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A Comparative Study on Quality of Work-Life Balance Between Working Women and Women Entrepreneurs

Abstract

The quality of work-life balance (QWLB) has emerged as a crucial determinant of productivity, job satisfaction, and overall well-being in contemporary professional environments. This study aims to compare the quality of work-life balance between working women employed in organizations and women entrepreneurs managing their own ventures. Using a mixed-method approach, the study collected data from 120 respondents—60 working women and 60 women entrepreneurs—through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that women entrepreneurs enjoy higher autonomy and job satisfaction, while working women experience better job security and structured support systems. However, both groups face common challenges such as time management, role conflict, and societal expectations. The study concludes that customized organizational policies and entrepreneurial support mechanisms are vital for improving QWLB among women professionals.

Keywords

Work-life balance, Working women, Women entrepreneurs, Quality of work life, Job satisfaction, Gender studies

1. Introduction

The increasing participation of women in the workforce and entrepreneurial sectors has transformed socio-economic dynamics globally. However, the dual responsibilities of professional commitments and domestic obligations often challenge women's ability to maintain an optimal balance between work and personal life. Quality of Work-Life Balance

(QWLB) is therefore an essential factor influencing not only professional success but also personal well-being and mental health.

While corporate women often face rigid schedules and organizational pressures, women entrepreneurs encounter uncertainties and extended working hours in managing their ventures. This comparative study seeks to identify differences and similarities in the quality of work-life balance between these two groups, analyzing key factors that influence their experiences.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To assess the quality of work-life balance among working women and women entrepreneurs.
2. To identify major challenges faced by both groups in achieving work-life balance.
3. To analyze factors influencing job satisfaction and well-being.
4. To suggest strategies for improving QWLB among women professionals.

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies have explored the concept of work-life balance and its implications for organizational performance and employee satisfaction. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), work-life conflict arises when demands from work and family roles are mutually incompatible.

Working Women: Previous studies (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002; Gupta, 2018) show that working women often struggle with fixed working hours, limited flexibility, and lack of support for family responsibilities. Organizational stressors, gender bias, and lack of career advancement opportunities further exacerbate these challenges.

Women Entrepreneurs: Research by Brush (1992) and Jamali (2009) highlights that women entrepreneurs enjoy higher autonomy and flexibility but also face stress due to multitasking, business risks, and lack of social support systems.

Comparative Perspective: While corporate employment provides stability, entrepreneurship offers independence at the cost of longer work hours and uncertain income. Studies by Singh and Sharma (2020) indicate that women entrepreneurs experience a better sense of control but higher work pressure.

3. Research Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive and comparative in nature.

Sample: A total of 120 women respondents were selected using purposive sampling—60 working women from IT, education, and banking sectors, and 60 women entrepreneurs from small and medium-scale enterprises.

Data Collection: Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on

Walton's Quality of Work-Life model (1975), covering eight dimensions—adequate compensation, safe working conditions, work-life integration, social integration, growth opportunities, constitutionalism, social relevance, and overall satisfaction. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted to capture qualitative insights.

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0. Statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, t-test, and ANOVA were employed to compare QWLB between the two groups.

4. Results

The quantitative analysis revealed significant differences between working women and women entrepreneurs in key QWLB parameters:

Dimension	Working Women (Mean)	Women Entrepreneurs (Mean)	t-value	Significance
Work Autonomy	3.2	4.4	2.89	0.005
Job Security	4.5	3.1	3.04	0.004
Flexibility	3.0	4.2	2.76	0.007
Work Pressure	3.9	4.1	0.64	NS
Family Support	3.5	3.7	0.54	NS
Job Satisfaction	3.8	4.3	2.11	0.03

Key

Findings:

- Women entrepreneurs reported higher autonomy and flexibility.
- Working women experienced greater job security and stable income.
- Both groups struggled with time constraints and balancing household duties.
- Entrepreneurial women expressed higher intrinsic satisfaction but also higher stress due to business uncertainties.

5. Discussion

The results affirm that both occupational categories offer distinct advantages and challenges. Women entrepreneurs derive motivation from independence and creative expression but face financial pressures and social isolation. Conversely, working women benefit from structured environments and steady pay but struggle with rigid work schedules and limited control over decision-making.

Cultural expectations and gender roles significantly impact both groups' QWLB. Despite increasing societal awareness, women continue to shoulder disproportionate household responsibilities, leading to role overload. Organizational interventions such as flexible

working hours, telecommuting options, and supportive family policies can enhance QWLB among employed women. For entrepreneurs, access to mentorship networks, financial literacy programs, and digital platforms can mitigate stress and improve balance.

6. Conclusion

This comparative analysis demonstrates that quality of work-life balance is influenced not merely by professional status but by the degree of control, flexibility, and social support available to women. Working women prioritize security and stability, while entrepreneurs value autonomy and self-fulfillment. Both groups require supportive ecosystems—organizational, familial, and policy-level—to sustain work-life harmony.

Recommendations:

1. Organizations should promote gender-sensitive HR policies, flexible work arrangements, and wellness initiatives.
2. Entrepreneurial training programs should incorporate stress management and networking support.
3. Government and industry bodies should create inclusive platforms for women's professional growth.

7. References

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