

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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1. Introduction

Work Life Balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) on the one hand and "life" (Health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other.

The expression "Work-life balance" was first used in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life.

Over the past decade, a rise in workplace violence, an increase in levels of absenteeism as well as rising workers' compensation claims are all evidence of an unhealthy work life balance. Employee assistance professionals say there are many causes for this situation ranging from personal ambition and the pressure of family obligations to the accelerating pace of technology. According to a recent study for the Center for Work-Life Policy, **1.7 million people consider their jobs and their work hours excessive because of globalization.**

Young Generation Views on Work Life Balance

According to Kathleen Gerson, Sociologist, young people "are searching for new ways to define care that do not force them to choose between spending time with their children and earning an income" and "are looking for definition of personal identity that do not pit their own development against creating committed ties to others". Young adults believe that parents should get involved and support the children both economically and emotionally, as well as share labor equally. Young people do not believe work-life balance is possible and think it is dangerous to build a life dependent on another when relationships are unpredictable. They are looking for partners to share the house work and family work together. Both men and women believe that women should have jobs before considering marriage; for better life and to be happy in marriage. Young people do not think their mother's generations were unhappy. They also do not think they were powerless because they were not economically dependent.

Consequences of an Imbalance

Mental health is a balancing act that may be affected by four factors: the influence of unfavorable genes, by wounding trauma, by private pressures and most recently by the stress of working. Many people expose themselves unsolicited to the so-called job stress, because the "hard worker" enjoys a very high social recognition. These aspects can be the cause of an imbalance in the areas of life.

Responsibility of Employers

Companies have begun to realize how important the work-life balance is to the productivity and creativity of their employees. Research by Kenexa Research Institute in 2007 shows that those employees who were more favourable toward their organization's efforts to support work-life balance also indicated a much lower intent to leave the organization, greater pride in their organization, a willingness to recommend it as a place to work and higher overall job satisfaction.

Employers can offer a range of different programs and initiatives, such as flexible working arrangements in the form of part time, casual and telecommuting work. More proactive employers can provide compulsory leave, strict maximum hours and foster an environment that encourages employees not to continue working after hours.

According to Stewart Friedman, professor of Management and founding director of the Wharton School's Leadership Program indicates that the solution lies in approaching the components of work, home, community, and self as a comprehensive system.

2. Objectives

The objective of this article is to study the factors which are responsible for work life balance. As many OB theorists have suggested that a person has certain needs. Amongst these needs physiological and social needs and self actualization needs can be termed as the most important needs. So, in today's fast and unstoppable world where people has to work hard continuously for long hours to earn their living and realize their true potential it becomes increasingly difficult for them to fulfill their needs and responsibilities towards their families and to fulfill their other social needs. This in turn affects their job and mental satisfaction and raises the issue of work-life balance. This motivated us to determine: what are the factors that are responsible for balancing work and life? How is work-life balance different amongst males and females? Is there is any difference in the perception on work-life balance amongst different age groups etc. Along with this it gives us a good platform to determine what policies should be adopted by a company to help and support its employees in striking a right balance in their life and work.

3. Literature Review

(a) INFLUENCES OF THE VIRTUAL OFFICE ON ASPECTS OF WORK AND WORK/LIFE BALANCE

E. JEFFREY HILL, BRENT C. MILLER, SARA P. WEINER, JOE COLIHAN (2006)

Millions of employees now use portable electronic tools to do their jobs from a "virtual office" with extensive flexibility in the timing and location of work. However, little scholarly research exists about the effects of this burgeoning work form. This study of IBM employees explored influences of the virtual office on aspects of work and work/life balance as reported by virtual office teleworkers ($n = 157$) and an equivalent group of traditional office workers ($n= 89$). Qualitative analyses revealed the perception of greater productivity, higher morale, increased flexibility and longer work hours due to telework, as well as an equivocal influence on work/life balance and a negative influence on teamwork. Using a quasi-experimental design, quantitative multivariate analyses supported the qualitative findings related to productivity, flexibility and work/life balance. However, multivariate analyses failed to support the qualitative findings for morale, teamwork and work hours. This study highlights the need for a multi-method approach, including both qualitative and quantitative elements, when studying telework.

(b) Predictors of Physician Career Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance, and Burnout

Keeton, Kristie MD, MPH1; Fenner, Dee E. MD1; Johnson, Timothy R. B. MD1; Hayward, Rodney A. MD2

OBJECTIVE: To explore factors associated with physician career satisfaction, work-life balance, and burnout focusing on differences across age, gender, and specialty.

METHODS: A cross-sectional, mailed, self-administered survey was sent to a national sample of 2,000 randomly-selected physicians, stratified by specialty, age, and gender (response rate 48%). Main outcome measures included career satisfaction, burnout, and work-life balance. Scales ranged from 1 to 100.

RESULTS: Both women and men report being highly satisfied with their careers (79% compared with 76%, $P<.01$), having moderate levels of satisfaction with work-life balance (48% compared with 49%, $P=.24$), and having moderate levels of emotional resilience (51% compared with 53%, $P=.09$). Measures of burnout strongly predicted career satisfaction (standardized β 0.36-0.60, $P<.001$). The strongest predictor of work-life balance and burnout was having some control over schedule and hours

worked (standardized β 0.28, $P < .001$, and 0.20-0.32, $P < .001$, respectively). Physician gender, age, and specialty were not strong independent predictors of career satisfaction, work-life balance, or burnout.

CONCLUSION: This national physician survey suggests that physicians can struggle with work-life balance yet remain highly satisfied with their career. Burnout is an important predictor of career satisfaction, and control over schedule and work hours are the most important predictors of work-life balance and burnout.

(c) The relation between work–family balance and quality of life

Jeffrey H. Greenhaus, Karen M. Collins, Jason D. Shaw(2002)

We examined the relation between work–family balance and quality of life among professionals employed in public accounting. Three components of work–family balance were assessed: time balance (equal time devoted to work and family), involvement balance (equal involvement in work and family), and satisfaction balance (equal satisfaction with work and family). For individuals who invested substantial time in their combined work and family roles, those who spent more time on family than work experienced a higher quality of life than balanced individuals who, in turn, experienced a higher quality of life than those who spent more time on work than family. We observed similar findings for involvement and satisfaction. We identified the contributions of the study to the work–family balance literature and discussed the implications of the findings for future research.

4. Recommendations

The following points should be considered by the employer to maintain the work-life balance for the employees:

1. Provide regular and valuable increment in employees' salaries. It has already been proved in the survey that employees of this company have enough autonomy. So, well-paid employees with greater autonomy are more satisfied with their work.
2. Provide benefit programs for families of the employees like insurance, some discount on holiday at certain location etc.
3. Organize different types of functions for employees as well as their families on quarterly basis. This will increase the interaction amongst the employees as well as within families.
4. Organize small informal get-togethers in the respective department on monthly basis this will fulfill the social needs of the employees.
5. Organize various competitions within the company like employee of the year, employee with best behavior, employee who got the most valuable deal etc. this will encourage employees to use their true potential.
6. Encourage a healthy relationship among employees so that they can support each other in the time of need. This will help everyone in the organization to strike a good balance between work and life.

5. Bibliography

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