

MEASURING WORKLIFE BALANCE OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

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Abstract

Work life balance refers to the effective management of multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and in the other aspects of life. In the current economic scenario, organizations are hard pressed for higher productivity and need professionals with improved work-life balance as an employee with better work-life balance will contribute more meaningfully towards the organizational growth and success. The main objective of the study is to analyze the work life balance of healthcare professionals in Tirunelveli District. The study mainly based on primary and secondary data. The important findings of the study, there is significant difference between Mean Ranks towards factors to determine all dimensions of Work Life Balance, Opinion on all dimensions of Work Life Balance and Constraints of all dimensions of Work Life Balance of healthcare professional during COVID 19 Pandemic at 1 % significance level.

Keywords: Work Life Balance, Healthcare and Professionals, COVID 19

INTRODUCTION

Work is the most centric part of everyone's life. Employees today are more likely than ever to be concerned with how to balance their work and family lives. Competing demands, which arise between work and personal roles, often result in conflict for employees. Work and family are the equally important dimension of every one's life. Work facilitates meaning to life and livelihood. But life is not just meant for work alone. Its purpose and functionalities are much wider in scope. The relationship between work and life has acquired a silent place in the modern society where people are ambivalent about their work and life values. These both aspects are like wheels of the same vehicle, any problem in either aspect leads to conflict in the other aspect. Job stress among healthcare professionals is becoming a common occurrence in most public health services. Work life and personal life should be given importance as they demand, and should be held distinct from each other. There is an urge in the current phenomenon in order to have a proper blend of work and life. The work-life balance remains an issue that requires considerable attention to maintain good physical and mental health.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Indian Healthcare is one of the most significant sectors responsible for citizens' good health and well-being. Healthcare workers like doctors and nurses play the vital role in healthcare sector. Congenial atmosphere has to be created for them to work with utmost job satisfaction and content. When employees return home, they should not carry organizational stress along with them.

An individual has two roles to play – personal and professional; each role having different set of demands. Balancing professional life and personal life is a big task. When such role demands overlap, multiple problems are faced leading to losses for the healthcare professionals. Other reasons for slowing down of the healthcare professional's population is mental stress and work pressure. Factors that lead to mental stress and work pressure are improper balance of professional life, physical health or fitness, improper working conditions, discrimination, distrust and unlimited work load. The study has been undertaken, to find out the healthcare professionals' dimensions of personal life and work life balance during COVID-19.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are

1. To analyze the factors, determine the work life balance of healthcare professionals during COVID-19 Pandemic.
2. To find out the constraints of healthcare professionals in balancing of work life.

METHODOLOGY

This study is empirical in nature. Both Primary and Secondary data were used in this study. The primary data were collected using questionnaire from doctors and nurses working in government and private hospitals. 200 sample respondents were selected for the study using purposive random sampling. Out of 200 sample respondents, 100 from government hospitals and 100 from private hospitals. Equal weightage was given to doctors and nurses to measure the work life balance of professionals working in healthcare industry. Then the secondary data were books, journals, magazines and internet.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**Factors to Determine Work Life Balances of Healthcare Professionals**

Work life balance is one of the important factors to determine the individual life. The Work Life Balance of Healthcare professionals during COVID-19 Pandemic in Tirunelveli district is determined by twelve variables. The items are measured as five-point scale. Friedman test has been used to find out the significant difference between Mean Ranks towards Work Life Balance of Healthcare professionals during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between Mean Rank towards factors to determine Work life balance of healthcare professionals during COVID-19 Pandemic

Table.1 Factors to determine Work life balance of HealthCare Professionals during COVID-19 Pandemic

Variables	Mean Rank	χ^2 -value	P-value
Overtime work leads to stress and leads to less time for family	6.60	370.257	0.001**
Spending quality time with family & friends has become low	7.00		
Work overload makes worker's health weaker and mingling with children becomes restricted	6.32		
Able to find the purpose of medical profession in everyday Experience	7.60		
Feeling proud to be a part of healthcare team	7.13		
Feeling tired due to excessive workload	5.53		
Co-ordination among Health professionals while working in a team	6.66		
Healthcare of healthcare professionals is critical	7.38		
Healthcare professionals are affected physically and mentally	5.40		
Self-defence is given priority	7.16		
Fear of carrying the COVID-19 coronavirus home and infect their loved ones	6.40		
Unusually increasing demands to work for longer hours	4.82		

Source: Computed data** Significance at 1% level

The table.1 shows that factors to determine work life balance of healthcare professionals during COVID-19 pandemic, 'Able to find the purpose of medical profession in everyday experience' with the mean score of 7.60, followed by 'Healthcare of healthcare professionals is critical' (7.38), 'Self-defence is given priority' (7.16), 'Feeling proud to be a part of healthcare team' (7.13), 'Spending quality time with family & friends has become low' (7.00), 'Co-ordination

among Health professionals while working in a team' (6.66), 'Overtime work leads to stress and leads to less time for family' (6.60), 'Fear of carrying the COVID-19 coronavirus home and infecting their loved ones' (6.40), 'Work overload makes worker's health weaker and mingling with children becomes restricted' (6.32), 'Feeling tired due to excessive workload' (5.53), 'Healthcare professionals are affected physically and mentally' (5.40) and 'Unusually increasing demands to work for longer hours' with the mean score of 4.82 is contributed least.

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 % level of significance. Hence, there is significant difference between Mean Ranks towards Work life balance of Healthcare professionals during COVID 19 Pandemic.

Healthcare Professionals Opinion about Work Life Balance

. The healthcare professionals' opinion about work life balance is presented in the table.2

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between Mean Ranks towards Opinion on Work Life Balance among healthcare professionals.

Table.2 Healthcare Professionals Opinion about Work Life Balance

Variables	Mean Rank	χ^2 value	P-value
Satisfaction on present position in balancing work life	6.04	309.639	0.001**
Healthcare profession provides effective and successful work-life balance	5.19		
Hospital management motivates in improving work life Balance	5.10		
There are responsibilities in work and life balance	5.16		
Managing your time effectively	4.66		
Decisions made according to purpose in life	6.12		
Healthcare profession is meaningful and purposeful	6.07		
Working for long hours on overtime	4.52		
Frequently change plans for family doings due to work Responsibilities	5.45		
Receives sufficient respect in personal life and work life	6.68		

Source: Computed data **Significance at 1% level

The table.2 reveals that healthcare professionals opinion about work life balance, 'Receives sufficient respect in personal life and work life' with the mean score of 6.68 is best factor behind opinion on work life balance, followed by 'Decisions made according to purpose in life' (6.12), 'Healthcare profession is meaningful and purposeful' (6.07), 'Satisfaction on present position in balancing work life' (6.04), 'Frequently change plans for family doings due to work responsibilities' (5.45), 'Healthcare profession provides effective and successful work-life balance' (5.19), 'There are responsibilities in work and life balance' (5.16), 'Hospital management motivates in improving work life balance' (5.10), 'Managing your time effectively' (4.66) and 'Working for long hours on overtime' with the mean score of 4.52 contributed least place.

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence, there is significant difference between mean ranks towards opinion on work life balance.

Constraints of Work Life Balance of Healthcare Professionals

Work life balance is not easy to set up the right *balance* between *work* and *family* in the *healthcare* sector. The healthcare professionals faced on different types of problems in work and family. The work life balance of the healthcare professionals is not easy task. The Constraints of Work Life Balance of Healthcare professionals in Tirunelveli district is presented in the table.3. The items are measured as five-point scale.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between Mean Ranks towards Constraints of Work Life Balance

Table.3 Constraints of Work Life Balance of healthcare Professionals

Variables	Mean Rank	χ^2 -value	P-value
Self-necessities are avoided	6.61	726.491	0.001**
Unable to handle household responsibilities	6.85		
Lack of time management	6.24		
Lack of family support	6.61		
Working environment creates stress	3.91		
Conflicts and misunderstanding among co-staff	4.70		
Low salary Salary/benefits	4.02		
Distance between hospital and home	6.49		
Complex workload makes strain on personal life	4.66		
Conflict with co-workers due to unclear responsibilities	4.91		

Source: Computed data **Significance at 1% level

The table.3 shows that Constraints faced by work life balances of healthcare professionals in Tirunelveli district, ‘Unable to handle household responsibilities’ with the mean score of 6.85 is contributed best Constraints of Work Life Balance, followed by ‘Self-necessities are avoided’ (6.61), ‘Lack of family support’ (6.61), ‘Distance between hospital and home’ (6.49), ‘Lack of time management’ (6.24), ‘Conflict with co-workers due to unclear responsibilities’ (4.91), ‘Conflicts and misunderstanding among co-staff’ (4.70), ‘Complex workload makes strain on personal life’ (4.66), ‘Low salary Salary/benefits’ (4.02), and ‘Working environment creates stress’ with the mean of 3.91 contributed is least.

Since P-value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 % level of significance. Hence, there is significant difference between Mean Rank towards Constraints of Work Life Balance of healthcare professionals.

SUGGESTIONS

- The important suggestions are given below,
- ❖ Healthcare professionals working in private hospitals may be motivated by making their job secured and permanent along with a high pay and other benefits.
 - ❖ Both government and private hospitals may provide accommodation facility nearby the hospital for the healthcare professionals along with their family at free of cost or by charging a nominal rent. As the travel time is decreased for the healthcare professionals, they will feel relaxed and stress free while working.
 - ❖ Healthcare professionals may be provided with a better leave policy, so that they will be satisfied in personal life and work responsibilities. They may be self-motivated towards job by increased involvement and job satisfaction.
 - ❖ The hospitals may take necessary steps to reduce the stress of the healthcare professionals so that they can handle the household responsibilities. The family members may support them to balance their work and family.
 - ❖ The salary/benefits for the Healthcare professionals may be revised and increased with better promotions. The hospital management may improve the working environment and reduce stress among the employees.

CONCLUSION

Work life balance is the concept that is not researched much among the healthcare professionals in Tirunelveli District. Hospitals of all types are facing the challenge of how to make optimum use of the potential of the employees to achieve high productivity. Clear and detailed job responsibilities may be allocated to the employees in order to promote work life balance. The study reveals that the management and healthcare professionals have to focus more on employee related policies to improve their work and balance their personal care, which gives them stress free work and more attention towards the patient care. Unbalanced work life may result in reduced health and low performance of

the healthcare professionals. Proper and balanced work life will support the healthcare professionals to segregate their time and interest between work and family.

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