she must consider the toll on other facets of her life, including hobbies, personal relationships, and family. Most executive jobs require a substantial amount of time and effort, which a working mother may not be able to devote due to family obligations. So also, it may be nearly impossible for a working mother in a top management position to be the primary care giver of her child. Women often find it more difficult to maintain balance on account of the competing pressures of work and demands at home. Working women have to carefully handle their personal balance and skilfully blend their roles, so as to optimise their potential in all quadrants of life (Sundaresan, 2019).

According to Amstad et al. (2011), a stressful environment can create imbalance in work-life. Another reason of an imbalance work-life is the lack of support of the managers. Long working hour is another reason for creating imbalance between work and life. Tomazevic, Kozjek, and Stare (2014) have discussed both positive and negative consequences as a result of both work-life balance and work-life imbalance. If there is balance in work-life, employees get motivation and job satisfaction increases while imbalance creates dissatisfaction among employees. As a result of work family conflict, employees experience stress related outcomes such as depression, burn out, family related stress, general psychological strains etc. Not only this but also there is an invert relation exists between work-family conflict and job satisfaction. According to Hutcheson (2012), one may experience depression or become overwhelmed as a result of imbalance in work-life.

Moorthi (2012), in her study on "A Literature Study on Women Employees Attitude About Work Life Balance in Service Sector" found that enhancing balance between work and personal lives results in genuine paybacks both for employers and employees. Work-life imbalance has organizational outcomes like elevated rates of absenteeism and turnover; decreased productivity; dwindled job satisfaction; growing healthcare costs and reduced levels of organizational commitment and loyalty.

Bloom and Van Reenen (2006) found that work family conflict can also have negative impact on the organization, both financial and non-financial-issue. Based on a study of 732 manufacturing firms in US, France, Germany, and the UK, organizations which offer better work life balance practices enjoyed higher productivity. As far as non-financial aspects of organizational performance are concerned, research shows that firms that adopt more better work life balance policies can improve the level of job satisfaction and increase organizational commitment among their employees.

Time management is a system that allows you to plan out in advance the exact amount of time you'd want to allocate to performing a specific task or tasks per day. Making the most out of your day and ending it with that pleasant feeling of knowing you've done all you could do in that single 24-hour period—that's what time management is all about. It means that you've made effective use of your time and accomplished what you've set to do for yourself for the day. Being good at managing your time makes you better at successfully completing all of your work and life-related activities, tasks, or responsibilities. The principal idea behind efficient time management is to prioritize your work tasks based on their importance and urgency and estimate the time needed to complete them in advance

Methodology

This study employs an extensive literature review across different research work and article to discover and determine different time management techniques and its impact on the work-life balance of a career woman. Overall, the in-depth review allows a broad examination of the research problem, providing insights into challenges faced by career women and the impact time management techniques has on her work-life balance.

Review of Findings

Time Management Techniques for Work-Life Balance

Time management is the coordination of tasks and activities to maximize the effectiveness of an individual's efforts. Essentially, the purpose of time management is to enable people to get more and better work done in less time. Elements of time management include organization, planning, and scheduling to best take advantage of the time available. Time management techniques also take into account an individual's particular situation and their relevant capabilities and characteristics.

Several techniques can be utilized to manage time effectively and facilitate a better work-life balance. There's no universal system for time management; the following techniques have been identified as particularly helpful for career women:

1. Prioritization:

- **Time blocking:** As levels increase in the corporate ladder, responsibilities increase. Time blocking can help in allocating specific periods for all activities. Time blocking is a time management and productivity technique that involves dividing your day into blocks of time and assigning a specific task or set of tasks to each block. You estimate how long a task will take and commit to working on it during its block without getting distracted. This permits career women to separate work tasks from personal time, creating clear boundaries between their professional and personal lives. This also allows them to focus on the most important tasks, ensuring they meet work deadlines while still having time for themselves.

- **The Eisenhower matrix:** This tool assists women deal with life and work balance, when to prioritize and what level of urgency to assign to the task. This would ensure they focus on high impact tasks, reducing feelings of overwhelm.

2. Delegation:

- Many career women feel a sense of responsibility to do everything themselves, but delegation is a powerful technique to reduce workload and create space for other important tasks. Whether at work or home, effective delegation allows women to share responsibilities and avoid burnout.

- At work, identify tasks that can be delegated to team members. In your personal life, consider outsourcing tasks like cleaning, grocery shopping, or meal prep. Delegating frees up your time for high-impact activities that only you can do—whether it's advancing your career, spending time with family, or pursuing personal passions.

3. Goal setting and time allocation:

- SMART goals: Setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals is an effective way to manage both work and personal objectives. Career women can break down large tasks into manageable pieces, ensuring steady progress and reducing anxiety about completing complex projects.

- The Pomodoro technique: This method involves working in short bursts (usually 25 minutes), followed by short breaks. It helps career women maintain focus during work tasks and prevents burnout, giving them a mental recharge to engage in personal activities afterward.

- Time audit: Put simply, a time audit is the process of tracking exactly what you spend your time on for a consecutive period. The results can be analysed to arrange your time in a more efficient way. This, in turn, gives you more free time to work on what actually matters to you and your business.

4. Leverage on technology:

- Technology is a powerful tool for effective time management. Harnessing the power of technology to optimize time management has become increasingly crucial in today's fast-paced world. According to a study conducted by the American Institute of Stress, 46% of employees report feeling burnout due to their workload. One solution to combating this issue is by utilizing time management tools and apps. In fact, research from the University of California Irvine shows that employees who use time tracking software are 30% more productive in managing their time effectively. These tools can help individuals prioritize tasks, set deadlines, and track progress, leading to improved efficiency and reduced stress levels.

- Moreover, technology allows for remote work and flexible scheduling, which can enhance work-life balance. The Annual Workplace Flexibility Study by FlexJobs found that 65% of employees believe they would be more productive working from home due to fewer distractions. This highlights the importance of leveraging technology to streamline daily tasks and create a more conducive work environment. By embracing technological advancements in time management, individuals and organizations can achieve higher levels of productivity and well-being. There are numerous time management apps and tools to help one stay organized, track your tasks, or even block distractions

5. Self-care and downtime:

- Many women overlook self-care in favour of work or family obligations. However, prioritizing personal time is critical for maintaining mental and physical health. These should be integrated into daily routines, ensuring that women have time to recharge. This could be anything from meditation sessions, exercise, hobbies, or simply quiet time. By treating these activities with the same importance as a work meeting, individuals can ensure they're maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Challenges and Barriers to Effective Time Management

While time management techniques can be highly beneficial, career women often face specific obstacles that may obstruct their ability to manage time effectively:

1. Social expectations: Women are often expected to excel in both work and home, causing guilt when they do not meet social standards. This pressure may lead to an inability to determine realistic boundaries.

2. Workplace demands: Career women in high pressure or male-dominated industries may experience expectations of working beyond regular hours, which can interfere with their personal life and self-care routine.

3. Internal guilt: Women may feel guilty of giving preference to family or self-care, or vice versa. This feeling of guilt can reduce the effectiveness of time management strategies as women feel forced to fulfil all obligations at the cost of their well-being.

4. Unexpected life events: Family emergency, health concerns, and other personal challenges can disrupt carefully drafted time management plans, leading to stress and burnout.

Recommendations for Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

To overcome some of these issues, the following are recommended:

1. Supportive workplaces: Organizations can create policies that accommodate flexible working hours where employees can work from home, provide for family commitments, and maintain a work environment where women are not judged to prioritize personal well-being, and also by having creche and sickbays within the organization's building. Support from the organization can help tremendously in maintaining work-life balance. Not only this but also support from supervisor, family, and colleagues can positively contribute in this matter (Tasnim, Hossain, & Enam, 2017).

2. Empowerment through mentorship (women encouraging women): Learning from mentors who have successfully managed the issues of work-life balance can offer important advice and guidance for career women.

3. Open communication: Open interaction with employers, family members, and colleagues can help create understanding and flexibility.

Conclusion

In conclusion, career women need time management methods to balance work and life. These include setting priorities, creating limits, sharing tasks, and taking care of themselves. These steps can cut down stress, boost output, and make life better overall. However, barriers such as societal expectations and workplace dynamics often create obstacles that can make it difficult for women to implement these strategies effectively. So, we must see the special problems career women face and build places that help them find this balance. Organizations have an important role to play in helping career women such as flexible working arrangements, child care support, and self-care support.

In the end, using good time management methods can help women take charge of their day. This means they'll have the time and drive to do great at work and in their personal lives.

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