CHAPTER-IV

Need, Objectives and Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the objectives necessary to address the current research demands, as well as the formulation of hypotheses. The inclusion of the methodology employed in this study is crucial in order to emphasise the manner in which data was gathered and analysed through the utilisation of diverse tools and approaches. Furthermore, it provides researchers with methodological guidance on doing future studies in the field of Remote Working. The chapter also provides a comprehensive discussion of specific information, including the variables that were assessed and the scale of measurement adapted. Additionally discussing the types of statistical tests employed for the analysis of the acquired data.

4.1 Need of the Study

Liu Zhenmin (2020), the UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, urged all governments to increase efforts for empowering women and girls, as well as to enhance the evidence foundation for tracking progress: Data gap in coverage of critical gender issues must be resolved. There is an immediate need to work towards finding out accurate measures to decrease the rate of women attrition in the total work force of the country in the 21st century (The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics, 2020). Thorough research and campaigning would aid in putting it on the policy agenda in countries where certain practices continue to limit women's existence in the workforce (Chatterjee et al., 2018; Neetha, 2021). Research indicates that every alteration in the work-family dynamic provides an opportunity to examine gender disparities within and between the realms of work and personal life (Drummond et al., 2017). Empirical research on diverse genders and inclusion practices that aid in stopping the leaking pipeline of women leaders is needed. Which in turn, will aid in identifying policy implications that may have a long-term impact on the nation's economic growth (Datta & Agarwal, 2017). Clearly, more effort has to be made by practitioners and scholars to make telework and other technology-enabled work practices more successful. This therefore calls for the on-time research and development in the Indian setting also. Here work-life balance has always been a common issue of concern, especially for working women. There is a need

for research to assess the willingness of employees to embrace remote working under normal circumstances rather than being compelled to do so due to health or other emergencies (Volfová et al., 2023).

The emergence of this contemporary and agile work environment is a result of rapid advancements in technology on a global scale. Major firms in numerous Western nations have commonly adopted remote working to facilitate work-life balance (Tsang et al., 2023). Therefore, researchers indicate an increase in the virtual teams following the COVID19 pandemic. This has also led to an unexpected rise in virtual work and virtual teamwork among professionals, creating challenges requiring the special focus of managers/supervisors on forming trustworthy relationships and bonds within teams, along with the selection of proper virtual tools for effective performance (Paul et al., 2021). The study might resolve many questions regarding remote work leading to this work culture being experienced as constructive, flexible and gender equitable (Sullivan, 2012) and paving ways for more inclusive studies to be done in this field.

These findings indicate that there is a need for strategies and initiatives that are centred on encouraging originality, while also taking into account certain characteristics that are specific to each country and business domain (Heredia Pérez et al., 2019). Further, studies are needed to make more conclusions on gender, WLB and quality of remote work as well (Stankevičiūtė & Kunskaja, 2022). The current study can serve as a body of knowledge for the organisation to know the state of mind of female employees regarding the nature of remote work, which could help the employers acquire as well as manage the organisational talents. Generally, on how can firms assess the effect of e-working and targeted strategies or guidance be effectively framed and linked to suitable training and individual coping mechanisms. These measures will aid in the future development of awareness and identification of both healthy and unhealthy behaviours among e-workers (Grant et al., 2018).

4.2 Objectives of the Study

The existing body of knowledge in the realm of remote work is deficient in its examination of the long-term impact of these work practises on the work-life balance of female work forces, particularly within diverse cultural contexts, with a specific focus on the Asian region. Countries such as India have yet to fully embrace these work practises to the same

extent as their European counterparts. The past studies fall short of elucidating the impact of changed work dynamics on the work-life balance and productivity of both managerial and non-managerial personnel. Hence, this study has established the following aims, taking into consideration the existing research gaps found in the literature about employees' attitudes and perceptions towards remote working and remote management practices;

1. To identify the relationship between remote working and work-life balance of non-managerial women employees in the IT sector.
    a. To determine the role of trust-flexibility, e-wellbeing and effectiveness in predicting work-life balance of non -managerial women employees during remote work.
2. To analyse employee feedback on the availability of e-working facilities and examine its effect on the relationship between remote work and work-life balance.
3. To investigate managerial attitude towards adopting virtual management practices, the challenges encountered in this process and its impact on managerial productivity.

4.3 Scope of the Study

Geographical Scope:

The research caters to information technology (IT) sector because this sector which employees four million people transitioned to a Work-From-Home "WFH" environment after the pandemic, when TCS, one of India's largest IT employer asked nearly 90% of its 450,000 employees to work remotely (Sharma, 2020). Despite numerous national and international studies and reports on the future prospects of remote working, there is still a lack of comprehensive literatures on the Indian IT sector's experiences of remote working (Kolluru et al., 2021). Hence, the scope covers those IT companies functioning at Delhi/NCR and Bengaluru regions, which were discovered via the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) website. The rationale behind selecting these places is; the new Industrial Policy 2010-21, which aims to establish a conducive atmosphere in Delhi for knowledge-driven and advanced IT/ITES firms. Additionally, Karnataka is recognised as India's primary hub for information technology and home to the world's fourth largest technology cluster Bengaluru (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2021). Objective 1 and 2

of this study is to specifically examine the non-managerial employees. However, the 3rd objective encompasses individuals across all levels of management, including managerial, supervisory and leadership positions. These employees function remotely but within the state borders of their organisation.

Academic Scope:

This study encompasses three distinct academic perspectives. The preliminary objective of this study is to assess the relationship between employees' experiences with remote working and their possibilities for achieving work-life balance. This study draws upon to the existing literature in the domain of remote working and work-from-home, as well as virtual team management, in order to recognise a range of attitudes exhibited by both employees and managers. It aims to assess the positive and negative attitudes exhibited by managerial personnel towards the remote management technique in relation to their functioning and productivity outcomes in the virtual management context. Additionally, seeking to explore any disparities in their perspectives. This study defines managers as those having a management and supervisory position in the organisational hierarchy, whereas non-managerial employees are those who are supervised or managed by managers but do not hold an official management position. Both the positions often being identified by organisational titles (Yamazaki et al., 2018). The research does not include the organisational perspective and focuses solely on the attitudes and perceptions of employees (both managerial and non-managerial) towards remote working/management practises in the information technology (IT) sector. Lastly, this study implements a mixed method approach (including quantitate and qualitative methods of data collection) via questionnaire and interview schedules to have an in-depth knowledge on whether remote working practices support or challenge the work life balance and productivity of female work forces in IT industry at both non-managerial and managerial positions.
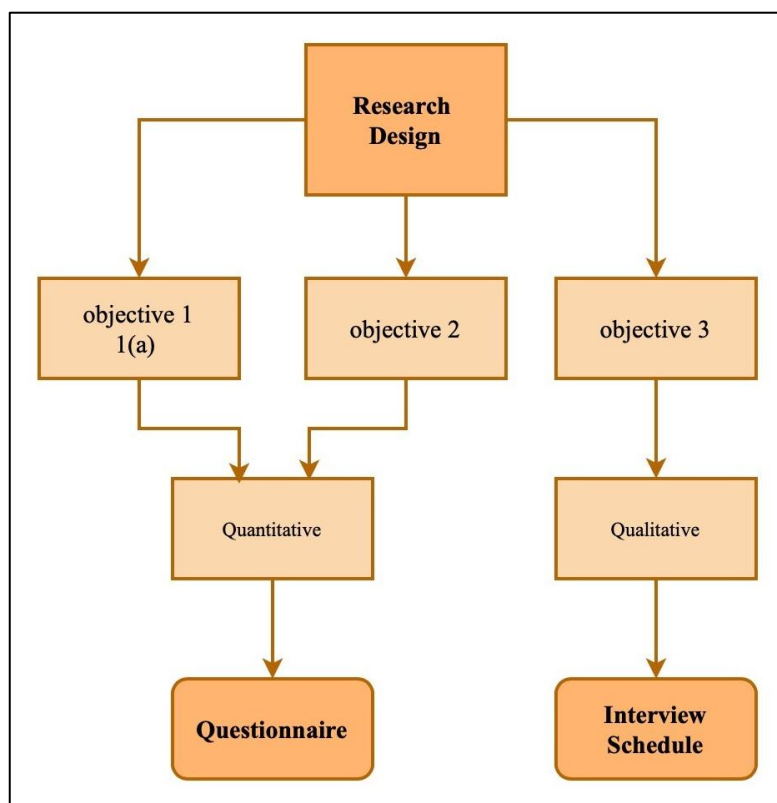
Time Scope:

The time frame for the collection of data for this study is from October 2022 to September 2023.

4.4 Research Design

The design of research entails a systematic framework that enables the efficient and effective implementation of research endeavours, with the ultimate goal of resolving the stated research question (Annexure). Research methods, however pertain to the practical strategies used to gather data where researchers have the option to employ multiple methods of data gathering within a single research design. This empirical study implements an exploratory research strategy to get qualitative data, while utilising a descriptive research method to gather quantitative data.

Quantitative research facilitates a systematic understanding of a given situation through the collection and analysis of bigger samples drawn from a population. Objective 1 and 2 of this study involves the adoption of a descriptive research design, specifically focusing on examining the attitudes and opinions of non-managerial employees towards remote working experiences. The collection of primary data for the variables was conducted by the administration of a standardised questionnaire to the employees.

This study utilises qualitative research methods (objective 3) to examine the field of virtual team management and uncover underlying challenges within the area. Qualitative studies often designed as an independent investigation, solely based on qualitative data, or incorporating mixed-methods research, which integrates both qualitative and quantitative data (Tenny et al., 2017) similar to the present study. The methodology employed consisted of collecting firsthand information by conducting semi-structured interviews with managerial personnel from the organisations. The objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the notion of modern management and determine the extent of virtual team management practises in the IT industry. The main purpose of conducting these interviews were to create a robust correlation between the knowledge acquired from the literature and its practical application, meanwhile also addressing the potential research deficiencies in the present field of study.

Figure 4.1: *Flow chart for research design and instrument*

4.4.1 Sampling Design

Sampling facilitates the researcher in implementing the data collection plan for the study. Typically, this process entails establishing the specific group or population that the study aims to investigate, identifying the pool of potential participants, choosing suitable methods for selecting a sample and ultimately, calculating the necessary sample size for the study. This section examines the sample methodology employed for conducting surveys and interviews in the study.

Population

The population selected for research were the female working professionals of those IT Services & Consulting companies which are operating in megacities of Delhi/NCR and Bengaluru. Former being one of the largest metropolises in the country and, the latter being a cosmopolitan metropolis that attracts people and businesses from all around the world (Sudhira et al., 2009). Also, because Karnataka being the IT capital of India and home to the world's fourth largest technology cluster (IBEF, 2021). The Delhi government has made a commitment to foster a progressive business climate. The new Industrial Policy

2010-21 intends to create a favourable environment in Delhi for knowledge-based and high-tech IT/ITES industries. The DQ-IDC survey on the top IT cities in the country, undertaken across 35 cities in 16 states. Bengaluru and Delhi/NCR took place within the top five positions in the overall ranking. In this survey, the NCR region—Gurgaon and Noida— are considered as a part of Delhi because of being the regions recent IT hotspots.
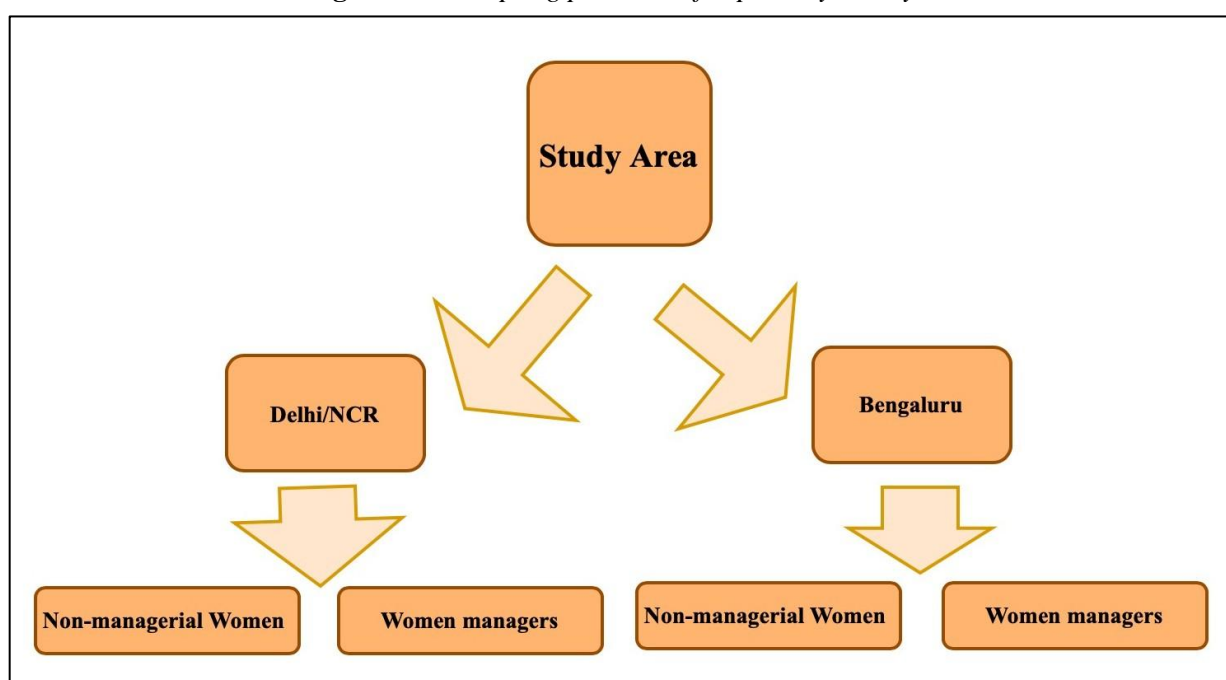
Element

Employees working in the IT industry at non-managerial levels represented the elements of this study for objective 1, 1(a) and 2 whereas for the third objective, employees working in the industry at managerial and supervisory levels represented the elements of this study.

1. *Sampling Unit-* IT & ITES (Consulting) companies listed in the National stock exchange (NSE) of India are considered as the sampling unit of this study.

2. *Extent:* Delhi/NCR and Bengaluru is selected as the study area for this research.

Figure 4.2: *Sampling procedure for primary survey*

Sampling Technique

The collection of data for this study involved a multi stage approach of systematic and snowball sampling procedures (Orlandi., 2024). Firstly, systematic sampling technique have been initiated to select the companies from the NSE list on a random basis. Later, a

snowball sampling method is used to reach out for respondents from the referral mode of data collection (Foucreault et al., 2018; Goodman, 2011), to locate non-managerial women professionals. Snowball sampling is a method wherein participants are encouraged to distribute the questionnaire to others who possess the same characteristics as the target population (Berg, 2005), making it feasible for reaching out to those set of audience who are hard to approach otherwise. Also, a purposive sampling technique have been adopted for interviewing women managers/supervisors of different departments.

4.4.2 Sample Size

Objective 1, 1(a) and 2:

Roscoe's rule of thumb (1975) – The rule suggests that the sample size between 30-500 is justified in behavioural research. This is because a sample size larger than 30 adheres to the advantages of the central limit theorem and with a sample size smaller than 500, sample error will not exceed 10% of the standard deviation (Memon et al., 2020).

Further, Cochran (1977) established a method for calculating sample size in case of huge populations, which is –

$$n = zpq/e2$$

where,

n sample size

z is critical value of the standard normal distribution for a given confidence interval p is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population $q= 1- p$

$e =$ margin/ proportion of sampling error

According to Cochran's method, when determining sample size for an unknown and big population, if the confidence interval is set at 95 percent and .05 desired level of precision/ proportion of sampling error, the sample size will be, n=384.

As per prior statistical and social sciences research (Hair, 2018; Hulland et al., 1996; Kline, 2015), as stated by Tan et al. (2018), a sample size of 100 is small, between 100 and 200 is medium and more than 200 is significant.

Sample size from similar studies - Raisiene et al. (2020) in his article has chosen 294 women in the study out of 436 employees, the number of men being 142 only. Past

literatures on remote working practices have adopted quantitative approaches mostly studying the employees perspectives ignoring the managerial one, especially in the context of developing economies. The article on initial construction of e-remote work scale by Grant et al., (2018); was tested on 260 e-workers consisting of 65 per cent female, ranging between 25–74 years of age. However, in context of India, such studies are found to be less compared to U.S and U.K i.e., 3% till 2022 (Singh & Das, 2024). Similarly, gender based and qualitative studies are also seen to be very few (see eg., Chamakiotis et al., 2021; Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017; Ford et al., 2017), also in the Indian industries and the COVID 19 context (Bhumika, 2020; Dogra & Kaushal, 2021).

4.4.3 Final sample size

In the current study, a total of 478 responses were collected from both cities, for fulfilling the aims of objective 1, 1(a) and 2. After filtering these responses, the final sample size has been adjusted to 446 to eliminate bias and non-response errors.

4.5 Research Instrument

Questionnaire Development

The construction of a questionnaire was facilitated by identifying various study factors obtained from current literature. Two sets of survey materials, one containing close-ended questions and the other an interview schedule, were created (refer to Appendix A and B pages- for more details). One was designated for the non-managerial women employees while the other was specifically intended for the women managers/supervisors. The questions were formulated in English under the assumption that all respondents have a high level of proficiency in the language. Hence, minimising any potential communication difficulties.

The close-ended questionnaire employed in this research was structured into five comprehensive sections in order to investigate employees' perceptions on various aspects of work-life balance within the context of remote working conditions (see Appendix A for reference). The initial portion included a study of the demographic characteristics of the participants, specifically focusing on factors such as age, educational background, work position, professional experience, marital status and department affiliation. The second

segment comprised items concerning e-wellbeing, effectiveness/ productivity, trust and flexibility, measuring the key dimensions associated with remote working. The third portion included 15 item scale measuring the work-life balance perception. Fourth section was incorporated to assess the accessibility of digital infrastructure among workers in their remote environments. This portion consisted of three questions that evaluated the quality of internet connectivity, the availability of compatible hardware devices and availability of effective collaboration tools. The final segment of the questionnaire was specifically developed to gather employees' perspectives on the use of work gadgets and the location of their remote work setup.

Operational definitions

a. Trust & flexibility - Trust in the study is defined as the belief a manager/supervisor shows in their team or employee regrading the task assigned for completion without micromanaging them. Flexibility on the other hand is giving the opportunity to perform (complete the assigned work) from wherever and however the employee feels comfortable with, without affecting the timelines and quality of deliverables.

b. E-wellbeing - In the current study context e-wellbeing is defined as the social and psychological wellbeing of the employees working majorly via electronic medium away from the traditional office premises.

c. Work effectiveness - Effectiveness here deals with the efficiency of employees while working in remote settings. In general, the ability of employees to perform productively even when working outside traditional office setup.

Measurement

The questionnaire comprised of multiple items that were utilised to represent various dimensions associated with remote working and work-life balance among employees. Remote working was measured by adapting to the prior established dimensions like; effectiveness/productivity, e-wellbeing, trust and flexibility, used previously in remote working research to measure remote work-life situations (Charalampous et al., 2022; Grant et al., 2018). The current research focuses primarily on" Work-life" instead of "Work family" because of its broader scope in embracing areas like home, leisure and economic stability, under the banner of 'life' and the key construct investigated is "Balance". Items

studying the work-life balance are based on a 15-item scale from Hayman in 2005 (Chang et al., 2010); as a dependent Variable in the current study. These items are assessed using a five-point agreement scale, ranging from 1 (*least agreed*) to 5 (m*ost agreed*). According to Joshi et al. (2015), the validity of a scale is established by the relevance of the issue, the understanding of the respondents and the assessment made by the researcher. Hence, several past studies in the field of remote working have been witnessed using the five point rating scale (see e.g., Chaudhary et al., 2022; Castellano et al., 2021; Depoo & Hyršlová, 2022; Sedrine et al., 2020).

Pilot Testing

Prior to the collection of actual data for this research, a pilot study was done. The main objective of this endeavour was to detect any potential issues in the study instrument, specifically the questionnaire and address them accordingly. Participants from all departments were included in the study, with the exception of managerial staff. Three questions were added based on the field observations for measuring remote working dimension of e-wellbeing, trust and flexibility; "I am not micro-managed when e-working remotely"; "Remote work also motivates me to work for my career development" and "Conflict situations on virtual calls have not increased due to remote working". Therefore, three more items were added to the questions measuring remote work dimensions.

In research, the notion of WLB can be measured in a variety of ways (Clarke et al., 2004; Pichler, 2008). Many studies have only examined dimensions based on their study objectives primarily consisting of items measuring work interference with personal life (WIPL) and personal interference with work-life (PIWL) (Berglund et al., 2021; Bhumika, 2020; Karkoulian et al., 2016). However, the current study adapted all the 15 items of the scale in order to measure the overall perception towards work-life balance outcomes as a whole.

To operate from distance remote work needs to have proper environment connected with tech support, internet facilities and required softwares. Past studies have talked regrading the importance and affects of tech use on remote workers. However, as the study caters to Indian environment and the researcher in the pilot stage found unavailability of such facilities to result in delayed work and frustration of employees which might have in some way affect their work-life balance outcomes. Hence, the study adopted few items analysing

the availability of e-working facilities and based on a grounded theory approach the moderating affect of presence of such facilities were checked to judge the effect it has on the relationship between remote work and work-life balance of women employees at non-managerial positions.

4.6 Data Collection Process

The collection of data for this study involved a procedure with five different steps. Firstly, the people associated with Human capital of the organisation like the Recruiter, HR, Admin, Managers and CSR heads were identified and chosen to be the source of main contact. Secondly, the researcher contacted them via LinkedIn, phone calls and emails explaining the nature and purpose of the study. Thirdly, the template of the interviews and the questionnaire were also shared with them on demand. The concerned authorities landed support in the study on a personal basis and on goodwill keeping it outside the scope of professional relations and organisational policies. Further, the questionnaires were handed over to the first point of reference who then distributed them to all employees working in different departments.

Additionally, the researcher also employed a direct approach by contacting employees of the concerned organisations through professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn and via emails (Pillai & Prasad, 2022). The researcher then met all these respondents and their referred individuals outside of their regular office hours away from their workplace (K, 2011). The participants were provided with an explanation of the objectives of the study and assured that both their personal identities and the identities of their respective organisations would remain confidential. Lastly, they were informed that their involvement in this study is entirely voluntary. Only participants who agreed of having remote working experience for a minimum of six months were selected for inclusion in the study. As workers who suddenly and newly began remote working might lack a totally developed home office environment and lack of appropriate home working experience (Fukushima et al., 2021). Employees in few of the IT companies were continuing their remote working (WFH) and visited the office only once or twice a week. Therefore, the researcher handed over the questionnaires to the respective HR or departmental heads who then distributed them to the employees at their convenience and depending on the availability of the employees.

4.6.1 Response Rate

A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed to employees in the selected IT companies of Bengaluru and Delhi/NCR who agreed to participate in the study. A significant quantity of questionnaires are distributed due to the fact that the average rate of response for research conducted on employees in the IT companies in India is approximately 71%, which is regarded to be high and found in mixed-gender based studies (Priyan, 2011). The current study exclusively focuses on female participants of the IT sector collecting the total 478 filled responses, out of which only 446 were fully completed and deemed appropriate for the study. Hence, a response rate of 68% in total was achieved.

4.7 Parametric tests

Parametric tests are conducted when a normal distribution (Normality) of the underlying population is assumed to be present, which are based on the assumption that the data are on a quantitative (numerical) scale. Secondly, referring to the fact that all the samples have the same variance i.e., Homogeneity of variances. Further, a random selection is made from the population to select the samples and the observations that are made within a group are not influenced by one another (Independent Observation) (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016). Finally, the relationship between two variables were linear (Linearity). The responses gathered for fulfilling quantitative objectives (1, 1 (a) and 2) meets all these assumptions, making the dataset fit for all kind of parametric tests and inferential statistics as mentioned below;

4.8 Analytical Tools and Technique

As the dataset fulfils all assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity and linearity making it fit for using parametric statistics, this study employed a range of statistical methods, encompassing both descriptive and inferential techniques. It first includes descriptive statistics to describe the data and characteristics about what is being studied, examines the demographic characteristics, including age, education, department, employment and marital status of the participants. The frequency of occurrence for each variable has been evaluated and visually displayed using pie charts and bar diagrams. Moreover, inferential statistics have been employed to examine several hypotheses formulated for primary and secondary objectives of this study. This section (chapter 6) provides a concise overview

of the analytical methods employed in the research. Finally, the interviews are transcribed with the help of qualitative data analysis software (MAXQDA) and themes are generated for describing the findings (chapter 7).

Descriptive Statistics

Numbers that are used to describe a sample or community are called descriptive statistics. The mean, or average, is calculated in the current study by dividing the total amount of values in a sample by the number of values in the sample (Hurley & Tenny, 2023). These values are used in the profiling and analysis section to calculate the highest average response for questions asked in fulfilment of the quantitative objectives.

Correlation Analysis

This research focuses on the utilisation of Pearson's Correlation to investigate the connection between variables. Studies on remote working have been exploring various connections and relationships to find out the suitability and sustainability of this work culture in the long run. Work-life balance is observed as one of the crucial constructs in remote working studies around the globe, especially in developed and high-income economies. However, countries like India still have limited research on remote working practices and their impact on various aspects of the working class. Especially for working women, who have to address multiple work-life aspects daily. Thus, before making any further conclusions on this work culture, there is a need to first discover a relationship between remote working and work-life balance.

These associations can be discovered with the help of a correlation analysis. Pearson's Correlation was chosen above other tools because the data contained continuous variables obtained using rating scales, which satisfied the parameters of Pearson's technique. Pearson's Correlation, as opposed to Spearman's Rank Correlation or Kendall's Tau, is better suited for investigating basic, linear correlations. Because the goal was to first understand the direct relationships before forecasting outcomes, Pearson's approach was the most appropriate and statistically robust option.

Further, looking for the relationships of these dimensions on women employees 'work-life balance to see how strongly these aspects are connected and whether these relationships

are significant or not. Various dimensions of remote working are measured to find out the degree and nature of their association with work-life balance as a composite variable (Stanley & Sebastine, 2023).

This method helped identify whether the relationships are positive, negative or zero. The criteria established by authors like; Cohen (1988) for assessing the strength of a correlation more precisely suggest the values of $r = 0.10$, $r = 0.30$ and $r = 0.50$ to represent small, medium and large magnitudes respectively. Nevertheless, Gignac and Szodorai (2016) proposed in their study that when no other information is available, researchers studying individual differences should regard correlations of 0.10, 0.20 and 0.30 as relatively small, typical and relatively large, when interpreting statistical results from a normative viewpoint.

Regression analysis

In order to understand the nuance ways remote working influences work-life balance, it is important to apply a statistical tool that allows to examine how different Independent Variables (IV's) affect the Dependent Variable in this study (DV). Since, the primary focus of regression analysis is often to look at the relationship between a DV and several IVs, multiple regression analysis have been used to access individual contribution of each remote working dimension to the overall model, fulfilling requirements of sub objective one in the study. It plays a significant role in identifying which construct has the most meaningful impact on work-life balance of the non-managerial women working in the IT organisations. The results provided can hence show the strength and direction of the relationships between variables. Not only determining if remote working impacts WLB but also the degree to which it does by predicting WLB scores based on various remote work dimensions (Tabachnick & Fidell 2013).

Both correlation and regression have been applied due to its complimentary roles in achieving the desired outcomes. Where correlation shall help in determining whether there is a meaningful relationship between remote working constructs and work life balance, multiple regression analysis shall extend this by measuring the extent to which remote working constructs could predict changes in the work life balance of non-managerial women employees. They shall offer a comprehensive understanding for both existence and effect of these relationships, essential for meeting the research objectives 1 and 1(a).

Independent Samples T-test and One Way ANOVA

An independent-samples t-test shall be used to determine if there is a statistically significant disparity in the average scores between the two groups (for eg, whether permanent and contractual employees exhibit significant differences in their work-life balance levels). Statistically, while assessing the likelihood that the two sets of scores (for permanent and contractual employees) originated from the identical population. Whereas One way ANOVA shall be adopted to analyse the difference in mean score for the more than two group (i.e, whether the level of work-life balance of non-managerial women differ among different departments).

Process Analysis

PROCESS is a computer tool—a "macro"—that facilitates the implementation of mediation, moderation and conditional process analysis with observed (or "manifest") variables. The macro is given arguments on which variables are acting as independent, dependent and moderator variables in the model (Hayes et al., 2017). The objective is to assess whether the strength or direction of the relationship between remote working and employees 'work-life balance changes depending on the level of available e-resources. Hereby, moderation analysis shall be performed using process macro in SMART PLS4(trial version) to produce results necessary for achieving the second objective of the thesis.

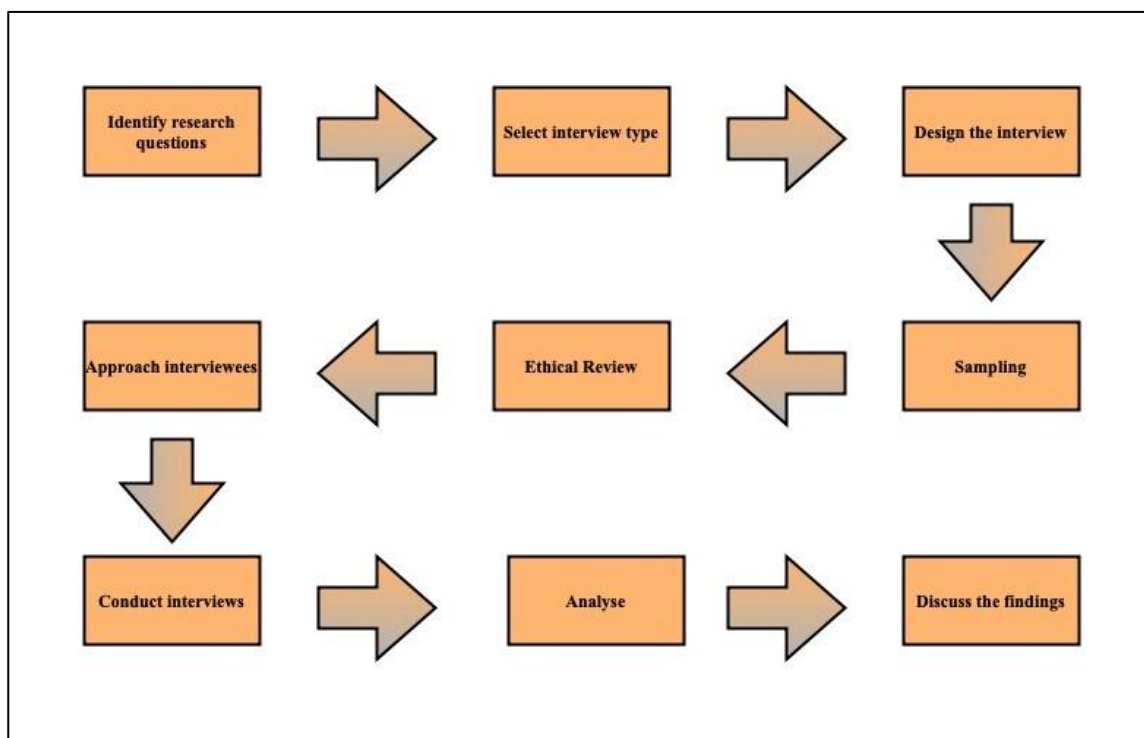**4.9 Method for Qualitative Study (Objective 3)**

Semi-structured interviews were done with managers/supervisors to collect qualitative information on the problems of digital workforce management and its impact on managerial productivity. Quite a few number of the participants actively contributed to the creation and implementation of virtual management practises in their respective departments. The interviews were conducted either at the participant's selected location or online using telephonic medium and was recorded with the participants' consent. Each interview had a duration of 15-20 minutes or half an hour as per the availability and connivence of the participant. Following the conclusion of each interview, the researcher composed a research note that briefly outlined the main highlights. The research notes were utilised to construct a comprehensive database encompassing codes for diverse

attributes, including remote team management, flex-time utilisation, work-life balance, work hours, training requirements, managerial obstacles, impacts, strategies and remote work preferences. The next phase of coding entailed a greater level of concentration and a more thorough examination of key codes that were of analytical significance, achieved by creating sub-themes (Emerson et al., 2011).

Sample size

Accurately determining the appropriate sample size for conducting interviews is challenging. Researchers thereby provide the initial ideas of sample sizes that typically range from 20 to 30 and are generally less than 50 (Marshall et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the underlying theoretical process upon which these numbers are derived remains uncertain (Van Rijnsoever, 2017); whereas few rely on the reaching of saturation point theory of repetitive occurrence pattern, when it seems appropriate to stop further interviewing. According to certain qualitative researchers, saturation can be achieved when respondents consistently attach patterns of meaning to certain events. This saturation point is typically reached after performing a series of 16-24 interviews, as suggested by Hennink et al. (2017). The researcher here is able to perform a total of 20 interviews across various departments of the companies. This number therefore fell between the threshold limit of 16-24 interviews as mentioned above. Hence, making it a considerable sample size for the study. Moreover, the sample size accuracy of qualitative method also depends on the information power of the data gathered. It indicates that, higher the information the sample holds in relevance to the actual study, the lower is the need of number of participants to be involved.

Figure 4.3 below explains the stages adopted for fulfilling the requirements of the qualitative research objectives of the study. To begin with, first the research questions were identified from thorough review of available literatures, next selecting the type of interview to be conducted and later designing the interviews catering to the nature and demand of the research questions. Appropriate sampling was decided upon and ethical conditions were analysed, by exclusion of questions considering no breach of identity or privacy of the respondents involved. Finally, the interviewees were approached and interviews conducted, which were later analysed and discussed upon in the findings section 7.4 and 7.5 (chapter 7).

Figure 4.3: *Basic stages in interview process, reproduced from Ref. (Young et al., 2018)*

4.10 Qualitative Tools and Techniques

Qualitative research employs various methodologies, one of which is conducting interviews. Interviews can be conducted in an unstructured or structured manner. The current study utilises an unstructured method where the researcher asked open-ended questions on the particular topic (managerial attitude) while adjusting their approach during the interview sessions (Tenny et al., 2022); on the basis of responses received.

After analysing the frequency of similar replies and keywords appearing multiple times. The keywords gathered were assembled under subheadings as open codes. Which were further categorised under main headings as axial codes and later on converted into selective themes for the purpose of theory development. However, a researcher must develop an optimal study design by carefully and thoughtfully preparing, taking into account the current circumstances and recognizing the resources that are available. Firstly, it is necessary to consider the allocation of external resources, such as financial resources, time and possible informants. This is because certain methods for collecting and analyzing data might be expensive and time-consuming. Therefore, the selection of methods must be adjusted to accommodate these limitations (Bengtsson, 2016). Finally, the researcher's

self-reflection is a crucial component of qualitative research, regardless of the specific qualitative approach selected (Burnard, 1995).

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is employed to identify and explain repeating patterns or themes within the dataset. This approach frequently results in the discovery of novel insights and better interpretation (Elliott, 2018). Secondly, Coding the responses for organising data in case of qualitative investigation (interviews). "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2015).

4.11 Research Ethics and Confidentiality of Data

The responses to each question gathered from the questionnaire were subjected to statistical analysis. The findings of the analysis reported in this thesis are not specific to any single company or individual. The interview data are consolidated through the use of thematic analysis. The thesis presents general conclusions without any specific mention of a particular organisation or individual (Priyan, 2011). The researcher has further acknowledged the original source of the theory or article for the knowledge gained through reviewing existing data and literature on Remote Working, Work-life balance, Virtual Human Resource Management and the IT/ITES industry. The researcher has not claimed credit for work that was not originally conducted by them.

4.12 Summary

This chapter elucidated the research design and its underlying rationale. The text provides a description of the methodological processes employed in conducting the study, including an overview of the research design, the sources of collecting data, the sampling method and the statistical tests utilised for analysing the empirical data. This aids in comprehending the research methodology employed. The primary data is gathered using two sets of meticulously designed questionnaires and interview schedules, one for the non-managerial women employees and another for the women managers. The respondents consist of non-managerial women employees and managers from IT/ ITES organisations in Delhi/NCR and Bengaluru. The participants were reached via email, telephone, or face-

to-face whenever feasible. The acquired data underwent quantitative analysis using frequency tabulations, graphs, descriptive statistics and specific parametric tests. The researcher's adherence to the research ethics protocol is also addressed.