

“Balance Life in the Current Era”– Illusion or Reality for Working People: A Step Ahead

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Abstract

The word “Work life balance” has gained increasing popularity day by day. This term has been used widely in corporate, especially in large companies but the same importance with material knowledge and evidences has not been found in academics. Moreover, till date, researches on work life balance has directed only towards work-health balance largely. However, this paper is directed to examine work life balance, their impacts, and ways to overcome adverse cause. The discussion on same is targeted here to restore the working community’s problems and identifying major cause of it. This research is empirical in nature and focuses on the basic fundamentals of work life balance, the reasons of unbalanced work and family life, ingredients and ways to overcome same.

Keywords: Work-life balance, work-family balance, work-health balance, satisfaction level

Introduction

If career success is important and suppose that balance is synonymous with anathema for compromise and success, then Work-life balance will make more successful. There is a misconception that balance does not work for those who want to succeed. But that’s just not true (and it’s based on a common misconception that work-life balance is less stable). Work Life Balance is about building a successful life on own terms.

Review of literature

1. (Yadav & Dabhade, 2013) Found that respondents reported average level of work life balance and is generally happy with their working arrangements. The findings of the study reveal that balancing care and work affects career progression. Manager’s act as barriers to members achieving appropriate work-life balance and considered WLB is an important determinant of intrinsic aspects of job satisfaction. Most of the employees enjoy the job and feel comfortable at their work place. According to studies; it has been found that it is important for employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and their private lives.
2. (S. Padma, 2013) have highlighted the role of family support in balancing personal and work life and found that the present study show that the support from family members will play a significant role in balancing Personal and Professional lives. Employees who have adult children can easily balance than those with younger age kids. Similarly employees who need to take care of elder parents/in-laws health responsibility have lesser work life balance than their counterparts. The study concluded that lower balance may lead to higher absenteeism, lower job satisfaction and sometimes may turn to higher employee attrition. Organizations with cooperative work culture may help them to bring a suitable balance in their professional and personal life.
3. The study of (Ajith & Patil, 2013) on work-life balance for role prioritization of IT employees showed that the employees were able to fulfill their professional and personal commitments at the same time, because of better work-life balance policies. The relationship between work-life balance policies and role prioritization was significant. The study was conducted on variables like travelling time, depression, temper, work, etc., to know the relation between work-life balance and stress management.

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4. (Kumari, 2012) commented that each of the WLB factors such as Psychological distress, organizational changes, working hours, managerial style, job responsibilities, work overload, work life conflict and personal financial problems, etc., have been proven to affect or are predictive of job satisfaction. It can also be concluded from the data, that the overall WLB policies positively correlates significantly with level of job satisfaction which shows that job satisfaction increases with the increase in work-life balance. The results also indicated a shift in perceptions about work-life balance and job satisfaction. In the past, employees often found it more difficult to maintain balance due to the competing pressures at work and demands at home.
5. (Tariq, Siddique, & Tanveer, 2012) studied the considerable knowledge related to the theory and practices of Work-life balance from extensive meta-analysis of literature found that work-life balance is both important for the organization and for its employee's particularly in current dynamic organizational scenarios. It helps the organization to improve productivity, efficiency, competitiveness, morale and hence gain a competitive edge. Similarly employees are benefited from work-life balance initiatives through increased motivation to work, enhanced satisfaction, empowerment and ultimately more commitment to the organization.
6. (Albertsen, Rafnsdottir, Grmsmo, Tomasson, & Kauppinen, 2008) Studied the relationship between work hours and work life balance and found a strong association between larger numbers of work hours and lower levels of work life balance amongst women. For men, the results were less conclusive, while for gender-mixed groups, an association between overtime work and lower levels of work life balance was strongly supported. It was found that nonstandard work hours had a negative influence on work life balance and some evidence suggested that it had a negative influence on children's well-being and on marital satisfaction.

Research Objectives

1. To identify core ingredients of work life balance.
2. To analyze various adverse impacts of unhealthy work life.
3. To find out relevant practices for healthy work life balance.

Research Methodology

This research is based on secondary data and empirical in nature, studies the possible aspects of work life balance and issues with it using previous work done so far, data collected from the past surveys by professional bodies and organization with review papers and theoretical concept of working personnel.

What is Work-life Balance?

Work-life balance means preference between personal and professional activities. It is the level of life of a person when his job related activities are present in the house.

What is an Ideal Work-life Balance?

This question is rather debatable. Happiness is sometimes defined as having little or no difference in a person's professional and personal life. This balance has become a local issue due to the increasing amount of technology that eliminates the importance of physical space in determining work-life balance. Previously the line between professional and personal was clear so taking work home was difficult or impossible.

Following are few steps suggesting building balanced work life.

1. "To prioritize and focus on what is most important to you" Self ensuring for your own well-being enabling you to serve for the betterment of others and take control of your life is the answer of what is true success? In addition, a balanced lifestyle makes you better rounded, more creative thinker and more productive and that means you will have more potential for success in your personal and professional life.
2. "Start creating a balanced life" All the reasons why work life balance is important are a guide for you on how to start creating a healthy work life balance. Now is the time to start creating a balanced life and when you give up the rest, start by controlling what you can do, which means focusing on your mind. Building a less stressful, healthy mindset is major of the foundation.

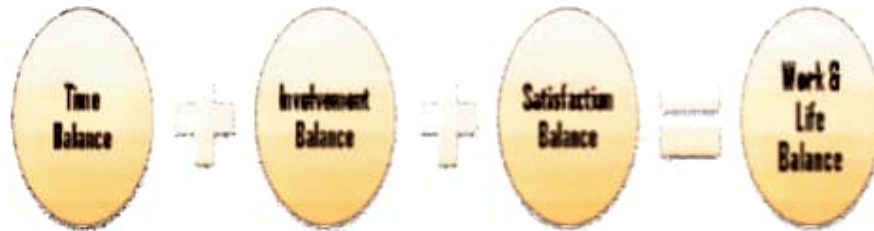


Figure 1: Components of Work-life Balance

Theories of Work-life Balance

A few theories on work-life balance integrate spillover theory, segmentation theory, compensation theory, congruence theory, Inter-role conflict theory, border and boundary theory and enrichment theory.

- **Spillover Theory:** This theory explains exposure in one role affects experiences in the other, representation the role more identical. Research has studied the spillover of mood, values, skills and behaviors from one role to another (Edward & Rothbard, 2000).
- **Segmentation Theory:** This theory has been utilized to explain work and personal life are two different segments and do not affect each other. Moreover, the satisfaction derived from work place maintains balance between work and family (Edward & Rothbard, 2000).
- **Compensation Theory:** This theory explains how work and family display alter relationship (Clark, 2000). Moreover, both work and family have two different spaces where the negative experience of one could be repaid with positive of another.
- **Congruence Theory:** According to this theory, factors such as knowledge, identity, hereditary compel or level of education could impact positively on work and family (Zedeck, 1992) (Edward & Rothbard, 2000).
- **Inter role Conflict Theory:** It implies that taking care of a demand in one area (work) makes it tough to meet up the demands in other space (family) (Greenhaus & Powell, 1985).
- **Enrichment Theory:** This refers to how encounters from aptitudes, capacities and values or inclination, fulfillment to improve the nature of the other area (Morris & Madsen, 2007).
- **Work Family Border Theory:** The result of this theory is work-family balance, which leads to satisfaction and good functioning at work and home, with minimum conflict (Clark, 2000).
- **Boundary Theory:** This is a general theory of social classification which focuses on results, for example, the individual allot to home and work and the straightforwardness and recurrence of transitioning between roles (Zerubavel, 1991) (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000).

Reality in 2021

The dreaded Covid-19 crisis has shifted work and household duties under the same roof for many families. For some of them, finding work-life balance while working remotely becomes more difficult. Parents who work from home can schedule important virtual negotiations but their children can also have a standing teleconference. Indeed, a virtual morning preschool meeting can be as important as your own conference calls or virtual team-building. So, you will need to make some effort to combine the rest of the workday for early morning and after bedtime.

Why is Work-life Balance Important?

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance will have a positive impact not only on health and relationships but also on employee productivity and performance. When team members don't see work on a regular basis, they will work harder and make fewer mistakes. Given the fact that nowadays it can be difficult to attract and retain new workers; companies that get a name for promoting work-life balance have become attractive. Let's list some of the more relevant reasons why work-life balance is important to your company and employees. Following are few important reasons of work-life balance;

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1. **Reducing Health Problems:** Being under stress, you run the risk of further ruining your physical and mental health apart from just your social life. Poor work-life balance usually leads to dangerous symptoms that can affect your well-being: from the flu to serious heart problems. Maintaining balance, you will significantly limit health problems and absences. This ensures that your company is more efficient during business hours.
2. **Enhancing Engagement:** With the help of team members in finding a healthy balance between work and home, you will increase their engagement level. An engaged employee will become a loyal advocate for your brand and product to your team members. If something needs to be done after a normal workday, they will be late for work.
3. **Reducing Burnout:** Stress comes from time to time at all times. However, you can avoid workout burnouts and make some effort to ensure that this does not happen to your team. Burnout occurs when you are overwhelmed. It can affect every aspect of your life. Sometimes it's really important to encourage your team to take time off and leave work.
4. **Velocity Mindfulness:** Maintaining a healthy work-life balance gives us more control over our focus and ability to focus on the task at hand. This is about mindfulness. A healthy work-life balance will help create an environment where everyone is dedicated to work. You should quickly improve retention rates, profits and productivity.
5. **Work-life Balance and Various Payments:** The essential goal of any employer is to save money and maintain a healthier, more productive workforce by creating a work environment that prioritizes work-life balance.

What exactly does work-life balance look like? Over the years, the approach to work-life balance has been constantly evolving. For employers, it should be useful to know “how to differentiate between different pay generations - Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennial.”



Figure 2: Picture Defining Generations

Table 1 Generations and Their Attributes

S. N.	Category	Age Group	Birth Range	Aspirations	Attitude for Technology
1.	Builders	71 or above	1950 or before	Home ownership	Largely disengaged
2.	Baby boomers	52 – 70	1951 - 1965	Job security	Early adapters
3.	Generation X	37 – 51	1965 - 1980	Work-life balance	Digital immigrants
4.	Generation Y	22 – 36	1981 - 1994	Freedom and flexibility	Digital Natives

5.	Generation Z	7 – 21	1995 - 2012/15	Security and stability	Techno-holics
6.	Generation ALPHA	7 or below	2015 onwards	Basic need	-

Source: (FOURHOOKS MARKETING, 2015)

Unbalanced work life and unfavorable cause

60% of Indian working professionals surveyed rate their current work-life-balance average to terrible. To inquire for work-life balance, a survey has been made on 2000 working professional by www.monster.com, in which out of total respondents 45% of respondents were from non metro cities, where work life balance is not that serious issue. (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>)

“Collectively, 67% of India’s working professionals either sometimes, often or always think about work when not at work. About half of the respondents in relationships currently, confessed that the lack of work-life balance makes them or their partners irritable or ill-tempered. Lack of sleep (17%), depression (16%), anxiety & irritability (9%), hypertension (4.5%) came up as the top work-related illnesses. Back pain (15%), frequent headaches & fatigue (14%), and obesity (5%) came up as other stress related physical illness.” (Basu, Sreeradha D., 2019)

The survey further says “As opposed to the belief that technology is a facilitator, one-third of the young professionals find technology (laptops and mobile phones) a hindrance in managing family with work commitments. This becomes significant as 54% of the respondents were single. Other two hindrances that emerged were meetings, calls and trainings after office hours (18%); and negative attitude of supervisors towards work-life balance despite the policy (11%). When asked, what work-life means, ‘flexible work hours’ came as the number one response at 41%. This was followed by leaving work on time and not bringing work home at 39%. The other significant response that came from close to 40% respondents was to get time to pursue their hobbies and passion.” (Basu, Sreeradha D., 2019)



Figure 3 : Major Outcomes of Imbalanced Work-life

Another study held on work-life balance has evolved many aspects related to personal life as well as professional life. This study says “Various studies and experiments have proven that overworking has a profound impact on both the physical and mental health of the employees. Consequently, unhealthy workers cannot maximize their productivity at work. In some cases, they cost businesses money due to low-quality

output and increasing absenteeism." (Zuckerman, Arthur, 2020). The following table shows how imbalanced work-life causes severe dilemma to personal and professional life.

Conclusion

Balance of work-life includes corresponding amid professional life which includes career, challenges, pressure, accomplishment and aspiration on one side and personal life which includes pleasure, leisure, family & spiritual enlargement. Both family & professional life are vital for people and if are not handled wisely, may lead to stress and strain and results into various diseases. This study is found important as it tries to identify how work-life & family-life are consistent and results into stress.

Justifying Objectives

1. The major ingredients mentioned required for balancing happy and healthy life must be kept into notice and not ignored as usual. From the concerned research we get to know that work-life balance is all about managing family and work simultaneously
2. How the unbalanced life could be hazardous for individual can only be understood after inquiring in depth. This study represents how unhealthy impacts can take place in terms of mental, physical and relational; if work and professional correspondence not managed properly.
3. From the study it is clear that a healthy life is a mixture of pleasure, leisure, family, spiritual and safety of earning as well as wealth.

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