

A STUDY ON WORK LIFE BALANCE OF THE EMPLOYEES IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

Strategic Human Resource Management

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Abstract: In today's fast-paced workplace, most of us are urged to do more, faster, and with fewer resources. There seems to be more pressure to be successful than ever before. While doing the job of two or three people at work, we're expected to be exemplary parents and have a fulfilling personal life in which we rear perfect children, enjoy our hobbies, volunteer in the community and take superb care of our bodies, spirits, and minds. While the quest for balance is a wonderful goal, it's just not a realistic goal for most folks. Instead, it has become one more "to-do" on an ever-expanding, guilt-inducing list. There are times when we need to work more than usual and other times when we can take more time off. Sometimes we can focus more intently on our hobbies and passions; at other times different priorities take precedence. There may be times when we take really good care of ourselves, and other times when that slips a bit; times where we devote a lot of attention to our family, and other times when there is less energy and daily time to focus on them. The aim of balance is to live a well-rounded life, to renew and refresh your creative energies on a regular basis so you can achieve your highest potential. We achieve life balance when we have enough time to pursue both work and personal interests that we love. However, when you feel as if one side of your life is using up too much of your energy, you can become stressed, your productivity can fall, and your personal relationships can become strained. The present paper highlights the risks associated with work life imbalance, benefits of healthy work life balance and the strategies that can be employed to maintain a perfect work life balance.

Key words: work-life balance, work -life balance strategies

Introduction:

Work life balance is the interaction between work and other activities that include family, community, leisure, social obligations, health and personal development. Striking a fine balance by prioritizing these is work-life balance. It is individual specific and keeps changing over time. According to Stewart, Professor of Management and Founding Director of Wharton School's Leadership Program "A one size fits all mentality in human resource management often perpetuates employees. It is about the right combination of the individual's participation in the work and other aspects of their life. This combination changes over a period of time.

Work-life balance is a state where the tensions between the work-life and personal life is minimized by having proper policies, supportive management, provisions at work place and good relations in personal life. Performance and job satisfaction of the employees are said to be affected by work-life balance. Work-life balance of employees helps in reducing the stress level at work and increases job satisfaction.

Organizations have realized the importance of work-life balance with respect to the productivity and the creativity of the employees. Employers are now offering flexible working hours, team outing health care centres, day care centres to motivate the employees to work efficiently. As a result employees feel motivated and become loyal and committed towards the organization as it puts an extra effort to strike a healthy balance between work and life.

Organizations face many challenges in implementing the policies of work-life balance as employees today are not looking out just for a job but they want the organization to cater to their well being also.

Work-life balance approach in the Indian perspective:

The concept of work-life balance has been essentially stemmed from Western management theories. Companies like Infosys, Wipro, Yahoo India, Google India Dell India, Microsoft India, Accenture and HCL Technologies amongst many others have already begun taking steps in this direction. The steps taken be the Indian companies to maintain a good work-life balance at their workplaces are:

- 1) **Working from Home:** Nearly 50,000 employees at IBM India and about 15,000 tech worker at HP India are taking advantage of their companies work-life balance option. They virtually have no cubicle in their offices and are allowed to work from home. Microsoft India too reimburses telephone and broadband usage to their employees for working from home and offers them a variety of flexible working options.
- 2) **Plan work in a way that you can take the weekend off:** Unlike western countries, a majority of Indian workforce still functions on a 6-day week routine. However with certain MNCs taking the lead with 5 day work weeks, big corporate houses may very well be seen giving weekend offs to some of their employees.
- 3) **Opting for split shifts:** Split shift is one of the latest work-life initiatives that India Inc has taken to .In split shifts, employees can work for a few hours in the morning, attend to their personal work during afternoons when business tend to be typically slack and return in the evening to close the day. This strategy allows them to induct more women into the workforce and retain talent who would otherwise leave due to inflexible work hours.
- 4) **Making full use of the company's facilities:** Surprisingly many employees who work in corporate houses with sprawling campuses and innumerable facilities do not actually use it. Many big companies in India offer gym facilities, sport courts, crèches, grocery stores, banking facilities and cafes within their campus. Employees should try to use these facilities within work hours for a quick rejuvenation.

- 5) **Optimization of time at work:** Employees should look at maximizing all available resources, including time, to get work done. A great way to optimize time is to work on a schedule and follow a timetable. The India workplace is slowly moving away from the notion that longer hours spent in the office are directly related to higher productivity levels.

Consequences of imbalance in the work-life

The personal consequences are mainly related to the stress felt by individuals when they perceive some degree of imbalance between their work and life. The demands of work, relationships with management, colleagues and peers and levels of control are the major components of stress in the workplace. The organizational consequences associated with high levels of work-related stress are negative impacts on outcomes and productivity. Research shows that workplace practices and culture can adversely override the needs of individual employees and adversely affect their health and overall well-being (Pocock 2003; Bond et al 1997). The negative effects of work-life imbalance that manifested in high levels of absenteeism, low productivity, low morale team dysfunction, depression and mental illness and the associated organizational costs. Staff retention, down time and losses of productivity can be cited as the most obvious impacts resulting from an organization not effectively managing work-life balance issues.

Barriers to achieve a work-life balance

- **Unsupportive work culture and work environment:** Employees using flexible working options feel they are being placed under the close observations by their colleagues and required to justify their use of the options.
- **Career decisions:** Some employees feel they are placing their career in jeopardy. They believe they could be or are overlooked for promotion or that they might miss the challenging and interesting work.
- **Mismatch between policies and life stages:** Research tells us that younger people want choice and the freedom to exit and enter the paid workforce without fear of damaging career or promotional prospects (Corporate Leadership Council 2003b). Middle-aged sought to undertake pursuits outside the workplace in a manner that would not negatively impact on career and job opportunities. Similarly, people in the later phase of their working lives expressed the desire to be able to exit the workforce in a manner that matched their financial status and personal circumstances.
- **Job and work design:** Job and work design influence employees ability to take up the flexible working options that may contribute to a better work-life balance.
- **Role of the manager:** Supportive manager is the key to achieving work-life balance. If managers did not understand the available flexible working options and how to successfully implement them, then flexible working options tended to be unavailable for access by staff. The role of manager was implicit in employee's perception of their empowerment and autonomy.
- **Self-perception:** There is a distinct delineation between senior executives views on their staff utilizing the policies and their own practices. The focus group of senior executives stated that while they did not believe they could use current policies due to levels of workload, time management and other constraints, it was important for less senior staff to access policies and initiatives.
- **Communication:** Effective communication by supervisors and senior staff is a major driver of employees level of satisfaction with work-life balance; absence of this also becomes a barrier.
- **Empowerment:** Empowerment is the key to attaining a work-life balance. Empowerment is embedded in an individual's knowledge, awareness and ability to effectively communicate and negotiate with managers and work teams. The participants identified that knowledge of the available options was critical to their ability to access and utilize the policies and initiatives that facilitate work-life balance.
- **Measuring effectiveness:** Shifting the focus from time in the office to the outputs/ outcomes achieved was seen as a way of encouraging work-life balance.
- **Being a perfectionist:** The very idea of perfection is an illusion. If you find yourself frequently criticizing yourself and rehashing mistakes you made and how it made you feel, it's time to re-evaluate your expectations. Get okay with the fact it's perfectly okay to not be perfect.
- **Giving people 24/7 access:** Whether it's your boss or clients contacting you at 11pm, you need down time. This goes at home, too—take breaks from the family as needed to do your own thing. Create boundaries and stick to them. There should be a certain time each day that you cease doing for everyone else and focus on recharging for the next day
- **Reacting to everything immediately:** You don't have to answer each email or return each phone message as it comes in. Prioritize. Each day, make a list of the most important things that you need to get done the following day. It's easy to react to everything, but in doing so, less actually gets accomplished.
- **Mistaking busyness to productivity:** Skipping breaks and staying up all night working sure make you feel busy, but they may not result in any more getting done. Productivity is about getting things done effectively, not about being a hero who misses sleep and skips meals in the name of being so busy.
- **Living in one world when you should be in the other:** If you're thinking about work while you're at home and about home while you're at work, are you really giving either your full attention? It's important for your family to understand when you have a deadline that must be met. However, you also need to strike a balance where you eventually reach that point in the day that all of your work issues stay at work, allowing you to be present at home—physically and mentally.

Statement of the problem

A study on work-life balance of the employees in the field of education.

Operational definitions:

Work-life balance: Work-life balance is a state where the tensions between the work-life and personal life is minimized by having proper policies, supportive management, provisions at work place and good relations in personal life.

Employees: An employee is a person who is paid to work for an organization or for another person and has recognized rights and duties.

Review of related literature:

Hyman and Summers ((2004) classified seven major problems which are associated with current practices over work-life balance. These are unevenness of adoption across different sectors and organizations, lack of formalization of policies at organizational level, restricted employee voice over the introduction and implementation of policies, tangible and intangible work intrusions into domestic life etc..

Mohammad niaz(2008) in his research work titled “Work-life balance practices and gender gap in job satisfaction” discusses the role of work-life balance practices by explaining the paradox of the contended women worker. The main finding is that Work life balance is the important determinant of the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction.

Rebecca (2009) quotes in “Work-life balance – Men and Women” that women and men have a different perception on work-life balance. According to her women devote more time on family and men spend more time pursuing their personal interest. She states that balance is not only about dividing the time spent on work and personal life but also establishing harmony that reflects on the individuals priorities.

Peter (2009) In his study “Work-life balance and subjective well being “ explains about the work-life balance and the well being of the employees. According to him sufficient amount of time available increases the well being of the employees as it helps in satisfying personal needs.

R Baral and S Bhargave (2011) in their research work titled “HR interventions for work life balance” quotes that work-life balance is the concern for both research scholars and the business leaders in view of the technological, demographic and organizational changes related to it. They have explained about the challenges that the HR managers face while effectively implementing the policy in their organization. They suggest that the organizations must implement work-life balance policies and incorporate the organizational culture that ensures employee commitment and productivity.

Objectives of the study:

- To understand the meaning of work-life balance in the context of employment relations.
- To know the importance of work-life balance for employers and employees.
- To identify the factors that impact the employees work-life balance.
- To know the relationship between employee’s job and its impact on employee’s personal life.
- To know the relationship between the supervisors support and employee’s job performance.
- To recommend areas for improving work-life balance satisfaction among employees.

Hypotheses of the study

H₁: There is a relationship between the employee’s job and its impact on employee’s personal life.

H₂: Work-life balance approach is positively associated with employees’ performance in the organization.

Research design:

The present study adopted a descriptive type of research approach for analyzing the work-life balance of teachers in various schools.

Population:

All the teachers working in various schools under Board of Secondary Education constituted the population of the study

Sample:

For the purpose of data collection a sample of 60 teachers were drawn from different schools of Hyderabad district by using random sampling technique.

Tool used for the study:

A structured questionnaire was designed to collect the primary data from the employees. Secondary data was collected from school’s official website, internet, journals and text books.

Statistical techniques used:

Statistical techniques such as multiple regression analysis, ANOVA and percentage analysis are used to analyze the data.

Validity and Reliability:

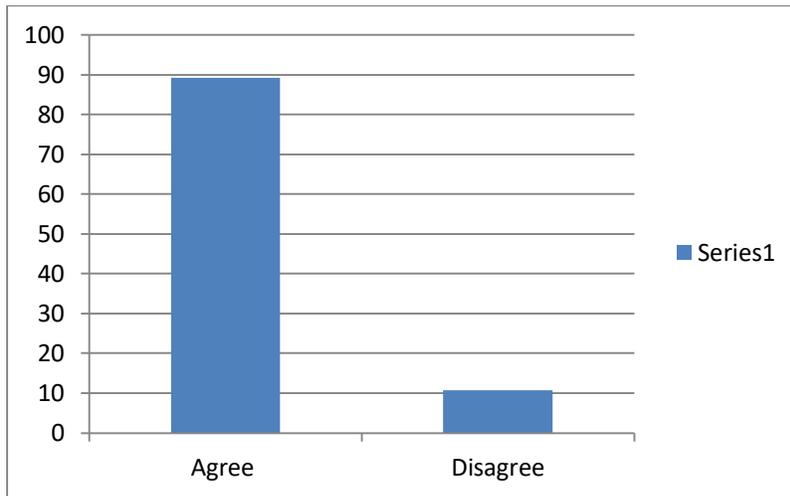
To check the internal consistency, the reliability tests viz., split half and Cronbach’s Alpha vales have been worked out. The reliability of the responses has been examined by dividing the data into two halves. The mean value in the first group and the second group is same (3.9). Further, Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.93 reflected internal consistency of the data.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data:

➤ **Do you think it is important to achieve a balance between paid work and personal life?**

As shown in the figure majority of the teachers (89.3%) strongly agreed that it is important to achieve a balance between paid work and personal life. While (10.7%) respondent negatively.

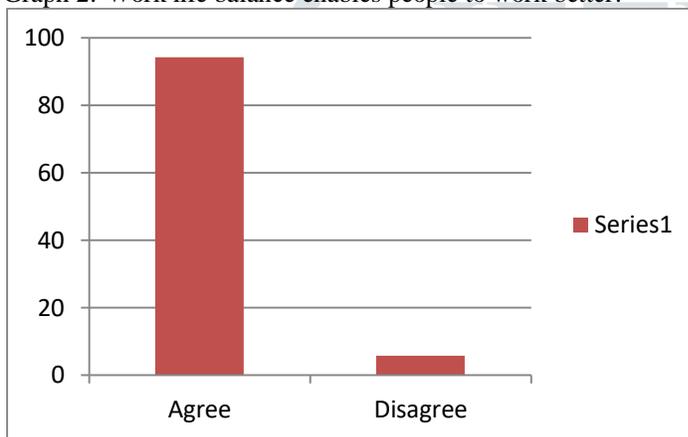
Graph-1: Showing balance between paid work and personal life.



➤ **Do you think that work-life balance enables people to work better?**

94.3% of the teachers agreed that work-life balance enables people to work better, while 5.7% disagreed.

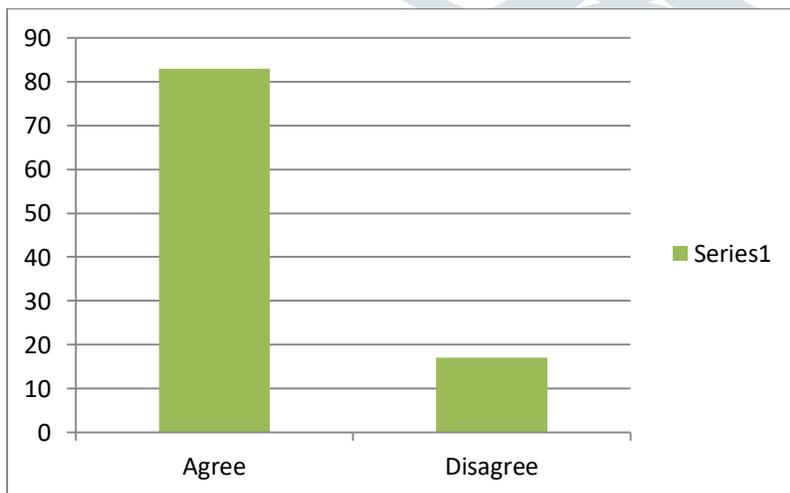
Graph 2:-Work life balance enables people to work better.



➤ **Do you think that bringing work-life balance is a joint responsibility of employer and employee?**

83% of teachers agreed that work-life balance is a joint responsibility of employer and employee.while 17% affirmed in the negative.

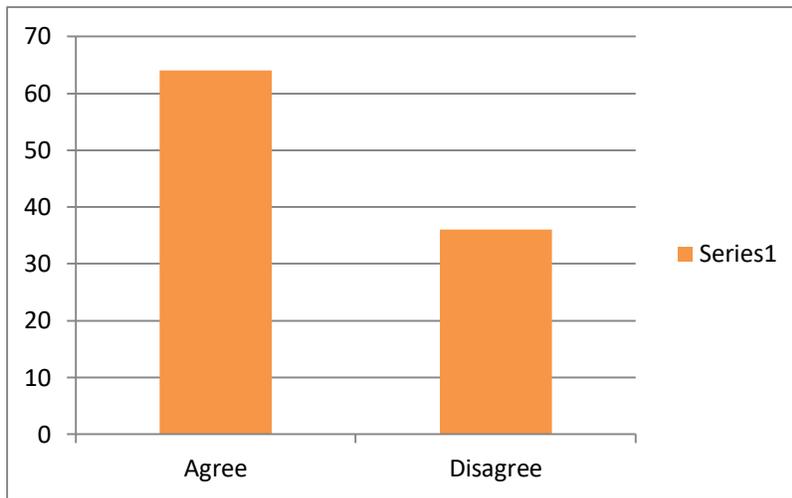
Graph-3: Work-life balance is a joint responsibility of employer and employee.



➤ **Do you feel that your Principals/ in-charges/ HOD's style affects your work-life balance?**

Only 64% of the teachers felt that their work-life balance is affected by their Principals/ in-charges/ HOD's style. While 36% were of the opinion that principals/ in-charges/ HOD's style does not affect their work-life balance.

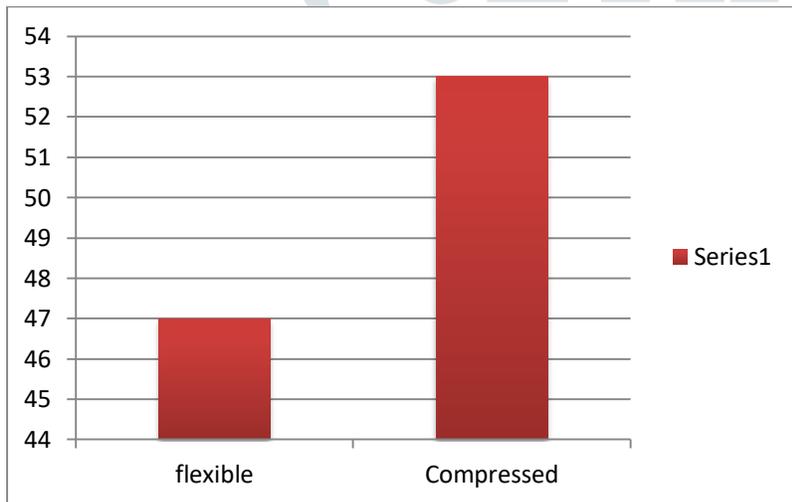
Graph-4: Principals/In-charges/HOD'S Style affects Work-life balance



➤ **Do you think flexible working hours is needed to maintain work-life balance?**

47% of teachers answered positively while the remaining 53% were happy with the compressed working hours.

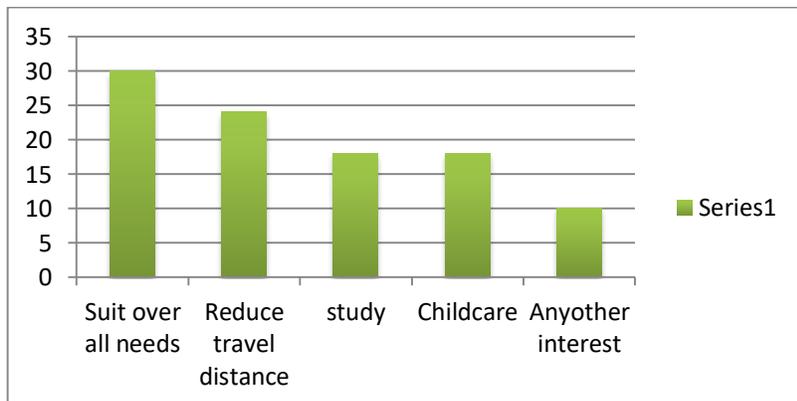
Graph-5: Flexible Working hours and work-life balance



➤ **Why do you need flexible working hours?**

The most common reasons given for need of flexible working hours are to suit over all needs (30%), to reduce distance of travel (24%) to pursue a course of study or training (18%), childcare responsibilities (18%) and to pursue any other interest (10%).

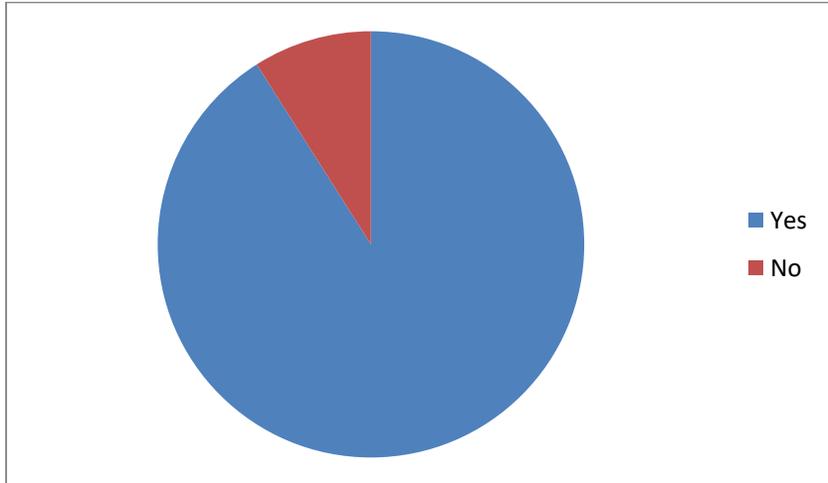
Graph-6: Showing need for flexible working hours



➤ **Are you aware of leave benefits of your organization?**

91% of the respondents said that they were aware of the leave benefits of their organization and that they have availed them. 9% of the remaining respondents said that they were aware only of maternity leave and compassionate leave.

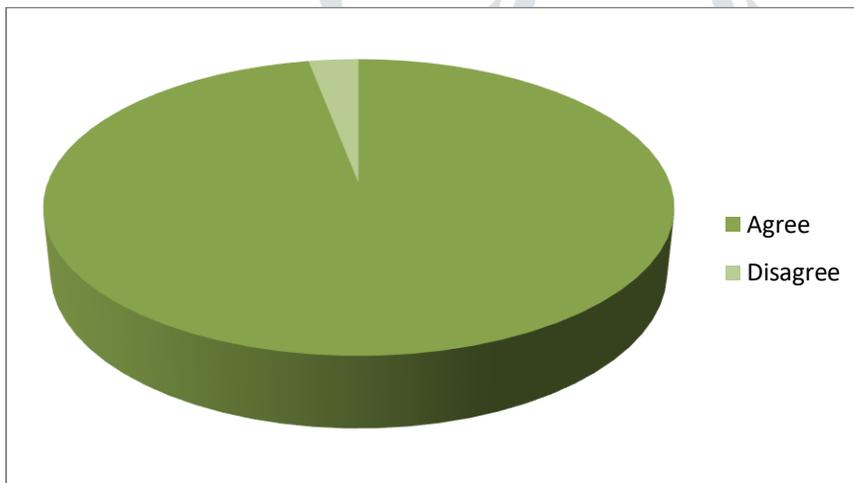
Graph-7: Leave benefits – Work- life balance



➤ **Do you expect your employer to be sympathetic towards employees?**

97% of the respondents agreed that their employer should be sympathetic towards them. 3% had a negative opinion regarding this statement.

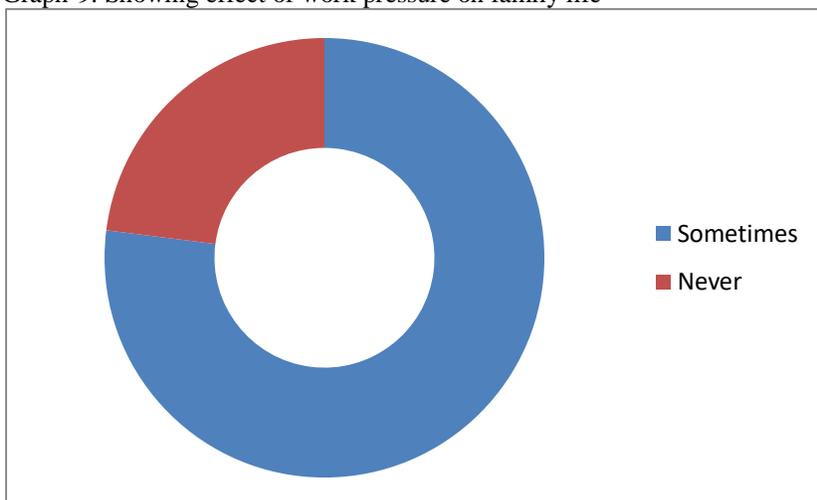
Graph-8: Showing Employee –Employer Relationship.



➤ **Do you think quality time with your family is missed because of work pressure?**

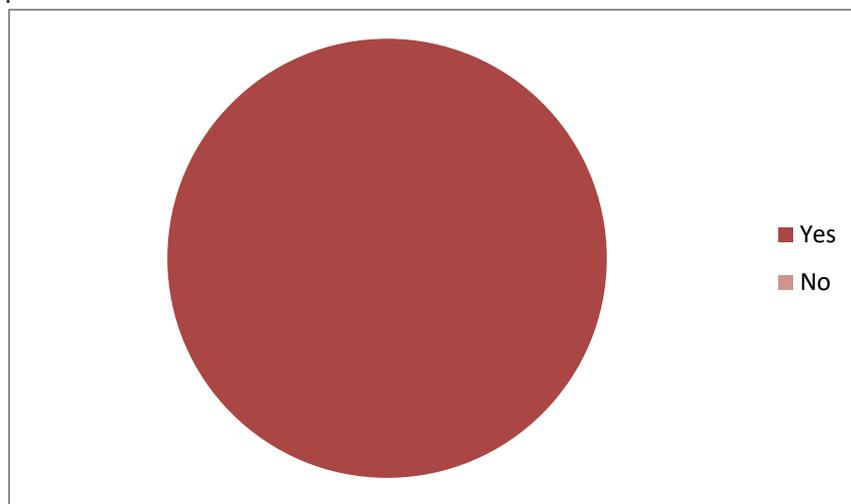
77% of the respondents feel that they sometimes miss quality time with their family while 23% never feel that their time with family is missed because of work pressure.

Graph-9: Showing effect of work pressure on family life



- **Do you think that your organization will be more effective and successful if employees have a good work-life balance?**
All the respondents (100%) opined that their organization will be more effective and successful if employees have a good work-life balance.

Graph-10: Work- life balance and Success of an organization



Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis -1

H₀: There is no relationship between the employee's job and its impact on employee's personal life.

H₁: There is a relationship between the employee's job and its impact on employee's personal life.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.541	.293	.242	.7235

Inference: Since, $r = 0.541$, there is a strong relationship between the predictor and the dependent variable under the study.

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	10.843	4	2.68	5.50	.001
Residual	25.973	55	0.51		
Total	38.73	59			

Since the significant value is 0.001 which is less than the standard value of 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is accepted.

Inference: There is a relationship between the employee's job and its impact on employee's personal life.

Hypothesis 2:

H₀: Work-life balance approach is not associated with employees' performance in the organization.

H₂: Work-life balance approach is positively associated with employees' performance in the organization.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.548	.413	.410	.512

Inference: Since, $r = 0.548$, there is a strong co-relation between work-life balance approach and performance.

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	11.724	4	2.43	5.32	.001
Residual	23.73	55	0.47		
Total	33.13	59			

Since the significant value is 0.001 which is less than the standard value of 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is accepted.

Inference: H₂: Work-life balance approach is positively associated with employees' performance in the organization.

Findings

- Work has a negative effect on the life of employees. As a result of over time working and demands of the work the quality time of the employees is lost.
- The employees job has an impact on the personal life.
- Factors like over time, travelling to work, meetings etc. have a negative impact on the work-life balance of the employees.
- Majority of the employees feel that Work-life balance approach is positively associated with employees' performance in the organization.

Recommendations:

- Appropriate policies and initiatives should be promoted widely to create awareness about the available options for accessing work-life balance strategies.
- The policies and initiatives must be reviewed taking into account the varying work-life balance requirements an employee may have relative to his individual life and circumstances.
- The organizations must promote and publicize positive case studies that exemplify the benefits of utilizing work-life balance policies and initiatives.
- The organization should promote a positive work-life balance.
- The concerned heads should encourage team dialogue on how to align work-life balance needs.

Suggestions:

- The organizations should improvise and innovate the ways to cater to the diverse needs of its employees.
- Utmost care is needed while taking decisions in adopting and implementing the policies as it impacts both the employee and the organizations.
- The employees should be made aware of the organizations policies with regard to work-life balance.

Conclusion

Work-life balance is a very important issue in the Human Resource Management field and it has a vital impact on the productivity and growth of both the organization and the employee. Many factors act as supporting elements for employees to achieve balance between work and personal life. While certain elements like employees participation in framing the policies and taking key decisions, effective communication of organizations policies can be strengthened to make work and personal life of employees highly balanced.

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