

The Empirical Study on Work Life Balance of Self Employed Individuals

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Abstract

Self employment has increased popularity in recent times due to the high flexibility and earning. Less attention has been paid on work life balance of self employed men and women. Work-life balance is one of the most difficult matters that is faced by self employed men and women. In the recent era, women are motivated to start their own business with a skill and become self employed to meet her personal needs and become economically independent. The main aim of this paper is to explore how men and women who are self employed are managing their work and family life. The main purpose of this paper is to examine the factors that affect the work life balance of self employed individuals. The study also examined the main challenges being faced by men and women self employed individuals in managing their work and family life. To examine the factors exploratory factor analysis is used. The study collected the data from 285 respondents through structured questionnaire. The results of the study highlighted 6 factors namely Family role and success, society support, Family commitment, Time Management, Family support, Work stress and health issues. T-test is performed to understand the challenges of self employed individuals. The study suggests some useful implications to motivate the upcoming generation to start their own ventures or start their career being a self-employed. The analysis of the study shows that self employment is treated as a way to participate effectively in the family affairs due to flexibility which is one of the most important thing that is offered to self employed.

Keywords: Self Employment, Self Employed Individual, WLB, Work-Life Balance

Introduction

From several decades the topic of achieving work life balance has been the topic of central debate. There is lot of research that is taken out on work life balance but less research is conducted in context of self-employment. The present study focus on the need of studying the work life balance of self employed workers. As in recent times self employment has gained recognition and is increasing amongst all other forms of employment. Self employment is increasing at rapid pace as compared to paid employment. The category of self-employed persons includes those having less than 10 employees. Self employment is treated as one of the important form of employment that contribute in economic development (Tal, 2008). To promote self employment there is need to understand the relationship of psychosocial work environment that can help self employed to manage their work and family life to promote health and well being of self employed.

Self employment is preferred due to the reason of flexibility and autonomy. The research has shown that self-employed persons possess very high level of decision authority and control to organize and manage their resources well. Self employment provides the opportunity to enhance the skills and utilize the same in the work which provides the autonomy to the self employed individuals (Hundley, 2001). Women choose self employment because self employment gives women the opportunity to spend time for the domestic work and provide them flexible work environment to organize themselves for their family commitments and responsibility (Anthias and Mehta, 2003)

The important motivator for self employment is Autonomy. Acc. to the several studies and research men and women tend to choose self employment sue to the autonomy and financial returns. Self employment provides opportunity to the individuals for personal development With self employment the individuals feel themselves in charge of their life while in paid employment they need to work under someone (Peel, 2004). Self employment gives them opportunity to think broadly and take their decisions. Self employed are more satisfied with the work due to more flexibility and autonomy in this type of employment (Hundley, 2001)

Despite of many benefits certain challenges are related with self employment. Self employment does not provide health benefits due to uncertain or long hours of working. Self employment increases the health issues as it increases the stress level of the individual due to lack of security. Economic factors and resource availability are found to be the challenges in self employment. Lack of government initiative and support is another challenge for self employed ones (Genin, 2008)

In concept of self employment work activities that are involved includes the freelancer, contractors, day workers or professionals remunerated per consultation. Independent workers, professionals in co-partnership or on individual basis also cover under the category of self employed (Delage 2002). In our study we included those persons as self employed who are working with 5 or less than 5 employees.

Review of Literature

Burke et al. (2002) identified the differences between men and women in self-employment in terms of income. The study highlighted that women tend to be involved in other family responsibilities than men which gives them less time to devote on work due to which there is income differences in men and women.

Singh, (2007) studied the work life balance of male and female entrepreneurs. The findings revealed that there exists a difference of Work Life Balance between male and female entrepreneurs and this difference is also visible across the marital status. The survey has also identified the initiatives taken by the government, organizations, family and the individuals to maintain the Work Life Balance and steps to be taken to make it viable.

Gholipour et al. (2010) studied the work life balance of female entrepreneur especially through job sharing method. Qualitative and quantitative research method is used. The sample size includes the female entrepreneurs in education industry. The results of the study revealed that female in the workplace have a positive attitude towards job sharing.

Haslett (2010) explored the women entrepreneurs who have started their career after their family life. The study explored that women business ownership has increased by 10% within seven-year period, from 9,182,619 firms in 2002 to 10,075,630 firms in 2008. Women are more likely to start their business and rate of increase is twice as compared to men.

Strandh et. al. (2012) identified the work life balance of self-employed men and women in Europe. The results of the study concluded that self employed men and women experience a lower level of work-life balance than the employed one. When demands and job control is made constant then self employed women experience high WLB as compared to employed ones. The results confirm the importance of psychosocial working conditions as WLB is influenced through demand and control among self-employed men and women.

Dulk et al. (2012) studied the work life balance of self employed women. The study found the women working in training and development and business services being more satisfied as compared to the other sectors and are able to manage their work and family responsibilities well while women working in commercial services are found out to be less satisfactory with their work and family responsibilities.

Lero (2014) identified the construct of work life balance of self employed men and women and has explored the growth in self-employment during recessionary periods due to the less job opportunity and high flexibility being offered in self employment. The study concluded that individual start the self entrepreneurship due to high earnings and to deal with the family commitments due to flexible work environment. The study also highlighted the disadvantages being associated with self employment which includes irregular work hours, lack of security etc.

Boland (2015) made an attempt to define work life balance of entrepreneurs. He concluded that things that entrepreneurs typically compartmentalize into the “life” bucket (time with family, exercise, vacation and outings with friends) are essential to their work selves as a means to recharge and reset their mental and physical health and productivity. He suggested that do not treat your personal life as something you have to make time for and your work life as something you have to apologize for.

Munkejord (2016) explored the work life balance of self employed immigrants parents and the study suggested the work life balance of the individuals competing individually or on couple level. The study suggests that to have work life balance

among couples it is required that one partner should be at home otherwise the situation creates stressful work-family situation for the other.

Genin et al. (2008) explored the reasons as to why IT professionals opt for self employment. The study shows that IT professionals opt for self employment due to high work life balance and financial advantages.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are:-

1. To examine the factors of work life balance of self employed entrepreneurs.
2. To study the challenges faced by self employed entrepreneurs.

Research Methodology

The study is based on the primary data in connection to the outline objectives. The data was collected through the structured questionnaire method to examine the factors of work life balance and challenges. Research questions are answered through structured questionnaire. In work life balance questionnaire 32 statements are adapted from scale. The Work-Family Conflict Scale by Matthews et al. is used for analysis of the study that contains the statements related with attitude of entrepreneurs towards job, business and family life. Validity of the questions and statements were checked through professors' and experts' opinion to make sure that the questionnaire is simple and clear enough to provide information about the factors of WLB. The questionnaire was then first pilot tested on 10 self employed individuals to check the reliability of subscale of work life balance and it was found to be satisfactory. The reliability of the collected data was checked through cronbach alpha test.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.759	32

As cronbach alpha is more than 0.5 so the it shows that the exploratory research can be performed. This further suggests that the scale is reliable for measuring work life balance, based on internal consistency.

Sample size consists of 450 men and women self employed individuals who are involved in education industry, corporate sector etc. from Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ludhiana. The study considered those individuals as self employed who are working with 2-5 workers. Out of 450 questionnaires only 325 questionnaires were received back. Out of 325 only 285 questionnaires were completed in all aspects and are thus used for analysis of the results.

To explore the factors of work life balance of self employed men and women Exploratory Factor Analysis has been applied on 32 statements, measured on five-point Likert Scale.

Data Analysis

The factor analysis is performed on SPSS software. The differences were checked at 5% level of significance. The results have been presented in tabular form. To achieve the objective of the study it is required to determine various factors which affect the work life balance of men and women self employed individuals.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) for individual variables was found to be satisfactory for all the variables. Overall MSA found to be 0.682 which indicated that the sample was satisfactory for analysis. The results of Principle Component Analysis with VARIMAX rotation indicated 6 factors. Suitable names are given to the factors. The names of the factors, variance extracted and factor loadings have been summarized in the Table I.

Table 1: Factor Analysis

Factor Name	Items	Factor Loadings
Work Stress and Health Issues	I am too fatigued to look after my work role due to my work load in the family.	0.829
	I have become a successful person by sacrificing many of my family roles.	0.827
	Due to the excessive work load, I am not able to give proper attention in my personal life as well as in my work.	0.825
	Due to the work/family issues, I find it difficult to take care of my health.	0.793
	The role conflicts in the work and family life given me a lot of stress.	0.789
	I feel angry with my colleagues and family members as I am not able to balance my work and family issues.	0.776
	As my business drains away my energy and time, I feel sick at home.	0.765
	I frequently visit my physician for health issues.	0.755
Family Support	I have to perform many roles in a given time.	0.819
	As my employees look after all business roles I am quite contented	0.796
	As I can balance both work and family , I feel relaxed and sleep very well.	0.793
	I feel free and enjoy my profession as I have no dependent care issues.	0.792
	I often came from my work place very late in the evening	0.789
	My family members are over stretched to make me a successful person in work life.	0.777
	The support network does not play any role in the work life balance	0.77
	Health care issues have no place in work life balance.	0.754
Time Management	I am satisfied with entrepreneurial activity and feel relaxed and sleep well	0.971
	I have enough time to spend on family duties and societal roles.	0.964
	My work activities do not give me time to perform family/social duties.	0.963
	My spouse understands and accommodates my occupation.	0.958
	I feel angry with my colleagues and family members as I am not able to balance my work and family issues.	0.875
	As my business drains away my energy and time, I feel sick at home.	0.864
Family Commitment	I am taking care of my aged parent(s)/in law(s).	0.904
	Due to the work needs, I find it difficult to spend the evenings and weekends with my family.	0.9
	My family provides me the strength and support to face the challenges of work.	0.874

	Role overload is not a factor determining the work life balance	0.87
	My family life seldom suffers due to my work role.	0.868
	Due to the work/family issues, I find it difficult to take care of my health.	0.812
Society Support	As I am burdened with work and family roles, I find it difficult to attend social/ community activities	0.777
	As my employees look after all business roles I am quite contented	0.772
Family role and success	As I have to do multiple roles in the family, I could not succeed in my profession	0.793
	I have become a successful person by sacrificing many of my family roles	0.693

The above table shows the factor analysis result that is extracted from 32 statements used in questionnaire to evaluate WLB of self employed men and women entrepreneurs. After getting the result suitable names are given to the factors. The result shows that 6 factors are responsible for managing the WLB of self employed individuals which includes Work Stress and Health Issues, time management, family support, society support, Family commitments, family role and success.

Objective 2:

The study focused on identifying the various challenges faced by self employed men and women as to run the business variety of challenges are faced which are related to marketing, finance, human resource, productivity, raw material and economy. These challenges hinders and restrict the people to start their business. In this study challenges faced by self employed men and women are highlighted. The questionnaire is designed to answer the Objective 2 of the study. The questionnaire contained 15 statements adapted from previous studies. One sample t-test was used to test the significance of the values whether mean score of these statements significantly differ from the standard.

The result of the T-test is shown in the table below:

Table: Mean and standard deviation of statements relating to challenges for entrepreneurs		
Statements	Mean	Decision (Agree/ Disagree)
Lack of finance from various sources	3.72	Agree
Lack of marketing training	3.5	Agree
Lack of funds to market the product	3.56	Agree
Lack of access to IT and networking	3.32	Agree
Lack of skilled workers	3.38	Agree
Finding it difficult to cope up with design and technology	3.5	Agree
Negative attitude and lack of support from family/spouse	2.71	Disagree
Combining family responsibilities with work	3.84	Agree
Finding it difficult to cope up with market competition	3.52	Agree
Unreliable and undependable employees	3.62	Agree

Limited availability of resources	3.5	Agree
Finding it difficult to cope with working environment	3.37	Agree
Lack of opportunity to upgrade skills	3.12	Neutral
Unfavorable economic conditions	3.77	Agree
Dealing with customer complaints and dissatisfaction	3.28	Agree

In the above table mean score is compared with the middle value i.e. 3. Statements with mean score less than 3 are treated as being disagreed and statements with mean score greater than 3 are taken as agreed by the respondents and statements whose mean score was not different from 3, were considered to be being neutral by the respondents. Above analysis shows that to start the self employment initiative there are lot of challenges that are faced by the individuals that are restricting them to start their own venture.

The above analysis provides serious implications to the government to provide support in terms of self employment so that the people gets motivated to start their venture that can ultimately support the growth of the economy.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate the main factors that affect self employed men and women to balance their work life and personal life. The study highlighted the 6 factors that affect the work life balance of self employed men and women of Punjab which includes Work Stress and Health Issues, time management, family support, society support, Family commitments, family role and success. The results of the study provides analysis of the challenges being faced by self employed men and women to run their business. This analysis provides serious implications to the government to provide support in terms of self employment so that the people gets motivated to start their venture that can ultimately support the growth of the economy.

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