

# Factors Influencing Work-Life Balance- A Literature Review

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## ABSTRACT

*In the world of intense competitive challenges, the work culture of an organization is drastically changing. Every individual strives to excel in work and move to a greater height in the career ladder as such striking a healthy balance of work and personal life becomes a challenge. Positive work life balance is the capacity to schedule the hours of professional and personal life to lead a healthy and peaceful life. In this paper, an endeavour has been made to provide an overview of various factors influencing Work-Life Balance through a review of existing literature, with a major aim of promoting a quality life that would promote an employee's growth and satisfaction, which would lead to organizations development and a fulfilled/peaceful life therefore understanding the factors impacting work life balance is imperative in order to successfully overcome the challenges of imbalance. The sources referred include various journals, books, doctoral thesis, working papers, reports, magazines, internet sites, newspapers etc. and been reflected as references and practical recommendations have been made.*

**Keywords:** *Work-life Balance, Demographic Variables, Flexible Working Arrangement.*

## INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance is the optimal congruence of an individual's on-the-job and personal time to facilitate personal satisfaction and good health without negatively influencing productivity and professional success. Work life balance is defined as "achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains to a level consistent with the salience of each role for the individual (Reiter, 2007). WLB involves achieving satisfying experience in all life domains and it requires personal resources such as energy, time and commitment to be equitably distributed across various domains (Kirchineya, 2003). Work-life balance is a daily effort to make time for family, friends, community participation, spirituality, personal growth, self-care, and other personal activities, in addition to the demands of the workplace. Work-life balance is an employee's perception that multiple domains as personal time, family care, and work are maintained and integrated with a minimum of role conflict (Clark, 2000; Ungerson and Yeandle, 2005). Work

is a matter of necessity and survival. Through the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the role of “work” has evolved and the composition of the workforce has changed dynamically. Work still is a necessity but it should be a source of personal satisfaction as well. Family, friends, community participation, hobbies encompass to form a quality life worth enjoying and living. Work and family together completes a person's life. Along with well-paying jobs, everyone wants happy personal lives as well and do their best in order to succeed in both domains of life and lead a fulfilling life.

Work-life balance defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life (Hudson, 2005). The rising demands from the work and family domains represented a source of high strain for many employees, which even lead to the health problems and stress resulting from differing roles and demands (Burley, 1994). The strain caused due to an imbalance between home and work domains has increased amongst employees in most sectors of the economy (Lewis, Gambles and Rapoport, 2007). There is a dire need for organisations to adopt such human resource policies and strategies that could accommodate the work and life needs simultaneously to lessen the work and family role strain (Cieri, Holmes, Abbot and Petti 2005). Russell and Bowman (2000), asserted that the issue of work and life balance is gaining an increasing attention by the employees related to all organisations and managing the conflict between work demands and family responsibilities have become a serious challenge for organisations. Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea and Walters (2002), defined the WLB strategies as those strategies, which enhances the independence of employees in coordinating with the work and non-work aspects of their lives. Work-life balance is a concept that supports the efforts of employees to split their time and energy between work and the other imperative aspects of their lives.

Work-life balance based on the notion that paid work and personal life should be seen less as competing priorities than as complementary elements of a full life. An employee must adopt a two-way approach that would involve a consideration of the needs of employees as well as those of employers (Lewis, 2000). Work- life balance from the employee viewpoint defined as the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities. Work life balance from the employer point of view, the challenge of creating a supportive company culture where employees can focus on their jobs while at work. An optional convergence of work and family time leads to enhancing quality of life.

## **Need for Study**

Work is normally conceived as paid employment, life usually includes activities outside of work i.e. health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development (Guest, 2001) so an optimal balance between the two domains makes a content and happy life. (Guest, 2002) proved that the imbalance in work-life has a negative consequence for employee's well-being and job. Quality of work life is essential for the smooth running and success of employees. Therefore, work life balance must be maintained effectively to ensure that all employees are running at their peak potential and free from stress and strain therefore it is important to investigate: the factors affecting the balance in the two spheres of life.

## **Review of Literature**

Work-life balance refers to the ability of individuals to explore a rhythm, which would allow them to combine their work with their non-work responsibilities, activities and aspirations (Felstead et.al. 2002). Any imbalance in work or family hampers the quality of life thoroughly for the individual. (Devadoss and Minnie, 2013) stated that personality traits plays a vital role in work-life balance. (Wallace and Cousins, 2004), (Kumari.Ket.al, 2010) and (Thriveni and Rama, 2012) revealed that the demographic variables namely age, gender, place of living, and childcare had a significant influence over the work life balance of the employees. In the researches, it has been found that work life is affected by variables related to the family i.e. number of children, age of children, support of the spouse and home life is affected by the requirement of work life and workplace duties (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985); (Kossek and Ozeki, 2001). Different aspect of an individual's personality also adds to the different perceptions of balance (Guest, D.E, 2001). It found that a partner with unstable or low income increases the financial burden on other partner affecting work life balance. (Mehta, 2012) in his study concluded that, to achieve work life balance of life in all stages employees require family support, organizational requires support and self-support. (Lavanya and Thangavel,2014) opined that the experience in present organisation, demographic factors i.e. age, level of management, education, type of family, number of dependants, annual income and marital status are influential factors that impact the work life balance practices and these policies benefit the employees at large and help in the retention of women employees. (Kundanani and Mehta, 2015) support of Family/spouse are essential to run the cycle of work-life smoothly. (Ganguli, 1964) accentuated that personal factors, work factors, environmental (physical and social) factors determine performance of the workers. (Gomez, et al., 2010) examined that how social support, job satisfaction is related to work-family balance and found that the males who supported and allowed females to work is helpful to avoid family questions

and complications caused by the joint family system. (Padma and Reddy, 2013) the support of family members in every stage of life is important as it provides a helping hand to manage their personal and professional life. (Fisher and Layte, 2003) considered three distinct sets of measures of work-life balance, i.e. proportion of free time, the overlap of work and other dimensions of life and time spent with friends, relatives, family. Senthilkumar et al. (2012) conducted a review for work-life balance in teaching profession to identify the relationship between demographic variables and stress level in balancing teaching profession of work and personal life and found that old age and female underwent maximum level of stress in order to manage and balance their personal and work life. (Allen, 2001) suggested that older employees are found to use many dependent care policies like Childcare, Elder care, Paid Maternity leave and the like. The study also suggested that married employees are more likely to use these policies compared to unmarried employees. (Frone and Yardley, 1996) found that age of the child and number of dependents had a significant influence on the work life balance of the employees. (Jager, 2010 & Thornthwaite, 2011) suggested that there is a strong, unmet demand among working parents for shortened working hours, part-time work and flexible working time, therefore Management must communicate their organization's family friendliness in such a way that all employees feel they have equal access to alternative working time provisions. (Jeyarathnam, 2017) revealed that nature of job, Work Load job, Environment, Organizational Support, and Family Domain influenced work-life balance. (Varuhas.J.et.al, 2003) analysed that the most significant factor affecting work and family balance appears to be organizational culture of firm. According to (Roehling and Moen, 2001) researched that salary, schedule flexibility, family friendly work policies, supportiveness of colleagues are related to work and life strain. Non-supportiveness of colleagues affects the employee loyalty negatively. (Liang-Qiu WU, Dan Yan,2012) examined the relationship between the social support at work and home supervisor support, co-worker relationship and spouse support and work-family balance and found that social support has a significantly positive effect on work-family facilitation. Work life imbalance affects both family and job of female teachers, only when organization and family receives proper services from them and they contribute excellently women prove to be blessing at workplace therefore organization has to ensure flexible working arrangements and family friendly techniques (Uddin, et.al., 2013). According to (Sullivan and Lewis, 2006) schedule inflexibility increased depression in both men and women and increased physical distress such as insomnia, appetite problem, tension related aches and pain. (Bradley. L et.al,2006) revealed factor's influencing work-life balance from management perspective like negotiated time off for personal reasons, ad-hoc arrangements for dealing with emergencies are

key strategy for employee engagement, satisfaction, commitment and achieving work-life balance. (Doble and Supriya, 2010) analysed that both men & women strongly believe that flexible hours will enhance the work-life balance. (Dubey, Set.al, 2010) analysed that personal factors as well as factors at workplace significantly affect the work-life of female employees. Thus organization's efforts with family support can make women balance personal front with professional work. (Bhargava and Baral, 2009), found the self-evaluations, family support and supervisor support were positively related to work life balance. (Samaratha, 2013) found that striking a balance between professional and personal life has been of the hour and identified WLB is affected by six factors as individual growth, job pressure. WLB work environment, professional support and mental strain and further suggested that work life balance is affected tremendously by the increase in job pressure, this is witnessed by the high positive correlation between job pressure and work life balance. It was suggested by (Greenhouse and Powell, 2003) that working conditions, for example time flexibility can mitigate the negative effects of work demands on family life. (Subramaniam and Saravanan, 2012), investigated the factors affecting quality of work life of employees working in banking sector and found that factors like quality on personal anticipatory, quality on motivational insights, quality on job freedom, quality of workplace, quality on branch operations and quality on working conditions explain the poor work-life quality of employees in the workplace. (Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian, 1996) asserted that majority of the employees reported that they remained preoccupied with work issues even after leaving the workplace and feel difficulties in sleep at home. Rapid technology changes, long working hours, unpredictable workloads and the constant pressure of updating skills have a strong impact on the WLB (Reimara Valk & Vasanthi Srinivasan 2014). An absence of work life balance has been linked to many negative consequences that could be detrimental to employee performance (Hobson, Delunas and Kesic, 2001). The overall wellbeing of an individual's mind and body is affected by stress and as such, the individual's performance at work is negatively affected by continuous stresses at job that can be caused by conditions at work (Mulay, 2014). Stress in work is not related to any particular sector, job, or industry and can affect anyone no matter the position of that individual in the organization (Reuters, 2014). Stress at the work place, affects the individual, and affects the organization as the output of that particular individual is affected by stress (Reindl, 2013). Stress in family life and at home or with friends caused problems at work. The stress caused outside of work spilled onto the workplace affecting work efficiency of an individual (Rossi, Quick and Perrewe, 2009). In a study by (Sullivan and Lewis, 2006) schedule inflexibility increased depression in both men and women positively increased physical distress such as insomnia, appetite problem,

tension related aches and pain. (Burke, R.J, 2002) therefore, it was observed that women stress upon that work and family are both equally important and both are the sources of their satisfaction. When work does not permit women to take care of their family, they feel unhappy, disappointed and frustrated. Moreover, as stress level is low the intention to quit will be lower in the organization. With less than sufficient time, being spent with the family there is an increase in disputes, misunderstandings and problems in a marriage and in the family. Bad family life in turn takes a toll on an employee's performance at work. When family life is riddled with strife and insecurity this would results in low motivational levels, which affects the overall performance at work. Managing rising demands from the work and family domains represented a source of high strain for many employees, which even lead to the health problems and high-level stress (Burley, 1994). Major factors that affect work family conflict among women executives are harmony in home and office, organisational support, family expectations, parenting effect and professional skills, nature of organisation, education (Sandhu and Mehtas, 2006). The major factors that affect are education, incoming ratio, professional experience, spouse stress and workload and stressors of professional women's work family conflict (Fan Wei and Liangliang, 2009). (Pike, 2012) found that work life imbalance affects the employee's family relationship. Role overload, dependent care issues, quality of health, problems in time management and lack of proper social support are the major factors influencing work life balance of women employees in India (Mathew and Panchanatham, 2011). (House, 1981) identified nine sources of social support i.e. spouse, partners, relatives, friends, neighbours, supervisor, co-workers, service providers and professional institutions. (Lin, 2008) has classified social support variables i.e family support (parents, siblings, relatives, spouses and children); friend support, colleagues in workplace and supervisor support. (Cassel, 1976) found that social support can reduce work pressure and promote physical and mental health of an individual. According to (Nubling et al., 2008) the socio-demographic factors is important factor for work and family interference as the age grows support of family is important to balance work and life. As the workload is an important factor and too much of workload causes stress, the programs of the company should be so designed that they do not become burden for the employees. (Mulay, 2014) analysed in his study and concluded that the supervisors too have an important role to play in the employees achievement of work life balance. (Stephen P. Robbins, 2003) accentuated both women and men prefer working in organisations that support work-life balance. Organization that don't help their people achieve work-life balance will find it increasingly hard to attract and retain the most capable and motivated employees. (Kinman and Jones, 2003) accentuated which

showed that as long working hours has an effect on employees' psychological (i.e. anxiety and depression) and physical wellbeing (i.e. coronary heart disease). Work-life balance is very important for all working individuals, imbalance could negatively affect their well-being, and this would affect their performance. (Haddock, Zimmerman, Ziemba, 2006). (Burke and Greenglass, 1999) highlighted the impact of support variables from the work domain and the family domain on work-family found that the family domain i.e. having a supportive partner enhances the employee's ability to balance work and family. (Lavanya and Thangavel, 2014) suggested that the differing age groups have different career orientation policy requirement, the number of dependants for an employee influences the women employee to opt for certain practices like child care or elder care practices. (Tewathia, 2014) concluded work had an adverse effect on health and sleep of both the genders and accentuated that the flexible working hours, child care facilities at the workplace, supportive work environment as factors which the employees perceived would improve their work-life balance for a sustainable performance. Flexible working practices can enable childcare for women employees beyond the working time (Doris Ruth and Axel, 2009). A supportive workplace was found to be important for balancing family and work (Mittal et.al. 2017). Organisational support offered by the organization in the form of HR practices, does influence work life balance (Shripra,2013). Supportive organization policies for work personal life balance has a greater job and career satisfaction, less work stress, less intention to quit, greater family satisfaction, more positive emotional well-being (Burke, 2002). (Rania.S et.al, 2011) found that work-life balance is key driver of employee satisfaction which include recruitment and retention of valuable work force, reduced absenteeism, reduced employee stress, health benefits, job satisfaction and better life-balance. An individual enjoying their work is a critical factor in achieving work life balance (Voydanoff, 2004). According to (Veenhoven, 1991) appropriate balance in job and personal life makes a person more content and happier. Work-life balance is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities and thus strengthen employee loyalty and productivity, be able to achieve job and life satisfaction and overall employee development (Haider and Azmi, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, an endeavour has been made to provide an overview on various factors of Work-Life Balance through review of existing literature, which led to emergence of various factors that are combined under:

1. **Family/personal factors:** Family holds an imperative place in a person's life. If an individual is happy and gets support from their family, then it enhances work-life balance. Joint family or nuclear family, dual earning couples, substantial support of family members, spouse is an influential factor impacting work life balance because at times for childcare, elderly care all need support of family member's especially in emergencies.
2. **Workplace factor:** Organizations policies, support of supervisor/manager, working hours, experience in job, support of co-workers, family – friendly work environment, flexible working schedule, level of job satisfaction. Work overload is a critical factor in increasing the stress level and creating imbalance at work as well as in family. All these organization factors impact work life balance.
3. **Social support factor:** An individual cannot live in isolation. People seek emotional and substantial support through various formal and informal sources i.e relatives, friends, neighbours, service providers; these factors contribute to attain work life balance.
4. **Individual factor:** Individuals personality, perceptions/attitude about handling responsibilities and multiple roles, level of patience, work ethics, lack of knowledge or tactics to manage multiple roles, propensity for work involvement all these factors impact an individual's work life balance.
5. **Stress:** Stress is the major cause of unhappiness leading to fatigue, mental illness depression, heart diseases, and ultimately loss in productivity, which leads to imbalance in work and personal life.

An individual adorns multiple hats of responsibilities in work area and at home while developing and maintaining a robust career and sustaining active engagement in personal life is a strenuous challenge. (Greenhaus, 2003) provides an organization with a productive and innovative employee Disparity in the work life balance tends to develop depressed and dissatisfied employees (Kofodimos, 1993). Juggling between multiple roles i.e career, ambition and leisure time, family, striking a balance would lead to a contented life. (Greenhouse and Powell, 2003) have suggested that certain working conditions, work demands on family life. Workplace support, as providing active adjustment technique would benefit and offer

employees a latitude to address their personal and family commitments, while at the same time not compromising their work responsibilities. Achieving an optimum balance is essential for an individual as time, circumstances, life-situations, relationships alter time to time therefore to gain optimum balance an individual must learn to adjust and adopt new work life balance techniques with changing circumstances, because firstly we all individuals must learn to help ourselves. An optimal balance between professional demands and domestic compulsions is work life balance.

## **Recommendations**

- **Accentuate positive attitude-** A positive approach towards challenges helps to overcome all difficulties by keeping an open mind, welcome feedback and guidance from colleagues, resources persons. Introspect on what went well, what didn't and what would you do differently in future.
- **Active adjustment techniques-** coordination and proper understanding between spouses can help to adjust work schedules in order to fulfil personal commitments and make quality family time.
- **Lifestyle changes-** Stay healthy and happy by being disciplined, being engaged in exercises, relation activities, walking, swimming, yoga can improve mood, reduce fatigue, lethargy, and keep negative thoughts at bay.
- **Offering flexibility in working schedules during early stage of childcare-** this would prove to be an innovative arrangement as the employees could easily maintain their health, care for the child and work too, whereas it would help the organization to retain its well-trained employees.
- **Employer support for handling emergencies-** As job is also imperative for the employee but these sought of emergency circumstances put employees in role conflicting situations. Employers must develop understanding attitude in case emergencies occur at employee's home.
- **Hone your skills-** "Learn More, Grow More" by honing your core-competencies, being more competitive, actively participating would help an individual to learn more and grow more, creating a motivation to work and building a healthy balance.

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