

Examining the Work Life Balance of Higher Education Employees: The Case of President Ramon Magsaysay State University

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1304000042>

Received: 05 March 2026; 10 April 2026; Published: 27 April 2026

ABSTRACT

Work Life Balance (WLB) has been noted as an important area of human resource management and is receiving increasing attention from policy makers, organization's, management, employees and their representatives globally. The concept of work-life balance is growing in importance day by day in today's fast paced global world. Moreover, it also means that individuals in the workplace can effectively manage its own personal life and responsibilities to be productive and successful at work while ensuring that they have time to live a grounded personal life. In the Public Sector organization in the Philippines, it is one of the mandates of the Civil Service Commission to ensure the physical and mental health being of the employees. In President Ramon Magsaysay State University, the Human Resource Development Office implements programs such as mental health awareness, physical fitness programs and other relevant activities to maintain a healthy work life balance. Using qualitative research this study examined the importance of work life balance in the overall wellbeing of PRMSU employees. It also investigated how the employees achieve work life balance and how the university's programs improved the overall wellbeing of the employees. The study revealed that Family responsibilities, physical and mental health as well as workloads are the factors that affect their WLB. The study also showed that the work life balance of the school is a way to destress, further it also promotes healthy work environment, improved productivity, and better time management. Overall, the study showed that PRMSU employees have work life balance.

Keywords: Worklife balance, employees, work life balance programs, wellbeing, time management

INTRODUCTION

Work Life Balance has been noted as an important area of human resource management and is receiving increasing attention from policy makers, organization's, management, employees and their representatives globally. The concept of work-life balance is growing in importance day by day in today's fast paced global world. Work life balance means that individuals in the workplace can effectively manage its own personal life and responsibilities to be productive and successful at work while ensuring that they have time to live a grounded personal life. Work-life balance is a greatly researched area of interest focusing on how well the employee's work and personal life are balanced. (Lewis, Suzan & Beauregard, T. 2018)

Work-life balance in the university is one of the priority programs of the Human Resource Management Office of PRMSU because they place great importance on the well-being of their employees. The HRMO recognizes that a healthy balance between professional responsibilities and personal life contributes to employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational performance. By promoting work-life balance, the university ensures that personnel feel valued, supported, and motivated to perform at their best.

Furthermore, this initiative reflects the university's commitment to meet the standards and mandates set by the Civil Service Commission. As a government institution, the university adheres to CSC guidelines that promote employee welfare, mental health, and a positive work environment. Implementing work-life balance programs is not only a compliance measure but also a proactive effort to cultivate a culture of care and respect. Through these efforts, the university strengthens its workforce and fosters a more sustainable and harmonious workplace. Under CSC Resolution No. 1901265 encourages and supports physical fitness programs to improve the health

and well-being of public servants. This includes organizing sports tournaments in the workplace. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) stressed the need for government agencies to put in place measures that promote a healthy workplace, saying that a healthy public sector workforce is a productive workforce. (CSC 2023).

Using qualitative case study design, this study investigated the determinants of work life balance of PRMSU employees, further it also examined the work life balance programs of the university and the effectiveness of its WLB programs. Likewise, it is also important to know if the employees have work life balance and how work life balance helps improve the overall wellbeing of the employees. This study offers important insights that can guide the development and refinement of institutional policies. The results can serve as a basis for designing evidence-based strategies aligned with Civil Service Commission mandates and best practices in human resource management. This study is significant to researchers because it contributes valuable insights to the limited body of literature on work–life balance, particularly within the context of public sector organizations.

METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative research which utilized a descriptive case study design. A qualitative approach was appropriate in this study to have a deeper understanding of the importance of work life balance in the Higher Education Institution thus, it requires in depth investigation of the case. Moreover, it is also because the study does not involve quantifiable variables. (Punch 2021)

Research Sample

For this study, a total of 15 participants out of 38 middle managers were selected to take part in the research. The participants were chosen through purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals who possess specific knowledge, experience, and involvement relevant to the study. Their firsthand experience makes them the most suitable sources of rich and relevant information.

Data Collection Procedure

The study employed **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** as the primary data-gathering method. Key Informant Interviews were used because they allow for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations regarding work–life balance programs. Thematic analysis method was used to analyse the findings of this data. In qualitative research, Thematic analysis is an appropriate method of analysis for seeking to understand experiences, thoughts, or behaviors across a data set (Kiger, Varpio, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The factors that affect the work life balance of PRMSU staff and officials?

The participants highlighted the significance of family, health, and work-related matters. Participants emphasize the role their familial relations play when it comes to their work-life balance, especially their responsibilities to their children. They make note of factors that are detrimental to their health, both physical and mental. Participants also claim that work-related matters are a key factor that affects their work-life balance, this is especially true regarding their statements on the issue of work-overload. In the study of Makhwana (2025) it was noted that working mothers face significant challenges in managing their time due to the dual responsibilities of work and family

“Our dual role as a parent, and as an official, it really matters. Sometimes I don’t have time for my children because I need to attend to my work even on weekends”

Motherhood, you need to balance your work and your responsibilities to your children”

Participants made note that their family lives are a significant factor that affects their work-life balance, mainly due to the various officials and staff having very close familial ties with both immediate and extended family

members, while also noting that sometimes family life gets interrupted by emergencies revolving around the university. This factor is especially prominent among high-ranking officials.

What are the Work-life balance programs of PRMSU?

The statements of the participants show that the President Ramon Magsaysay State University offers a variety of methods to assist in the work-life balance of its personnel. The university provides fitness routines in the form of sports events and Zumba dance sessions. They also noted that attending seminars is a type of work-life balance program. Participants also cite travelling, particularly for benchmarking or for attending seminars, is a way the school allows its staff to balance their work-life. The participants note the many team-building activities hosted by the university help balance their work-life.

“There are fitness programs, mental health breaks to spend time with family, trainings and seminars is a way to destress”

In the study of Owens et al (2018) regarding methods in improving work-life balance in the faculty, they state that Physical fitness can help academic faculty members. In their study they cite literature that shows the increase of mood resulting in physical activity, as well as the benefits of regular exercise.

Do the staff and officials at PRMSU think that there is work-life balance in the school?

The participants claim that there is work-life balance in the President Ramon Magsaysay State University. Participants state that the school has work-life balance as the university offers programs for its staff and officials to maintain their productivity.

“Yes, the school has programs for the staff and officials to make sure the people are productive” and it is also a compliance of the organization to the mandate of the civil service commission

This corresponds with the study of Majewska (2021), wherein they state that the typical psychological effects of the lack of balance between work and private life can lead to conflicts, dissatisfaction with life, prolonged sadness, and increasing stress. Therefore, managing work-life balance is an important part of maintaining an effective and happy workforce.

A participant, however, notes that “work-life balance” as a concept with the institution is relative to the personal opinions of the staff and officials. The participant claims that individuals have a different concept of what, and what does not, constitute as work-life balance, therefore stating that the staff and officials have no universal agreement as to why they think that the school has work-life balance.

“Yes, because it depends on person's choice or decision”, some will say they have work life balance

What specific work-life balance programs do the PRMSU staff and officials like the most?

As noted by the responses of the participants, they enjoy differing programs in and outside of the university. Statements from participants claim that they partake in physical activities such as Zumba and Sports in order to rid themselves of stress. An official commented that activities that raise their physical fitness allows them to forget about work all together. Participants also note that taking a wellness break and relaxing is one of the ways they achieve work-life balance, mainly for the sake of their mental and physical health. A participant also mentions that participating in team-building and strategic planning activities is a way for them to unwind.

“I like going on wellness breaks. It helps me relax”

“The fitness program it's not just the Zumba but it's an avenue to bond with other teaching and non-teaching, during Zumba session personnel have interaction and for a while they forget work because they enjoy the Zumba”

Some participants prefer the occasional seminar the school hosts for its employees and officials or seminars that involve traveling to other schools or locations. The latter also serves as short vacation for some participants as the school foots the bill for the travel expenses and provides a small allowance for the participants during their time away from the university.

“Attending seminars, especially if it is out of the campus since the school reimburses us for some expenses.”

How did the University’s programs help in achieving work-life balance?

Participants note that the work-life balance programs allow them to relax and unwind. They also note that they find that joining an activity and maintaining a steady attendance, such as participating in Sumba sessions, is what allows them to relax. Participants also claim that the school’s work-life balance programs allow them to foster a healthier and more dynamic workplace environment, as well as creating positive connections between colleagues and co-workers outside of the workplace.

“It promotes healthy work and home environment.”

This is in line with the study of Sheppard (2016) wherein he discovered that work-life balance programs could help significantly improve organizational culture as well as boost employee overall performance. Similarly, a paper made by Vliagoftis (2016), in which the researcher state that working with “friends” and enjoying one’s work helps you develop work–life balance by having work be large part of your life without consuming all your waking time.

The participants mention that the wellness breaks that the school provides allows staff and officials to relax at home. When asked, participants claim that wellness breaks allow them to partake in other relaxing activities that further boost their work-life balance.

Despite this, a participant states that the current number of activities offered by the university is still lacking and could potentially hold more room for variety. The participant notes that the school’s current work-life balance programs do not cater to a wider selection of interests among the staff and officials.

“Aside from work, sports and recreation should also be included in my routine even once in a while.”

The study conducted by Majewska (2021) showed that it is important to increase the degree of adjustment of work-life balance programs to the needs of employees. This would make it easier for employees to cope with work-life balance and increase their job satisfaction.

How do the PRMSU staff achieve work-life balance?

As noted by the participants, they practice work-life balance at the work-place by practicing time management by ensuring that they have time for themselves outside of work. The staff and officials also add that they relax and unwind on their own time as a means of achieving work-life balance. Participants also note that, aside from relaxing, they achieve work-life balance by balancing their mental condition through meditation, distancing their personal lives from their work, and other activities.

“I achieve work-life balance through not being overworked and just have enough time to work within the day.”

“Taking breaks to think things over”

In the study of Owens et al (2018), their paper includes several strategies and methods to help individuals attain work-life balance. One such method that was included was Cognitive Training which serves strengthen the mind.

A participant claims that they achieve work-life balance through creating and following a routine. They state that following a strict set of things to do daily allows their mind to remain focused and sharp, while also allowing their mind to be in a familiar and comfortable environment.

“Establish a routine, be kind yourself, build a support network, set realistic expectations.”

One participant claims that they achieve work-life balance by spending time with their friends outside of work. They note that being with their friends forces them to not bring their work into their personal life and allows them to strengthen and rekindle the bonds they have with their friends.

“I balance my work and my outside world. I make sure I don’t bring home works as much as possible I find time to hang out with friends.”

CONCLUSION

The staff and officials of the President Ramon Magsaysay State University do not have a universal factor that affects their work-life balance. The two main factors that do affect them, however, are either related to the work

The school provides its personnel wide array of activities and programs to help manage their work-life balance. These activities range from physically demanding sports festivals and school-wide Zumba sessions, to wellness breaks that take the staff and officials away from campus grounds. While the selection is plentiful, there is still an argument to be made that more diverse programs and activities might be potentially added in the future.

The majority of the staff and officials of the President Ramon Magsaysay State university agree that there is work-life balance in the school. However, there are those that say that the concept of work-life balance is an entirely subjective matter and whether or not it does exist is dependent on the individual’s choice.

Personnel of the university overwhelmingly enjoy wellness breaks as it helps them with their mental and physical health, while also giving them the opportunity to relax at home or hang out with friends. They also enjoy the company of their co-workers outside of the workplace and enjoy mingling with them through the school’s Zumba sessions or during wellness breaks.

Personnel find that the work-life balance programs and activities of the school do in fact help them achieve work-life balance. They claim that the schools’ efforts help foster a much healthier workplace environment by allowing staff and officials to rest and possibly get to know each other better.

The vast majority of the president Ramon Magsaysay State University’s personnel achieve work-life balance outside of the school. The majority of the participants state that the they are able to achieve work-life balance by preventing themselves from overworking and through careful time management, ensuring that they would always make time for themselves. Some like to spend time with their family while others spend their time alone, which they consider healthy for the mental health.

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