

Impact of Work-related Stress on Well-being among Corporate Women

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ABSTRACT

Stress at work can be a real problem to the organization as well as for its workers. Good management and good work organization are the best forms of stress prevention. If employees are already stressed, their managers should be aware of it and know to help. Work related stress is the response people may have when present with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope.

Stress occurs in a wide range of work circumstances but is often made worse when employees feel they have little support from supervisors and colleagues and where they can cope with its demands and pressures. There is often confusion between pressure or challenge and stress and sometimes it is used to excuse bad management practice. In the workplace and at home, stress and other difficult situation are at an all- time high. Factors such as job insecurity, long hours, continuous change and unrealistic deadlines can cause serious problem for workers.

The aim and goal of the paper is to know the various factors to stimulate stress level among corporate women.

Workplace stress occurs when there is an imbalance the demands and perceived pressures of the work environment and an individual ability to cope. An individual's experience of stress at work is to a large extent affected by the level of control they have over their working condition / pressures, the degree of support they receive from others in the workplace and the strategies they use to respond to work pressures.

Keywords: stress, work-conflict, corporate women, causes and consequences.

Employees who believe that management is concerned about them as a whole person – not just an employee – are more productive, more satisfied, more fulfilled. Satisfied employees mean satisfied customers, which leads to profitability.”

By Anne M. Mulcahy,

Former CEO of Xerox

INTRODUCTION

Modern living has brought with it, not only innumerable means of comfort, but also a plethora of demands that tax human body and mind. Now-a-days everyone talks about stress. It is cutting across all socio economic groups of population and becoming the great leveler. Not only just high pressure executives are its key victims but it also includes laborers, slum dwellers, working women, businessmen, professionals and even children. Stress is an inevitable and unavoidable component of life due to increasing complexities and competitiveness in living standards. The speed at which change is taking place in the world today is certainly overwhelming and breathe taking. In the fast changing world of today, no individual is free from stress and no profession is stress free. Everyone experiences stress, whether it is within the family, business, organization, study, work, or any other social or economical activity. Thus in modern time, stress in general and job stress in particular has become a part of the life and has received considerable attention in recent years. Stress has become the core concern in the life of everyone, but everybody wants stress-free life. Stress is a subject which is hard to avoid. Stress is a part of day-to-day living. Every individual is subjected to stress either knowingly or unknowingly. Stress, long considered alien to Indian lifestyle, is now a major health problem / hazard.

Stress is difficult to define precisely. The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences by Selye Hans in 1936. It was derived from the Latin word 'stringere'; it meant the experience of physical hardship, starvation, torture and pain. Selye Hans, 1936 defined stress as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand placed upon it". Further, stress was defined as "any external event or internal drive which threatens to upset the organismic equilibrium" (Selye Hans, 1956). Another definition given by Stephen Robbins (1999) stress has been stated as "a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he / she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important."

Stress affects not only our physical health but our mental well being, too. To successfully manage stress in everyday lives, individual can learn to relax and enjoy life. The best way to manage stress is to prevent it. This may not be always possible. So, the next best things are to reduce stress and make life easier.

Stress is a universal element experienced by employees around the globe. Stress is prevalent in modern life, yet in spite of its frequent use, the word 'stress' is an ambiguous term. Stress is the psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. Many emotions characterize stress, such as anger, anxiety, sadness, despair, depression and disappointment. Job satisfaction can be defined as the affective orientation that an employee has towards his or her work. Stress has become major problem for employer particularly in developing nations where the employer doesn't realize the impact of stress on employee performance which has Stress, Managerial Role, Stress Management and Job Performance ultimately results in critical managerial dilemmas. Giga and Hoel in 2003 concluded that high rates of mergers, acquisitions, increasing economic interdependence among countries due to globalization, technological development, and restructuring have changed the organizational work over the last few decades have resulted in time pressure, excessive work demand, role conflicts, ergonomic insufficiencies and problematic customer relationship are causes of stress. Stress can't be eliminated as it serves as a driving force if kept at a certain level, so stress needs to be managed in the sense that the level of patient care job satisfaction and other factor that affect it are optimized or minimized.

Researchers have found that satisfied employees (e.g. having a pleasurable feeling resulting from job experience) are more likely to contribute their knowledge (Janz & Prasarnphanich, 2003), improve their job performance (Judge et al., 2001). Dissatisfied employees, in contrast, often hold what they know and are unwilling to share their knowledge. Because organizational agility requires that employees at all levels engage in knowledge-based activities, understanding the reasons for

employee dissatisfaction, their expectations and requirements and the directions to implement changes are essential for every organization (Eskildsen and Nussler, 2000; Martensen and Gronholdt, 2001). By doing so, organizations enhance their capabilities to meet increasingly turbulent and uncertain environmental conditions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While women at work deliver the same results as men, across occupations, women experience "unreasonable" stress than men do, says a global survey. Payment parity, equal opportunities, career growth, fair performance assessment etc are some of the key concerns that kept working women under unreasonable stress. Tapping its rich mine of educated female talent has been an important factor in allowing India to become one of the world's fastest-growing economies. But recently this particular dynamo has been showing signs of strain. According to "Women of Tomorrow," a recent Nielsen survey of 6,500 women across 21 different nations, Indian women are the most stressed in the world today. An overwhelming 87% of Indian women said they felt stressed most of the time, and 82% reported that they had no time to relax. The present study has been done to find out the Occupational stress & its effect on Job & Life Satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational stress arises due to lack of person- environment fit. When organizational stress is mismanaged, it affects the human potential in the organization. It further leads to reduced quality, productivity, health as well as wellbeing and morale. According to Kahn and Quinn (1970) "stress is the outcome of fact of the assigned work role that caused harmful effect for individual. Occupational stress is considered as harmful factor of the work environment."

Cooper and Marshal (1976) stated that occupational stress includes the environmental factors or stressors such as work overload, role ambiguity, role conflict and poor working conditions associated with a particular job.

Work-family conflict is among the most commonly studied outcomes in the work-family literature (Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe, 2001). While there can be both a positive and negative spillover between work and family domains (Westman, 2001). The work-family conflict research focuses on the difficulties employees have in balancing their work and family commitments. It is of particular importance to those interested in work-family practices, as these are often depicted as allowing greater balance between work and family responsibilities (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). Work-family conflict is "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role demands stemming from one domain (work or family) are incompatible with role demands stemming from another domain (family or work) (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Soek & Rosenthal, 1964). Conceptually conflict between work and family is bi-directional. Most researchers make the distinction between what is termed work-family conflict, and what is termed family-work conflict. Work-to-family conflict occurs when experiences at work interfere with family life like extensive, irregular or inflexible work hours, work overload and other forms of job stress, interpersonal conflict at work, extensive travel, career transitions, unsupportive supervisors or organization.

Brook (1973) reported that qualitative changes in the job create adjust mental problem among employees. Cobb (1975) has the opinion that, "The responsibility load creates severe stress among workers and managers." If the individual manager cannot cope with the increased responsibilities it may lead to several physical and psychological disorders among them.

Organizational role stress is a chronic disease caused by conditions in the workplace that negatively affect an individual's performance and/or overall well-being of his body and mind. Role is the position that one occupies in an organization and is defined as the functions one performs in that organization. Role is thus defined as "the position one holds in an organization having a set of

functions to perform in response to the expectations of others and his/her own expectations about the role” (Pareek, 1976).

Musa Shallal, Journal of International Women’s Studies. According to this research three prominent factors that enhance job satisfaction – age, education, and income. There is a positive significant relationship between job satisfaction and age. Second, employed females with education beyond the secondary level are more satisfied with their jobs than those with less than the secondary level (p-values less than 0.05). Third, the employed females with high incomes are more satisfied with their jobs than those who earn less (p-value=0.034).

Sonal Pathak, Dr. Anil Sarin, IJMBS Vol. 1, Issue 3, September 2011. According to this research there is a direct correlation between the employment of women and the economic well being of a nation. IT-BPO companies must further refine their policies and processes to strongly influence the participation of women in key leading projects and must identify procedures that can be restructured to encourage participation of women in organizational decision making activities. Companies have to understand the requirement of managing stress among women to make the environment conducive which can retain skilled talented women. Management must provide continuous learning, mentoring, coaching, counseling, opportunities for self development, time management to handle their responsibility at home along with office to encourage them to take higher.

According to Surena Sabil Sabitha Marican, her study results show that the average working hours is 45 hours per week. The findings reveal that working hours had a positive relationship towards work-family conflict, however no Relationship with work-family enrichment. The results suggest that practicing work-home segmentation and support from family members help them to manage work and family commitment effectively and efficiently.

Prof. Sandeep Bhattacharjee International Journal of Multidisciplinary According to this study Women in India have proved their mettle in the work domain. Behind such success lies a big story of struggle and freedom in the traditional social arena. Besides, changing roles of working women, they have maintained the traditional work ethos of household. This research is devoted towards finding the root causes of the existing problems faced by the working women in Ranchi. It also aims at finding feasible solutions that have been practiced elsewhere and needs to be adopted at other social fronts

Sanghamitra Buddhapriya, The research reveals the expectations of the women professionals in terms of the support that organizations can provide to help them in achieving better work-life balance and advance in their career. A significant percentage of respondents have shown their strong preference for provisions like flexible working hours, childcare facilitates and emergency care for children and elders, support for non-work commitment, wellness, and personal development programs. Half of the women professionals agree that “flexibility in work location” (working from home/telecommuting) can be taken up as an additional support provision. The requirement for all these work-life provisions are felt more at the middle and junior level rather than at the senior level.

Els Clays, Francoise Leynen, Dirk De Bacquer, Marcel Kornitzer, France Kittel, Robert Karasek, Guy De Backer, (2007) The aim of their study was to assess whether job strain is associated with 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure measurements within a subsample of the Belgian Job Stress Project (BELSTRESS) population. Methods: A group of 89 middle-aged male and female workers perceiving high job strain and an equally large group of workers perceiving no high job strain wore an ambulatory blood pressure monitor for 24 hours on a regular working day. Results: Mean ambulatory blood pressure at work, at home, and while asleep was significantly higher in workers with job strain as compared with others. The associations between job strain and ambulatory blood pressure were independent from the covariates. Conclusions: Within this study, high job strain was an important independent risk factor for higher ambulatory blood pressure at work, at home, and during sleep in a group of men and women.

Hodson, R. and Chamberlain, L.J,(2003) Job stress is a problem for both workers and organizations. It undercuts meaning and joy in work, has negative health consequences, and reduces organizational effectiveness. Understanding the full range of determinants of job stress has been difficult, however, because in-depth information on both jobs and organizations is difficult to acquire. The current article makes use of a new data set based on content coding job, organizational, and job stress information from the full population of published book-length organizational ethnographies (N=125). This new data set allows the simultaneous exploration of both organizational and job level determinants of job stress. The analysis confirms the long-established importance of job autonomy as a positive factor in reducing stress. New findings include positive roles for organizational coherence and local ownership. Finally, the effects of some job stressors are mediated by social involvement in the workplace, both through informal coworker relations and through more formal participation programs. Overall, organizational effects on stress are as significant as or more significant than job effects suggesting the importance of giving further attention to organizational characteristics as a less examined set of determinants of job stress.

Susan Gill, Marilyn J Davidson., (2001), investigated a large sample of German and British managers selected from the private and public sectors completed the Pressure Manage Indicator (PMI), through a 12- item self-report questionnaire developed from the Occupational Stress Indicator (OSI). The PMI provides a global measure as well as differentiated profiles of occupational stress. Outcome measures include work satisfaction, organizational security, organizational satisfaction, and commitment, as well as physical well-being (physical symptoms and exhaustion) and psychological health (anxiety depression, worry and resilience). In addition moderator variables are assessed including type a behaviour, internal focus of control and coping strategies. The data from the PMI show that, when compared with British managers, the German managers reported greater job satisfaction and lower levels of resilience. The German managers displayed substantially higher pressure from the homework interface but less pressure from the need to have their achievements recognized. German managers reported higher levels of impatience (a subscale of type of behaviour), coupled with high internal control (extent to which individual feels able to influence and control events) and made more use of coping strategies especially problem-focused measures

SCOPE

This study of the stress depends on the corporate women. Because the stress related to work, family, decision, future, and more. Stress is both physical and mental. It is caused by major life events such as illness, the death of a loved one, a change in responsibilities or expectation at work and increase job promotion, avoids loss, or changes in the organization, changing worker demographics (race/ethnicity, gender, and age) and worker safety and health. This study allows us to understand the stress level faced by the women in the organizations & how does it affect their life & job satisfaction level.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the various causes for stresses that affects the working women.
- To assess the perception of the personnel towards their Job Stress.
- To know the consequences of stress on job & family.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Exploratory Research Design

It is being used for clear and precise investigation and information is gathered about practical problems on a particular conjectural statements.

Area of the Study

The study is confined to Bangalore only.

Sampling Method

The sampling used in this study is 'Simple random sampling' because the sample is selected with equal probability.

Sample Size

Since the population for the survey is very large, and due to time limitation a sample size of 65 is taken for the survey with help of questionnaire.

Data Collection

Primary Data

Survey method is employed to collect the data from the respondents and the data are collected with the help of structured questionnaires.

Work Life conflict scale by Netemeyer et al. (1996).

Analysis Tools

- Percentage analysis.
- Mean & Standard deviation
- Coefficient of variation: (the series or groups for which the coefficient of variation is greater is said to be more variable {or less consistent}¹. On the other hand, the series for which the variation is less is said to be less variable {or more consistent}.

Limitations

As the research is restricted within Bangalore, results are not applicable to other areas of India; Limited number of respondents has been chosen due to time constraint and this could affect the accuracy of result to certain extent.

Scope of Further Research

It is suggested that future researchers perform a longitudinal study to examine work-family Conflict process over time, thus capturing relevant data during different occurrences of stressful Conditions between work and family and its impact on job satisfaction resulting in fast turn-over of corporate women employees.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

WORK LIFE CONFLICT SCALE

Percentage Analysis Table:

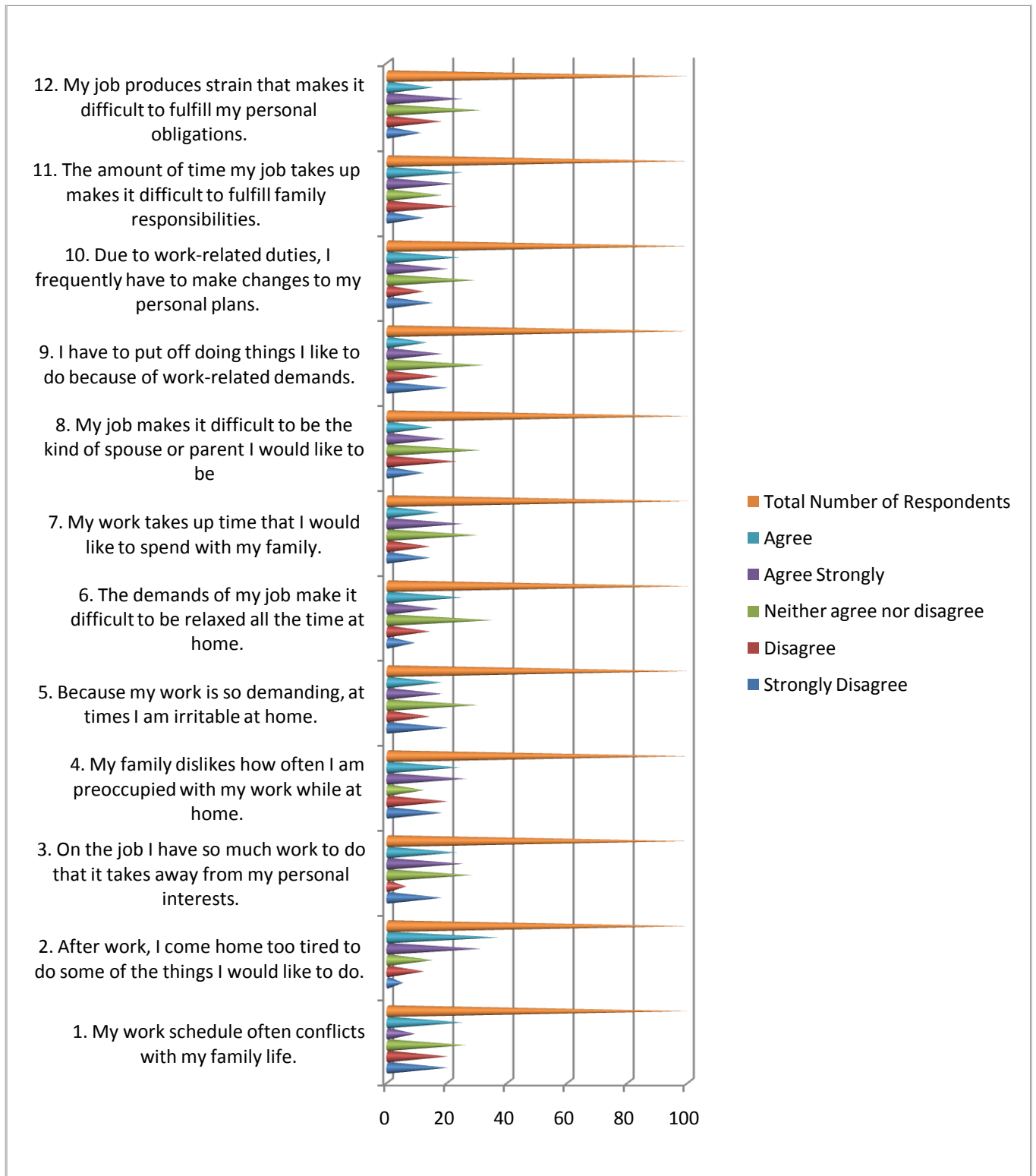
<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Agree Strongly</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Total Number of Respondents</i>
1. My work schedule often conflicts with my family life.	13	13	17	6	16	65
Percentage	20	20	26	9	25	100
2. After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I would like to do.	3	8	10	20	24	65
Percentage	5	12	15	31	37	100
3. On the job I have so much work to do that it takes away from my personal interests.	12	4	18	16	15	65
Percentage	18	6	28	25	23	100

4. My family dislikes how often I am preoccupied with my work while at home.	12	13	8	17	15	65
Percentage	18	20	12	26	24	100
5. Because my work is so demanding, at times I am irritable at home.	13	9	19	12	12	65
Percentage	20	14	30	18	18	100
6. The demands of my job make it difficult to be relaxed all the time at home.	6	9	23	11	16	65
Percentages	9	14	35	17	25	100
7. My work takes up time that I would like to spend with my family.	9	9	19	16	12	65
Percentage	14	14	30	25	17	100
8. My job makes it difficult to be the kind of spouse or parent I would like to be	8	15	20	12	10	65
Percentage	12	23	31	19	15	100
9. I have to put off doing things I like to do because of work-related demands.	13	11	21	12	9	65
Percentage	20	17	32	18	13	100
10. Due to work-related duties, I frequently have to make changes to my personal plans.	10	8	19	13	15	65
Percentage	15	12	29	20	24	100
11. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.	8	15	12	14	16	65
Percentage	12	23	18	22	25	100
12. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill my personal obligations.	7	12	20	16	10	65
Percentage	11	18	31	25	15	100

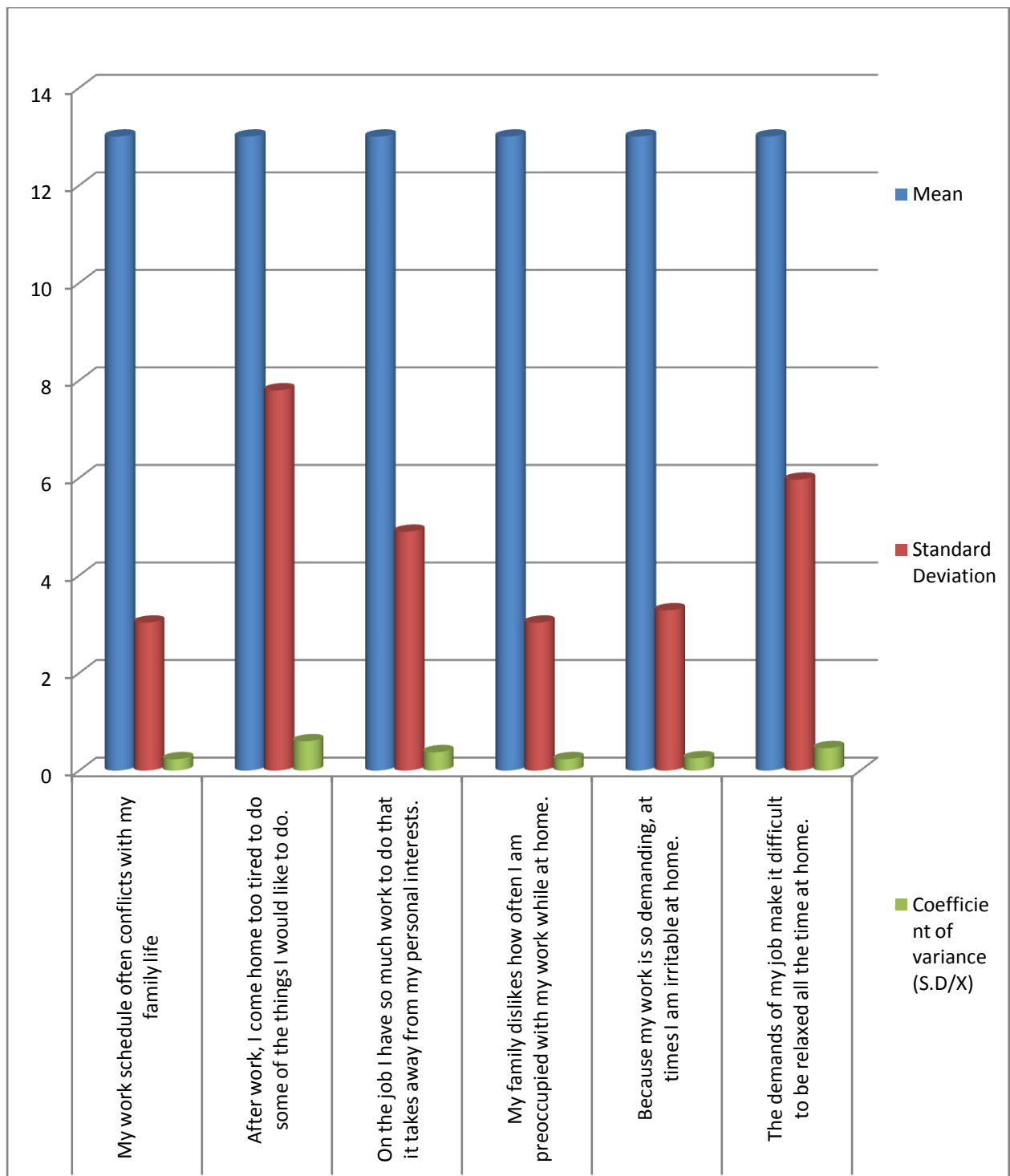
Table showing Mean, standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variance

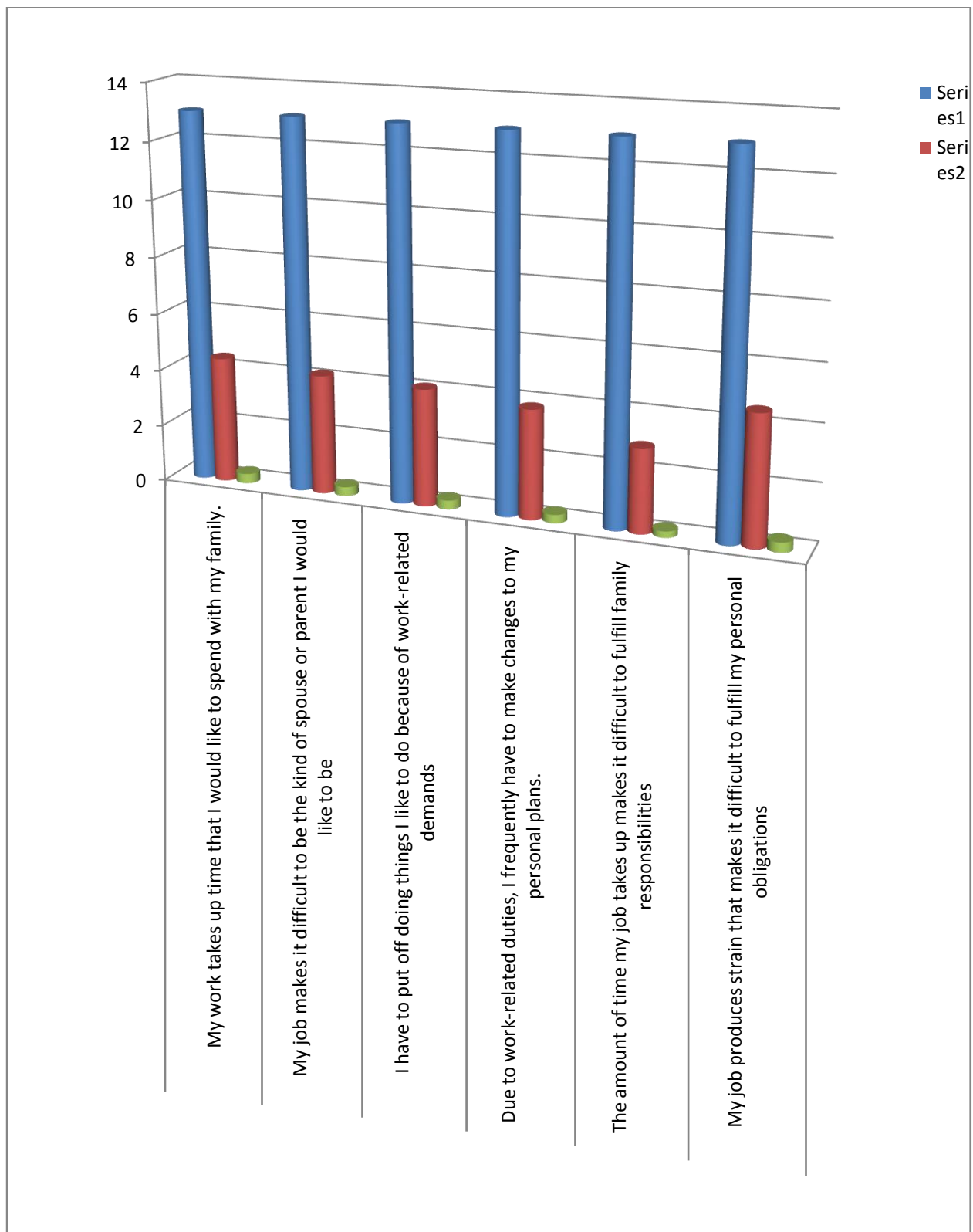
S.no	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of variance (S.D/X)
1	My work schedule often conflicts with my family life	13	3.033	23.33%
2	After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I would like to do.	13	7.797	59.97%
3	On the job I have so much work to do that it takes away from my personal interests.	13	4.898	37.67%
4	My family dislikes how often I am preoccupied with my work while at home.	13	3.033	23.33%
5	Because my work is so demanding, at times I am irritable at home.	13	3.286	25.27%
6	The demands of my job make it difficult to be relaxed all the time at home.	13	5.966	45.89%
7	My work takes up time that I would like to spend with my family.	13	4.427	34.0%
8	My job makes it difficult to be the kind of spouse or parent I would like to be	13	4.195	32.36%
9	I have to put off doing things I like to do because of work-related demands	13	4.123	31.71%
10	Due to work-related duties, I frequently have to make changes to my personal plans.	13	3.84	29.53%
11	The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities	13	2.93	22.53%
12	My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill my personal obligations	13	4.56	35.07%

Graph Showing Percentage Analysis of Work Life Conflict scale



Graph Showing Mean, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variance of Work Life Conflict scale





RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

From the above table & charts the following analysis can be drawn:

- 1) 26% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that their work schedule often gets in conflict with the family life whereas, 25% of the respondents agree with it, 20% strongly disagree & 9% strongly agree with it.
- 2) 37% of the respondents strongly agree & 31% agree that they don't get much time to perform their own activities of their choice after their hectic working hours, 15% neither agree nor disagree, noticeably, 12% strongly disagree & 5% disagree with the same .
- 3) 28% of the respondents neither disagree nor agree that, because of the hectic schedule women are losing their own personal interest, amongst which 25% & 23% strongly agree with the same, wherein 18% & 6% strongly disagree & disagree with the same.
- 4) 26% & 24% strongly agree & agree that their Family is not happy as they are pre-occupied at home with their official work, 20% & 18% strongly disagree & disagree with the same whereas 12% neither disagree nor agree with the same.
- 5) 30% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that they often are disturbed and frustrated at home due to their hectic schedule leading to disturbance in family life, 20% disagree with the same, 18% strongly agree over the same, where as 14% disagree with the same.
- 6) 35% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that they don't feel relaxed at home due to hectic schedule, 25% & 17% agree & strongly agree for the same whereas, 14% & 9% strongly disagree & disagree over the same.
- 7) 30% of the respondents neither disagree nor agree that due to heavy work load they don't have personal family time, 25% & 17% strongly agree & agree for the same, whereas 14% strongly disagree with it.
- 8) 31% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that they often get the feeling that they are not a perfect spouse or parent as desired by them, 23% & 12% strongly disagree & disagree with it whereas 19% & 15% strongly agree & agree with it.
- 9) 32% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that they have to skip their important schedule due to immediate demands of official work, 20% & 17% strongly disagree & disagree with it, whereas 18% & 13% strongly agree & agree with it.
- 10) 29% of the respondents neither disagree nor agree that their personal plans need drastic changes due to sudden and fluctuating demands of the work, 24% & 20% agree & strongly agree with it whereas 15% & 12% strongly disagree & disagree over the same.
- 11) 25% & 22% of the respondents agree & strongly agree that they face problems in fulfilling the needs of the family, and also notice the lack in holding responsibilities, 18% neither disagree nor agree for the same whereas 12% & 23% strongly disagree & disagree with it.
- 12) 31% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree that they often feel strain & stress due to heavy workload, 25% & 15% strongly agree & agree with it whereas 18% & 11% strongly disagree & disagree with it.
- 13) According to the coefficient of variation the factor which affects women a lot is that they don't get much time to perform their own activities of their choice after their hectic working hours & the factor which affects less is the strain or the stress level what they face in their job profile.

CONCLUSION:

In this study, most of the respondents experience work family conflict, but they do it differently. These women, in particular, regretted not being able to give enough attention to their families and children and referred to housework and childcare, as major constraints to their performance of corporate work. As they were hectic schedules, they experienced more conflict between work demands and family.

The work-family demands are considered as a source of conflict between work demands and family responsibilities such as long working hours, office work overload, and household work and children matters. The result of this research are supported by previous empirical studies, for example high work-family conflict was positively related to long working hours (Burke et al., 1980; Frone et al., 1997; Grzywacz and Marks, 2000; Gutek et al., 1991; Pleck et al., 1980; Wallace, 1997) also high work-family conflict was positively related to work schedule inflexibility (Ayee, 1992), and work overload and irregular work schedules had a strong positive relationship with work-family conflict (Burke and Greenglass, 2001; Simon et al., 2004). Some studies have shown the number of children living at home as positively related to, work to family conflict and family to work conflict (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Time spent on family activities has been found to be positively related to family-to-work conflict (Frone et al., 1997; Gutek, 1991). In the current case, it was suggested to corporate heads for dealing with these problems, they should provide more support and flexibility to its employees especially women.

Beckman (1978) showed that, working women considered parenting and a career as conflicting, if not competing roles. The fundamental consequence of married working women marriage is the fact that, long working hours on the part of both spouses subtracts from the much needed time for completion of household tasks, causes greater fatigue due to energy depletion at work, and deprives them of the most essential element to the growth and strengthening of their relationship-time together.

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