WORK-LIFE CONFLICT, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG IT PROFESSIONALS

Swati Vispute[a], Lipi Basu[b]

[a*] Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies (SIMS), Symbiosis International (Deemed University) (SIU), Khadki, Pune, Maharashtra, India
[b] Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies (SIMS), Symbiosis International (Deemed University) (SIU), Khadki, Pune, Maharashtra, India

*Corresponding author: swati.vispute@sims.edu

Abstract

The Indian IT industry is at a major crossroad of advanced technological changes impacting the people working in it. They are continuously coping with changes in the working pattern as well as technology taking a toll on their morale. Therefore, it is critical to understand the organizational commitment of the IT professionals in today's context. The purpose of current research is to understand whether work life balance, gender or earning responsibility affects the organizational commitment for IT professionals in India. A survey is conducted to get the responses. Findings suggests that work life balance is not related to variables like gender or commitment though women find it difficult to leave the organization while earning responsibility has relationship with organizational commitment.

Keywords:

1. Introduction

The word Work Life Balance was devised for the first time in the year 1986 however its use in day to day life is been made since years. Work life balance doesn't indicate that one should spend equal number of hours on work and personal life. It can be defined as the number of hours you spend on job compared to the number of hours you spend for your personal life doing things you enjoy. It is thus obvious, that there is no perfect solution that one should strive for as different people have different priorities in life. Work life balance is also explained as ones' ability to devote time to work and non-work domain and be content with it. As defined by Greenhaus (2010) work life balance is a set of activities that help in satisfaction and good operation in both the areas with the least clashes.

Success of an organization depends on the employees and the commitment that they bring to their work. Organizational commitment can be defined as persistent affiliation of employees with their organization. It is the individual's attachment with the organization and such a committed employee will align himself or herself with the objectives and culture of the organization. Such employees then can definitely be considered as competitive advantage of the organization. Literature has shown that there is positive relationship between organizational commitment and employee behavior in terms of retention, lesser absenteeism, employee engagement, citizenship behavior, and performance etc.

Technology has affected people's lives in different ways and the last two decades have seen extraordinary changes in our workplaces and families. Work life balance has gained tremendous importance in today's world with changing demographics and increasing women participation in the work place. With increasing population and changing technology coupled with the demand for better services, there has been a massive change in the

working schedule of Information Technology (IT) professionals. Nowadays, the standard nine hour a day regime is replaced with a twenty-four by seven work schedule. Moreover, it is not a standard 9am to 6pm work schedule as clients are distributed globally and they have to cater to their needs. Indian IT companies are at a major crossroad today. Till now, IT has led the economic transformation of the country and altered the perception of India in the global economy. But it faces a huge challenge in terms of automation and other new technologies. The IT employees are finding themselves in constant need of reskilling and they are now coping with layoff and decreased employment opportunities. This uncertainty coupled with instability is putting pressure on the quality of life.

Organizations are increasingly becoming more employee centric as they see them as asset. Many facilities are being extended to employees so that they have an optimum balance between their work and non-work sphere. Work life balance also allows employees to remain motivated and work towards organizational goals without supervision. Various organizational policies are aimed at retaining employees which indirectly maps to organizational commitment. Any separation adds to the cost of the organization and the more they can retain, less will be the operation cost for an organization.

Middle life is that period of life when one tries to balance growth and decline at the same time. Studies have shown that during this time stress peaks as there is multiple role demand, financial pressure along with one's own dream and aspiration. Although, job loss can happen during other age periods, but it affects most during this time. This is also the time when health issues start coming up. Overall, well-being becomes an issue in this period. With this backdrop, an attempt has been made in the present study to co-relate work life balance with organizational commitment in the IT industry specifically for middle aged professionals which is defined as anyone falling in the age group of 35 years to 45 years.

This study aims to correlate organizational commitment and work life balance and trying to understand time and strain-based conflict with reference to organizational obligations.

2. Literature Review

Good amount of literature is available on work life balance in Indian IT sector, but none focused on a specific age group. Researchers have given three components of work life balance such as time-based conflict, strain-based conflict and behaviour-based conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1987). According to authors, behavior based conflict is observed when the manner in which one behaves in one role is opposite of expected characteristics of another role. Time based conflict is observed while extra time spent in one area for e.g. work, makes is difficult for an individual to use same time for another area for e.g. personal activities. In strain based conflict the stress or strained generated in individual's role affects to fulfill the requirements of other roles pf the individual. When employees can pay attention to both personal and professional lives, they enjoy their job and feel committed.

Work life balance is one of the signs of organizational commitment amongst IT professionals (Goswami, 2014). It is also a gender specific issue (Chauhan, 2010) where women are burdened with the added responsibility of taking care of home. Women workforce attrition is high with only 0.06% of senior management profiles are possessed by female employees (Internet and Society Survey 2013, Sharda Singh, et al 2017). Working women having different attitude form their partner regarding life roles, experience relatively deep conflict. As suggested by Shravanthi, et al (2013), organizations should concentrate more on women of the age group 25-35 as at that time they have more responsibilities at home. Both men and women are of the opinion that flexible work hours will improve the work life balance along with work from home (Tewathia, 2014). In their paper Marsden et al (1993) have shown that men display slightly higher organizational commitment than women which was further corroborated by Farooq and Zia (2013) for teachers working in higher institutions of higher learning. Work family conflicts can also result from low level of leader or supervisor support and interaction (Jones and Butler, 1980).

Perceptions has significant role in maintaining work life balance (Dave and Purohit, 2016). It is required that individuals change their thoughts that personal life and work are opposite to each other, that both have contradictory values and people around should treat both make and females equally. Several authors (Olawale et al., 2017; Gulbahar et al., 2014; Goswami, 2014), in their study have shown that there is positive but not statistically significant relationship between work life balance and organizational commitment. However, Gulbahar et al (2014) further found no association of work life balance with marital status and gender. Conversely, Sharma and Jha (2016) didn't find any significant relationship between the variables.

Research papers related to work life balance for IT professionals in India were adequately found but none focussed on the middle-aged professionals. Papers on organizational commitment and work life balance for IT is very less and requires more inputs.

3. Research objective and problem statement

The objective of the study is to explore if there exists any relation between work life balance and organizational commitment amongst Indian IT professionals who are in their middle age.

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were formulated to attain the research objective.

H_1: Work life balance leads to organizational commitment.

H_2: There is no relationship between time and strain-based conflict with organizational commitment.

H_3: There is no difference in organizational commitment of male and females.

H_4: There is no difference in the organizational commitment of single and dual income families.

4. Research methodology

The study was aimed at IT professionals. The data was collected from 58 IT professionals working in different MNCs in India. The survey was conducted through questionnaire that was created in google form and then sent to the respondents. A non-random sampling was done based on convenience and most of the respondents are known to the author. The work-life balance is measured as Time-based conflict and Strain-based conflict. The scale for the same is adapted from the study by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Organizational Commitment was measured by adapting the scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). Basic demographic details were captured like age, gender, marital status, household status, work experience, number of years in current company, average working hours and management levels. This was done to understand the characteristics of the respondents.

Method

A box and whisker plot have been done for each question to understand the distribution of response which was received from the respondents, its central value and its variability. It also gives the skewness of data which is the measure of asymmetry of the distribution of variables about its mean. For testing the first hypothesis, a Pearson correlation was done as there are two variables - work life balance and organizational commitment. It will give us the extent to which two variables are linearly related. A regression analysis was done to test the second hypothesis. In this hypothesis there are two independent variables and one dependent variable. A t-test is done for testing the third and fourth hypothesis as there are two samples for the same variable (gender and income). It is used for analysis of two population means and how they differ from each other.

5. Results and discussion

Demography details

Table 1 gives a concise information about the demographics of the target population. Graphical representation of the demography is given in Annexure A.

Table 1: Demographics of study population

	Number	Percent
Gender		
Female	14	24.1%
Male	44	75.9%
Age		
35-45 Years	58	100%
Position in Company		
Middle Level	38	65.5%
Senior Level	20	34.5%
Years of Experience		

< 8 Years	0	0.0%
8 – 15	12	20.7%
> 15 Years	46	79.3%
Number of Years in Current Company		
< 1 Year	3	5.2%
1-3 Years	9	15.5%
3-6 Years	8	13.8%
> 6 Years	38	65.5%
Marital Status		
Unmarried	4	6.9%
Married	53	91.4%
Others	1	1.7%
Average Working Time Per Week		
< 45 Hours	11	19.0%
45-50 Hours	32	55.2%
50-55 Hours	7	12.1%
> 55 Hours	8	13.8%
Earning Responsibility		
Single	29	50.0%
Dual	29	50.0%

There were total 58 respondents amongst which 76% were male and 24% females. All were in the age group of 35 to 45 years with nearly two- third of them in the middle management level. Most of the respondents (79%) have more than 15 years of experience with nearly 66% working in the same company for more than 6 years. More than three-fourth of the respondents work less than 5 hours per week. The response for earning responsibility is equally split between single and dual income.

Company policy

Data for two most important company policies that the respondents have, in their company, which affects their work life balance like working and leave arrangement. 64% of the surveyed professionals have flexible timing while 38% have the flexibility to work from home. Only 3.4% had worked part time for a short period. Considering today's work culture in IT industry it was surprising to note that nearly 28% of the respondents have no such working arrangement in their office. This parameter requires further study to establish what kind of other arrangements does the company provide, if any, to its employees. Annexure A has the detail for the distribution of the sample population for the company policies.
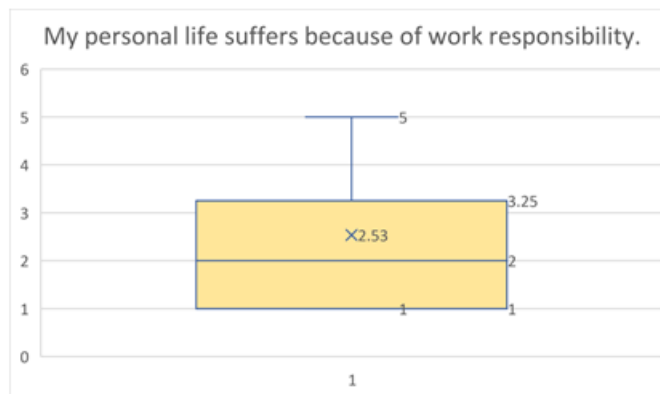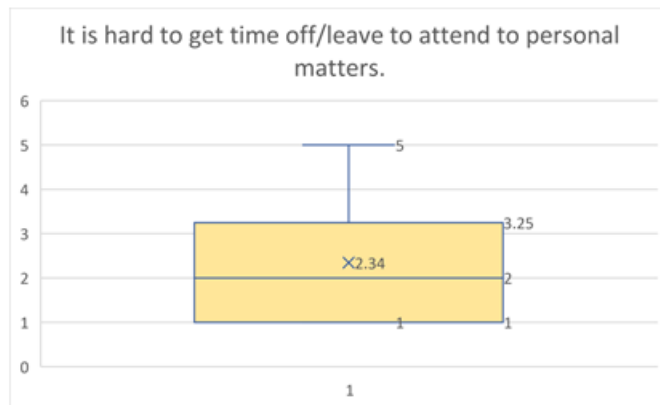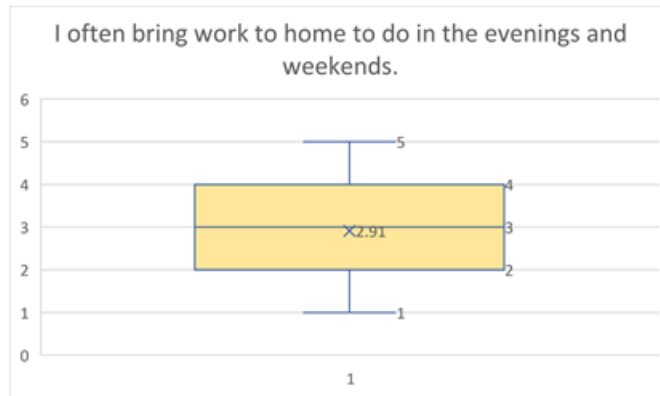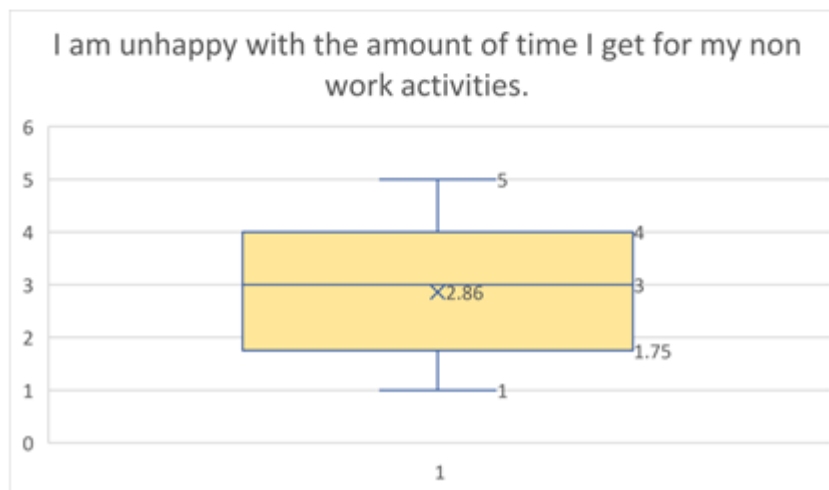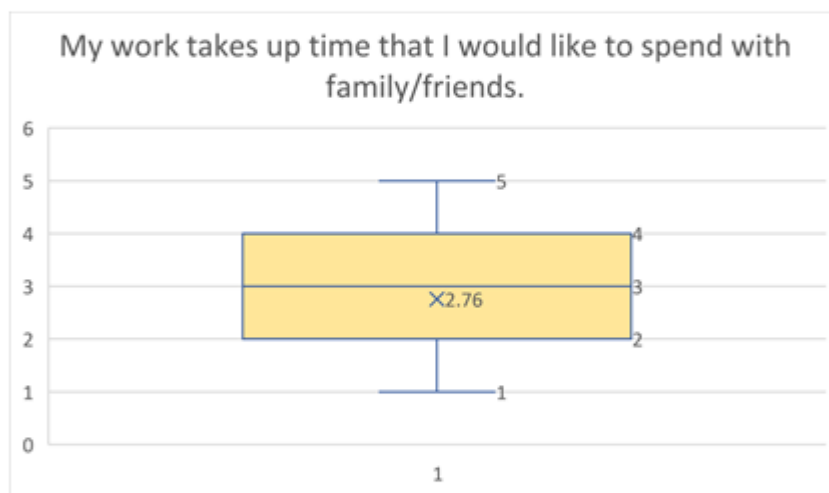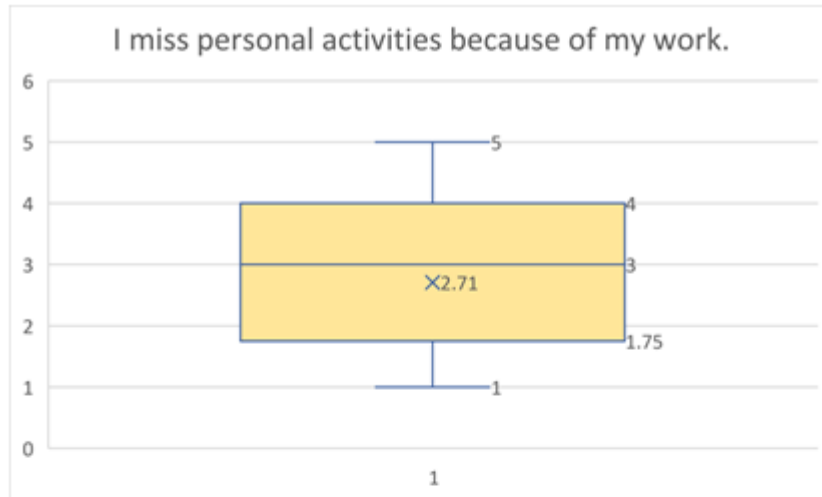
Questions on time-based constraints

There are six questions on time-based conflicts, responses to which are in Likert scale 1- 5. A statistical analysis is shown for a general idea about the kind of response received for each question.

Table 2: Summary Statistics for Questions on Time based Conflicts

Question	Mean	S.D.
Item I	2.91	1.39
Item II	2.34	1.42
Item III	2.53	1.37
Item IV	2.71	1.35
Item V	2.76	1.28
Item VI	2.86	1.44

I often bring work to home to do in the evenings and weekends.

It is hard to get time off/leave to attend to personal matters.

My personal life suffers because of work responsibility.

I miss personal activities because of my work.

My work takes up time that I would like to spend with family/friends.

I am unhappy with the amount of time I get for my non work activities.

Data is right skewed for 'It is hard to get time off/leave to attend to personal matters' and 'My personal life suffers because of work responsibility' where the mean is more than the median indicating that majority of the respondents disagreed with these statements. For the questions 'I miss personal activities because of my work', 'I am unhappy with the amount of time I get for my non-work activities', 'I often bring work to home to do in the evenings and weekends' and 'My work takes up time that I would like to spend with family/friends' data is left skewed, with mean being less than median, indicating that most people agreed to the statements, though the dispersion of data is less for the last two statements.

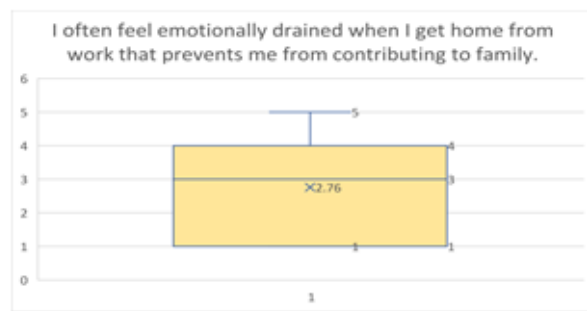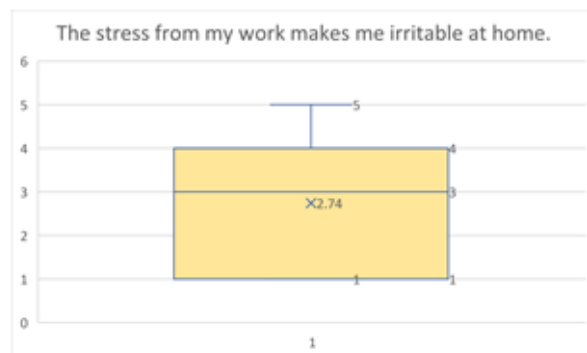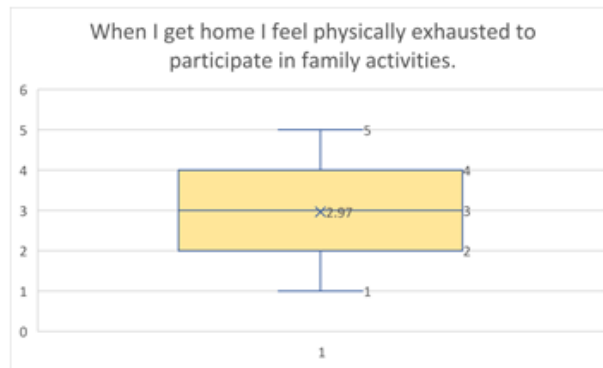The reliability of these six questions in constructing a scale for Time Based Conflict can be measured with

Cronbach's alpha, 0.913, which is greater than 0.8. This suggests that the responses to these questions are consistent with each other and reliable. Hence, we can add them up to construct a single scale to measure time conflict.
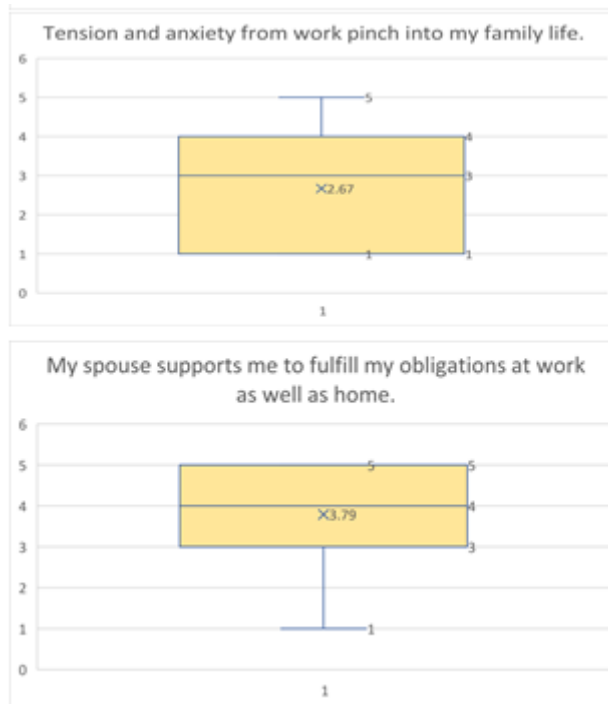
Questions on Strain Based Conflicts

There are five questions on strain-based conflicts. A statistical analysis is shown for a general idea about the kind of response received for each question.

Table 3: Summary Statistics for Questions on Strain based Conflicts

Item	Mean	S.D.
Item I	2.97	1.41
Item II	2.74	1.52
Item III	2.67	1.50
Item IV	2.76	1.42
Item V	3.79	1.45

Tension and anxiety from work pinch into my family life.

My spouse supports me to fulfill my obligations at work as well as home.

All the statements in the strain-based conflict show left skewness with mean being less than median. This means most people disagreed to the statements. For the statement 'My spouse supports me to fulfil my obligations at work as well as home' the 'disagree' has a negative connotation.

The reliability of these five questions in constructing a scale for Strain Based Conflict can be measured with Cronbach's alpha, 0.894, which is greater than 0.8. This suggests that the responses to these questions are consistent with each other and reliable. Hence, we can add them up to construct a single scale to measure strain conflict.

Association of Work Life Balance and Organizational Commitment

There are two questions each response to which are recorded in Likert scale 1-5. A statistical analysis is shown for a general idea about the kind of response received for each question.

Table 4: Summary Statistics for Questions on Organizational Commitment

Question	Mean	S.D.
It would be very hard for me to leave the company.	3.34	1.25
I feel strong sense of _belonging in the company.	3.38	1.23

It would be very hard for me to leave the company.
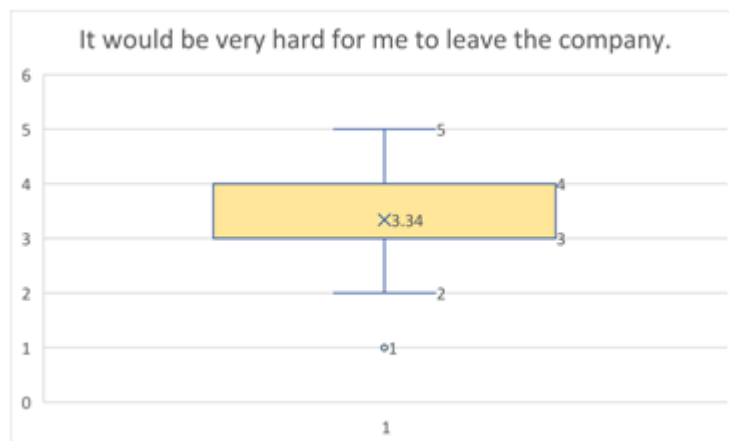
For this statement, the median is 3. The mean is more than the median indicating that the data is right skewed meaning that most of the respondents disagreed to this statement.
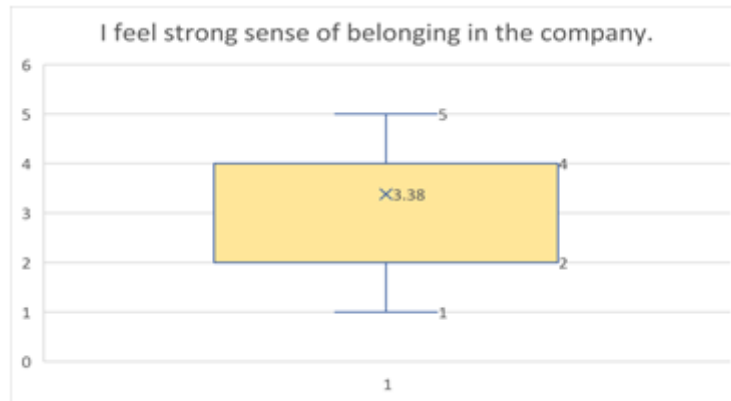
For testing Hypothesis 1: Worklife balance leads to organizational commitment, a Pearson correlation analysis was performed. Here, the worklife balance scale was defined as the sum of time-based conflicts, strain-based conflicts and management support questions. The Pearson correlation between organizational commitment and work life balance scale is 0.121 with a p-value of **0.366**, which indicates that there is no significant association between the responses to these questions on work life balance and organizational commitment. The result does not match with the findings of Goswami (2014) who showed that work life imbalance is negative and significantly influences organizational commitment. The absence of any relation these variables suggest that for these IT professionals, who have many years of experience, work life balance is no longer significant in influencing organizational commitment. Rather professional growth could be of paramount importance and the deciding factor to feel committed to the organization. On the other side, they may have found the perfect balance between work and life and know how to attain it irrespective of the organization for which they work for. Another point of view could be that these professionals have resigned to the fact that they must work irrespective of the conditions as they have various responsibilities, which needs to be fulfilled at this point of life.
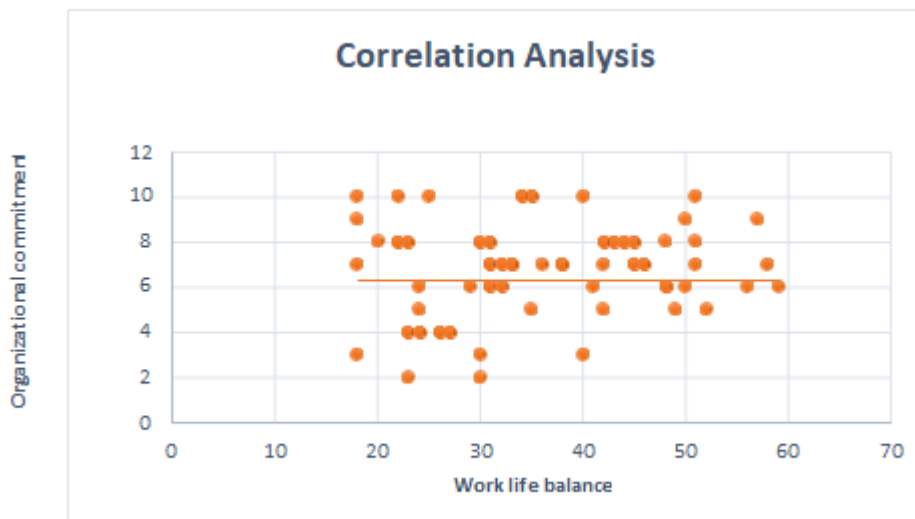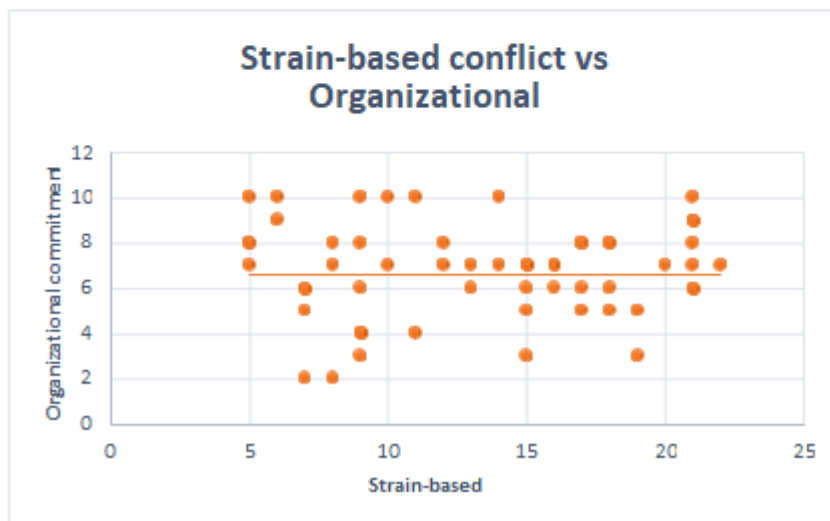

Association of Organizational Commitment with Time based, and Strain based Conflicts

To test hypothesis H_2: There is no relationship between time and strain-based conflict with organizational commitment, a regression analysis was performed with the scale on organizational commitment against the scale on Time based conflicts and Strain based conflicts.

Table 5: Regression Analysis Output

	Coefficients	Std. Error	t-Statistics	P-value	95% C.I.

Constant	6.443	0.773	8.335	0.000	(4.89, 7.99)
Time Based Conflict	0.023	0.068	0.337	**0.738**	(-0.11, 0.16)
Strain Based Conflict	-0.006	0.088	-0.073	**0.942**	(-0.18, 0.17)

The p-values of the coefficients for time-based and strain-based conflicts are larger than 0.05, which indicate that time-based conflict and strain-based conflict have no significant association with organizational commitment. The R^2 = 0.004, also suggests that there is no association of these scales together with organizational commitment. The cluster plots show wide dispersion of data suggesting that responses were varied. Here too no relationship suggests that the parameters for time-based conflicts and strain-based conflicts have no bearing on the organization commitment of the respondents. As already discussed, these factors no longer hold importance to the respondents maybe because majority of them (75%) work less than 50 hours per week which is a reasonable figure.

Association of Organizational Commitment with Gender

To test the difference in responses in organizational commitment between male and females, we use independent sample t-tests and summarise the results in Table 8.

Table 7: Differences in Responses to Organizational Commitment byGender

	Male			Female				

Question	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	t-statistic	P-value
It would be very hard for me to leave the company.	44	3.16	1.26	14	3.93	1.07	-2.062	**0.044**
I feel strong sense of belonging in the company.	44	3.32	1.31	14	3.57	0.94	-0.670	0.506
Total	44	6.48	2.15	14	7.50	1.65	-1.629	0.109

We observe a significant difference in results to the question "It would be very hard for me to leave the company" between male and female respondents with a p-value of 0.044. However, there is no significant difference in responses for the other question or the total. This suggest that females are more committed not to leave the company compared to males. This is further corroborated by looking at the data where 71% of women are working at the same company for more than 6 years compared to 64% men.
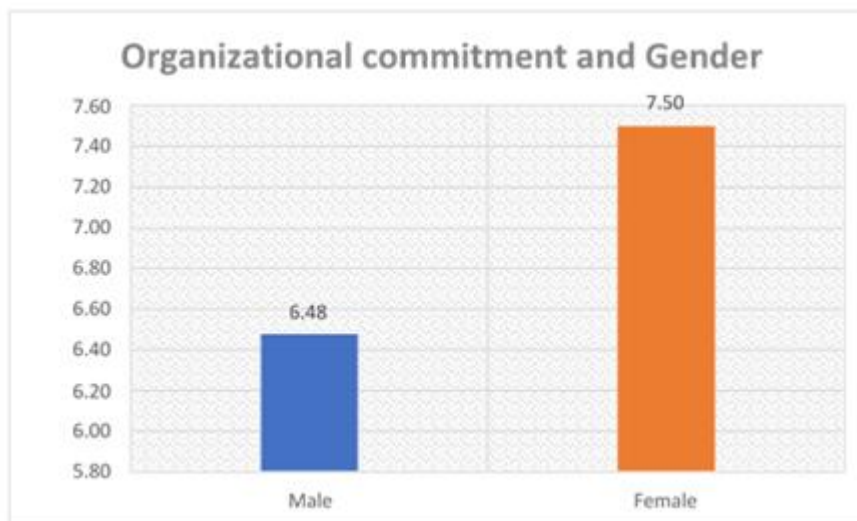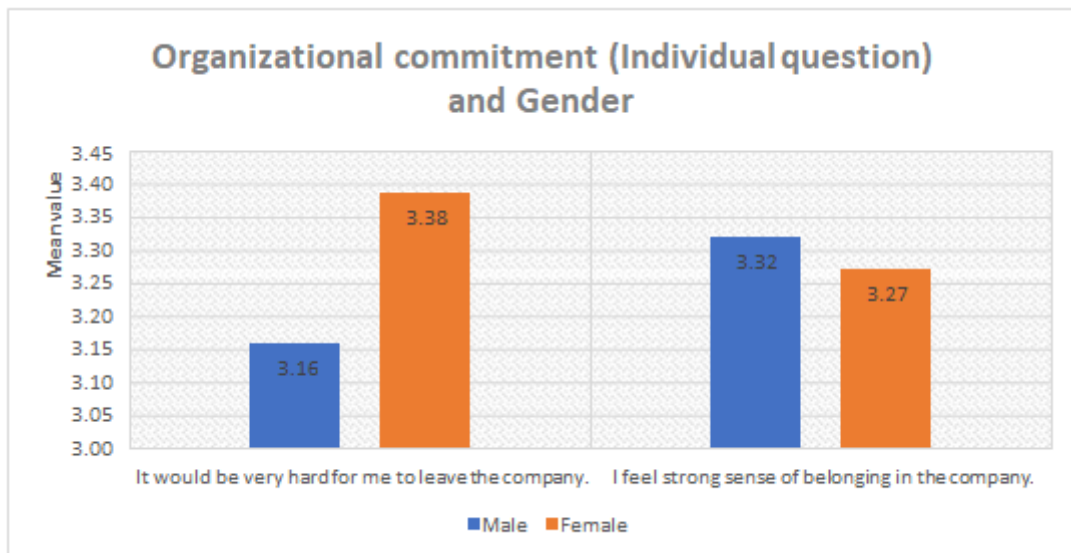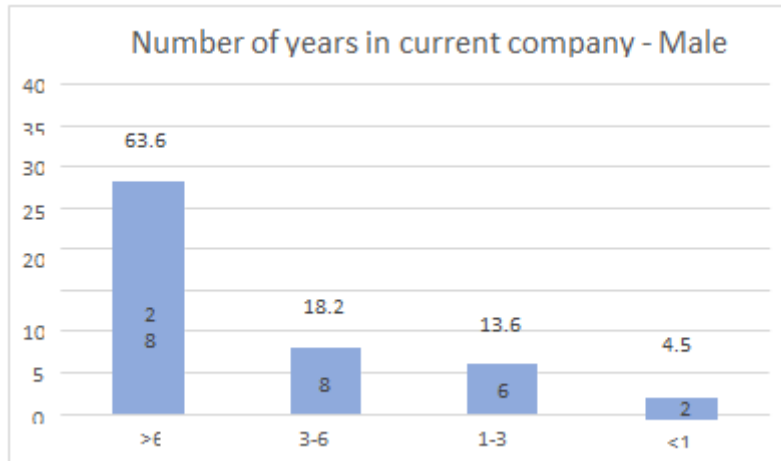

Table 8: Years of Experience by Gender

	Male	Female	Male %	Female %
>6	28	10	63.6%	71%
3-6 yrs	8	0	18.2%	0%
1-3 yrs	6	3	13.6%	21%
<1	2	1	4.5%	7%

The finding, though, does not match with Marsden (1993) who found that men have slightly more organizational commitment than women Women in general have more household responsibilities which they need to fulfil. Their reluctance to leave job could be because they do not want to change job until and unless it is imperative. They feel comfortable in their old job as they know that in case of any emergency they can get backing from their organization. This hypothesis needs more data for further analysis.
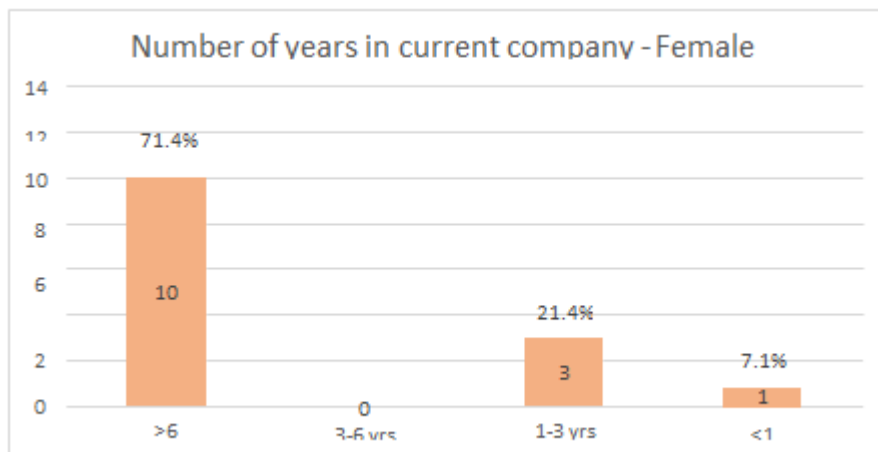
Association of Organizational commitment and work life balance with earning responsibility

To test the difference in responses in organizational commitment between respondents with single and dual family earning responsibility, we use independent sample t-tests and summarize the results in Table 9. Just as an addendum, the effect of earning responsibility on work-life balance was also checked.

Table 9: Differences in Responses to Organizational Commitment by earning responsibility

		Single			Dual			
Question	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	t-statistic	P-value

It would be very hard for me to leave the company.	29	3.00	1.28	29	3.69	1.14	-2.17	**0.034**
I feel strong sense of belonging in the company.	29	3.17	1.28	29	3.59	1.15	-1.29	0.201
Total Organizational Commitment	29	6.17	2.12	29	7.28	1.91	-2.08	**0.042**
Work Life Balance	29	36.31	11.16	29	36.48	12.40	-0.056	0.956

There is a significant difference between single and dual income families in response to the question "It would be very hard for me to leave the company" with a p-value **0.034**. Total organization commitment is also significantly different with a p-value of **0.042** which suggest that dual income families are more committed to the organizations.
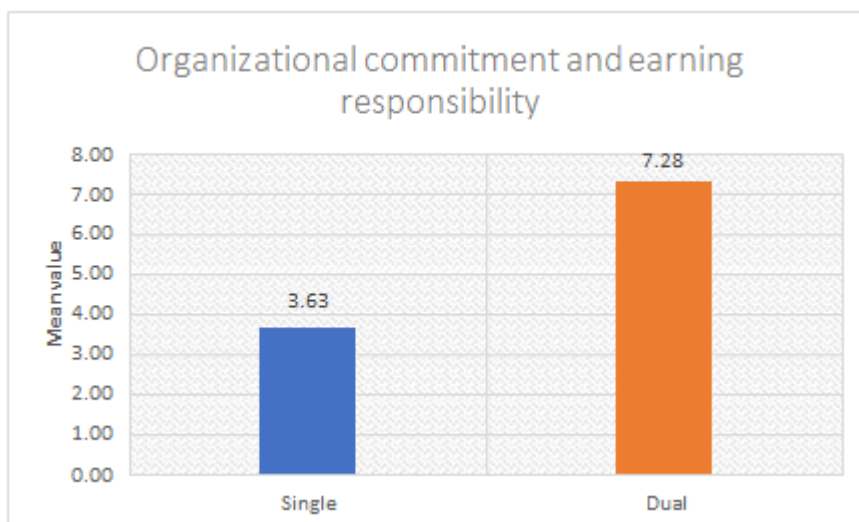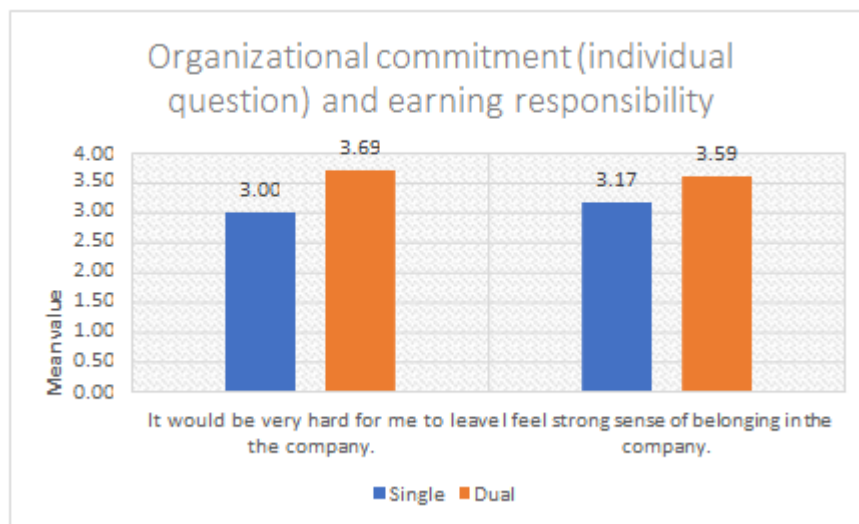
Single income professionals who are shouldering all the responsibilities alone, do not hesitate to change job as they are in the constant look out for better opportunities. This study shows that it is not the same with dual income who feel more committed towards the organization. It could be because the responsibility is equally shared between the two and they look for more settled life without much change, given an option. Work life balance do not have any significant difference between single and dual income families. This means the earning responsibility has no impact on the work life balance of IT professionals.

6. Conclusion and future research

To summarize, following are the key statistical result observed: -

Work life balance, which in this study is defined as sum of time-based conflicts, strain-based conflicts and management support, does not influence organizational commitment for IT professionals in their middle age.

Organizational commitment has no relationship with time-based conflicts and strain-based conflicts separately i.e. individually they do not affect the organizational commitment for the respondents. There is no relationship either when they were taken together.

Gender has no association with organizational commitment but in general, females find it hard to leave company.

Dual income family respondents were found to be more committed to their organization though single income family respondents found it difficult to leave the organization.

Based on the above statistical result, listed below are some probable implications: -

Respondents with many years of experience in the IT industry, and in most cases working in the same company, may have understood how to balance their life and work. Thus, their organizational commitment is not dependent on it.

It could also mean that they are know they have responsibilities and they have to keep working to fulfil them. Thus, they have adjusted themselves accordingly to any given condition.

During this time, professional growth could be another factor. If the career is on the right path they are satisfied. Working in the same company may give them that career development and if they find themselves stagnated then they will not hesitate to change their company.

Women do not want to leave the company in general, maybe, because they want to be in a comfort zone during this time as they have other responsibilities in the personal front. Any change may affect their stability and they may find it difficult to handle.

In general, single earning family has more responsibilities than dual earning family where the liabilities get shared. So, they may find it difficult to leave their organization because of the uncertainty which may arise due to changing of job. In general, it was found that dual earning family is more committed to the organization than single earning family. This could be because dual earning family have reached an equilibrium and they do not want to cause any change to it.

Based on the findings above it can be said that there is scope for further study. There could be more specific research targeting the middle-aged IT professionals in terms of the work life balance and organizational commitment. One study can focus on getting data for IT professionals below 30 years of age and then repeating the study after 10 years when they reach middle age to map the change in their behavioural pattern. It will be interesting to see how responsibilities and other changes in personal life affects a respondent in their outlook towards work-life balance and organizational commitment.
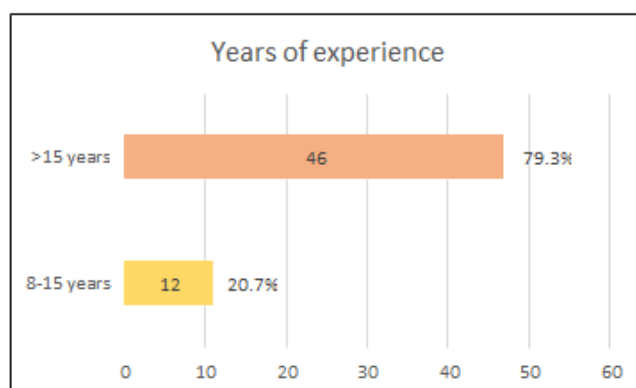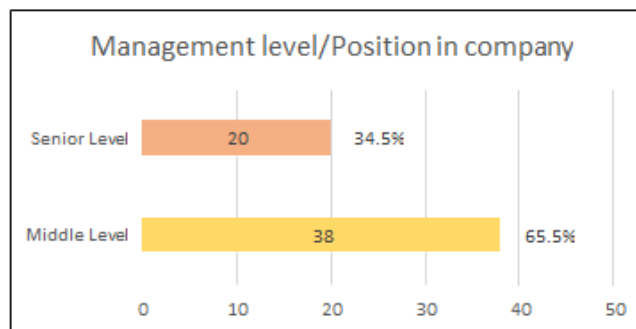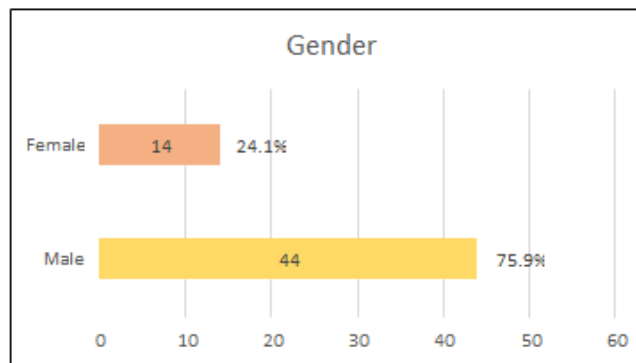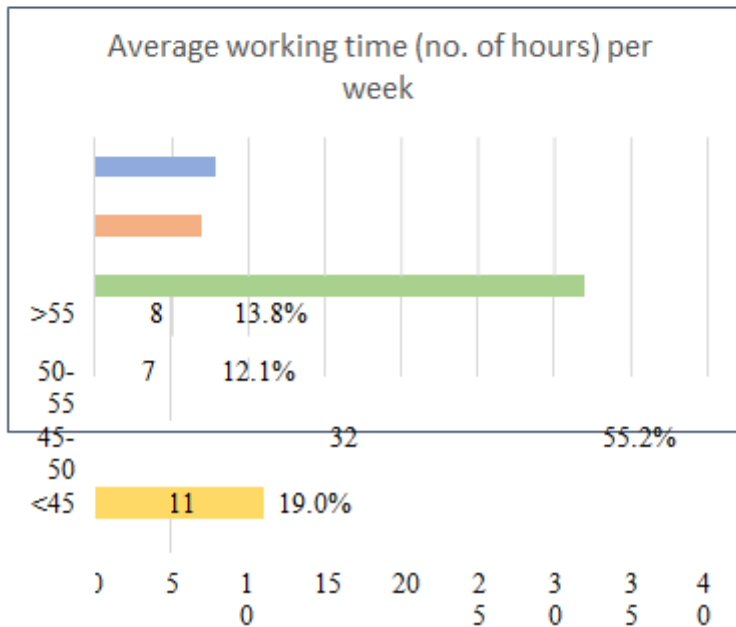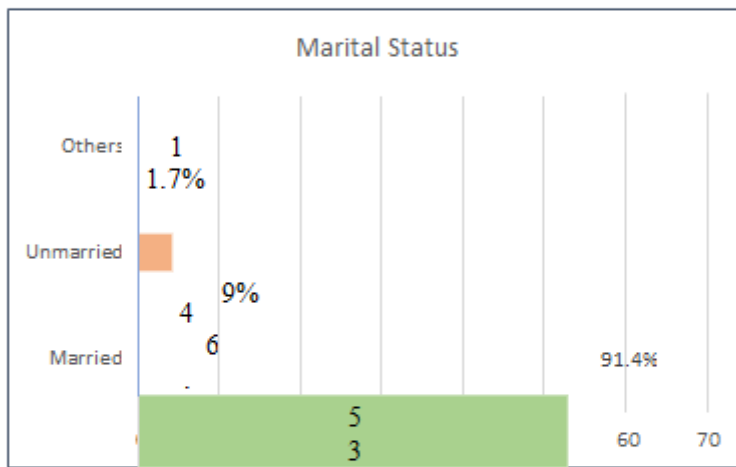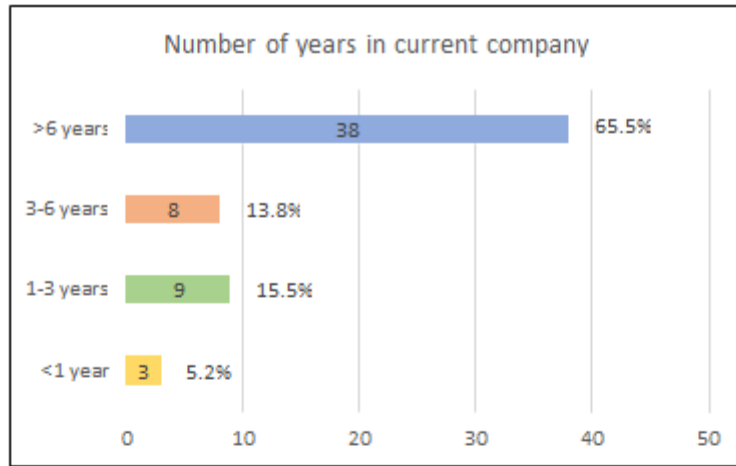
References

[1] Akhtar, R. Relationship between Work-Life Balance & Organizational Commitment.
[2] Beutell, N. J., & Greenhaus, J. H. (1982). Interrole conflict among married women: The influence of husband and wife characteristics on conflict and coping behavior. *Journal of vocational behavior*, *21*(1), 99-110.
[3] Chauhan, A. (2010). Indian Corporate Women and Worklife Balance. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, *5*(4).
[4] Dave, J., & Purohit, H. (2016). Work Life Balance and Perception: a conceptual framework. *Clarion: International Multidisciplinary Journal*, *5*(1).
[5] Farooq, N., & Zia, Y. A. (2013). Gender and Organizational Commitment. *Putaj Humanities & Social Sciences*, *20*.
[6] Goswami, S. (2014). Work-Life Conflict Among IT Professionals. *IUP Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *13*(4).
[7] Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of management review*, *10*(1), 76-88.
[8] Jha, M., & Sharma, E. (2016). Impact of work life balance and commitment on citizenship behaviour. International Conference on Integral Development for Wholesome Life. June 2016, Udaipur, India.

[9]   Marsden, P. V., Kalleberg, A. L., & Cook, C. R. (1993). Gender differences in organizational commitment: Influences of work positions and family roles. *Work and Occupations*, *20*(3), 368-390.

[10]   Olawale, A. V. R., Fapohunda, T. M., & Ilesnmi, J. V. F. (2017). Work-life balance and organisational commitment: Perceptions of working postgraduate students. *BVIMSR's Journal of Management Research*, *9*(2), 178-188.

[11]   Ravindran, B., & Baral, R. (2014). Factors affecting the work attitudes of Indian re-entry women in the IT sector. *Vikalpa*, *39*(2), 31-42.

[12]   Shravanthi, A. R., Deshmukh, S., & Deepa, N. (2013). Work life balance of women in India. *International Journal of Research in Management Sciences*, *1*(1), 47-56.

[13]   Singh, S., Ganguli, S., & David, R. (2017). Women Workforce Attrition Dynamics in Indian IT/ITES Sector. *Qualitative Report*, *22*(5).

[14]   Tewathia, N. (2014). Work-life balance in the IT sector: A case study of Delhi. *International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology*, *3*(7), 89-93.

Annexure A

Number of years in current company

Category	Count	Percentage
>6 years	38	65.5%
3-6 years	8	13.8%
1-3 years	9	15.5%
<1 year	3	5.2%

Marital Status

Category	Count	Percentage
Others	1	1.7%
Unmarried	4	9%
Married	53	91.4%

Average working time (no. of hours) per week

Category	Count	Percentage
>55	8	13.8%
50-55	7	12.1%
45-50	32	55.2%
<45	11	19.0%

Earning responsibility

Dual Income	29	50.0%
Single Income	29	50.0%

Working arrangement

None	Flexible timing	Work from home	Working part time for a short period
16 (27.6%)	37 (63.8%)	22 (37.9%)	2 (3.4%)

Leave arrangement

Parental leave	Maternity leave	Medical leave	Easy time off during emergency
24 (41.4%)	14 (24.1%)	39 (67.2%)	35 (60.3%)