

HARMONY IN ACADEMIA: INVESTIGATING WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG FACULTY MEMBERS IN MANAGEMENT INSTITUTES OF PRAYAGRAJ AND LUCKNOW REGIONS"

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the challenges of work-life balance in India's demanding work culture, emphasizing its impact on employee mental health. The escalating work hours and stressful conditions necessitate employer intervention for workload distribution. A survey reveals a correlation between balanced work-life dynamics and reduced stress. The research advocates for employer policies minimizing workload without compromising productivity. Lifestyle disparities underscore the need for personalized time management. Teaching professionals face unique challenges in balancing work and personal life. The study identifies gaps in research, particularly regarding management institute faculties and work-life provisions in educational institutions. Objectives include investigating work-life schedules, examining demographic impacts, and scrutinizing existing policies. Findings indicate a positive work-life balance, influenced by marital status. Implications suggest instituting counseling services, promoting flexible work arrangements, and focusing on health initiatives for employee well-being. The study advocates for active employee involvement in planning and prioritizing work and personal commitments for optimal work-life balance.

Keywords: *Work-life balance, Stress reduction, Teaching professionals, Management institutes, Flexible work arrangements, Employee well-being, Job satisfaction.*

Introduction

The biggest and most urgent threat to employees' mental health in India may be the pressure of an increasingly demanding work culture. Many people's lifestyles are being negatively impacted by longer workweeks, which is detrimental to their mental health. Work-life imbalance and stressful work environments are parts of a larger, more intricate picture. Employer initiatives to address task distribution may offer employees who struggle with work-life conflict a better work-life balance, albeit this is not a given. The primary cause of work-life imbalances is the requirement for companies to handle job loads and schedules. The concrete advantages of creating a work-life balance-promoting environment must be more successfully and broadly shared.

Workers who reported maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal/family life report less stress than those who don't, according to a Human Solutions poll. The high rate of workplace stress among knowledge workers prompts questions about the long-term viability, expense of the position, and constraints placed on employees' careers. Workers must evaluate the risks that stress at work poses to their personal and professional lives, paying particular attention to knowledge workers who put in excessive hours.

Stress and work-life balance are closely related. The significance that employees attach to striking a balance between their personal and professional lives, as well as the degree to which workplace policies and procedures enable them to do so, appear to be relevant factors in this context. This study examined the work lives of employers and employees, offering recommendations for how to attain work-life balance.

Employers must establish policies aimed at reducing employee workload without compromising organizational productivity to foster a successful work-life balance. Throughout history, life on Earth has adhered to natural laws, yet humans have consistently sought to expand their understanding through experimentation, despite the presence of divine

knowledge illuminating their path. Every creature on Earth instinctively aligns with natural principles, leading individuals to continually grapple with balancing work and personal life, striving for improvement. While some may advocate for

setting artificial standards based on personal experiences, others argue that true balance lies in aligning with divine knowledge, which remains constant over time, unaffected by change.

Work has to be organized along life, as life is assumed about family activities, mystical developments, pleasure and leisureliness, while work is supposed for a person's aspiration and professional responsibilities. When people need to split their time in these two important and vital elements of our living, they have to build a balance between them. Priorities should be set according to age, family status, profession, living standard and ambition which make a balance in life and work in comfortable manner. In fact a lifestyle of job oriented person is different from a businessman and same chart of time management could not be made for them.

Work life balance has always been a concern of those interested in the quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life. The concept of work life has been abstracted from the job satisfaction level of an employee, which is an extrinsic factor of job satisfaction. It aimed to provide quality of life for an employee at the same time retaining the productivity levels of an employee at the workplace. The balance work life score provides an organization with a productive and innovative employee, whereas disparity in the work life balance tends to develop depressed and dissatisfied staff.

Though work-life balance is a very broad subject who speaks about both career development on one side and the family care on the other side, it is very necessary to know how the people balance the professional demands and domestic compulsions. Professional life means the aim to grow and earn respect in the organization and society at large and Personal life means taking care of family, children, parents, health and spending the leisure time effectively. With the development in educational, economical and social standards, things have improved to a great extent and the role of faculty in balancing their lifestyle is less taxing. Work – life balance for teaching professional has become one of the greatest challenges in today's world. Teachers work load not only demand their time in the institution but also extend to their home so as to get prepared for the following day, apart from maintaining student records and attending to various institution related functional requirements. Teachers need to spend extra hours every day to be effective and productive in their profession so that they could reach higher levels and face the challenging atmosphere. Moreover, teachers not only look forward towards teaching, but need to also focus on soft skills and life skills so that they not only produce good professionals but also develop good citizens.

Finding a suitable balance between work and daily living is a challenge that all workers face. Families are particularly affected. Work is taking over the lives of many individuals in today's fast-paced, global environment, and if they do not guard themselves against work–life imbalance, there could be increasing work–family conflicts and stress resulting from long hours and workload escalation. Vacations are getting shorter and are often clubbed with work, or even worse, many do not have the time for a vacation. Quality family time is getting invaded by the omnipresence of media and the internet.

Many employees have ongoing, predictable demands on their time outside of work. These demands may include dependent children, an ill family member, a long commute, a desire for increased education, or a commitment to community or religious activities. To meet these demands, and to get a paying job done, such individuals often need to work at a different time or in a different place than the traditional —9 am to 5 pm, five days/week, face time at the workplace rubric.

Employees care about work life balance more than money. The modern economy has resulted in better opportunities, jobs and salaries. The flip side of the coin is that this has also brought in extended working hours, leaving very little time for individuals to balance their work. It is not surprising that Indians consider work life balance as their main concern although job security remains central to all activities of life. Concerns such as health, children's education and caring old parents, etc; also figures in the work life cycle to cope with. The Indian concern of parents' welfare and happiness is a unique and typical mindset, rarely seen in any other society the world over. But concerns differ across regions and even individuals. The present paper has attempted to understand the research gap in balancing of work life of working couples serving educational institutions. It is found that women employees need to make more adjustments as compared to male counterpart and also couples working in same organization have more balance in their work and life and also support their children to have better work life balance.

Work is central to an individual's lives. It provides them with a sense of achievement, recognition and above all a means of income to meet out their basic and material needs. Balancing work and home life is a growing concern for both employers and employees.

Literature Review

Work-life and personal life are two sides of the same coin. Striking a balance between work and life is critical for an employee to achieve his personal and professional goals. Simultaneously, the repercussions are profound for organizations, as employee attitude, loyalty to the company, and productivity hinge directly on the effectiveness of balancing work and personal life.

As individuals in professional roles, people aim for a harmonious blend of work and personal life, seeking a sense of fulfillment or satisfaction overall. They perceive balance as aligning their time usage with personal and professional objectives and priorities. While formal definitions of work-life balance differ, they commonly emphasize that it's not just about evenly dividing time between work and personal pursuits, but about feeling content with one's life as a whole (Berry, 2010). Others have proposed the concept of work-life integration, recognizing that the traditional notion of balance over simplifies the complexities of modern life, especially in an era dominated by digital connectivity (Ashkenas, 2012). Regardless of the terminology used, attaining a state of contentment rather than feelings of guilt, resentment, or regret can be daunting due to its constantly evolving and deeply personal nature. While academics may enjoy more flexibility in their schedules compared to other professions, this advantage can paradoxically complicate their quest for balance, particularly when work and home boundaries blur, especially with unconventional schedules or remote work arrangements. Academic staff often endures long hours, including weekends and evenings, and express a desire for clearer separation between their professional and personal lives (Kinman & Jones, 2008). In the field of school psychology, junior faculty members are tasked with managing various responsibilities such as teaching, supervision, service, and practice. These demands can become overwhelming, particularly when faculty members struggle to justify taking time away from professional obligations due to the belief that they should constantly be working and striving for more (Solomon, 2011). While research on this subject is limited, concerns regarding work-life balance seem particularly significant for academics, especially those in tenure-track roles who feel the pressure to "publish or perish" (Allen, Taylor, & Bedeian, 2011). It's no wonder that early-career faculty members are particularly susceptible to burnout. Given these challenges, many scholars may find it advantageous to partake in deliberate activities aimed at promoting well-being and achieving a fulfilling equilibrium between their professional and personal spheres. Studies indicate that the most content faculty members are those who feel empowered to manage their work and schedules and receive institutional support (Kinman & Jones, 2008).

Den Dulk et al. (2014) suggest that flexible work arrangements enable employees to adjust their work hours or location to accommodate responsibilities beyond their job, such as caring for a sick child or family member, by allowing them to work remotely from home.

Achieving work-life balance is often seen as an elusive goal or even dismissed as a myth by today's professionals. However, leaders can effectively manage their commitments by making intentional decisions about which opportunities to pursue and which to turn down, rather than simply reacting to crises. They have learned from experience that success in senior positions requires a careful blend of work, family, and community engagement, without sacrificing their personal well-being or relationships. Those who excel at this typically involve their families in work-related decisions and activities, while also prioritizing their own physical and emotional health. While deliberate choices cannot guarantee complete control over life's challenges, many executives—both men and women—have maintained their momentum through difficult times while remaining connected to their families.

While the concept of "work-life balance" isn't new, employees worldwide still grapple with how to effectively attain it. Particularly for millennial, who have been accustomed to constant connectivity through smart phones and the ability to work remotely, even while on vacation in places like Hawaii, the question arises whether achieving work-life balance is feasible at all. Amidst the ongoing discussions on managing personal and professional obligations, it's evident that there's no universal solution that suits everyone. The crucial aspect lies in identifying what holds the most significance for each individual, both in their career and personal life, and ensuring that they prioritize these aspects in their daily schedule.

Research Gaps

Upon examination of existing literature, it is evident that there is a scarcity of research studies concerning the work-life balance of faculty members affiliated with management institutes. Additionally, several variables remain unexplored,

including the provisions and facilities related to work-life balance offered by educational institutions, as well as the relationship between job satisfaction and work-life balance.

Research Problem

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, achieving work-life balance has emerged as a pressing issue for both organizations and individuals worldwide. The increasing prevalence of 24/7 global operations, driven by businesses' emphasis on round-the-clock customer service and operations across multiple time zones, has heightened the importance of work-life balance for employees. Given these concerns, this study specifically targets faculty members of management institutes. Furthermore, the research aims to investigate the impact of various demographic factors such as age, gender, and location on different variables related to work-life balance. The selected variables for examination include the availability of work-related amenities and provisions provided by educational institutions, factors that facilitate or impede work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Objectives

The study is formulated with the following objectives:

- i. To study work life schedule of faculty members of management institutions
- ii. To study the impact of demographic variables on Work-life balance
- iii. To study the existing Work-Life Balance policies in organizations

Research Methodology

The Study comprises of primary and secondary data.

- Sources of **secondary data** are: Websites, Articles, Magazines, Publications, and Annual Reports, Journals on the same or related topic.
- In this study, a sample survey technique was employed to gather primary data, focusing on faculties from Management Institutes. The questionnaire was meticulously designed by referencing extensive literature on the subject and related topics. It comprised a mix of open-ended, close-ended, and Likert scale questions, totaling 30 in number. The questionnaire was structured into three main categories: Personal Information, Work-related Information, and Information on Work-Life Balance. A sample size of 50 respondents was collected from each city, namely Prayagraj and Lucknow. Non-probability convenience sampling was utilized for participant selection, and data collection was carried out through a combination of personal interviews and questionnaire administration.

Analysis of Data

The data was analyzed using the following statistical techniques –

1. SPSS
2. Z-test
3. ANOVA

Work life Balance –

The Work-Life Balance variable aids participants in assessing the equilibrium between their personal and professional lives. In this study, data regarding the level of Work-Life Balance was gathered utilizing the Fisher-McAuley et al. (2003) scale, employing Likert ratings as the measurement tool.

The mean score for WLB is 65.62 and standard deviation is 11.9. All 100 respondents are classified into 3 groups according to the level of possessing WLB. Respondents of score below 53.71 are classified as 'Low Level'. Respondents of score between 53.71 and 77.53 are classified as 'Medium Level'. Respondents of score above 77.53 are classified as 'High Level.'

Work Life Balance and Demographic –

Work Life Balance and Gender –

H₀₁: There is no association between Work-Life Balance and Gender

H₁₁: = There is association between Work-Life Balance and Gender

The association between Work Life Balance and the gender i.e. Male and Female is tested using Chi-square and z-test. The results indicate that null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is no association between work – life balance and gender.

Level of WLB	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Low	12	6	18
Medium	34	37	71
High	4	7	11
Total	50	50	100

Levels of WLB & Gender

The table above illustrates that among 100 respondents surveyed, 18 are categorized as having a 'Low level of Work-Life Balance (WLB)', 71 respondents fall into the 'Medium level of WLB' category and the remaining 11 respondents are classified as having a 'High level of WLB'. Among the 18 respondents in the 'Low level of WLB' category, 12 are females and 6 are males. Within the group of 71 respondents with a 'Medium level of WLB', 34 are females and 37 are males. Additionally, among the 11 respondents with a 'High level of WLB', 4 are females and 7 are males.

Chi Square shows that, p-value is 0.164 which is greater than standard value 0.05. Therefore chi square test is accepted. Hence, null hypothesis is accepted and alternate hypothesis is rejected. There is no association between WLB and Gender.

WLB & Marital Status –

The association between Work Life Balance and the marital status i.e. married and unmarried was tested using Chi-square and z-test. The results indicate that null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is an association between work – life balance and marital status.

To study correlation of WLB with different variables, Pearson's coefficient of correlation is calculated. The correlation results showed that the coefficient of correlation between WLB and Organizational Policies is positive and significant. Organizational policies include factors like Work Practices, Work Environment, Remuneration, Employee Morale, Fringe Benefits, Organization Structure, Job responsibilities, Employee-Employer relations etc. Therefore, it is observed that there is a significant association between Employer's Contribution and Work-Life Balance.

Findings

It was noted that faculty members generally exhibit a favorable Work-Life Balance, with their marital status also impacting this balance significantly. Unmarried respondents tend to effectively manage their personal and professional lives. While organizational policies, such as flexible start/end times, working hours, paid time off, career breaks, and sabbaticals, are intended to support Work-Life Balance, the study suggests that their association with it is not particularly significant. Additionally, institutions provide various facilities like counseling services, health programs, parenting and family support initiatives, recreation, and transportation. While these amenities are associated with Work-Life Balance to some extent, their impact is not deemed significant. Conversely, there is a positive and noteworthy association between Work-Life Balance and organizational policies, which encompass aspects such as work practices, environment, remuneration, employee morale, fringe benefits, organization structure, job responsibilities, and employee-employer relations. Consequently, it was observed that employer contributions significantly influence Work-Life Balance.

Implications of the Study

Institutions need to create counseling services in their respective organizations by appointing full time counselors who can help employees in balancing their mental and physical rhythm. Sabbaticals & Part-time work arrangements need to be promoted in institutes as Education is gender unbiased sector. These work life initiatives also offer good opportunity for institutions to manage their tight salary budgets in periods of tough competition and declining revenues. Free health checkups, health insurance & exercise facilities are the initiative not only expected by the employees but they are also the initiatives which will be the critical influencing factors for employees in making choice of employment.

It is advised to employees that careful planning and personal effort is important for balance in work and personal life. Employers can only facilitate work life balance with many schemes that can attract employees and satisfy their needs but it is employees, who have to plan, prioritize and schedule their work and life obligations. Cost effective retention strategies like creating a retention culture in the organization, ensuring freedom of expression to employees, creating friendly work environment and instituting competitive reward schemes are a few strategies institutes can be experimented with in talent retention.

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