

Person-Environment Fit and work-Life Balance Among Women: An Insight From Indian IT & Retail Industry

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Abstract: Over the last few decades, global demographic changes such as an increased feminization of the workforce, two-income households and elder care have resulted in increased challenges faced by women professionals who tried to balance demands of work and family life. Also, the changing nature of work and environment becomes incredibly important for women for stability, productivity and effectiveness at work. This study thus seeks to shed some light on the paradoxical situation in which women often find themselves due to different facets of work-environment causing work-life imbalance. The present study examined the relationships of the various facets of person-environment fit with work-life balance and its various dimensions among women employees working in the Indian retail and IT sector using factor analysis and correlation techniques. In addition, a comparative analysis using independent t-test has been carried out for above stated factors among IT and retail sector women employees to highlight their present satisfaction level. This would give an insight to employers to design policies and women-friendly work-environment in order to reduce employee turnover and attract prospective candidates.

Keywords: Person-environment fit, person-job fit, person-organization fit, work-life balance

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I. Introduction

The Indian IT and retail sectors are often characterized by an especially high requirement for work-life balance satisfaction for women employees. Indian working women struggle with a double burden: they're expected to take good care of their kids and households and at the same time thrive in the workplace. The current retail format involving abrupt shift timings and the obligation to work on festivals and holidays acts as a barrier for females to opt for retailing as their career. They hardly get time to fulfil their personal and professional responsibilities. Low salaries, poor working conditions, no career growth, and extremely low job security makes the situation even worse for them. However, it is not the case that the employees are always compelled to work during holidays, sometimes they are also convinced by means of bonus, and extra leaves some other time of the year. On the other hand, IT industry offers lucrative pay and perks, but too many deadlines and commitments make it highly demanding (Deivasigamani and Shankar, 2012). Work-life balance means different things to different people and different things at different stages of life. Thus, currently available best work-life balance practices can't be applied or can be applied only to a limited extent in other companies. There is no 'one size fits all'. Thus, there is a growing need to understand the individual and their work-environment characteristics from a fitment perspective. Person and environment interact with each other. While interacting, the degree to which person and environmental characteristics match is termed as person-environment fit. (Caplan, 1987; French, Rodgers, & Cobb, 1974; Ostroff & Schulte, 2007). Researchers broadly define Person-Job fit as individuals' compatibility with a specific job (Kristof, 1996). Previous studies indicate that employees frequently choose to leave mainly because of three reasons. First, they believe they have chosen the wrong job or organization, second, they do not perceive good fit with organizational values and culture and third, they find a mismatch between their skills, abilities and the job or organization's requirements (Edwards 2008; Horn et al., 2008; Michaud, 2010; Schneider, 1987a, 1987b). Daniels (2006) showed that employees are no longer passive receivers of information from the environment. When employees perceive a misfit, they will first try to restore the balance before they decide to leave the organization (Edwards, Caplan, & Van Harrison, 1998; Kozlowski, 2012). It means perceived level of PE fit influences work-life balance significantly. Renowned researchers in the field (Kristof, 1996; Edwards 2008; Harrison 2007) have suggested that there is a need for more field research of different components of person-environment fit at varying levels of the organization in the same study. Later, they propose that a multidimensional concept of fit will be a better predictor of broad workplace outcomes. (Edwards, 2008; Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). Although there has been a plethora of research involving fit between jobholders and their environments, but the understanding of this phenomenon is primarily based on studies conducted in western countries. There aren't enough evidences of

replicating these studies in Asian countries like India, which still possess male dominating work culture in most of the industries. This topic is very important for academia and management practices across the globe (Oh et al., 2014). Furthermore, despite calls for a multidimensional approach to studying fit, most research has focused on individual's fit with a single aspect of the work environment (Jansen and Kristof-Brown, 2006). Very few papers (Cennamo and Gardner, 2008; Westerman and Yamamura, 2007) present a work-life balance perspective on workplace fit. Also, P-E fit and its outcomes have rarely been investigated empirically in Indian context. Considering above facts, the present research addresses these gaps by exploring whether there is a role of P-E fit in fostering the balance of women's personal and professional life in Indian working conditions. The service sectors represented in this study are characterized by an especially high requirement for work-life balance satisfaction.

II. Objective of The Study

Person-environment (PE) fit has been considered one of the most pervasive concepts in psychology. The present study attempts to identify the various facets of the person-environment (PE) fit (Person-job fit, person-organization fit and person supervisor fit) of retail and IT women professionals which affect their work-life balance. Women professionals provide a variety of services in IT and retail industry. For example, Most of the young women are employed for customer facing roles in the retail industry while in IT, women work as a part of a team who work on back end profiles which is mostly non customer facing roles. Inlike back end and customer facing services in IT and retail industry. The unfavorable environment under which they are supposed to work might be affecting their satisfaction with work-life adversely, and this encouraged the researchers to carry out the present study. The paper contributes to the ongoing debate on feminization of the workplace and its implications for attracting and retaining talent. Thus, the objective of this study is to determine the possible effect of person-environment (PE) fit on work-life balance satisfaction of women employees. Because P-E fit is a multidimensional concept, operationalization of all fit forms is difficult, a number of studies examined a nexus between the person and the singular aspect of environment fit. Such as, person- vocation fit (Feij et al., 1999; Marcus and Wagner, 2015), person-job fit (Babakus, Yavas and Ashill, 2011; Chen, Yen and Tsai, 2014), person-team fit (Glew, 2012), person-group fit (Werbel and Johnson, 2001; Seong and Kristof-Brown, 2012), person-supervisor fit (Kim and Kim, 2013), and person-organization fit [Piasentin and Chapman, 2007]. This study presents an integrative investigation of three levels of PE fit: person-supervisor (PS) fit, person-organization (PO) fit and person-job (PJ) fit and tries to explore the facets of PE-fit among women employees in Indian context.

2.1 Hypotheses:

- H1: There is no significant difference in the person-environment fit of IT and retail sector women employees.
- H1A: There is no significant difference in the person-job fit of IT and retail sector women employees.
- H1B: There is no significant difference in the person-supervisor fit of IT and retail sector women employees.
- H1C: There is no significant difference in the person-organization fit of IT and retail sector women employees.
- H2: There is no significant difference in the work-life balance satisfaction of IT and retail sector women employees.
- H3: There is positive relation between person-job fit and work-life balance satisfaction of women employees.
- H4: There is positive relation between person-supervisor fit and work-life balance satisfaction of women employees.
- H5: There is positive relation between person-organization fit and work-life balance satisfaction of women employees.

III. Research Methodology

This article attempts to explore the relationship between facets of PE fit and work-life balance satisfaction among women professionals in Delhi/NCR.

3.1 Overview of Sample and Procedures

The target population consisted of 490 women employees from retail and IT companies located in Delhi/NCR region, India. 554 questionnaires were handed out, of which 490 were completely filled and usable. The response rate was 88.4%. Table I. represents the demographic profile of respondents.

Table I. Sample Demographic Profile

Variables	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Marital Status	Single	163	32.9
	Married	332	67.1
Age Group	GenXers	195	39.4
	Millenials	300	60.6
No of Kids	None	285	57.6
	>= 1	210	42.4

3.2 Research Instruments

PE-fit Scale has been adopted from Chuang et al. (2016) which seeks information about the various fitment factors related to a person’s work environment including organization fit, job fit, supervisor fit and group fit. For job, organization and supervisor related factors, responses were sought on a seven point scale ranging from ‘No match’ to ‘complete match’. On the other hand, satisfaction with work-life balance was measured on a five point scale, ranging from ‘Very dissatisfied’ to ‘Very satisfied’. A pilot survey was also conducted successfully among 102 working women before collecting research data.

Table II. Different constructs, their sources and reliability

Construct	No. Of Items	Sources	Chronbach’s Alpha
Person-Environment fit(PE_FIT)	16	Chuang, A., Shen, C. T., & Judge, T. A. (2016).	0.87
Work-Life Balance Satisfaction(WLB_Sat)	5	(Valcour, 2007)	0.78

IV. Result And Discussion

4.1 Factor Analysis

Assessing the reliability of the different constructs is one of the important steps in developing a measurement scale. To assess the internal consistency of the items incorporated in this study coefficient alpha was computed (Cronbach, 1951). For internal consistency, the acceptable range should be above 0.7 (Nunnally,1978;Hair et al.,2006). Table II shows the reliability results for each construct. To validate that the sample size is adequate and the EFA is appropriate, Kaiser–Meyer– Olkin(KMO) measure was used to ensure the sampling adequacy, along with Bartlett’s test of sphericity. KMO value is greater than 0.6 which is considered adequate (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). Moreover, eigenvalues for all the resulted factors were greater than 1.0.

Principle component analysis with varimax rotation was employed to examine the structure of the environmental fitment factors of women professionals. The factor analysis of 16 items identified 2 items with weak and multiple loadings and were thus excluded from the analysis. Finally, 14 items have been analyzed and used for further analysis. All the extracted factors with their respective structure, percentage of variance explained and loadings are reported in Table III. In an attempt to identify the various characteristics of the work-environment affecting women’s work-life balance, ‘Person-supervisor fit’ has emerged as the most important environment characteristic with five variables loaded on it, and this explains 39.75 per cent of variance. Person-job fit and person-organization fit emerged to be second and third important factor explaining 17.85 and 14.97 percent of variance respectively (See table III).

Table III. Factor Loadings

Label	Variables	Factor Loadings	% of Variance explained
PJ-FIT	Person–Job Fit Scale (PJFS) (Chronbach’s alpha=.883)		17.851
PJ1	1. How would you describe the match between your professional skills, knowledge, and abilities and those required by the job?	.899	
PJ2	2. How would you describe the match between your personality traits (e.g. extrovert vs. introvert, agreeable vs. disagreeable, and dependable vs. undependable) and those required by the job?	.884	
PJ3	3. How would you describe the match between your interests (e.g. social vs. unsocial, artistic vs. inartistic, and conventional vs. unconventional) and those you desire for a job?	.867	
PJ4	4. How would you describe the match between the characteristics of your current job (e.g. autonomy, importance, and skill variety) and those you desire for a job?	.810	
PO-FIT	Person–Organization Fit Scale (POFS) (Chronbach’s alpha=.876)		14.979
PO1	1. The match between your emphasis and your organization’s emphasis on honesty	.924	

PO2	2. The match between your emphasis and your organization's emphasis on achievement	.834	
PO3	3. The match between your emphasis and your organization's emphasis on fairness	.884	
PO4	4. The match between your emphasis and your organization's emphasis on helping others	.724	
PO5	5. The match between your emphasis and your organization's emphasis on reward	.708	
PS-FIT	Person-Supervisor Fit Scale (PSFS) (Chronbach's alpha=.862)		39.755
PS1	1. How would you describe the match between the things you value in life and the things your supervisor values?	.623	
PS2	2. How would you describe the match between your personality and your supervisor's personality?	.896	
PS3	3. How would you describe the match between your work style and your supervisor's work style?	.884	
PS4	4. How would you describe the match between your lifestyle and your supervisor's lifestyle?	.853	
PS5	5. How would you describe the match between your supervisor's leadership style and the leadership style you desire?	.784	

4.2 Independent Sample t- test

Having met the test assumptions, to test research hypotheses H1, H1A,H1B, H1C and H2, independent sample t-test was conducted because the data collected are further sampled as of two different populations i.e., IT sector women employees and retail sector women employees. Group statistics to compare the mean values of IT and retail sector female employees are given in table IV.

Variables	Industr y	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. PE_FIT	Retail	245	4.684	.9175	.0586
	IT	245	4.981	.6700	.0428
2. WLB_Sat	Retail	245	3.700	.7190	.0459
	IT	245	3.929	.4161	.0266
3. PJ_FIT	Retail	245	4.589	1.4044	.0897
	IT	245	5.234	.9776	.0625
4. PS_FIT	Retail	245	4.206	1.2741	.0814
	IT	245	4.536	.8969	.0573
5. PO_FIT	Retail	245	5.258	.8730	.0558
	IT	245	5.174	.8919	.0570

Variables		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
PE_FIT	Equal variances assumed	32.880	.000	-4.093	488	.000	-.2971	.0726	-.4397	-.1545
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.093	446.626	.000	-.2971	.0726	-.4398	-.1545
WLB_Sat	Equal variances assumed	8.220	.004	-4.307	488	.000	-.2286	.0531	-.3328	-.1243
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.307	390.959	.000	-.2286	.0531	-.3329	-.1242
PJ_FIT	Equal variances assumed	50.839	.000	-5.899	488	.000	-.6449	.1093	-.8597	-.4301
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.899	435.494	.000	-.6449	.1093	-.8598	-.4300
PS_FIT	Equal variances assumed	44.341	.000	-3.313	488	.001	-.3298	.0995	-.5254	-.1342
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.313	438.155	.001	-.3298	.0995	-.5254	-.1341
PO_FIT	Equal variances assumed	.014	.904	1.046	488	.296	.0834	.0797	-.0733	.2400
	Equal variances not assumed			1.046	487.778	.296	.0834	.0797	-.0733	.2400

The hypothesis H1, H1A, H1B and H1C states that there is no significant difference in perceived person-environment fit, person-job fit, person-supervisor fit and person-organization fit of women employees

working in IT and retail sector. Group statistics (see table IV) and t-test results (see table V) indicate that person-environment fit, person-job fit, person-supervisor fit among women employees of IT sector is higher than the retail sector women employees i.e. (mean=4.98, Sig.= 0.000), (mean=5.23, Sig.= 0.000) and (mean=4.53, Sig.= 0.001) respectively. Thus we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the person-environment fit, person-job fit, person-supervisor fit of IT sector women employees is higher than women working in retail sector. However, we couldn't find enough evidence to support hypothesis H1C which states that there is no significant difference in the person-organization fit of IT and retail sector women employees (mean=5.174, Sig.=0.296). Hypothesis H2 states that there is no significant difference in the work-life balance satisfaction of IT and retail sector women employees. Group statistics (see table IV) and t-test results (see table V) indicate that work-life balance satisfaction among women employees of IT sector is higher than the retail sector women employees i.e. (mean=3.92, Sig.=0.000). Thus we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that work-life balance satisfaction among women employees of IT sector is higher than the retail sector women employees.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

To test the hypothesized relationships H3, H4 and H5 correlation analysis of study variables was conducted. Table VI presents correlation analysis of work-Environment factors affecting work-life balance satisfaction. Result supports above three hypotheses with $r=.277$, $r=.304$ and $r=.130$ (See table VI). Thus, it may be inferred that these work-environment characteristics have been helping women employees in maintaining better work-life balance. Also, it could be noted that all the three facets of person-environment fit (PJ_FIT, PS_FIT AND PO_FIT) are positively correlated with each other which means for better fitment supervisor, job and organization, all three factors should be taken care of.

Table VI. Correlation Analysis

Variables	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	
1.WLB_Sat	3.81	0.59			
2.PJ_FIT	4.90	1.25	.277**		
3.PS_FIT	4.37	1.11	.304**	.263**	
4.PO_FIT	5.22	0.88	.130**	.326**	.483**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation analysis helped to understand the degree to which different dimensions of fit influence each other. Being a lesser known fact, an enhanced understanding of these effects not only expands the body of knowledge that highlights variability in individual's perceived fit, but at the same time it also sets forth the proposition that fit with a single, specific work environment should not be studied in isolation. Notably, because fit with one aspect of the environment is known to spill over into other areas, a specific fit dimension may trigger a change in other fit dimensions over time (Jansen and Kristof-Brown, 2006). For Example, PO fit and PJ fit may gradually influence each other over time Tak (2011). Therefore, it is important to investigate whether various domains integrate into an overarching sense of person-environment fit, or whether each domain independently influences outcomes (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006; Piasentin and Chapman, 2006). Person supervisor fit clearly depends on employee-supervisor relationships, may be of particular relevance to employees' perceptions of fit and consequent behavior over time (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

In particular, a good relationship with one's supervisor may strengthen the relationship between different types of fit over time. This is the reason why women employees of IT companies having high level of person-supervisor fit show high level of person-job fit too. Further, evidence suggests that the nature of employees' relationships with supervisors can influence associations between fit and various organizational outcomes (e.g. Erdogan et al., 2004). In line with these arguments, we examined effect of various types of fit on work-life balance satisfaction of women employees and results revealed positive relationship between all dimensions of fit and work-life balance satisfaction. In sum, we aim to add to the growing stream of study, by showing which PE-fit dimensions affect the ongoing process of work-life balance, as well as to what extent. Doing so, our results have replicated previous studies findings while examining the relationship between person-environment fit factors and work-life balance satisfaction. Person environment fit affects work-life balance significantly (Humphrys and Brough, 2009). Different facets of PE-fit such as, PO fit has positive effect on work-life balance of employees (Seong, 2016). Next findings that women employees from IT sector are more satisfied with their work-life balance than in retail sector may be associated with the fact that women with lower education have more difficulties in finding well paid jobs; therefore, it is harder for them to pay for domestic help (Eurofound, 2006). Also, new trends like teleworking attempt to address work-family issues of women working in IT industries (Valcour and Hunter, 2005).

V. Conclusion And Limitation

This study result supports the fact that the women professionals can enhance their work and life satisfaction by managing their work-environment factors. Correspondingly, this study validates the fact that focusing on the maintenance of the factors associated with one's job, organization and supervisor may help to maintain better balance between one's work and family roles. Consequently, organizations and individuals must focus on modifying the existing work-environment policies and practices so as to improve their satisfaction with work-life. Creating employee friendly work environment will boost employee satisfaction with work-life as the dissatisfied workforce will likely seek any other career option to live a satisfied life. In this study, the nature of self-reported data possess the possibility of common method bias. However, Spector (2006) doesn't report common method bias as a serious concern and thus it may not inflate the relationship among the research variables. This study lays the foundation for continued future research in this area. First, the present research work can be replicated for different sample with increased sample size in different context such as banking, education etc. Also, comparative analysis should highlight strengths and weaknesses organizations related to their work-environment in fostering work-life balance of employees. Other psychological variables (Burnout, stress, job autonomy etc.) should also be studied using samples from different industries and geographical location.

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