

EFFECT OF WORK, FAMILY, SELF AND SOCIAL DOMAINS ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONGST MANAGERS IN PRIVATE SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

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INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance refers to harmonious or satisfying arrangement between an individual's work obligations and his or her personal life. It is also considered as an appropriate arrangement of role-time commitments that allows good functioning at work and home, with minimum role conflict and maximum satisfaction. In other words, absence of conflict is viewed as the state of balance. The New Zealand Department of Labour (NZDL) (2004) defines work-life balance in terms of creating a productive work culture where potential tensions between work and other parts of people's lives are minimized. The majority of early research has been focused on the two life domains of work and family, and referred it as "work-family balance" (Guest, 2002). Work-family balance has evolved into "work-life balance", on the one hand, in response to individuals without family responsibilities who felt that they are not getting benefits that others got. On the other hand, perceived balance can be significantly influenced by life domains outside work and family (Bird, 2003; Guest, 2002). The term "life" applies to any non-paid activities or commitments that could be extended beyond family to friends, community and self, while the term "work" applies to paid activities and commitments (Guest, 2002). In this regard, Bird (2003) argues that work-life balance should essentially be concentrated on the four aspects, namely, work, family, self, and social due to the fact that an individual's life satisfaction goes beyond work and family. In this context, objectives of the study were to identify the impact of life domains on work-life balance and to make suggestions to enhance work-life balance. Therefore, it is hypothesized that a significant positive relationship exists between satisfaction from work, family, social and self domains such that the higher the satisfaction from each domain, the higher will be the perceived work-life balance.

METHODOLOGY

Evidence suggests that work-life balance is mostly a problem for individuals in managerial positions than otherwise (Guest, 2002). The sample of the study consisted of randomly selected 210 middle and above level managers belongs to the private sector. Data collection was based on a self administered structured survey questionnaire. Microsoft Word and Adobe formats of the questionnaire were e-mailed (allowing respondents to use either of the two at their convenience) to a randomly selected 400 cases of the selected population, along with a covering letter indicating the purpose of the study and assuring the confidentiality of the information provided. At the end of the data collection period, 210 valid responses were received yielding a 52% response rate. This sample represented by diverse and geographically dispersed individuals who are employed in various private sector organizations from different industries, and ranked at different levels within organizations.

Conceptualization and operationalization of measures are shown in Table 1. Each multi-item construct was tested for its internal consistency and arrived at satisfactory Cronbach's alpha values ($\alpha > 0.7$). The results of factor analysis are shown in Table 2.

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Measure	Definition	Source
Work-life balance	Satisfying arrangement between an individual's work obligations and his/her personal life	Lambert et al. (2004)
Work	Time spent and comfort in handling work in measuring the satisfaction from work	Lambert et al. (2004)
Organizational support	Explicit support (policies and procedures) provided by organizations in helping employees to achieve a better work-life	NZDL (2004)
Organizational culture	Existence of culture of long hours, culture of managerial, supervisory and co-worker support, and attitude of employees towards using organization-led work-life support initiatives	Forret and Janasz (2005)
Family culture	Expectations of those in the family environment on commitments and obligations	Lambert et al. (2004)
Self	Satisfaction in meeting the requirements of an individual for education, professional growth, health, sports, spiritual development and leisure.	NZDL (2004)
Social	Satisfaction in meeting obligations and commitments of friends, community and other relevant parties beyond work, family and self	NZDL (2004)
Controls	Age, gender, marital status, the number of dependents, with whom the respondent lives with, job level, tenure and the level of education	-

Table 1: Measures

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Principal component factor analysis was carried out and results are shown in Table 2. The six dependent variables loaded into three principal factors explaining 78% of the variability. Family culture was removed from the analysis as it was loaded with less than 0.5 component value. The three factors were identified as "Social and self", "Supportive organization", and "Work".

	F1: Social and self	F2: Supportive organization	F3: Work
Social	.876		
Self	.904		
Organizational Support		.861	
Organizational Culture		.804	
Work			.953
Explained variation	29.406	28.044	20.060
Eigenvalue	1.764	1.683	1.204
KMO sampling adequacy		.639***	
Bartlett's Chi-Square		230.875	

*** $p < 0.001$, Principal Component Analysis, Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 2: Summarized results - factor analysis

Hierarchical multiple regression was carried out to single out the effects of controls, work, supportive organization, and social and self domains. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 3. According to Table 3, work and supportive organization significantly explains 56% ($R^2 = .564$) of the variance of the dependent variable. The contribution of "Social and self" on

work-life balance is significant. The four work-life domains of work, family, self, and social significantly explain 59% ($R^2=.586$) of the variance of the dependent variable.

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R ² Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.213 ^a	.045	.005	.745	.045	.905	.530
2	.415 ^b	.172	.124	.693	.172	3.561	.000
3	.564 ^c	.318	.273	.630	.273	7.175	.000
4	.586 ^d	.351	.294	.625	.033	7.212	.000

^a Predictors: (Constant), controls.

^b Predictors: (Constant), controls, work.

^c Predictors: (Constant), controls, work, Supportive organization.

^d Predictors: (Constant), controls, work, Supportive organization, Social and self.

Table 3. Model summary - work-life balance

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The objective of the study was to explore whether the level of work-life balance experienced by managerial level employees go beyond the traditional two domains of work and family. Supporting the arguments of Guest (2002), the study found that the level of work-life balance experienced by an employee goes beyond the traditional domains of work and family into other life domains of self and social. Work-life balance has been identified as a significant contributor in attracting and retaining employees and in creating many other positive organizational outcomes. The findings of the study imply that an organization's efforts in creating a better work-life environment for employees should also concentrate on other life domains (i.e., social and self), which are important for an employee's life, other than the traditional two domains of work and family.

With regard to limitations of the study, analyzing the main variables by demographic characteristics, such as job category, is beyond the scope of the study. Future research can incorporate such variables.

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