



Work–Life Balance among Single Working Mothers in Coimbatore District

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ABSTRACT

Work–life balance has become an important concern among working women due to increasing professional responsibilities and family commitments. The present study examines the work–life balance of single working mothers and identifies the influence of work-related factors such as work hours, distance to workplace, employment benefits, and income on their personal and professional well-being. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 63 single working mothers using a structured questionnaire through the convenience sampling method. Secondary data were collected from journals, books, and previous research studies related to work–life balance and single parenting. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis through SPSS. The findings of the study reveal that single working mothers experience a moderate level of work–life balance while facing challenges related to

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workload, commuting distance, and limited organizational support. The correlation analysis indicates that work hours and distance to workplace have a negative relationship with work–life balance, whereas employment benefits positively influence work–life balance. The regression analysis further shows that the selected work-related factors collectively influence the work–life balance of respondents. The study concludes that supportive workplace policies, flexible working arrangements, and organizational support are essential for improving the well-being and quality of life of single working mothers.

Introduction

Work–life balance has emerged as an important area of study in recent years due to the increasing participation of women in the workforce and the growing complexity of balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Work–life balance refers to the ability of individuals to effectively manage work-related duties along with family and personal commitments without experiencing excessive stress or conflict. A healthy work–life balance contributes to employee satisfaction, organizational productivity, mental well-being, and overall quality of life (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). For single working mothers, maintaining such a balance becomes more challenging because they independently handle both income generation and family responsibilities.

Single working mothers represent a vulnerable yet significant segment of society. They are required to fulfill multiple roles such as employee, caregiver, decision-maker, and homemaker simultaneously. The absence of spousal support often increases emotional pressure, financial burden, parenting stress, and time constraints. According to Voydanoff (2005), work and family responsibilities are closely interconnected, and imbalance between these domains can lead to stress, burnout, and reduced psychological well-being. Similarly, Higgins, Duxbury, and Lyons (2010) observed that working mothers frequently experience role overload due to competing demands from workplace and family environments.

In India, socio-cultural expectations continue to place major caregiving and household responsibilities on women, regardless of their employment status. As a result, single working mothers often struggle to balance occupational responsibilities with childcare, household management, and social obligations. Research by Mathew and Panchanatham (2011) found that Indian working women experience considerable stress in balancing work and family roles, particularly in urban areas where professional expectations are high. The

study further emphasized that lack of organizational support and flexible work arrangements negatively affects women's personal and professional lives.

Coimbatore District, one of the prominent industrial and educational centers in Tamil Nadu, has experienced rapid economic and social transformation in recent years. The district offers employment opportunities in sectors such as textiles, healthcare, information technology, banking, education, and manufacturing, leading to an increase in the number of working women. However, with increasing work participation, women—especially single mothers—face significant challenges in managing professional duties alongside family responsibilities. A study conducted among working women in Tamil Nadu reported that long working hours, workload pressure, lack of childcare support, and insufficient family assistance contribute to work–life imbalance and occupational stress (Lakshmi & Gopinath, 2013).

The challenges faced by single working mothers are multidimensional. Financial insecurity, emotional strain, social stigma, childcare responsibilities, and limited personal time significantly affect their physical and psychological well-being. According to Ahmad and Omar (2010), inadequate work–life balance among working women can reduce job satisfaction and increase stress levels, eventually affecting organizational performance and family relationships. Supportive workplace policies such as flexible scheduling, leave benefits, childcare facilities, and emotional support systems are therefore essential for improving the quality of life of single mothers.

Furthermore, organizations have increasingly recognized that employee well-being directly influences productivity, commitment, and retention. Family-friendly organizational policies help employees manage dual responsibilities effectively and reduce work–family conflict (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). In the context of single working mothers, such support becomes highly important because they carry sole responsibility for both economic and family management.

Therefore, studying the work–life balance of single working mothers in Coimbatore District is essential to understand the specific challenges they encounter in balancing work and personal life. The study also helps identify the coping strategies adopted by single mothers and the role of organizational and social support in enhancing their well-being. Understanding these factors can contribute to the formulation of effective workplace policies and social support mechanisms aimed at empowering single working mothers and improving their overall quality of life.

Review of Literature

Work–life balance has become a significant area of research due to the increasing participation of women in the workforce and the challenges associated with balancing professional and personal responsibilities. Several researchers have examined the relationship between work demands, family responsibilities, stress, and well-being among working women and single mothers.

Jeffrey H. Greenhaus and Tammy D. Allen (2011) defined work–life balance as the extent to which individuals are equally engaged and satisfied with their work and family roles. The study emphasized that effective work–life balance contributes to psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and improved family relationships. The authors further highlighted that imbalance between work and family domains may lead to stress, burnout, and reduced productivity.

Phyllis Moen and Patricia Voydanoff (2005) examined the relationship between work demands and family responsibilities and found that excessive workload and insufficient family support create work–family conflict among working women. The study concluded that women who experience higher levels of role conflict are more likely to face emotional exhaustion and reduced life satisfaction.

Linda Duxbury, Christopher Higgins, and Sean Lyons (2010) studied dual-earner families and observed that women often experience role overload because they simultaneously manage employment and household responsibilities. Their findings revealed that long working hours and lack of organizational support significantly affect women’s physical and psychological well-being.

In the Indian context, R. V. Mathew and N. Panchanatham (2011) conducted a study on working women and reported that balancing family and professional life remains a major challenge due to cultural expectations and limited support systems. The study found that women frequently experience stress and fatigue while managing multiple responsibilities. Flexible work arrangements and family support were identified as important factors in improving work–life balance.

Aminah Ahmad and Zoharah Omar (2010) examined the influence of family-supportive work culture on employees’ commitment and turnover intention. The researchers concluded that organizations providing supportive policies such as flexible scheduling, leave benefits, and childcare facilities positively influence employee satisfaction and reduce stress levels among working women.

A study by K. S. Lakshmi and S. Gopinath (2013) reviewed the work–life balance of women employees and highlighted that increasing work pressure, technological advancements, and changing family structures have

intensified stress among working women. The authors emphasized that organizations should implement employee-friendly policies to support women in balancing work and family responsibilities effectively.

Research specifically related to single mothers indicates that they face greater challenges compared to married working women because they independently manage childcare, financial responsibilities, and household activities. Catherine E. Ross and John Mirowsky (1995) found that single mothers are more vulnerable to stress, depression, and emotional strain due to financial insecurity and limited social support. The study suggested that strong social networks and workplace support can help reduce stress among single mothers.

Similarly, Ellen Galinsky and James T. Bond (1998) reported that flexible working hours and supportive supervisors significantly improve the ability of working mothers to manage family responsibilities. Their study indicated that employees who receive organizational support demonstrate higher productivity and lower levels of work–family conflict.

In Tamil Nadu and other urban regions of India, studies have shown that women employees in sectors such as education, healthcare, banking, and information technology experience difficulties in balancing work and family life due to long working hours and role expectations. Research findings indicate that work–life imbalance negatively affects mental health, job satisfaction, and family relationships among working women.

From the above literature, it is evident that work–life balance is a critical issue among working women, especially single working mothers who independently manage professional and family responsibilities. Most studies have focused on general working women or dual-earner families, while limited research has been conducted specifically on single working mothers in Coimbatore District. Therefore, the present study aims to fill this research gap by examining the work–life balance of single working mothers in Coimbatore District and identifying the factors influencing their personal and professional well-being.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the work–life balance of single working mothers in Coimbatore District. The study is empirical in nature and is based on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected directly from 63 single working mothers through a structured questionnaire consisting of demographic details and questions related to work–life balance, work hours, distance to workplace, employment benefits, and income. Secondary data were gathered from journals, books, research articles, websites, and previous studies related to work–life balance

and single parenting. The respondents were selected using the convenience sampling method based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study. The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and various statistical tools such as percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were used to interpret the data and identify the relationship between the selected variables and work–life balance among single working mothers.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, the participation of women in the workforce has increased significantly due to economic necessity, career aspirations, and changing social conditions. Among working women, single working mothers face greater challenges because they are solely responsible for earning income, managing household responsibilities, and caring for their children without spousal support. Balancing professional responsibilities with family commitments often creates stress, emotional pressure, time constraints, and work–family conflict (Voydanoff, 2005). Long working hours, commuting distance, lack of flexible work arrangements, limited organizational support, and financial responsibilities further affect their physical and psychological well-being (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lyons, 2010).

In Coimbatore District, increasing employment opportunities in sectors such as education, healthcare, textiles, banking, and information technology have encouraged more women to participate in the workforce. However, single working mothers continue to face difficulties in maintaining a proper balance between work and family life. Studies have shown that poor work–life balance can reduce job satisfaction, affect mental health, decrease productivity, and negatively influence family relationships (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). Therefore, there is a need to study the factors influencing the work–life balance of single working mothers and identify suitable measures to improve their overall well-being and quality of life.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the work–life balance among single working mothers in Coimbatore District.
2. To examine the relationship between work-related factors and work–life balance.
3. To suggest measures for improving the work–life balance of single working mothers.

Data analysi

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 30 Years	18	28.6
	31–40 Years	27	42.9
	Above 40 Years	18	28.6
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	24	38.1
	Postgraduate	30	47.6
	Others	9	14.3
Occupation	Private Employee	29	46.0
	Teacher/Faculty	14	22.2
	Healthcare Worker	10	15.9
	Others	10	15.9
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	21	33.3
	₹20,001–₹40,000	28	44.4
	Above ₹40,000	14	22.2
Number of Children	One Child	39	61.9
	Two Children	20	31.7
	More than Two	4	6.3

The demographic profile shows that the majority of respondents (42.9%) belong to the age group of 31–40 years, indicating that most single working mothers are in their economically active stage. Regarding educational qualification, 47.6% of respondents are postgraduates, showing a comparatively high educational background among the participants.

Most respondents (46.0%) are employed in private sector organizations, while others work in educational institutions and healthcare services. In terms of monthly income, 44.4% earn between ₹20,001 and ₹40,000 per month, indicating moderate earning capacity among the respondents.

The majority of respondents (61.9%) have one child, which still places significant caregiving responsibilities on single mothers. The demographic findings highlight that occupational demands, financial

responsibilities, and childcare obligations collectively influence the work–life balance of single working mothers in Coimbatore District.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Work–Life Balance (WLB)	3.000	0.538	63
Work Hours	8.190	1.830	63
Distance to Workplace	5.281	4.998	63
Employment Benefits	1.809	0.395	63
Income	1.428	0.962	63

The above table presents the descriptive statistics of the variables considered for the study among 63 single working mothers in Coimbatore District. The mean score of Work–Life Balance (WLB) is 3.000 with a standard deviation of 0.538, indicating a moderate level of work–life balance among the respondents. The low variation shows that the respondents share relatively similar experiences regarding balancing work and personal life.

The mean value of Work Hours is 8.190 with a standard deviation of 1.830, which indicates that most respondents work approximately eight hours per day. Longer working hours may create difficulty in managing family responsibilities and personal well-being.

The variable Distance to Workplace has a mean score of 5.281 and a high standard deviation of 4.998, showing considerable variation in commuting distance among respondents. Longer travel distance may increase stress and reduce time spent with family.

Employment Benefits recorded a mean value of 1.809 with a standard deviation of 0.395, suggesting that only limited employment benefits are available to many respondents. Lack of supportive workplace policies may negatively influence their work–life balance.

The mean score for Income is 1.428 with a standard deviation of 0.962, indicating moderate variation in income levels among respondents. Income level plays a crucial role in managing household responsibilities and financial stability among single working mothers.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Work–Life Balance and Related Variables

Variables	WLB	Work Hours	Distance	Benefits	Income
Work–Life Balance (WLB)	1	-0.294*	-0.349**	0.227*	-0.093
Work Hours	-0.294*	1	0.325**	0.118	-0.047
Distance	-0.349**	0.325**	1	-0.202	0.020
Benefits	0.227*	0.118	-0.202	1	-0.163
Income	-0.093	-0.047	0.020	-0.163	1

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The above table presents the correlation matrix showing the relationship between Work–Life Balance (WLB) and selected variables among single working mothers in Coimbatore District.

The correlation analysis reveals that Work Hours have a negative and significant relationship with Work–Life Balance ($r = -0.294$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that an increase in working hours leads to a decrease in the level of work–life balance among single working mothers. Longer working hours reduce the time available for childcare, family interaction, and personal well-being, thereby increasing work–family conflict.

Distance to Workplace also shows a negative and highly significant relationship with Work–Life Balance ($r = -0.349$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that respondents who travel longer distances to their workplace experience greater difficulty in balancing work and family responsibilities. Longer commuting time may create physical exhaustion, stress, and reduced quality time with family members.

Employment Benefits demonstrate a positive and significant relationship with Work–Life Balance ($r = 0.227$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that organizational support mechanisms such as flexible working hours, paid leave, medical facilities, childcare support, and other employee benefits positively contribute to improving the work–life balance of single working mothers.

Income shows a negative but statistically insignificant relationship with Work–Life Balance ($r = -0.093$). This implies that income level alone does not significantly influence the work–life balance of respondents in the present study. Although higher income may provide financial security, it may not necessarily reduce the challenges associated with balancing professional and family responsibilities.

Further, Work Hours and Distance to Workplace have a positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.325$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that respondents who travel longer distances may also spend more time at work, leading to increased workload and time pressure.

Overall, the correlation analysis indicates that Work Hours and Distance to Workplace negatively influence work–life balance, whereas Employment Benefits positively contribute to better balance among single working mothers in Coimbatore District. The findings emphasize the importance of supportive organizational policies and manageable work conditions in improving the quality of life of single working mothers.

Table 4: Model Summary of Regression Analysis

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.451	0.203	0.148	0.497

The above table presents the model summary of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the influence of Work Hours, Distance to Workplace, Employment Benefits, and Income on the Work–Life Balance (WLB) of single working mothers in Coimbatore District.

The correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.451 indicates a moderate relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables included in the model. The coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.203, which means that 20.3% of the variation in Work–Life Balance is explained by Work Hours, Distance, Benefits, and Income. The remaining 79.7% of variation is influenced by other factors not included in the study.

The Adjusted R² value of 0.148 indicates that after adjusting for the number of predictors, the model explains 14.8% of the variance in Work–Life Balance. The standard error of the estimate is 0.497, showing the average deviation of observed values from the predicted values.

Table 5: ANOVA for Regression Model

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.660	4	0.915	3.700	0.009
Residual	14.340	58	0.247		

Total	18.000	62			
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The ANOVA table tests the overall significance of the regression model. The calculated F value is 3.700 with a significance value of 0.009, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

This result indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and that the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on the Work–Life Balance of single working mothers in Coimbatore District. Therefore, the model is suitable for predicting Work–Life Balance based on the selected variables.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	3.290	0.417	—	7.883	0.000
Work Hours	-0.073	0.037	-0.247	-1.957	0.055
Distance	-0.024	0.014	-0.227	-1.768	0.082
Benefits	0.271	0.168	0.199	1.610	0.113
Income	-0.038	0.067	-0.068	-0.572	0.570

The regression coefficient table explains the individual contribution of each independent variable toward predicting Work–Life Balance among single working mothers.

The constant value ($B = 3.290$) indicates the predicted level of Work–Life Balance when all independent variables are held constant.

Work Hours have a negative beta coefficient ($\beta = -0.247$) with a significance value of 0.055. This indicates that an increase in working hours tends to reduce Work–Life Balance among respondents. Although the relationship is close to significance, it is slightly above the 0.05 significance level.

Distance to Workplace also shows a negative relationship with Work–Life Balance ($\beta = -0.227$, $p = 0.082$). This suggests that longer commuting distance negatively affects the ability of single working mothers to maintain balance between work and family responsibilities. However, the relationship is not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Employment Benefits have a positive beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.199$, $p = 0.113$), indicating that supportive organizational benefits positively contribute to Work–Life Balance. Although the effect is positive, it is not statistically significant in the present model.

Income has a negative beta coefficient ($\beta = -0.068$) with a significance value of 0.570, indicating that income does not significantly influence Work–Life Balance among the respondents.

Overall, the regression analysis indicates that Work Hours and Distance tend to negatively influence Work–Life Balance, whereas Employment Benefits positively influence it. Among the variables studied, Work Hours show the strongest impact on the Work–Life Balance of single working mothers in Coimbatore District.

Suggestions

1. Organizations should introduce flexible working hours to help single working mothers manage both professional and family responsibilities effectively (Galinsky & Bond, 1998).
2. Work-from-home and hybrid working options may be provided whenever possible to reduce stress and commuting burden (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).
3. Employers should provide supportive benefits such as childcare facilities, paid leave, medical assistance, and counseling services to improve employee well-being (Ahmad & Omar, 2010).
4. Stress management and employee wellness programs should be conducted regularly to improve the mental health of working mothers (Lakshmi & Gopinath, 2013).
5. Organizations should create a supportive and family-friendly work environment for women employees to reduce work–family conflict (Allen et al., 2000).
6. Government and social organizations should develop welfare schemes and support systems specifically for single working mothers.
7. Single working mothers should be encouraged to practice effective time management and maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life.

Conclusion

The present study examined the work–life balance of single working mothers in Coimbatore District and analyzed the influence of work-related factors such as work hours, distance to workplace, employment

benefits, and income on their work–life balance. The findings revealed that single working mothers experience a moderate level of work–life balance while facing significant challenges related to workload, commuting distance, financial responsibilities, and limited organizational support.

The correlation analysis showed that work hours and distance to workplace negatively affect work–life balance, whereas employment benefits positively contribute to better balance between professional and personal life. These findings are consistent with earlier studies which reported that excessive workload and insufficient support systems increase work–family conflict among working women (Voydanoff, 2005; Mathew & Panchanatham, 2011). The regression analysis further indicated that work-related factors collectively influence the work–life balance of respondents. Supportive organizational policies and flexible work arrangements play an important role in improving the well-being of working mothers (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

Overall, the study concludes that maintaining work–life balance is essential for the physical, emotional, and professional well-being of single working mothers. Creating a supportive work environment and implementing employee-friendly policies can help them effectively manage both work and family responsibilities, thereby improving their quality of life and organizational productivity (Ahmad & Omar, 2010).

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