

WORK-FAMILY BALANCE OF ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONALS IN SRI LANKA

Perera H

Executive

Ernst & Young- Chartered Accountants

Opatha H.H.D.N.P.

Senior Professor

Department of Human Resource Management

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the research was to identify the most important three factors which determine work-family balance according to a selected group of actual Sri Lankan professionals in Accountancy and to investigate whether they significantly contribute to the work-family balance of Sri Lankan professionals in Accountancy. Also the research was designed to investigate whether there is a significant difference between male accountancy professionals and female accountancy professionals with regard to the degree of work-family balance; and to determine the degree of combined effect of the most important three factors on the variability of work-family balance of Sri Lankan professionals in Accountancy. The participants were the Accountancy professionals in Sri Lanka, (members of ICASL, CIMA and ACCA) who were employed during the time of the study. The final sample consisted of fifty four (56%) males and forty two (44%) females whose average age was 39.4 years. The type of investigation of this study was correlational and differential rather than causal, because the study attempted to analyze the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. The study was analytical in nature. Further this research was not an experiment and therefore manipulation of data and control of independent variables were not done. The study was conducted in the natural environment and researcher's interference was minimal under normal circumstances. As the data collection was done within a particular time period and there was no subsequent extension of the research, the study was cross sectional in nature. The unit of analysis was individual and covered members of ICASL, CIMA and ACCA.

The results of the study showed that work-family balance is positively related to time management, nature of the spouse and understanding of the strategies available for work-family balance. The individual variable which had the highest impact on work-family balance of Accounting Professionals in Sri Lanka is the understanding the strategies available for work-family balance. Further it was found that there is no significant difference between male professionals and female professionals with regard to work-family balance.

Key words: *work-family balance, time management, nature of the spouse, accountancy professionals*

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Balance in work life and family life is an emerging challenge for both employees and employers. Demographic changes including the increase in the number of women in the work place, dual career families, single parent families and an aging population have generated an increasingly diverse work force and a greater need of employees to balance work and family life (Jennifer and Gardner, 2007). Before the demographic changes, in a married context every husband had a wife whose primary responsibility was domestic labor and the husband's primary responsibility was economic labor. But today the context has changed and there are families in which both husband and wife are engaged in jobs. Therefore Gina and Michael (2005) observe that now within a majority of households headed by married couples each member has a paid job and there is the domestic labor to be done.

The expected behavior of a male is quite different from a female and if the person is unable to adjust the behavior to comply with the expectations of different roles, there will be a conflict between roles (Jeffrey and Nicholas, 1985). Russell and Bowman (2000) asserted that the issue of work-life balance is gaining an increasing attention by the employees in all organizations. To minimize or avoid the conflict between work demands and family responsibilities being faced by the employees has become a serious challenge for most of the organizations. Further Jennifer and Gardner (2007) state that conflict between work life and family life has been linked to job dissatisfaction and turnover and in order to reduce this, organizations are increasingly using work-family balance initiatives to hire and retain key personnel.

Problem Statement

Many researchers found out that there are interactions between family life and work life and have conducted number of researches on work-family balance in the recent past (Hareven, 1993; Day and Trina, 2006; Haddock et. al. 2001; Clark, 2000; Diane et. al. 2005; Lillian et. al., 2005; Felstead et. al, 2002; Smith J. and Gardner D., 2007; Greenhaus, Collins and Jason, 2003; Marks, Stephen R., et al, 2001; Koyuncu, Mustafa et. al., 2006; Jodyanne Kirkwood, Beth Tootell, 2008; Bellavia and Frone, 2005).

But there is a gap in the empirical knowledge in respect of factors which determine work-family balance of accounting professionals. As far as Sri Lanka is concerned theoretical arguments or empirical research findings regarding dynamics of work-family balance of Accounting Professionals are hardly seen. The problem statement addressed in this study is as follows:

What are the three main factors which will determine work-family balance of Sri Lankan accounting professionals according to their perception, their impact on work-family balance and does work-family balance get differed by gender?

Research Objectives

An attempt was made to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To identify three factors which will contribute more to work-family balance according to a preliminary investigation of the perception of practicing Sri Lankan professionals in Accountancy and to investigate whether they significantly contribute to the work-family balance of Sri Lankan professionals in Accountancy
2. To investigate whether there is a significant difference between male accountancy professionals and female accountancy professionals with regard to the degree of work-family balance.
3. To determine the degree of combined effect of time management, nature of the spouse, and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance on the variability of work-family balance of Sri Lankan professionals in Accountancy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different scholars have expressed different ideas and findings relate to work-family balance. Early conceptualizations described working life and family life as two independent and segmented domains. But nowadays it is assumed that people effectively separate these two lives and make efforts to balance the two segments (Clark, 2000). Edwards & Rothbard (2000) state that work and family life domains are jointly influenced by each other. The established approaches namely; conflict model, enrichment model, spill over model and the compensation model further describes this joint influence of each other. Further border theory explains how people can influence the interactions. This theory looks at people and their individual scope of action to negotiate the demands arising in each of the life domains. Therefore they are described as 'border crossers' that manage daily transitions from one domain to another according to their wish (Clark, 2000).

Work-family balance policies adopted by employers are most of the time supposed to create win-win situations for both the employer and employee. At the same time it tries to improve the employees' mental and physical wellbeing while employees can have their individual perceptions of 'balances', since that can be changed from one person to another (Viola, 2011). Work-family balance policies are mostly dominated by time based instruments, which includes flexible work schedules and part time arrangements, but not limited to these mentioned instruments (Thompson and Bunderson, 2001). Apart from time based instruments, information based policies, service based policies and finance based policies are also used to maintain work-family balance (Thompson, Beauvias & Allen, 2006).

People are border crossers who make daily transitions between two worlds; the world of work and the world of family (Clark, 2000). Further he states that the early researchers had treated work and family systems as separate systems which operate individually. But during 1970's researchers have identified a new approach which is known as an open system, where the events at work affect the events at home and vice versa.

Bellavia and Michael (2005) states that the work-family balance could be explained by three models;

1. Ecological systems theory - Person's development is life long and is best understood by examining the interaction between the characteristics of that person and the characteristics of his/her environment. Eg: The impact of one partner's work patterns to other partner's work life
2. Role theory – When people have multiple roles, it will be impossible for them to meet all the expectations of all roles because these expectations would inevitably conflict each other. This is labelled as 'inter role conflict'.
3. Boundary/ Boarder theory – Each of a person's roles take place within a specific domain of life, and these domains are separated by borders that may be physical, temporal or psychological. E.g.: between the domains of work and home life.

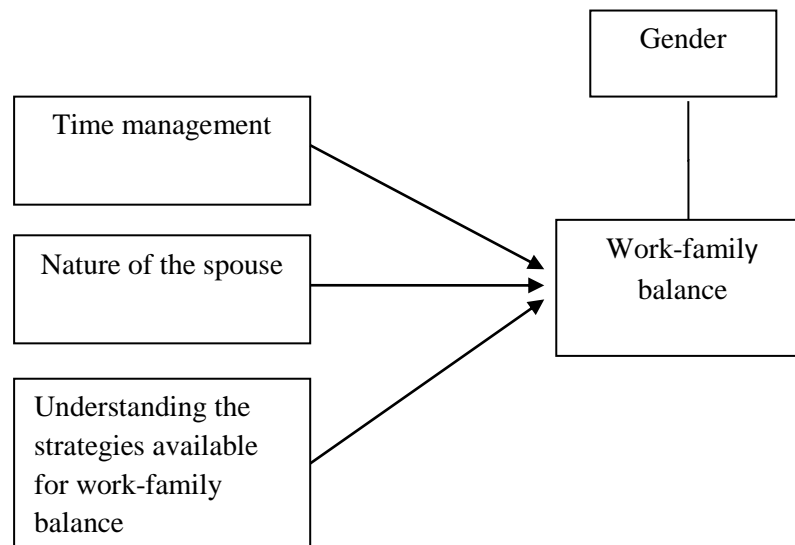
Both work family benefit availability and supportive work family culture are positively related to effective commitment and negatively related to work family conflict and intentions to leave the organization (Thompson et al., 1999). Gender had only a limited moderating influence on the relationships between the antecedents and the components of work-family balance. Also work-family facilitation was related to the work outcomes of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Aryee et al., 2005). Work family conflict leads to many negative outcomes, including job dissatisfaction, turnover intentions and stress, while family-to-work conflict is linked to stress and absenteeism. According to Anderson et al., (2002), there were no apparent differences between women and men in terms of the observed relationships.

McFarland (2004) states that certain personality types are more prone to experience work family conflict. Age also relates to work family conflict. She argues that there's initial evidence that as individuals get older, they develop more effective strategies for dealing with these conflicts. According to that research one cannot conclude that work and family are always at odds. There can be positive spill over in the form of moods, skills, behaviors and values. Further, there is evidence that people who engage in multiple roles have a better sense of well-being.

Conceptual Framework

A preliminary study was performed by using a group of twenty Sri Lankan accounting professionals working for six different companies in Sri Lanka during the month of September 2013. *Nominal Group Technique* was used to analyze the information gathered and it was found that time management, nature of the spouse, understanding the strategies available for work-family balance as the most important three factors according to their perception. Based on the results of the preliminary study a conceptual framework was developed and it is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework



The variable of primary interest to this research was the dependent variable of work-family balance. Three independent variables were used in an attempt to explain the variance in work-family balance in Sri Lankan professionals in Accountancy. These three variables were time management, nature of the spouse, and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance which were the three major determinants of work-family balance as per the perceptual prioritization of the selected group of twenty Sri Lankan accounting professionals working for six different companies in Sri Lanka.

Work-family balance is defined as the degree to which you fulfill the demands coming from your employment and the family (Opatha, 2010). Also it can be defined as effectively managing the paid work and the other activities that are important to people. Working definition of work-family balance for this study was the extent to which the professional in accounting fulfilled the demands coming from his or her employment and the family. Despite the widespread use of the term *time management*, there is currently no universally accepted definition of time management and no agreement regarding the skills and behaviors that constitute time management. Time management may be aided by a range of skills, tools, and techniques used to manage time when accomplishing specific tasks and goals. For the research purpose, time management was defined as the ability possessed by the professional in accounting to understand and engage in management of time. When the professional has no ability to understand and engage in management of time he or she becomes unable to meet all the demands which come from the employment and family. At least some of the demands cannot be fulfilled and also it is possible that fulfilling the demands does not occur to the satisfaction of the relevant parties. Complaints and grievances from the spouse, the children, the parents, the superior, the subordinates and the customers occur. Consequently the professional's contributions to smooth running of family affairs and

work affairs become low or inadequate. On the other hand, if the professional has high ability to understand and engage in management of time he or she becomes able to meet all the demands which come from the employment and family resulting in balance between work life and family life.

Nature of the spouse was defined as disposition or sort of the life partner selected by the professional. Positive nature of the spouse exhibits high levels of mutual understanding, patience and support given to the professional in both work life and family life which helps to fulfill the responsibilities. A positive spouse has real love to his or her life partner and is ready to sacrifice time, energy and other resources for advancement and pleasure of the life partner. Positive nature of the spouse will lead to the professional to create or maintain work-family balance.

Understanding the strategies available for work-family balance was defined as the degree to which the professional in accounting knows about techniques, tools etc in respect of work-family balance. The greater the understanding of the available strategies for work-family balance the greater the chance of creating and maintaining work-family balance.

Gender refers to the state of being male or female (Oxford Dictionary). It was generally accepted in the society that preparation of meals for family members, house cleaning, and gardening are the tasks assigned to the wife and providing food and other necessities, furnishing the house, doing external affairs, and providing protection for family members are the tasks assigned to the husband. There is a natural critical task to be performed by the wife, i.e. raising children. In case of modern female professionals there is no change happened to the traditional tasks to be performed by the wife. The modern wife who is a professional is supposed to perform the traditional tasks, and therefore she will encounter a bigger challenge over having work-family balance. Hence it is possible to argue that male accountancy professionals and female accountancy professionals get differed in terms of the degree of work-family balance.

From the conceptual framework discussed above, five hypotheses were developed for this research study, and they are as follows:

H1: Time management is positively related to work-family balance.

H2: The more positive the nature of the spouse, higher the work-family balance.

H3: Degree of understanding the strategies available for work-family balance is positively related to the work-family balance.

H4: Time management, nature of the spouse and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance will have a positive significant joint impact on work-family balance.

H5: There is a significant difference between male managers and female managers with regard to work-family balance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample and the Population

The participants were the Accountancy professionals in Sri Lanka, who were being employed during the time of the study. Each member had the equal chance in getting selected to the sample. The present analysis was limited to 96 respondents who were married, dual earners and had at least one child. These criteria were established to ensure that all respondents have at least moderate level of family responsibilities. The final sample consisted of fifty four (56%) males and forty two (44%) females whose average age was 39.4 years. All were married and had children. The majority of the sample was accountants at private companies (61.4%) and the rest of respondents were audit managers, Chief Financial Officers and bankers.

Operationalization

All the four variables including the dependent variable under the study were constructs and a sufficient attempt was made to operationally defining the constructs so that they became measurable by looking at the faces or properties denoted. The relevant indicators are given in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1: The indicators of variables identified

Variable	Indicators
Work-family balance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complains or grievances from your spouse regarding what the other partner is supposed to do at home 2. Frequency of such complaints 3. Complains or grievances from your children about your inability to live with them 4. Frequency of such complaints 5. Parents' contentedness towards your behavior of meeting their responsibilities 6. Contribution to smooth running of family affairs 7. Relationship with your close relatives 8. Job performance 9. Your superior and top management's view on your job performance 10. Complains from peers about your behavior at work 11. Frequency of complaints 12. Client's contentedness about your performance in meeting their requirements 13. Being a role model to your subordinates to follow
Time management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding your time wasters (E.g.: Travelling, non-essential phone chats, personal disorganization, try to perfection, unproductive meetings etc.) 2. Adopting any strategies/tactics to handle wasters (E.g.: Limit travelling, manage the telephone effectively, get organize properly, deal with perfection intelligently, manage your relationships properly etc) 3. Adopting any techniques to manage your time (E.g.: ABC analysis, Time log, To-do lists etc) 4. Meeting the deadlines of your assignments without working

	<p>many hours at night or slipping other work</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Your interest to meet the dead lines 6. Your ability to estimate about how quickly something can be done 7. Your ability to make time related decisions based on concrete knowledge of how long it has taken for you to do a similar thing in the past 8. Possibility to complete more things within a shorter period compared to your peers 9. Number of things that you have postponed or given up in your life so far 10. Time consciousness
Nature of the spouse	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employed/ unemployed 2. Spouse's aspiration to have a career rather than a job 3. Patience 4. Spouse's understanding 5. Support given by the spouse 6. Career objectives 7. Spouse's conflict handling style 8. enthusiasm to have a good balance between work and family
Understanding the strategies available for work-family balance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attitude towards the work and family life 2. Knowledge and skills on each aspect 3. understanding of the conflict model, enrichment model, spill over model, compensation theory and border model in work-family balance 4. Awareness on organizations adopting different time based policies 5. Awareness on the instruments available to improve the knowledge on work-family balance 6. Understanding fully the demands, expectations and responsibilities of all the parties at work and at family 7. Ability to gain understanding and patience of family members 8. Division of time between family life and work life 9. Ability to manage spouse without damaging the relationship 10. Ability to seek advice from right persons and right materials

Based on the above indicators, four instruments were originally developed. Levels of the instruments were interval and 5-point Likert scales were applied.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The content validity of a measuring instrument (the composite of measurement scales) is the extent to which it provides adequate coverage of the investigative questions guiding the study (Hussain and Opatha, 2008 as in Cooper and Schindler, 2003). There are three main kinds of evidence in support of content validity and they are: a) the judgment of those who construct the instrument or other experts familiar with the subject area; b) detailed definition or conceptualization and operationalization of the behavioral domain or universe of interest; c) indirect way : high internal consistency

reliability. As far as the three variables under the study are concerned, meeting of these requirements was done satisfactorily assuring content validity. The construct validity of the variables of this study was ensured as the correlation analysis supported the relevant hypotheses formulated linking the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The Cronbach's Alpha test was used in order to measure the inter-item consistency reliability. The relevant results are given in Table 1. According to the results of the test there was an adequate degree of internal reliability with regard to the four constructs.

Table 1-Reliability of the Instruments

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Work-family balance	0.797	13
Understanding the strategies available for work-family balance	0.725	15
Time management	0.773	10
Nature of the spouse	0.733	9

Design Elements

The type of investigation of this study was correlational and differential rather than causal, because of the decision of attempting to analyze the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables under the study. The study was analytical in nature. Further manipulation of data and control of independent variables were not done, and therefore this research was not an experiment. The study was conducted in the natural environment where normal flows of events occurred and researcher's interference was minimal under normal circumstances. The study was one-shot or cross sectional in nature as the data collection was done at one point in time and there was no intention of subsequent extension of the research.

Data Analysis Techniques

In order to test the hypotheses from H1 to H3 which were formulated to see the relationships; Bivariate Correlation was used and to test the difference between the two gender groups with regard to the degree of work-family balance, Independent Samples Test was carried out. The joint impact of the three independent variables on work-family balance was tested using the Multiple Regression technique.

FINDINGS

Univariate Analysis

Since the skewness ranges between -0.5 to +0.5, the distribution is symmetrical and almost similar to a normal distribution.

Table 2- Master Summary of statistical values

		Work-family balance	understanding the strategies for WFB	Time management	Nature of the spouse
N	Valid	96	96	96	96
	Missing	0	0	0	0

Mean	4.1771	3.2188	3.6354	3.5521
Std. Deviation	.72540	.65217	.72721	.81911
Skewness	-.284	.445	.185	-.288
Range	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Minimum	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

According to table 2, the mean values for all variables are above the average level which implies that the respondents had understanding the strategies available for work-family balance and they could manage their time effectively between the work and family lives whereas a considerable level of support was given by their spouses in maintaining work-family balance. Also greater part of the respondents are centered around the mean (SD=0.7254). Finally we can conclude that the majority of Accountancy professionals in Sri Lanka is having a high level of work-family balance (mean=4.1771).

Table 3- Frequency of responses on the 5 point scale

5 Point Scale	Work-family balance (%)	Understanding strategies for work-family balance (%)	Time management (%)	Nature of the spouse (%)
2.00	-	9.4	3.1	11.5
3.00	18.8	62.5	41.7	31.3
4.00	44.8	25.0	43.8	47.9
5.00	36.5	3.1	11.5	9.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

As per the above table, none of the responses have one (1) in the five (5) point Likert scale, meaning that there are no respondents who had a very low level of work-family balance, a very low level of understanding the strategies available for work-family balance, a very low level of time management and a very negative nature of the spouse.

Bivariate Analysis

Hypotheses from 1 to 3 were tested and the relevant results are given in table 4.

Table 4 - Pearson Correlation Coefficients of the independent variables with work-family balance

Work-family balance	Time management	Understanding the strategies for WFB	Nature of the spouse
1	.323**	.385**	.206*
	.001	.000	.022
96	96	96	96

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

H1: Time management is positively related to work-family balance.

H0: There is no relationship between time management and work-family balance.

The correlation coefficient is 0.323, which is positive, i.e. there is a positive relationship between time management and work-family balance. In order to find out whether found relationship is significant or not, the significant value was examined (sig=0.001) which is lower than 0.05, the desired level of significance for the research.

Therefore, H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected. Thus there is statistical evidence to claim that time management is positively related to work-family balance.

H2: The more positive the nature of the spouse, higher the work-family balance.

H0: There is no relationship between the nature of the spouse and work-family balance.

The correlation coefficient is 0.206 at 95% confidence interval. This correlation is significant (Sig. 0.022 < α 0.05) as shown in table 4 above. Thus we reject the null hypothesis and claim that more positive the nature of the spouse, the higher the work-family balance is.

H3: Degree of understanding the strategies available for work-family balance is positively related to the work-family balance.

H0: There is no relationship between the degree of understanding the strategies available for work-family balance and the degree of work-family balance.

The correlation coefficient is 0.385 at 99% confidence interval. This correlation is significant (Sig. 0.000 < α 0.05) as shown in table 4 above. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected while claiming that the degree of understanding the strategies available for work-family balance is positively and significantly related to the work-family balance.

Multivariate Analysis

The impact made by the three independent variables jointly on the variance of the dependent variable was examined. The relevant alternative hypothesis and the null hypothesis are given below. The relevant results are given in tables 5, 6, and 7.

H4: Time management, nature of the spouse and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance will have a positive significant joint impact on work-family balance.

H0: There is no joint impact of time management, nature of the spouse and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance on work-family balance.

Table 5 - Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.426 ^a	.181	.155	.66693
a. Predictors: (Constant), nature of spouse, understanding of WFB, time management				

This model summary shows the impact of three independent variables on the variable of work-family balance. Accordingly 18% of the variability of work-family balance has

been jointly explained by nature of the spouse, understanding the strategies available for work-family balance and time management ($R^2 = 0.181$), i.e. the joint impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable is 18%. In order to know whether this joint impact is significant or not, F value from Anova table was used.

Table 6 –ANOVA Table

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.069	3	3.023	6.796	.000 ^b
	Residual	40.921	92	.445		
	Total	49.990	95			

a. Dependent Variable: work-family balance

b. Predictors: (Constant), nature of spouse, understanding of WFB, time management

F value ($F=6.796$) is significant at 95% confidence level ($\text{Sig. } 0.000 < \alpha 0.05$). Thus the alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. It is possible to claim that time management, nature of the spouse, and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance will have a positive significant joint impact on work-family balance.

Table 7 – Beta Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.234	.451		4.952	.000
	Understanding the strategies for WFB	.337	.136	.303	2.478	.015
	Time management	.102	.123	.102	.827	.410
	Nature of the spouse	.137	.085	.155	1.614	.110

a. Dependent Variable: work-family balance

Degree of understanding the strategies available for work-family balance becomes a significant predictor of the dependent variable ($t=2.478$, which is > 2). Also it gives the highest beta compared to other independent variables ($\beta = 0.303$) at 0.05 confidence level, indicating that it is the strongest explanatory variable under the study.

Independent Samples T Test

The difference between the two gender groups with regard to the degree of work-family balance was examined by using the Independent Samples Test. The relevant alternative hypothesis and the null hypothesis are given below.

H5: There is a significant difference between male professionals and female professionals with regard to work-family balance.

H0: There is no significant difference between male professionals and female professionals with regard to work-family balance.

The relevant results of the Independent Samples Test are given in tables 8 and 9.

Table 7 - Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Work-family balance	Male	54	4.1111	.79305	.10792
	Female	42	4.2619	.62701	.09675

According to the above table, the mean values are almost the same for both gender groups. This shows that the degree of work-family balance for male accounting professionals does not differ from that for female accounting professionals. In order to find out whether this descriptive non-difference was statistically significant or not, t values were considered.

Table 8 - Independent Samples Test

		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
Work-family balance	Equal variances assumed	2.662	.106	1.011	94	.315	-.15079	.14923	-.44708	.14550
	Equal variances not assumed			1.040	93.966	.301	-.15079	.14494	-.43858	.13699

Levene's test of equality of variances is not significant with $F=2.662$. Therefore the null hypothesis that the two samples come from population with the same variances cannot be rejected. Hence T Test for equal variance assumed was considered. The T value for equal variance assumed is 1.011. This value was not significant at 95% confidence level, because 0.315 is larger than 0.05, meaning that there is no statistically significant difference between the two gender groups. Since the T value is insignificant statistically, the relevant null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The alternative hypothesis is not accepted (H_5), i.e. there is a significant difference between male professionals and female professionals with regard to work-family balance.

DISCUSSION

There was a high level of work-family balance among Accountancy professionals in Sri Lanka. Also the variables mentioned above had a positive relationship with work-family balance. Degree of understanding the strategies available for work-family balance becomes a significant predictor of the dependent variable. The findings did not support the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between male professionals and female professionals with regard to work-family balance.

Organizations are nowadays very much aware of the concept of work-family balance. DeCieri, Holmes, Abbott, and Pettit (2005) argued that the need of an organization to attract and retain high potential employees in labour market is a strong motivating aspect to increase awareness and action of an organization with regard to formulation and implementation of work-family balance strategies. Work-family balance strategies in the organization would contain policies including dependent care and family leave (Morgan & Milliken, 1992), direct services and flexible work practices (Vanderkolk & Young, 1991), and childcare benefits and childcare based policies (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995). The inability to balance the demands of work and family has a negative impact on both individuals (Frone et al., 1996; Frone and Yardly, 1996; Frone and Yardly, 1997; Kopelman et al., 1983) and organizations (Bacharach et al., 1991; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990).

Time Management

Greenhaus, Collins and shaw (2003) found out that individuals who invested substantially more time and involvement in family than work, experienced the least work-family conflict due to restricted engagement in work relative to family which may have produced limited work pressures, thereby precluding high levels of work-family conflict. Wickramasinghe and Jayabandu (2007) reported that flex time arrangements would help to increase the work-family balance. It has allowed the employees to have more autonomy to harmonize work and non-work demands upon their time.

In case of professionals the use of flexible time arrangements is little bit different from others. They are forced to go to a lower level job because reduced hours were not allowed in their more responsible position. The problem in such managerial jobs is not only that they are full time, but that they involve rotating evening and weekend work, making planned care work virtually impossible (Hegewisch, 2009).

Greenhaus et. al. (1985) state that work-family conflict exists when time devoted to the requirements of one role makes it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another. And therefore time management becomes an important criterion in balancing work and family lives. Further he explains that work schedules, work orientation, marriage, children, and spouse employment patterns may all produce pressures to participate extensively in the work role or the family role. Conflict is experienced when these time pressures are incompatible with the demands of the other role domain.

Supporting to these scholars' findings, the research also found out that there is a positive relationship with time management and work-family balance.

Understanding of the Strategies available for Work-Family Balance

This research concluded that Understanding of the strategies available for work-family balance as the most important predictor to work-family balance among the three variables identified under the framework. Supporting this finding, researches had been conducted in the past. Nowadays organizations more and more tend to provide family-

friendly policies to its employees, having understood the consequences of not having a work-family balance. But Ellen & Cynthia (1999) argue that since many are not aware of these strategies available, they are underutilized and employees are not taking advantage of them to smooth their lives. Therefore this research identified understanding of strategies available for work-family balance as a major factor to achieve balance. Also from the responses received from the selected sample, it was concluded that understanding has a significant positive effect on work-family balance.

Nature of the Spouse

It was found that there is a significant impact from the nature of the spouse to work-family balance. If the spouse is understanding and supportive, the more the other partner balances his/ her work and family lives. Many researchers favor this finding. Adams et al. (1996) found a negative relation of family instrumental support to work-family conflict and this supports the present model in that work support is a predictor of work-family conflict and family support is a predictor of work-family conflict. Spouse support was significantly and negatively related to parental time commitment also. Another research conducted by Fathima and Sahibzada (2012) found partner support as a major determinant to achieve work-family balance in their research conducted by using the university teachers in Pakistan. Accordingly they concluded that there is a significant difference in work-life balance of male and female university teachers with respect to partner support. Longer work hours by husbands also have been shown to be associated with greater marital conflict and less balance in work and family lives (Jeffrey et. al., 2001). Also to support this finding, Young and Melissa (2013) reported that the husband's social support buffered the relationship between wife's job stressors and their work-family balance.

Gender

Literature is available both for (Frone et al., 1996; Macewen & Barling, 1994) and against (Eagle et al., 1997; Frone et al., 1992; Frone et al., 1996; Gutek et al., 1991; Hall & Richter, 1988) the fact that gender is a significant variable which determines the level of balance in a family. Eagle, Edward and Marjorie (1997) had found out that family boundaries were more permeable than work boundaries in that demands of the work role were permitted to intrude more on one's family role than vice versa. But no gender differences were found in the pattern of asymmetry. In another study, Marks et al. (2001) examined how gendered marital roles associate with various correlates of balance among eighty white married couples. They found no difference between women and men in the effects of parental attachment to children and marital satisfaction on balance. They did find significant gender differences associated with traditional gender roles in the effects of time use variables. However, the argument of gender differences in relation to work-family balance has not been supported generally in empirical studies (Eagle et al., 1997; Frone et al., 1992; Gutek et al., 1991). Hall and Richter (1988) studied on managing home and work boundaries. They reported that home boundaries were more permeable than work boundaries consistently among both

men and women, which was failed to support the argument of gender differences. Hall and Richter's (1988) findings were supported by Frone et al. (1992). He found no evidence of gender difference in relation to permeability of work and family boundaries, which proposes that gender differences do not explain a significant amount of variance in the occurrence of conflict between work and family roles. In addition, Eagle et al. (1997) examined the gender differences in relative permeability of work and family boundaries, their results showed that permeability of work and family boundaries did not differ across men and women.

To the contrary to the findings of this research, Akuratiyagamage and Opatha (2004) found that there were slight variations in the level of grievance suffered by gender. Also Macewen and Julian (1994) concluded that there were some notable differences between the men and women in the pattern of the relationships between the two types of inter-role conflict and strain.

Conclusion

Accounting professionals are a critical category of employees in developing success and progress of success of all types of organizations. This research examined a sample of accountancy professionals in Sri Lanka to reveal major dynamics of their work-family balance. Time management, nature of the spouse and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance are positively and significantly related to degree of work-family balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Also time management, nature of the spouse and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance will have a positive significant joint impact on work-family balance. Hence the accounting professionals, particularly young new accounting professionals who wish to have a good balance between work life and family life need to be concerned with the three major factors investigated. Organizations need to pay a considerable concern on time management, nature of the spouse and understanding the strategies available for work-family balance when performing their training and development function with regard to accounting professionals. The paper provides an empirical evidence of a major predictor of work-family balance of accounting professionals, i.e. understanding the strategies available for work-family balance. Further research is suggested in respect of testing the research framework for other categories of employees including university teachers, general managers, engineers, and doctors. Also a further expansion can be done to investigate intervening variables which may have mediating effects on the relationship between understanding the strategies available for work-family balance and degree of work-family balance.

REFERENCES

- Adams G.A., Lynda A.K. and Daniel W.K., (1996), Relationships of job and family involvement, family social support, and work-family conflict with job and life satisfaction, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 81, 411
- Akuratiyagamage V.M. and Opatha H. H. D. N. P., (2004), Grievances of middle

- managers: an empirical investigation into perceptions of commercial bank branch managers in Sri Lanka, *Journal of Management Research*, Vol. 4, pp. 99-112
- Anderson S.E., Coffey B.S. and Byerly R.T., (2002), Formal organizational initiatives and informal workplace practices: Links to work-family conflict and job-related outcomes, *Journal of management*, Vol. 28, pp. 787-810
- Aryee S., Ekkirala S.S., and Hwee H.T., (2005), Rhythms of life: antecedents and outcomes of work-family balance in employed parents, *Journal of applied psychology*, Vol. 90, pp. 132
- Bacharach S.B., Bamberger P. and Conley S., (1991), Workhome conflict among nurses and engineers: Mediating the impact of role stress on burnout and satisfaction at work, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 12, pp. 39-53
- Baltes B.B., and Heather A.H.G., (2003), Reduction of work-family conflict through the use of selection, optimization, and compensation behaviours, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88, pp. 1005-1018
- Bellavia Gina and Frone Michael, (2005), Work-family conflict, *Handbook of work stress*, pp. 113-147
- Clark S.C. (2000), *Work/Family Border Theory: A New Theory of Work/Family Balance*, The Tavistock Institute, Vol. 53, pp. 747-7267
- Cole N.D. and Latham G.P., (1997), Effects of training in procedural justice on perceptions of disciplinary fairness by unionized employees and disciplinary subject matter experts, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 82, pp. 699
- Day A.L. and Chamberlain Trina., (2006), Committing to your work, spouse, and children: Implications for work-family conflict, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 68, pp. 116-130
- DeCieri, Helen, et al. (2005), Achievements and challenges for work/life balance strategies in Australian organizations, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol.16, pp. 90-103
- Diane P., et al. (2005), Work, life and time in the new economy, *Time & Society*, Vol.14, pp. 51-64
- Eagle B.W., Miles E.W., and Icenogle M.L., (1997), Inter role conflicts and the permeability of work and family domains: are there gender differences?, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 50, pp. 168-184
- Edwards Jeffrey and Nancy P. Rothbard, (2000), Mechanisms linking work and family: Clarifying the relationship between work and family constructs, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 25, pp.178-199
- Ellen E. and Cynthia O. (1999), Bridging the work-family policy and productivity gap: A literature review, *Community, Work & Family*, Vol. 2, pp. 7-32

- Fatima N. and Sahibzada S.A., (2012), An Empirical Analysis of Factors Affecting Work Life Balance among University Teachers: the case of Pakistan, *Journal of International Academic Research*, Vol. 12,
- Felstead A. et al., (2002), Opportunities to work at home in the context of work-life balance, *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 12, pp. 54-76
- Frone M.R. and Yardley J.K., (1996), Workplace family supportive programmes: Predictors of employed parents' importance ratings, *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 69, pp. 351-366
- Frone M.R. and Yardley J.K., (1997), Developing and Testing an Integrative Model of the Work–Family Interface, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 50, pp. 145–167
- Gina B. and Michael F., (2005), Work-family conflict, *Handbook of work stress*, pp. 113-147
- Glass, Jennifer, and Fujimoto T., (1995), Employer characteristics and the provision of family responsive policies, *Work and Occupations*, Vol. 22, 380-411
- Greenhaus J.H., Collins K. and Shaw J. (2003), The relation between work–family balance and quality of life, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol.63, 510-531
- Gutek B.A., Searle S. and Klepa L., (1991), Rational versus gender role explanations for work-family conflict, *Journal of applied psychology*, Vol. 76, pp. 560–568
- Haddock S.A. et al. (2001), Ten adaptive strategies for family and work balance: Advice from successful families, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, Vol. 27, pp. 445-458
- Hall D.T. and Judith Richter, (1988), Balancing work life and home life: what can organizations do to help?, *The Academy of Management Executive*, Vol. 2, pp. 213-223
- Hareven T.K. (1993), Family time & industrial time: The relationship between the family and work in a New England Industrial Community, University Press of America
- Hegewisch A. (2009), Flexible working policies: a comparative review, Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Vol. 16
- Hussain A.M.A.M. and Opatha H.H.D.N.P. (2008), Performance appraisal system and business performance: An Empirical study in Sri Lankan apparel industry, *Sri Lankan Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 74-90
- Ingersoll D.B., Neal M.B., and Hammer L.B. (2003), Redressing inequity in parent care among siblings, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 65, pp. 201-212
- Jeffrey G.H, and Nicholas J.B., (1985), Sources of conflict between work and family

- roles, *Academy of management review*, Vol.10, pp. 76-88
- Jeffrey H.E. et al., (2001), Finding an Extra Day a Week: The Positive Influence of Perceived Job Flexibility on Work and Family Life Balance, *Family Relations*, Vol. 50, pp. 49-58
- Jennifer and Gardner, (2007), Factors affecting employee use of work-life balance initiatives, *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*
- Kirkwood J., Tootell B., (2008), Is Entrepreneurship the Answer to Achieving Work-Family Balance?, *Journal of Management & Organization*, Vol. 14, pp. 285-302
- Kopelman R.E., Greenhaus J.H. and Thomas F.C., (1983), A model of work, family, and inter role conflict: A construct validation study, *Organizational behavior and human performance*, Vol. 32, 198-215
- Koyuncu M., Burke R. J. and Fiksenbaum L., (2006), Work engagement among women managers and professionals in a Turkish bank: Potential antecedents and consequences, *Equal Opportunities International*, Vol. 25, pp. 299-310
- Lillian T. E. et.al., (2005), Work and family research in IO/OB: Content analysis and review of the literature (1980–2002), Vol. 66, pp. 124-197
- Macan T.H., et al., (1990), College students' time management: Correlations with academic performance and stress, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 82, pp. 760
- Macewen K. E., and Barling Julian., (1994), Daily consequences of work interference with family and family interference with work, *Work and Stress*, Vol. 8, 244–254
- Marks S.R. et al., (2001), Role balance among white married couples, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 63, pp.1083-1098
- Mcfarland L.A., (2004), Work–Family Balance, *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*, Vol. 41, pp. 47-53
- Morgan, Hal and Milliken F. J., (1992), Keys to action: Understanding differences in organizations' responsiveness to workandfamily issues, *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 31, pp. 227-248
- Russell G. and Bowman L., (2000), Work and Family: Current thinking, research and practice, Department of Family and Community Services
- Skarlicki, Daniel P., and Latham G.P., (1997), Leadership training in organizational justice to increase citizenship behavior within a labor union: A replication, *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 50, pp. 617-633
- Smith J. and Gardner D. (2007), Factors affecting employee use of work life balance initiatives, *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 36

Thompson C.A., Beauvais L.L., and Lyness K.S., (1999), When work–family benefits are not enough: The influence of work–family culture on benefit utilization, organizational attachment, and work–family conflict, *Journal of vocational behavior*, Vol. 54, pp. 392-415

Thompson C.A., Laura L. B. and Tammy D. A., (2006), Work and Family From an Industrial/Organizational Psychology Perspective

Thompson J.A. and J. B. Stuart, (2001), Work-Non work Conflict and the Phenomenology of Time Beyond the Balance Metaphor, *Work and Occupations*, Vol. 28, pp. 17-39

Vanderkolk, Schwarz B. and Young A. A., (1991), The work and family revolution: How companies can keep employees happy and business profitable, *facts on File*

Viola (2011), Negative influences of working life on sustainable consumption, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 36, pp. 166-172

Wickramasinghe V. and Jayabandu S., (2007), Towards workplace flexibility: flexi-time arrangements in Sri Lanka, *Employee Relation*, Vol. 29, pp. 554-575

Young M.S.S. and Melissa A.M., (2013), Spouse's Work-to-family Conflict, Family Stressors, and Mental Health among Dual-earner Mothers and Fathers, *Society and Mental Health*, Vol. 14, pp. 213-240

Zedeck, Sheldon, and Mosier K.L., (1990), Work in the family and employing organization, *American Psychologist*, Vol. 45, 240