
Struggle to Strike Balance Between Professional and Personal Life: A Study on 21st Century IT Professionals

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Balancing the demands of work and family is very important for a dual-career couple. This study investigates the job satisfaction and marital quality of heterosexual married couples working in the IT sector. The results of the study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistical analytical tools like Spearman's Correlation method have been used. The results revealed that the two variables are negatively correlated. The results of this study would further help employers to realize the importance of time of the employees working in the IT sector and prevent any measure of take-home jobs. Academicians can use the results to build upon new theories and models for a better understanding of such complex phenomena. This study is probably the first to include the dimensions of job satisfaction, marital quality and overworking among married couples who work for the IT sector which functions round the clock, specifically in the Indian context

Keywords : Job Satisfaction, Marital Quality, IT Sector, Working couples, Overworking

INTRODUCTION

One could witness the changing trend in our society as a result of globalization and modernization. With emerging business, workforce has diversified into various sectors. The service sector itself caters to a huge population. One among its contributors is the IT Sector. With booming business, IT sector has carved out a place for itself in the 21st century market.

Number of people employed in the IT sector today is much more than it used to be two decades back. This composition is competitive in terms of gender as well wherein more and more women are employed in and are at the forefront contributing to this ocean-large working force in the IT sector. In this scenario, many of the professionals choose their partners from the same or similar sector. Marrying the same profession person only complicates the work as well as family life.

Families are to a great extent affected when the couples are employed in the IT sector as their work and family environments interact. Therefore the study of this interaction becomes necessary to understand the real situations faced by people in a better way in order to help them elevate their overall wellbeing.

With the significant changes witnessed in trend with

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regard to work and family, one cannot doubt the interaction between one's work and life realms. The Work/Family Conflict models propose that conflict arises when the demands of one domain are incompatible with demands of the other domain. Today's diverse workplace is increasingly populated with dual-career couples, where both husband and wife have their own careers. Interest in family-related issues in management researchers is relatively new, manifesting itself primarily in the past 20 years. Legitimate linkages between the two spheres of work and family are a much spoken about topics these days.

Zedeck's (1992) model of targets of research in work/family conflict further legitimizes the linkage interrelatedness of the two variables:

The effect of work on family: This area examines what impact work factors have on family matters. A common finding states that aspects of work such as work stress have negative effects on families.

The effect of family on work: This perspective generally focuses on how structural or developmental aspects of family have impact on work behavior. Some researchers view family life as positive which blocks disappointment at work; while others claim that family responsibility is a major determinant of work absenteeism.

The family-work interaction: This is the third model of work/family conflict that views work and family as interacting and interdependent. There is no simple and causal link between work and family matters.

Working Couples in Globalized India

Today, India has witnessed tremendous change in the attitude one holds about working couples. A slight majority of the Indian population believes that both the members should contribute to the family income. The importance of balancing the demands of work and family comes into picture once one considers the case of a dual-career couple. Silberstein

(1992) concluded that most dual-career couples have a work-oriented lifestyle prior to the birth of children. However, once there are children, the dual-career system undergoes a profound shift. The pragmatic demands of home life increase dramatically and cannot be postponed, rescheduled, or ignored. He also reported that the difference in the degree that wives and husbands accommodate their careers for children has become a central marital tension.

The 'traditional' division of family roles had the husband as the primary breadwinner; whereas, the wife was responsible for the household chores including the task of bringing up 'her' children. But as an outcome of globalization and modernization, more and more married women have entered the labour force resulting in the emergence of a more egalitarian division of family roles. Although attitudes have changed and more husbands make an effort to help their wives with household activities, the responsibility still lies on the wife's shoulder to make sure that things are done timely in an appropriate manner. It is also suspected that some wives refuse help from their husbands because of their acceptance of traditional family roles. Research has discovered that many of these wives somehow feel they are a failure as a wife if they don't manage the household, even though they work full time outside the home thereby contributing to a significant level of distress among them (Bruce & Tim, 1999). And the issue gets highlighted more in the IT sector wherein the job demands one to work round the clock throughout the year. This tremendous level of pressure to outperform in this cut-throat competition might lead to dysfunctions like stress, marital discord, child delinquency in the family life leading to a poorer quality of life and dissatisfaction.

Working for extra hours at workplace or at home exploiting one's social and emotional resources to the extent to which they start depleting, for the purpose of reaching out new horizons, though brings in a significant increase in job satisfaction

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owing to the recognition and other monetary or non-monetary reinforcement one is presented with; it eats up the time one spends with his/her spouse leading to a poorer marital quality. Gradually, this discontent spills over from the personal to the professional realm which in turn decreases the individual's productivity.

Job Satisfaction

One's work environment is a broad umbrella term that includes physical situation as well as psychological experiences at one's workplace. The physical situations at work refer to one's job conditions, peer group, leader and leadership, promotions, pay schedule etc. whereas, psychological aspect refers to the impact that the physical situation of work has on the individual i.e. one's perception of one's ideal and real work conditions leading either to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Locke (1976) defines job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experience. Satisfaction in job is the result of how employees perceive their job provides those things that are important to them and their wellness. In simple terms, job satisfaction can be described as a positive evaluation of a specific job situation.

Marital Quality

Marriage and marriage ties are not as simple as they appear to be. Deciding to become a couple is one of the most challenging transitions of the family life cycle. The romanticized view of this transition further adds to its difficulty since everyone including the family, friends and couples themselves want to see only the happiness of this transition. The problems entailed may thus be pushed underground, only to intensify and surface later on (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

Marital quality (Vannoy & Philliber, 1992) has been defined as a close and compatible relationship making a distinction from marital satisfaction, adjustment and happiness. Booth and Johnson

(1994) used the term marital happiness to address a partner's global feeling about the marriage and its specific aspects, whereas marital quality includes the components of marital happiness, marital interaction, marital disagreement and other marital problems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the focus is on the IT sector which operates round the clock, the concept of over-working cannot be ignored. Robinson, B.E. (2001) examined the relationship between workaholism, family functioning and the psychological outcomes of family members and concluded that a workaholic while over engaged in his work, neglects a few important areas of the family life.

Studies have also shown that one's work demands and environment impacts the marital quality of his/her spouse adversely. Graham, Kathleen and Deborah (1985) from their study concluded that wife's employment has negative effects on husband's job and life satisfaction. Whereas, Barling (1984) in her study suggested that husbands' perceptions of the organizational climate and their job satisfaction were related to their wives' marital satisfaction in a significant, positive, and linear manner.

Coming to the aspect of work-life balance, the impact of job involvement and work-family conflict upon job and life satisfaction has been studied in depth by Tiwari, Singh and Singh (2005). They suggest a positive correlation between job involvement and job satisfaction where job involvement significantly interfered with one's family life. Work-family conflict has also been explored by Kinnunen, Geurts and Mauno (2004) in their study where they found out that for women, the work-to-family conflict significantly predicted job dissatisfaction, parental distress as well as psychological symptoms. However, among men, a low level of satisfaction or well-being functioned as a precursor of work-to-family conflict.

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Rationale:

After an in depth study of available literature on the subject as well as issues related to it, it is clear that there is not much work done encompassing the realms of job satisfaction and marital quality in the IT sector which demands round the clock work and hence a stressful work condition, though studies relating job and life satisfaction (which broadly includes marital quality along with family and overall wellbeing) are quite abundant. One could find studies on effect of husband's/wife's job on his/her spouse's marital quality. Work-family conflict along with gender differences in marital satisfaction and job satisfaction are studied over time. The ill effects of overworking and excessive job involvement on one's personal life have also been touched upon by several researchers. But the aspect of job satisfaction and marital quality among couples especially in the IT sector needs further exploration. This study unravels the relationship between job satisfaction and marital quality among couples who work in the IT sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Aim:

To assess the job satisfaction and marital quality among heterosexual married couples working in the IT sector.

Objectives:

1. To assess the job satisfaction and marital quality level among heterosexual married couples working in the IT sector.
2. To find out the relationship between job satisfaction and marital quality among heterosexual married couples working in the IT sector.

Hypothesis:

There is a negative correlation between job satisfaction and marital quality among heterosexual

married couples working in the IT sector.

Sampling:

Sample Size: The sample consisted of a 60 participants (30 married heterosexual couples) working in the IT sector. There were strict criterions for inclusion or exclusion for this group of participants.

Inclusion Criterion:

- The couples should be employed in the service sector.
- The couples should be married for a minimum of 1 year.
- The couples should not be married for more than 12 years.
- The participants should not have had divorce or marital separation.
- The minimum educational requirement is graduation.
- The participants should be working for a minimum of 1 year.

Exclusion Criterion:

- If either of the spouses suffer from any sort of serious illness, the couple is excluded from the research.
- Foreign nationals.
- Homosexual couples.

Sampling Technique: Incidental sampling technique was used for the selection of sample. Incidental sampling is a type of non-probability sampling wherein the researcher selects the sample as per his/her convenience.

Tools Used:

1. Socio-demographic data sheet: It was used to collect information regarding the participant's socio-demographic details like age, profession, monthly income, religion etc. It included variables like age, sex, religion, income,

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educational and occupational details about the participants. It also assessed the number of years for which the participant has been married to his/her current partner along with the number of years he/she has been working in the IT sector.

2. **Job Satisfaction Scale:** The job satisfaction scale developed by Amar Singh and T.R. Sharma (1999) was used to assess the job satisfaction level of the participants. It is comprehensive and omnibus in nature. It was used as it is brief, reliable and valid and can be administered to any type of workers. The test-retest reliability of this scale is 0.978 with the validity of 0.743 and coefficient of correlation is 0.81.
3. **Marital Quality Scale:** The marital quality scale developed by Anisha Shah (1991) was used to assess the marital quality of the participants. It consists of 50 items in statement form, with a four point rating scale of „usually“, „sometimes“, „rarely“ and „never“, indicating the frequency of occurrence of various phenomenon in the marriage. Higher scores are indicative of a poorer quality of married life. The scale has high internal consistency (coefficient alpha) of 0.91 and high test-retest reliability of 0.83 over a 6 weeks interval. It has well established content and construct validity.

Data Collection:

The main phase of the research was preceded by a pilot phase, administered on 2 participants. This helped in to see if any subsequent changes have to be made before the main phase of the research was undertaken. Also, the data were correlated using Spearman Correlation method.

Administration of tools: A rapport was established with the comfortably seated participants. The scale was given to the participants and they were asked to respond to the statements. It was ensured that the participants understood the instructions well. The participants were encouraged to respond

spontaneously without taking much time in each question so as to get their correct response.

Ethical Considerations:

It was ensured that the participants' identity is not revealed anywhere in the test or after the test thereby maintaining the confidentiality of the test. The participants in not a single way were harmed physically, mentally or psychologically. The results were not looked at with any sort of prejudice or stereotype, trying to get a bias-free result. Also, the sample consisted of volunteer participants who were by no means forced to participate in the study. The participants were well informed about the procedure and nature of the test and were included in the study only after they signed the informed consent form.

The copyright laws will be abided and neither the scales nor the participants' results will be misused. The scales and results are used solely for academic purpose(s) and will not be duplicated or reproduced for any other purpose(s).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This first part of the chapter will give the description of the socio-demographic diversity of the participants followed by the analysis of results on job satisfaction and marital quality among the 30 heterosexual married couples working in the IT sector.

Socio-demographic Details of the Participants:

The total sample size of this study was 60 (30 heterosexual married couples working in the IT sector), included in the study keeping in mind the inclusion and the exclusion criteria. The sample was diverse in terms of geographical locations, age, designation, annual income, religion, number of years they have been working in the IT sector and the like.

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Analysis of Results:

First, the job satisfaction and marital quality level were assessed in the 30 heterosexual married couples working in the IT sector followed by correlating the two variables.

Analyzing the job satisfaction level among the 30 heterosexual married couples, one could witness the high levels of satisfaction at work in most of the individuals. Also, referring to Table 1, one could infer that the mean job satisfaction level among the 60 participants is 82.83 reflecting that the employees are extremely satisfied at work while the standard deviation accounts for 14.094. A very high standard deviation could imply the presence of outliers in the study owing to their individual differences.

Table 1 showing the mean and standard deviation in the job satisfaction scores of heterosexual married couples:

Job Satisfaction	N	Mean of Job Satisfaction	Std. Deviation
	60	82.83	14.094

Coming to the second dimension of the study, the marital quality level among the couples, one could see very high scores spread throughout. And, as per the norms of the Marital Quality Scale by Shah (1991), higher score would imply poorer marital quality. Therefore, majority of the couples show poor marital quality. Also, Referring to Table 2, one could infer that the mean marital quality level among the 60 participants is 89.32 while the standard deviation in this case is higher than that for job satisfaction, owing to the deviation of 25.829 from the mean.

Table2 showing the mean and standard deviation in the marital quality scores of heterosexual married couples:

Marital Quality	N	Mean of Job Satisfaction	Std. Deviation
	60	89.32	25.829

A higher standard deviation in this case, could imply the presence of outliers who lie on the two extreme poles in the art of balancing work/life demands. Some among which can very effectively balance their work life with family life (especially, marital life), while others face a difficulty in doing so, as for them, one of these realms is very demanding and taxing; resulting in their ignorance of the demands of the other realm forgoing their responsibility. This balance (or imbalance) between work related areas and personal life (work/life conflict) differs from person to person depending on the situation and the way he/she prioritizes work and life.

The research then went on to explore the relationship between the two dependent variables, i.e., job satisfaction and marital quality of the participants, these two variables were first computed followed by their statistical correlation using the Spearman's correlation test. Spearman's correlation test was used instead of Pearson's Correlation as it is a non-parametric statistical tool, the use of which is advocated because in this case, the data collected was not normally distributed. Also, the sampling technique (incidental sampling) used is a type of non-probability sampling. Therefore, a non-parametric statistical tool – the Spearman's correlation test was used for correlating the two variables.

Table 3 showing the correlation between job satisfaction and marital quality among 30 heterosexual married couples using Spearman's Correlation test:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Spearman's Correlation Value 'p'	Level of Correlation
Job Satisfaction	60	82.83	14.094	0.829	High Positive Correlation
Marital Quality	60	89.32	25.829		

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The global job satisfaction and marital quality scores were calculated for all the 60 participants. Table 3 shows the mean job satisfaction and marital quality scores of the participants. Spearman's Correlation test was done to find out the relationship between job satisfaction and marital quality among them.

Table 3 also indicates the Spearman's correlation value, ' ρ ' for job satisfaction and marital quality which was found out to be 0.829. The results show that there is a high positive correlation between job satisfaction and marital quality among the participants. But, according to the marital quality scale, high scores indicate poor marital quality. Thus the high positive correlation between job satisfaction and marital quality means that an increase in job satisfaction leads to a decrease in marital quality. Therefore, the results indicate that, there are 82.9 per cent chances that marital quality of participants would decrease with an increase in their job satisfaction.

Hence, the negative hypothesis which states that "there is a negative correlation between job satisfaction and marital quality among heterosexual married couples" can be accepted.

The correlation between job satisfaction and marital quality for the participants is in accordance with the results of Barling (1984) who in her study suggested that husbands' negative work-related experiences (overworking leading to stress) would have an adverse influence on the wives' perception of marital satisfaction. In addition to it, considering the male participants, this phenomenon can be attributed to their spouses' employment as suggested by Graham, Kathleen and Deborah (1985), who in from their study concluded that wife's employment has negative effects on husband's job and life satisfaction.

The current study suggests that job satisfaction and marital quality are negatively correlated, i.e., high work involvement which is at the core of the IT sector, though increases one's job satisfaction, cuts down the time given to one's family resulting in the

lowered quality of family life especially that with one's spouse as suggested by Tiwari, Singh and Singh (2005). Gradually this dissatisfaction at home leads to dissatisfaction at work as well via the spill-over effect wherein, one stops enjoying tasks he/she once loved doing and loses interest in work. This might be a warning sign to organizations to ensure a healthy life of its employees which eventually benefits the organization as well.

To summarize, the results of the current study indicate that job satisfaction and marital quality are negatively correlated because excessive job involvement though increases one's satisfaction at work, tends to eat up the family time leading to poorer marital quality.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

After a thorough analysis of results and an in depth review of literature, one can be sure about the interaction between one's work and other personal life realms in today's globalized world. Also, this interaction accommodates the work/family conflict that arises when the demands of one domain are incompatible with demands of the other domain. Workplace in the current scenario is populated with dual-career couples where both the spouse works in order to earn their living. This interests researchers to a great extent, as today a legitimate linkage between the two spheres of work and family can be easily traced.

Analyzing the literature available on the current issue with an approach to integrate one's personal as well as professional lives, one can see the need to explore the aspect of work-life balance. Therefore, a job related aspect – job satisfaction and a family related aspect – marital quality were explored. Adopting this approach, one can directly cater the issue of overworking in the IT Sector. As this was a relatively new area of study, very few studies catered to the needs and further, none encompassed all the above-mentioned viewpoints of integrating work-life realms which affect the IT professionals.

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This study explored job satisfaction and marital quality among dual-career couples employed in the IT sector.

Job satisfaction and marital quality were the two dependent variables assessed among 30 married couples working in the IT sector. The results indicate that job satisfaction and marital quality are negatively correlated. This would imply that with an increase in job satisfaction, one's marital quality decreases significantly; which could be attributed to excessive job involvement which though increases one's satisfaction at work, leaves with a very little time for one's family, especially spouse thereby affecting the marital quality of the individuals adversely.

Implications of the Study:

The study looks at a broader picture which is not restricted to one's performance at work but how satisfied an employee is in work and life. It aims at the overall wellbeing of the employees, suggesting ways to elevate total quality of life.

The research findings indicate that overworking affects one's family life, especially marital quality adversely. This is for the reason that excessive job involvement in the IT sector though fetches incentives and reinforcement at work leading to more job satisfaction, they leave an individual with a very little time for his family and personal life heading a poorer family life. Therefore, job satisfaction and marital quality are found to be negatively correlated among heterosexual married couples working in the IT sector. This suggests that for an overall wellbeing of an individual's health which includes, physical, psychological, social and emotional wellbeing; he/she should not be overworked.

However, finding the solution to the issue of overworking in the IT sector is not as obvious as it appears to be. It would require cognitive restructuring and change in attitudes of people at the workplace. A few measures to avoid overworking

could be to rightsize the staff empowering it to work in shifts with regular job rotations. A good leader and efficient team manager can also help the staff to manage time more effectively hence minimizing if not eliminating the possibility of overworking completely.

Limitations of the Study:

The main limitation of the study is the sampling technique used, i.e., incidental sampling which is a type of non probability sampling. Such a type of sampling does not give equal chance to all the participants to get selected in the study. This sampling style was used for the sake of convenience.

Additionally, more sincere response could have been obtained if the data was collected in person rather than using the online method of data collection. Also, the research has not looked into other job and family related factors influencing the participant's performance at both the levels, thereby leaving space for further research.

Suggestions for future research:

There is an unlimited scope of further research in the area of total employee welfare including his work and family life. Further research could be done on a larger sample, selected randomly which might be useful for further generalization of the research findings. This could also be done across sectors and businesses. Also, there is an advantage of getting better responses from the participants with the administration of test in person rather than using the online method of data collection and the same is suggested for future research.

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