

Work-Life Balance Survey Among Doctors at Southern and Uva Provinces Hospitals in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: The work-life balance has become a much-discussed topic in today's context in relation to many groups that are affected by many complexities and the highly demanding nature of the modern world. This research focused on doctors' work-life balance in the Southern and Uva provinces in Sri Lanka. The study emphasized the impact of Time Management, Job Autonomy, Work Demands, and Family Demands on the work-life balance of doctors. A quantitative questionnaire survey was conducted at Hospitals in Southern and Uva provinces which consisted of 128 respondents. The collected data were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. It is concluded that all the variables have a significant relationship with the work-life balance of doctors in these provinces.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Time Management, Job Autonomy, Work Demands, Family Demands, Doctors.

I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of WLB has gained significant attention in recent years in the literature on HRM. It places a focus on managing an individual's professional career, family obligations, and other personal activities well (Keelan, 2015). Furthermore, changes due to globalization, people's roles at work have also evolved (Joshi et al., 2002). Even if it is still viewed as being necessary, work is also important for increasing personal fulfillment. Therefore, the implementation of work-life benefits and programs in organizations is one of the driving forces that aid in the achievement of personal and professional goals (Joshi et al., 2002). This research emphasizes on the work-life balance of doctors in Sri Lanka considering a study conducted at National Hospital Kandy (A.J.P Jeyaseelan, P.P Premkumar, 2018). The survey highlights a significant relationship between the work environment, family environment, family and community groups, physical well-being, and mental well-being on the work-life balance of medical officers.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate doctors' work-life balance in the context of the many difficulties they deal with on a daily basis while performing their professional duties. Sri Lanka's healthcare system plays a vital role in view of economic development of the country by assuring the optimal health of its citizen. In addition, Sri Lanka is an excellent destination for medical tourism owing to high-quality medical expertise and care, minimal waiting lines, and affordable and freely accessible health care. In addition, it is a peaceful and popular tourist destination, with an ideal climate which makes it the perfect place to improve recuperation.

The duties of a healthcare professional are extremely demanding. In general, this strongly demands long working hours, high stress, and limited work flexibility, with resulting adverse impacts on work-life balance, performance at work, and eventually on overall well-being.

The medical profession has long been recognized as one of the most respected and prestigious professions. However recent studies suggest that increasingly lesser number of doctors believe their profession as desirable or satisfying and this trend is worsening (Taylor et al., 2005, Schernhammer and Colditz, 2004, Clarke and Singh, 2004, Firth-Cozens, 2003, Burbeck et al., 2002). High work load, increased demands from patients and relatives, interference with family life, poor remuneration, restricted autonomy in practice and repeated exposure to extremes of human suffering have been cited as possible sources of discontent within the medical profession (Taylor et al., 2005, Schernhammer and Colditz, 2004, Clarke and Singh, 2004, FirthCozens, 2003, Burbeck et al., 2002). Understanding the importance of work-life balance is crucial since it helps the Sri Lankan healthcare sector's human resource policy and WLB practices.

This study's main assumption is that demands from the workplace invade employees' personal lives and that these pressures are managed by achieving a balance between personal and professional responsibilities. Work-family conflict can arise as a result of the hard nature of balancing obligations such as childcare and housework with those at work. Doctors are likely to experience work-family conflict frequently. Yet, they must always make the correct clinical judgment Since this ultimately determines the fate of their patient.

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to analyze the factors influencing the work-life balance of the doctors working in hospitals of Southern and Uva provinces, Sri Lanka. Based on the discussed areas determining the work-life balance of professionals, we selected the following four factors for our study to establish the relationship with work-life balance.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the impact of Time Management on Work-Life balance
2. To identify the impact of Job Autonomy on Work-Life balance

3. To identify the impact of Work Demands on Work-Life balance
4. To identify the impact of Family Demands on Work-Life balance

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Work-Life Balance practices

According to Gryzwacz and Carlson (2007), work-life balance is the accomplishment of role-related expectations that are discussed and shared by individuals and their role-related partners in their families and places of employment. The process of successfully maintaining a balance within an individual's three life spheres, such as employment, relationships, and personal life (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2014; Keelan, 2015). The primary WLB practice constructs and their results were emphasized in a number of research. According to the researchers' recommendations (Cegarra-Leiva et al., 2012; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Haar, 2013; Morganson et al., 2010; Noor, 2011), workplace policies and assistance in the form of WLB plans will improve employee well-being, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. Workers may have the tendency to face personal conflicts if they are unable to balance the demand of their work and personal life. Moen et al. (2008) defined conflict as interference between work and family roles which generates tensions for the individuals as a direct outcome of incompatible pressures from an individual's work and family role. Thus, organisations are encouraged to provide workplace policies that will enhance employee WLB which improves well-being and eventually boost organisational productivity and performance (Haar, 2013).

There are few empirical investigations on WLB among Sri Lankan medical experts. The shift in the healthcare system from clinician-centered to patient-centered, which increased work pressure on doctors, was researched by Sibbald et al. in 2000. Their exhaustion and stress from job. Due to a lack of medical experts, an increase in patients, and a high-intensity daily clinical routine that includes lengthy work hours and working under time constraints, this problem is getting worse in Sri Lanka.

Time Management

In order to be successful person, ones should improve their self-discipline maybe by managing personal schedule well. Roberts (1998) stated that most people think there are more things they need to do, or would like to do, than they have time for in their life. This happens a lot at work, and often results in working overtime, frustration and stress and feelings of guilt or panic if deadlines are not met. Good time management will not remove the inevitable pressures and conflicts that arise in most jobs. But it should help make the working day more satisfying and calm. Never mind being tied with several works, time management is a key to work-life balance (WLB). The more people understand Time Management the more they know how to touch WLB.

Job Autonomy

Job autonomy is expressed as the extent of freedom the employee has in their work and working pattern (Bailey, 1993). According to Ahuja and Thatcher (2005), autonomy and flexibility enable employees to balance the competing demands of work-life. Job autonomy will enhance WLB (Johari et al., 2018).

Work Demands

Organizations expect employees to multi-task, causing role overload (Bacharach et al., 1991). The increasing intensity of work and tight deadlines negatively influenced WLB (Allan et al., 1999). The shorter time boundaries make it challenging to balance professional and family life (Jenkins and Harvey, 2019). Job demands negatively predicted WLB (Haar et al., 2019).

Family Demands

An employee spends most of the time commuting (Denstadli et al., 2017) or meeting their work and family responsibilities. Dual career couple in the nuclear family finds it difficult to balance work and life without domestic help (Dumas and Perry-Smith, 2018; Srinivasan and Sulur Nachimuthu, 2021). Difficulty in a joint family is elderly care (Powell et al., 2019). Thus, family demands negatively predict WLB (Haar et al., 2019). Spouse support enables better WLB (Dumas and Perry-Smith, 2018). Family support positively impacted WLB, especially for dual-career couples, with dependent responsibilities (Groysberg and Abrahams, 2014).

IV. METHODOLOGY

Data collection was done by the Questionnaire survey targeted doctors working at hospitals in Southern and Uva provinces. The study population was the doctors, aged around 28 years to 60 years. Data were collected using cluster sampling through a sample of 128 medical doctors in the above provinces. The questionnaires were distributed, to be answered at their convenience. The questionnaire was comprised of 2 sections. Section I consisted of demographic attributes (age, gender, marital status etc.). Section 2 related to time management, job autonomy, work demands, family demands, and work-life balance. The respondents were asked to indicate their perception on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from "strongly disagree" 1 to "strongly agree" 5. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured through Cronbach's Alfa coefficient. The values of the coefficient are ranging are above 0.7 for all the variables, considered to be relatively high and internally consistent. The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and inferential data analysis methods; this was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Taking into account the aforementioned details, a conceptual framework is derived from earlier literature in order to accomplish the research's objectives by developing research hypotheses.

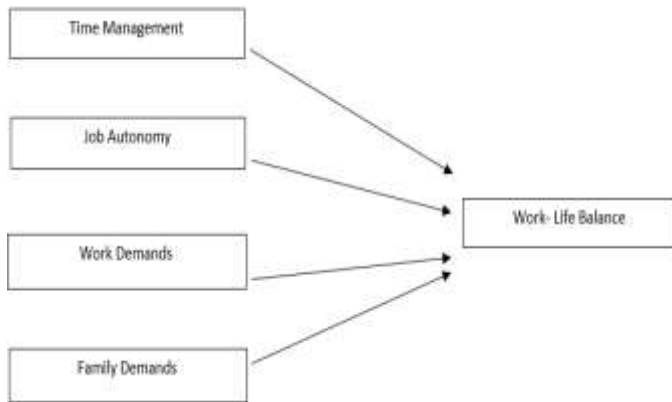


Figure 01: Theoretical Framework

Hypotheses

- H1: There is a relationship between Time management and the work-life balance of doctors.
- H2: There is a relationship between Job autonomy and the work-life balance of doctors.
- H3: There is a relationship between Work demands and the work-life balance of doctors.
- H4: There is a relationship between Family demands and the work-life balance of doctors.

V. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The majority of the respondents were male (68.2%), and aged between 41 -50. Also it is noted that 72.7% of them were married and having children. Furthermore, many of them were committed to family responsibilities and did not perform their duties from home. Due to the nature of duty, most of the respondents had to work 6 to 12 hours daily. Based on the survey results nearly 60% of respondents were away from their home location i.e. more than 50 km. It is noted that more than 60% of the sampled medical officers are not following any post graduate studies at present.

The relationship between independent and dependent variables was checked with the Pearson bivariate correlations.

Table 1: Hypothesis testing using correlation analysis

Hypothesis	Pearson Correlation coefficient	p- value	Correlation directions
H1: There is a relationship between Time management and the work-life balance of doctors	0.381	0.00	Positive
H2: There is a relationship between Job autonomy and the work-life balance of doctors	0.303	0.02	Positive
H3: There is a relationship between Work demands and the work-life balance of doctors	0.299	0.00	Positive
H4: There is a relationship between Family demands and the work-life balance of doctors	0.384	0.00	Positive

All variables of this study were reliable and valid. In addition, the results also indicated that there was a direct and significant relationship between all variables. Time management, Job autonomy, Work demands, and Family demands are significantly related to the work-life balance of doctors.

VI. CONCLUSION

The research objectives were met with all hypotheses being supported. In view of the practical implications of this study, a significant fundamental reform of the WLB policy at the Ministry of Health would promote a positive WLB among doctors. In developing this policy, critical employment aspects such as parental and marital status, job position and demand, the number of doctors in a hospital, and, the ratio of medical professionals per population in each region. This could be addressed by a WLB policy tailored based on individual needs and requirements or accommodating a wide range of employees and job positions. This will effectively reduce work-life and family conflict, and improve individual motivation which ultimately increases employee attraction and retention. Besides, a total commitment from the administration of hospitals is crucial to ensure this policy which could then be effectively implemented and sustained. They must recognize the importance and influence of WLB on doctors’ job performance, satisfaction, and well-being. Policymakers should also be willing to invest their time and effort in developing a supportive culture that helps in implementing an efficient WLB policy.

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