



A Study on Gender Differences in Managing Work and Family Responsibilities: An HR Perspective

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Abstract

In today's changing organizational environment, juggling work and family obligations has become more difficult. Men and women still face unique difficulties juggling the home and work lives, despite tremendous advancements in gender equality. This study uses human resource (HR) practices and policies to analyze how men and women handle work and family obligations. It highlights the ways in which workplace structures, cultural norms, and social expectations influence these experiences. According to HR research, women usually face more challenges in attaining work-life balance because of caregiving responsibilities, gender stereotypes, and restricted access to flexible work arrangements. On the other hand, men experience pressures associated with the underutilization of family-friendly policies and societal expectations of financial provision. The study takes an analytical and qualitative stance examining current research, case studies of organizations, and HR policy frameworks to learn how gender-sensitive HR practices can lessen these differences. It investigates the effects of interventions like mentoring programs, inclusive parental leave, remote work choices, and diversity-driven leadership development. The results indicate that improving employee well-being, productivity, and retention requires fair HR practices and encouraging company cultures. The study also emphasizes that addressing gender disparities in work-family management is a strategic necessity for long-term organizational growth, not just a social duty. Organizations can promote inclusivity, boost morale, and enhance overall performance by incorporating gender equity into HRM systems. By providing insights into the creation of useful frameworks that encourage balance, this paper adds to the conversation on gender and HR equity and sustained participation from all employees.

Keywords: Work-life balance, gender differences, human resource management, family responsibilities, gender equity, organizational culture, flexible work policies, employee engagement, workplace inclusion, and diversity management.

Introduction

Once upon a time—cue the black and white flashback—men worked, women stayed home, and that was that. Old-school, right? But welcome to the 2020s, where the script's been flipped. Women are out there climbing ladders, smashing ceilings, and still somehow expected to remember every single school bake sale. Meanwhile, guys who actually want to be more hands-on at home? Society still gives them a weird look, like, “Bro, shouldn't you be at the office?” It's all a little bonkers, honestly. And here's the kicker: HR is right in the thick of this. They're the ones who can actually change things, if they bother. Think flexible schedules, parental leave that doesn't scream “MOM ONLY,” actual pathways for moving up that don't punish you for having a life, and, yeah, some wellness perks that go beyond the free fruit basket in the break room. When HR gets it right, everyone wins—less stress, more loyalty, people actually want to stick around. But when they don't? Well, let's just say people notice. Let's get real—dealing with gender stuff at work isn't just

about “doing the right thing” or ticking some corporate responsibility box. It's smart business. Companies that figure out how to treat people like, well, people (and not just robots with gendered expectations) end up more creative, more adaptable, and way more likely to survive whatever curveballs the world throws at them next. So, what's the point of this paper? Simple: we're diving into how gender messes with the work-family balancing act, what HR can actually do about it, and how to build a workplace where everyone has a shot—without burning out or losing their mind in the process.

Review of Literature

1. Apriyawan & Rohendi (2021) — Systematic review on gender concepts in work–family conflict. Finds persistent gendered framing in WFC research and calls for intersectional, contextual HR responses. HR implication: design policies that acknowledge gendered perceptions of conflict rather than assuming identical needs.
2. Dou *et al.* (2022) — Work-to-family conflict, gender

- asymmetry among dual-earner couples. Shows stronger within-person and crossover effects for women's WFC affecting life/job satisfaction. HR implication: HR should prioritize couple- and family-level interventions (e.g., couple-friendly scheduling).
3. Chen *et al.* (2022) — Gender role attitudes and work–family conflict. Demonstrates that traditional gender attitudes intensify WFC and reduce effectiveness of organizational support. HR implication: include attitude-change programs (training, leadership role-modelling).
 4. Pace & Sciotto (2022) — Gender differences in work–life balance and health perception. Finds gendered links between perceived career opportunity, WLB and general health, with women reporting worse health outcomes when career prospects are limited. HR implication: tie WLB policies to career progression pathways.
 5. Recuero *et al.* (2021) — Work–family conflict, coping strategies and burnout in dual-earner couples. Identifies gendered coping and higher burnout for women; social support buffers stress. HR implication: create supervisor training in family-supportive behaviours and peer networks.
 6. IWPR (Byambasuren, 2025) — Workplace flexibility and health/activity by gender/race. Finds unequal access to employee-centered flexibility and downstream health/well-being effects. HR implication: audit access to flexibility and remove barriers for women and minority groups.
 7. Badrolhisam *et al.* (2025) — Bibliometric analysis: gender & flexible work. Shows Western dominance in FWA research and persistent evidence of unequal uptake across genders in Asia. HR implication: contextualize FWA design by region and cultural norms.
 8. Maraziotis *et al.* (2024) — Flexible working time arrangements and gender equality. Reports that certain FWAs can reduce hours gap but may also entrench part-time trajectories for women. HR implication: monitor long-term career impacts of FWAs and ensure access to full-time career tracks.
 9. Wang *et al.* (2024) — FWAs and fertility intentions. Suggests flexible work can influence life-course decisions; effects differ by gender and job type. HR implication: consider family-planning impacts when promoting FWAs.
 10. Yang *et al.* (2022) — Paid leave for fathers: policy practice and reform. Reviews how paternal leave uptake remains low without cultural and organizational support. HR implication: combine entitlement with culture-change initiatives to boost male uptake.
 11. Ndzi *et al.* (2023) — Paternal leave entitlement and workplace culture. Finds workplace culture strongly mediates the benefits of paternal leave for fathers' mental health and caregiving involvement. HR implication: HR must address normative barriers and managerial expectations.
 12. Eriksson (2022) — Parental leave and labor market gender interruptions. Argues long parental leaves without father quotas may deepen occupational segregation and wage penalties for women. HR implication: pair leave length with non-transferable father quotas and return-to-work supports.
 13. Pew Research (2013) — Parental leave design and gender pay gap (survey analysis). Finds mixed international evidence; generous leave can increase female labor force participation but sometimes increases pay penalties. HR implication: design leave policies that avoid long career interruptions and include re-entry measures.
 14. EIGE (2024) — Return to labour market after parental leave (EU report). Documents gendered division of unpaid care and return-to-work difficulties for mothers. HR implication: develop phased return programs and childcare supports.
 15. Brieger (2024) — Gender differences among entrepreneurs: WFC and well-being. Female entrepreneurs report higher WFC and lower well-being compared to males, indicating role demands differ outside formal employment, too. HR implication: entrepreneurship support programs must consider caregiving constraints.
 16. Thrasher *et al.* (2022) — Intersectional effects of age and gender on managers' WLB. Finds management-level WLB varies by career stage and gender; younger female managers report particular strain. HR implication: tailor managerial supports by career stage and gender.
 17. Sultana *et al.* (2023) — Work-life balance of female professionals in Bangladesh. Shows social support and workplace policy gaps create stress and job strain for women. HR implication: strengthen organizational social support (supervisor and peer).
 18. Reuter *et al.* (2021) — Couple-level analyses of WFC and coping. Demonstrates importance of spousal support and coordinated scheduling in reducing conflict. HR implication: consider family-inclusive HR programs (e.g., couple communications, family events).
 19. Frontiers (2024) — Generational differences among female employees and family-supportive supervisor behavior. Finds family-supportive supervisors particularly effective for younger female cohorts. HR implication: prioritize training younger cohorts' managers in family support.
 20. Workplace surveys & reports (2024–2025) — Flexibility demand and unequal access (EPI, Future Forum, Workable summaries). Employees broadly desire flexibility but low-wage and women workers face reduced access. HR implication: equity audit of who gets flexibility; expand access beyond knowledge workers.
 21. Time/popular analyses (2023) — Parental leave usage patterns and biases. Reporting shows men and women are judged differently for leave choices; unclear norms shape post-leave evaluations. HR implication: set clear guidelines and anti-bias return-to-work protocols.
 22. Recent UK/FT news analyses (2025) — Motherhood penalty evidence. Policy commentary highlights large earnings losses for mothers post-childbirth linked to inadequate supports. HR implication: HR should advocate for systemic supports (childcare subsidies, pension continuity).
 23. Marital/dual-earner couple studies (various 2018–2022) — Gender asymmetries in crossover effects. Several empirical studies find women's WFC affects spouse outcomes more strongly than men's. HR implication: family-intervention programs can have multiplicative household benefits.
 24. COVID-era remote work studies (2020–2023) — Working from home increased domestic load for women. Pandemic literature shows remote work often increased unpaid care for women, raising questions about “flexibility” as a panacea. HR implication: monitor outcomes of remote policies and provide time-use

support.

25. Policy synthesis & reviews (2022–2024) — Design of family-friendly policies matters. Reviews emphasize that policy details (transferability, incentive structure) determine gender outcomes. HR implication: adopt evidence-based policy designs (non-transferable quotas, pay replacement rates).
26. Health & wellbeing link studies (2022–2024) — Work-life imbalance correlates with poorer general health, especially for women. HR implication: integrate WLB metrics into occupational health programs.
27. Low-wage worker research (2021–2024) — Lower access to FWAs and greater instability for women in low-paid jobs. HR implication: targeted interventions for low-wage sectors (predictable schedules, statutory protections).
28. Fertility and career studies (2024) — FWAs can influence fertility intentions differently across genders. HR implication: anticipate demographic/workforce planning effects when implementing FWAs.
29. Global inequality & comparative reviews (2010–2024) — Cross-country analyses show institutional context (childcare, leave, gender norms) shapes gendered WFC outcomes. HR implication: benchmark HR practices against national institutional contexts and best practices.
30. Recent experimental and quasi-experimental policy studies (2022–2025) — Father quotas and paid leave expansions increase paternal involvement and can reduce mothers' long-term penalties when combined with workplace supports. HR implication: pilot father-inclusive policies and measure change in uptake and career outcomes.

Research Methodology

1. Statement of the Problem:

In today's organizations, balancing work and family life is a major challenge for both men and women. Even with the increase in dual-income families and changing gender roles, noticeable differences remain in how employees of different genders manage their professional and family responsibilities. Women often deal with both paid work and unpaid care work. Men face social pressures to uphold traditional breadwinner roles, which can result in underuse of family-friendly policies. From an HR perspective, this imbalance negatively affects job satisfaction, employee engagement, and overall productivity. Many organizations have implemented work-life balance initiatives, but these efforts are often hampered by gender-related cultural expectations and unequal access to support systems. Therefore, there is a clear need to investigate gender-based differences in managing work and family and to explore how HR policies and workplace culture can encourage fairness and inclusion.

2. Objectives of the Study:

The main objectives of the study are:

- i). To analyze gender differences in managing work and family responsibilities among employees.
- ii). To examine the impact of organizational policies and HR practices on employees' work-life balance.
- iii). To assess how gender-based expectations affect stress, job satisfaction, and career growth.
- iv). To identify the role of HR in lessening work-family conflict and promoting gender equality.

- v). To suggest strategies and frameworks for gender-sensitive HR policies that improve employee well-being and organizational performance.

3. Hypotheses:

The study is based on the following hypotheses:

H₁: There is a significant difference between male and female employees in managing work and family responsibilities. Gender significantly affects the level of work-family conflict experienced by employees.

H₂: HR policies and practices impact employees' ability to manage work and family life. Supportive HR interventions reduce gender differences in employee well-being and job satisfaction.

4. Research Design:

The study uses a descriptive and analytical research design to capture both the patterns and factors contributing to gender-based differences in managing work and family roles. The descriptive part focuses on documenting the current conditions—how men and women balance work and family responsibilities. The analytical part explores the underlying causes, such as organizational culture, HR policies, and social norms. A mixed-method approach (quantitative and qualitative) is employed to ensure both statistical accuracy and a deeper understanding.

5. Sample Size:

The study includes 50 respondents, consisting of 34 male employees and 16 female employees working in corporate, education, and government service sectors. This equal distribution ensures gender representation and comparability between groups.

6. Sampling Technique:

The research employs a purposive sampling technique, a type of non-probability sampling. Respondents were intentionally selected based on their relevance to the study—specifically, employees aged between 25 and 50 years, with at least two years of work experience, and currently managing both work and family responsibilities. This method ensures that participants have firsthand experience of the research problem and can provide valuable data.

7. Data Collection Techniques:

Primary Data: For this study on Gender differences in managing work and family responsibilities: An HR Perspective, data were collected through Google Forms directly from respondents through structured questionnaires as mentioned earlier. A structured questionnaire was prepared and shared with participants involved in this process.

8. Data Analysis:

Quantitative Data: Analyzed using statistical tools such as percentages, means, standard deviations, correlations, and chi-square tests to identify relationships and differences across gender groups.

Qualitative Data: Analyzed through thematic content analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and gender-specific experiences.

Software Used: Google forms and Microsoft Excel for quantitative analysis; manual coding for qualitative data interpretation.

Interpretation and Findings:

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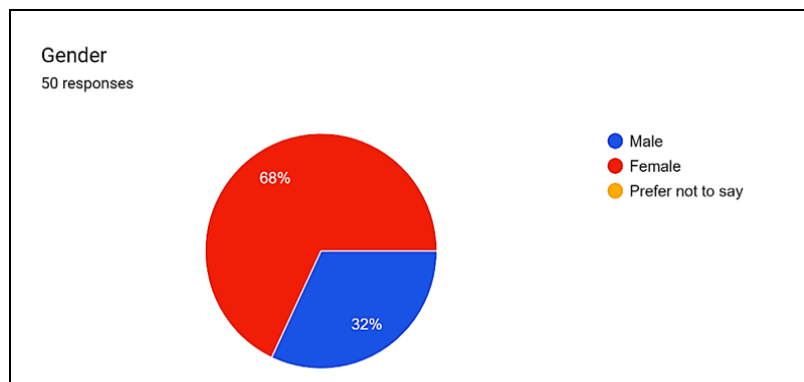


Chart 1: Gender of the respondents.

Inference: The sample was predominantly Female (68%), with Male respondents making up 32% of the total 50 participants. This skewed distribution means the overall findings are weighted heavily towards the experiences of women.

Findings: Majority of the respondents are female.

2.

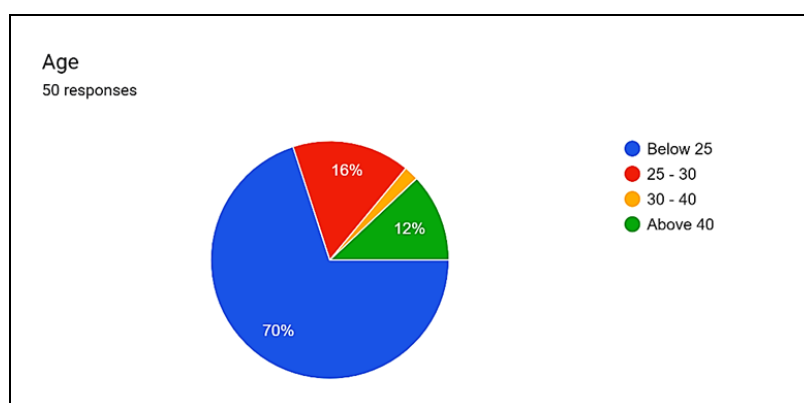


Chart 2: Age of the respondents.

Inference: The vast majority of the respondents (70%) were in the Below 25 age bracket. The remaining groups were much smaller: 25-30 (16%), 30-40 (12%), and Above 40 (12%). This indicates the findings primarily reflect the views of younger employees.

Findings: The vast majority of the respondents were in the age of 25 and below.

3.

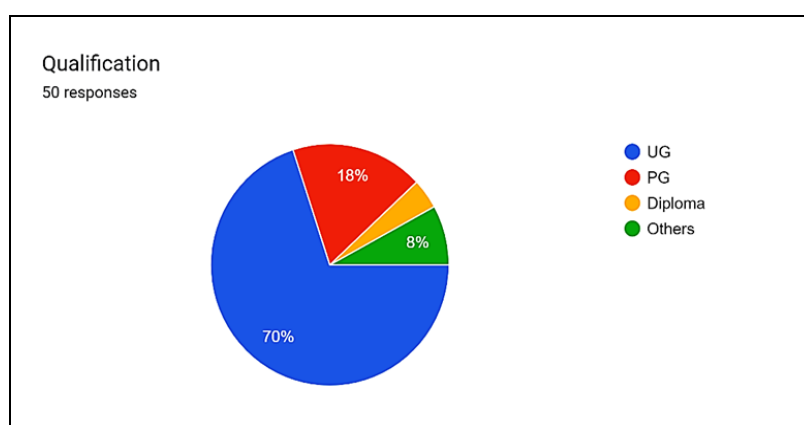


Chart 3: Qualification of the respondents.

Inference: The highest educational level reported was Undergraduate (UG) at 70%. Postgraduate (PG) qualifications accounted for 18%, and Others for 8%. This confirms that the sample is highly educated, with most respondents holding at least an undergraduate degree.

Findings: The highest educational level reported was Undergraduate (UG).

4.

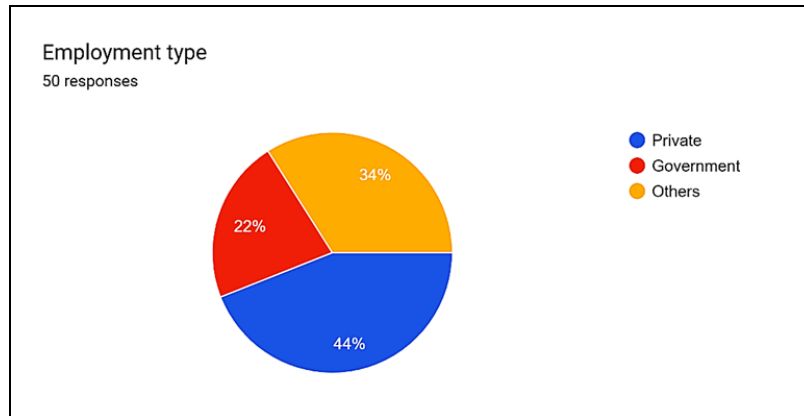


Chart 4: Employment type of the respondents.

Inference: Most respondents worked in the Private sector at 44%. The remaining responses were split between Others (34%) and the Government sector (22%).

Findings: Majority of the respondents are from private sector.

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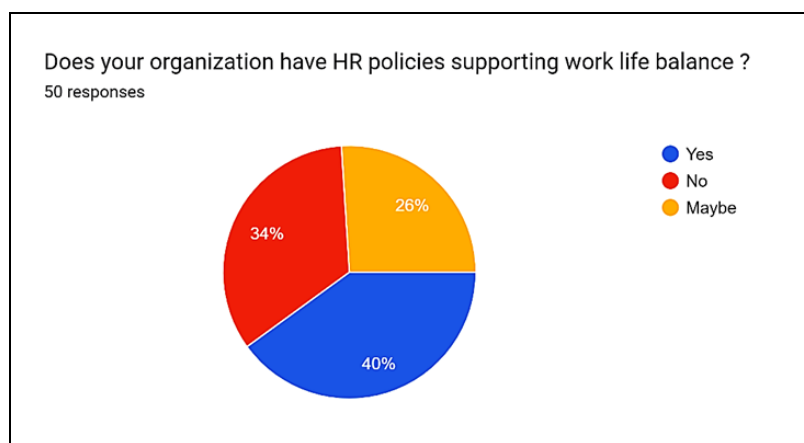


Chart 5: HR policies supporting work life balance of respondents.

Inference: A slight plurality (40%) confirmed their organization has supporting HR policies. However, a combined 60% either said No (34%) or were unsure (Maybe, 26%), suggesting a significant gap in policy implementation awareness or actual provision.

Findings: Majority of the respondents says their organization have HR policies supporting work life balance.

6.

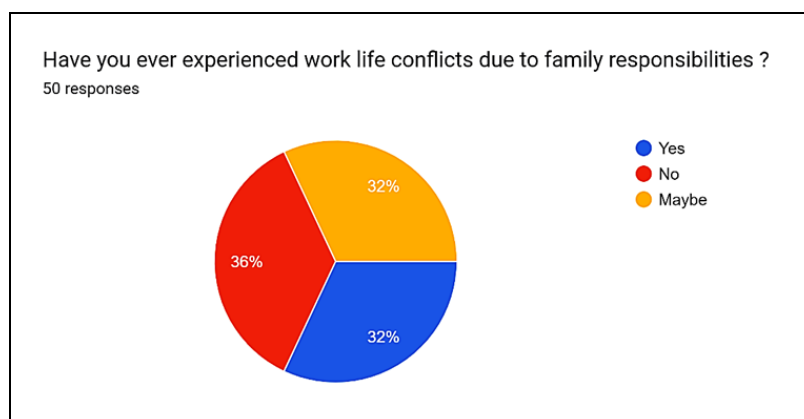


Chart 6: Work life conflicts due to family responsibilities by respondents.

Inference: Responses were evenly distributed, indicating a widespread issue. While 36% said No, 32% explicitly said Yes, and another 32% said Maybe, highlighting that work-life conflict is a definite reality for at least one-third of the workforce surveyed.

Findings: There is a majority of no. Responses were evenly distributed for yes and may be.

7.

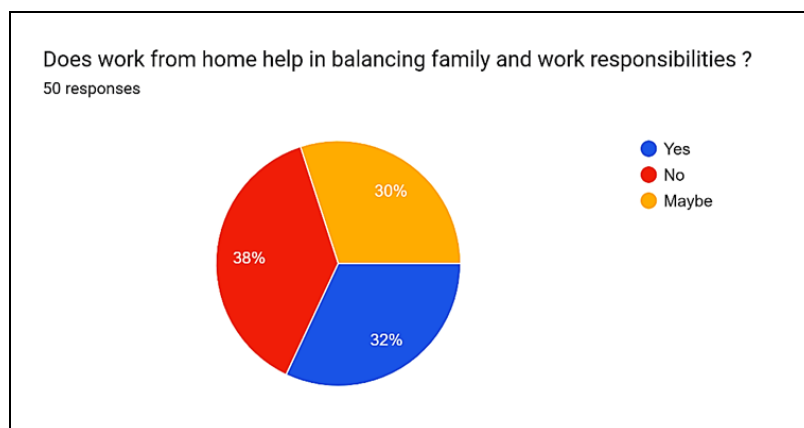


Chart 7: Balancing family and work with help of work from home by respondents.

Inference: More respondents said No (38%) than Yes (32%), with 30% unsure. This suggests that for the surveyed group, remote work is not a clear solution or "panacea" for balancing family and work, aligning with literature that shows remote work can increase the domestic load for women.

Findings: Majority of respondents said No than Yes.

8.

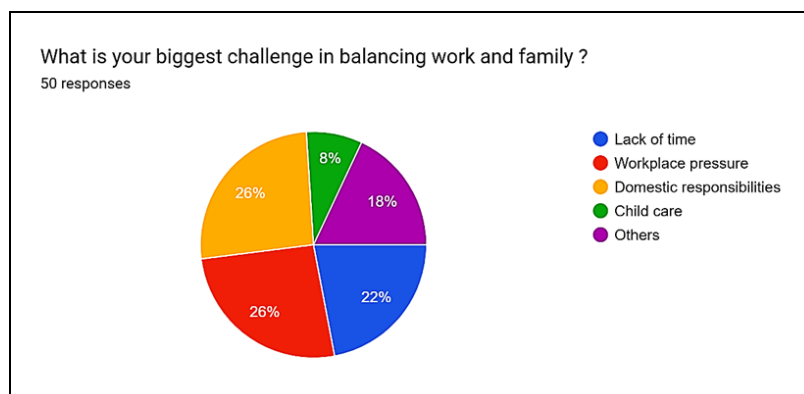


Chart 8: Biggest challenge in balancing work and family by respondents.

Inference: The top two challenges were tied: Domestic responsibilities (26%) and Workplace pressure (26%). Lack of time followed closely at 22%. This emphasizes that the struggle is dual-sided, involving both household demands and organizational stress.

Findings: There was an equal response of Domestic responsibilities and Workplace pressure as majority.

9.

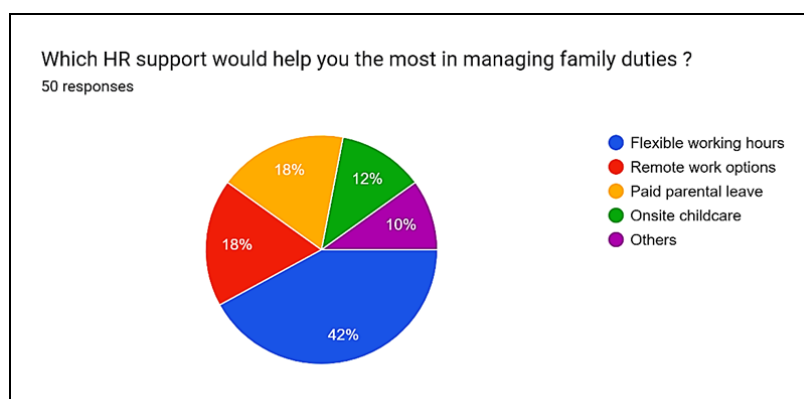


Chart 9: Which HR support help respondents the most in managing family and work.

Inference: Flexible working hours was the most requested HR support at 42%. Remote work options and Paid parental leave tied at 18% each. This indicates a high demand for autonomy over working time and location to better manage family duties.

Findings: The vast response was for Flexible working hours.

10.

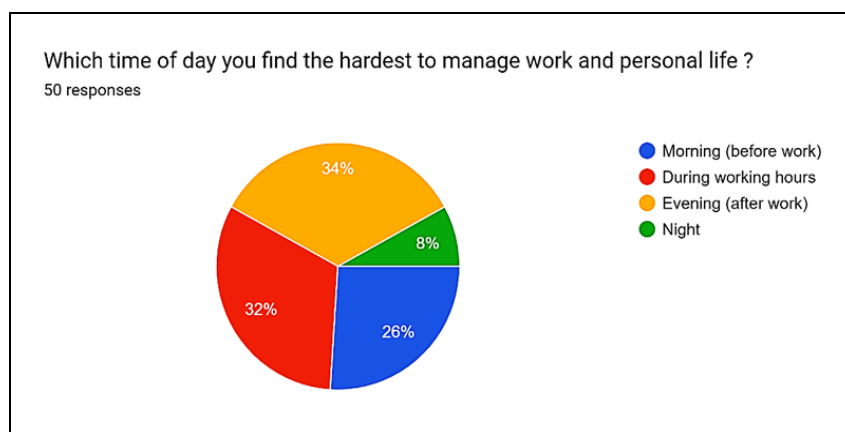


Chart 10: Which time of the day find the hardest to manage both by respondents.

Inference: The Evening (after work) was identified as the hardest time by 34% of respondents, followed closely by During working hours (32%). This suggests that the struggle peaks either when trying to transition to family life or while actively juggling work duties with unexpected family needs.

Findings: The Evening (after work) was identified as the hardest time by majority of the respondents.

11.

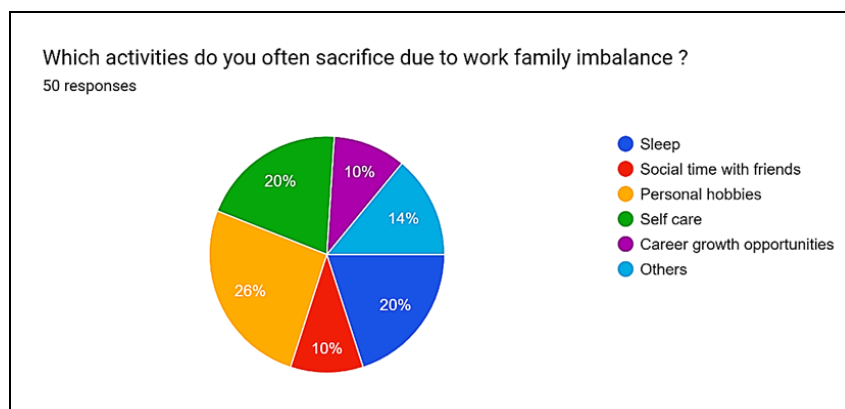


Chart 11: Activities that are often sacrificed by respondents due to work family events.

Inference: Personal hobbies (26%) was the most sacrificed activity. Self care (20%) and Social time with friends (10%) also ranked highly. Notably, Career growth opportunities were sacrificed by 10%, underscoring the long-term impact of imbalance.

Findings: Mostly Personal hobbies was the most sacrificed activity by respondents.

12.

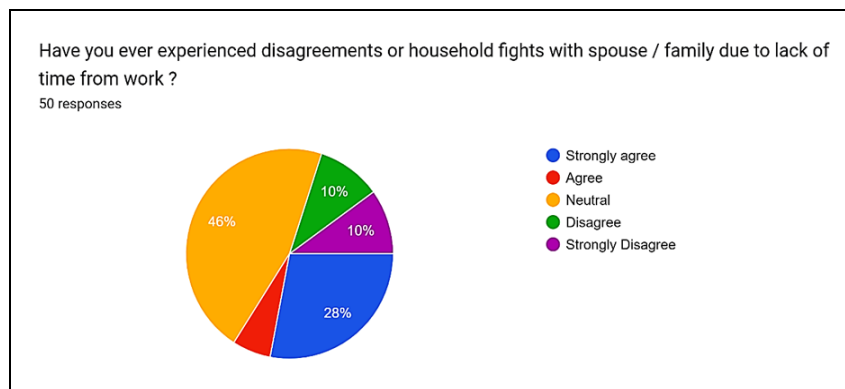


Chart 12: Conflicts faced by respondents due to lack of time from work.

Inference: The majority (46%) were Neutral. However, a combined 34% either Strongly agree (28%) or Agree (6%), indicating that work-life imbalance does translate into direct household conflict for a significant portion of employees.

Findings: The majority were Neutral.

13.

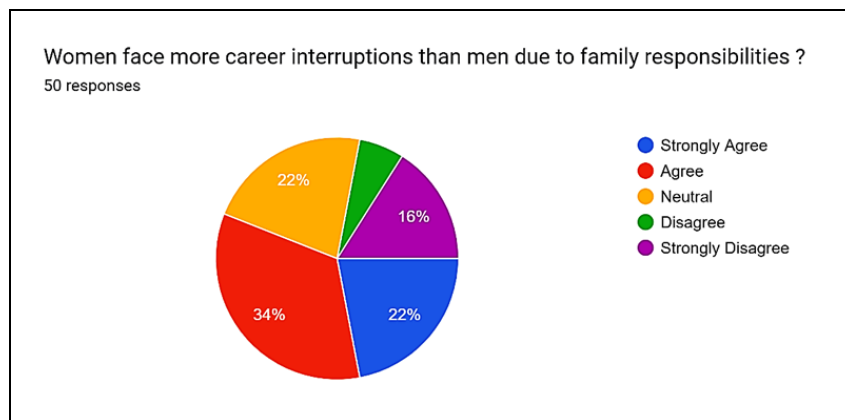


Chart 13: Women face more career interruptions than men due to family.

Inference: A combined 56% either Agree (34%) or Strongly Agree (22%) with this statement, reflecting a widespread perception that women bear a disproportionate burden of family responsibilities, leading to career penalties.

Findings: A majority of responses agree with the statement.

14.

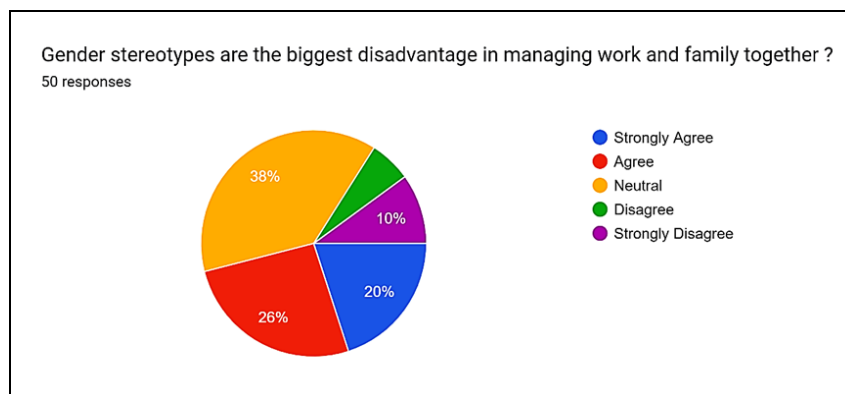


Chart 14: Biggest disadvantage due to gender stereotypes in work by respondents.

Inference: A combined 46% either Strongly Agree (20%) or Agree (26%) that gender stereotypes are the biggest disadvantage. However, 38% were Neutral. This highlights that while many recognize the role of stereotypes, a significant portion of the workforce is ambivalent or undecided on the magnitude of their effect.

Findings: Most of them Agree that gender stereotypes are the biggest disadvantage.

15.

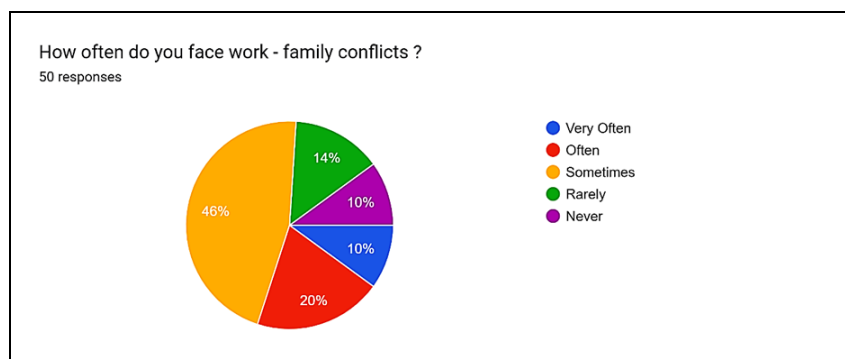


Chart 15: How often family conflicts arise due to work by respondents.

Inference: The largest response was Sometimes (46%). A total of 30% reported facing conflicts Often (20%) or Very Often (10%). Only 10% reported "Never." This confirms that work-family conflict is a frequent, though not necessarily daily, experience for the majority of the surveyed employees.

Findings: The largest response was Sometimes by respondents.

16.

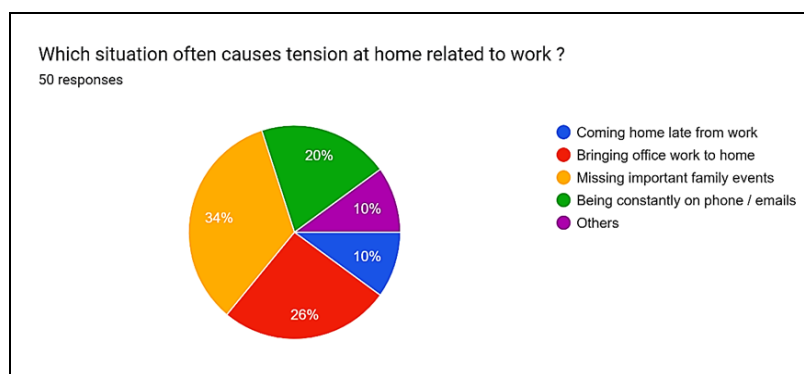


Chart 16: Situation that often causes tension at home related to work for respondents.

Inference: Missing important family events (34%) was the leading cause of tension. Bringing office work to home (26%) was the second highest. This suggests that the intrusion of work into key personal time points is a primary driver of household stress.

Findings: The majority responses was missing important family events was the leading cause of tension.

17.

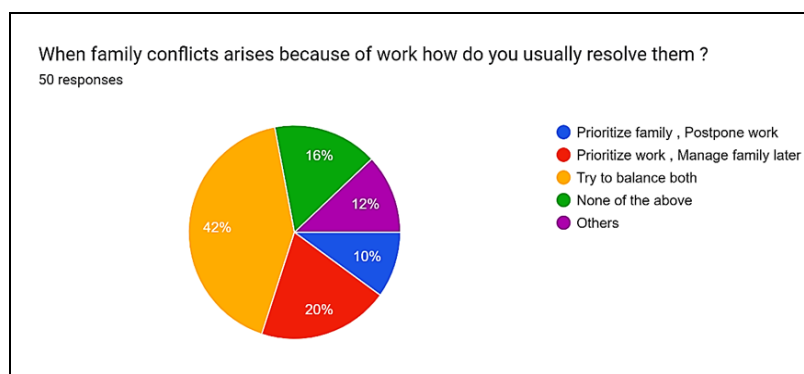


Chart 16: How respondents resolve family conflicts arising due to work.

Inference: The most common resolution strategy was to Try to balance both (42%). Significantly, 20% reported they Prioritize work, Manage family later, while only 10% chose to Prioritize family, Postpone work. This suggests that work often takes precedence, even when conflict arises.

Findings: The most common resolution strategy was to Try to balance both by the respondents.

18.

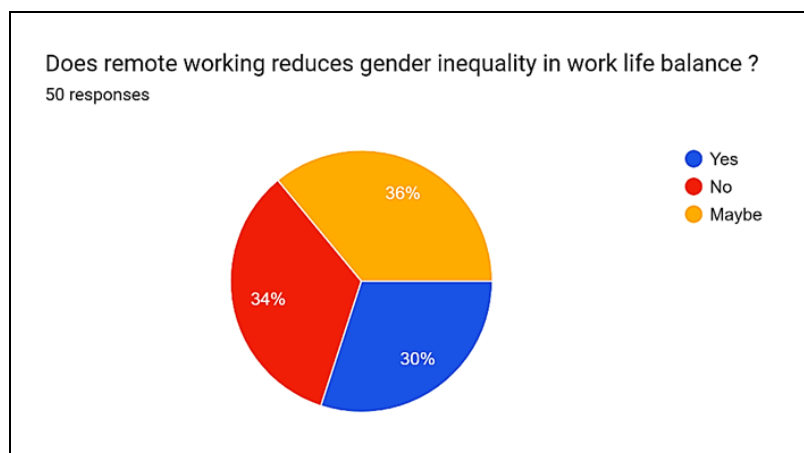


Chart 18: Does remote working reduces gender inequality at work for respondents.

Inference: Responses were split and inconclusive: Maybe (36%) was the highest, followed closely by No (34%) and Yes (30%). This confirms the complexity of remote work; while it offers flexibility, it doesn't clearly solve or reduce existing gender-based inequalities, aligning with research from the COVID era.

Findings: The majority of the response was may be by respondents.

19.

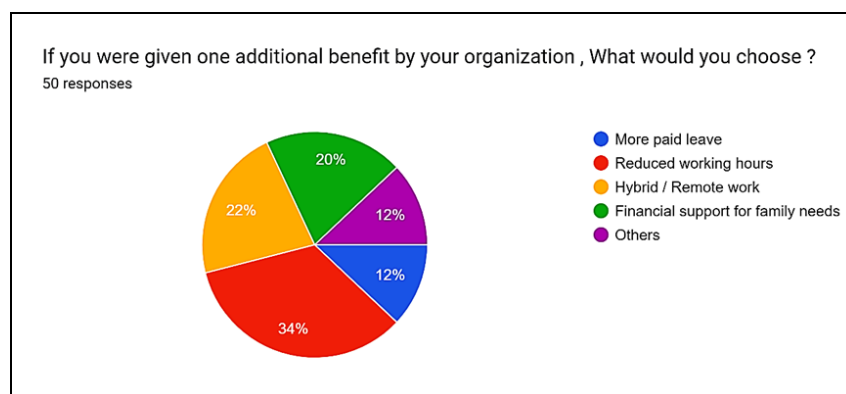


Chart 19: If respondents were given additional benefit what would they prefer the most.

Inference: Reduced working hours (34%) was the top-ranked additional benefit, slightly ahead of Hybrid/Remote work (22%) and Financial support for family needs (20%). This reinforces the finding in Chart 9 that employees prioritize flexibility and control over their time to achieve.

Findings: The vast was reduced working hours was the top-ranked additional benefit.

Suggestions:

- i). **Design Gender-Inclusive HR Policies:** Organizations should adopt policies that do not assume traditional gender roles. Flexible working hours, hybrid schedules, and parental leave must be available and encouraged for all employees, regardless of gender. For instance, non-transferable paternity leave quotas allow men to take part in caregiving. This eases the burden on women and supports a fair work-life balance.
- ii). **Promote Awareness and Training:** HR must organize workshops and training sessions to help employees and managers understand gender dynamics in work-family balance. Awareness campaigns can challenge stereotypes, encourage men to take on caregiving roles, and reinforce that flexibility is a right, not a privilege.
- iii). **Implement Supportive Leadership Practices:** Supervisors and managers should be trained to offer empathetic support and acknowledge individual family responsibilities. Humanizing management practices, like checking in on employee well-being, adjusting deadlines, and offering mental health resources, can lower stress and build loyalty.
- iv). **Develop Career-Support Programs for Caregivers:** Women often face career interruptions due to family responsibilities. HR can create mentorship programs, phased return-to-work plans, and career advancement support for caregivers to ensure family duties do not hinder professional growth.
- v). **Encourage Work-Life Balance Culture across Gender:** Beyond policy, organizations need to make balanced work habits the norm. Employees should feel comfortable leaving on time. Men should be encouraged to use parental leave, and overtime culture should not be celebrated. This mindset makes the workplace more human and reduces gender-related pressures.
- vi). **Provide Accessible Childcare and Wellness Support:** Onsite childcare, partnerships with daycare centers, and wellness programs like counseling or stress-management workshops can lessen the burden on employees. By addressing the practical challenges of family management, organizations help both men and women thrive.
- vii). **Regular Assessment and Feedback:** HR should

regularly conduct surveys and focus groups to understand employee challenges and adjust policies as needed. Listening to employees' feedback makes decision-making more human and ensures that interventions remain relevant and effective.

Conclusion

Balancing work and family responsibilities is not just a personal challenge; it is a shared organizational and societal issue. This study shows that gender influences how employees experience stress, manage dual roles, and engage with HR policies. Women frequently carry more domestic and caregiving responsibilities, while men encounter cultural pressures that limit their involvement in family life. From an HR perspective, the solution is not just about creating flexible policies but also about building an inclusive culture that values employee experiences. Policies like flexible hours, parental leave, and remote work options matter when paired with empathy, awareness, and leadership support. Humanizing HR practices involves seeing employees as whole individuals with professional goals, personal duties, and emotional needs.

The findings highlight that gender-sensitive strategies benefit both the workforce and the organization. Employees face less stress, experience higher job satisfaction, and improve productivity. Meanwhile, organizations benefit from better retention, loyalty, and innovation driven by diversity. By tackling inequalities and encouraging a fair work-family balance, HR can change the workplace from a rigid setup into a supportive, human-centered environment where everyone can succeed. Ultimately, organizations that prioritize human-centered HR policies go beyond meeting equality standards. They foster a culture of trust, empathy, and shared responsibility. This approach not only narrows gender gaps but also builds a more resilient, motivated, and engaged workforce, creating a truly inclusive and sustainable workplace for the future.

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