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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
<u>1</u>	The Impact Of Tourism On Culture: Empirical Evidence From Victoria Falls. Alick Mhizha, Golden Mandebvu and Noel Muzondo	<u>1-31</u>
<u>2</u>	Estimation Of Market Volatility-A Case Of Logistic Brownian Motion. D. B. Oduor, N. Omolo Ongati, N. B. Okelo and Silas N. Onyango	<u>32-48</u>
<u>3</u>	Market access and agriculture suitability analysis using GIS technique A case study on Morobe province, Papua New Guinea. Sailesh Samanta, Babita Pal, Dilip Kumar Pal and Wycliffe Antonio	<u>49-67</u>
<u>4</u>	Assessment Of Library Service Quality From Researchers' Perspective. Ms. Sunil Kumari, Ms. Poonam Khurana and Ms. Madhu Arora	<u>68-86</u>
<u>5</u>	Sustainable Development through ICT and education - A collaborative endeavour. Dr. Sangeeta Kohli and Dr. Ritu Bhattacharyya	<u>87-101</u>
<u>6</u>	International Marketing And The Impact Of Technology On The Integration Of The Global Economy. Dr. Ashish Mathur	<u>102-116</u>
<u>7</u>	Fiscal Policy, Public Debt, And Economic Growth. William R. DiPietro	<u>117-130</u>
<u>8</u>	Work / Life Balance In Corporate Sector. Perna	<u>131-147</u>
<u>9</u>	Profitabilty Analysis Of Reliance Telecom Ltd. M. Usharani and M. Kavitha	<u>148-163</u>
<u>10</u>	A Study On Customer Involvement In Purchase Of Home Appliance. P. Janaki and S. Premila	<u>164-185</u>
<u>11</u>	Economic Growth, Corruption and Poverty. Mr. Harsimran Singh and Dr. Sarbjeet Singh	<u>186-206</u>
<u>12</u>	A Study on Consumer perceptions and Brand Equity Analysis of Men's shirts: Foreign Brands Vs Domestic brands. A. Pughazhendi and R. Thirunavukkarasu	<u>207-225</u>
<u>13</u>	Applying Knowledge Management in the Life Insurance Industry. Dr. M. Dhanabhakya, V. Anitha and S. Kavitha	<u>226-241</u>
<u>14</u>	Measuring The Service Quality Gap Between The Perceived And Expected Services In Retail Banking. Ganesh P	<u>242-260</u>
<u>15</u>	Analysis on Problems of Customers on Mobile Banking Services of ICICI BANK in Tenkasi Taluk. Dr. S. Valli Devasena	<u>261-281</u>

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Title

WORK / LIFE BALANCE IN CORPORATE SECTOR

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Abstract:

Life is moving very fastly. People are not able balance their work / life. They are facing a lot of problems in their daily life. Tight schedules, pressure of the boss to do the work into stipulated time, never ending meetings etc. makes the person tired and he / she do not remain able to enjoy his life at home with their spouse and children. Can the existence of work-life balance programs be attributed to a realization of social responsibility by the employers towards their employees or to a realization of the competitive advantage it offers to employers? Before we can answer this question, we need to define what work-life balance is and various factors associated with it, which is also the purpose of this article.

In the fast moving life, there are many pressures that new-age couples have to deal with- running a home, doing daily chores like cooking/cleaning, raising children and handle the tight deadlines at work.

The changing economic conditions and social demands have changed the nature of work throughout the world. Originally, work was a matter of necessity and survival. Throughout the years, the role of "work" has evolved and the composition of the workforce has changed.

Today, work is widely viewed as a source of personal satisfaction. A good balance in work and life can play a phenomenal role in the attainment of personal and professional goals. The objective of this paper is to understand the various issues that have come to the forefront due to the dynamic nature of work.

Can the existence of work-life balance programs be attributed to a realization of social responsibility by the employers towards their employees or to a realization of the competitive advantage it offers to employers? Before we can answer this question, we need to define what work-life balance is and various factors associated with it, which is also the purpose of this article.

By definition work life balance is about people having measure of control over when, where and how they work. There is a view that work-life balance only in the framework of what the company does for the individual.

However, work-life balance is a two-pronged approach. The other prong of work-life balance, which many individuals overlook, relates to what individuals do for themselves. The core of work life balance could also be summed as achievement with enjoyment. If an individual goes on working his or her best at work place but not really enjoying the same then happiness and satisfaction can never be achieved. Achievement can be viewed as motive of life while enjoyment is the fuel that drives that motive.

While we strike a work life balance, we are not merely balancing our profession and family, we are also balancing our mental and status quo and thereby balancing our emotional intelligence, which is the worldly ability to manage you and to handle others. Organizations can help facilitate work-life balance for their employees through work-life programs and training.

Achievement and enjoyment at work is a critical part of work-life balance. Furthermore, achievement and enjoyment in the other three quadrants of one's life (e.g. family, friends and self) is critical as well. Work cultures have often demanded a transformation from inflexibility to flexibility. The underlying principle perhaps is the increasing realization that certain issues pertaining to the imbalance in working life and personal life of an individual are being overlooked.

There is a life at work and at home and also a life having space for leisure. With globalization becoming the norm of the day, these issues seem to have taken a back seat for quite a while. Work life 'imbalance' has over a period of time attracted concern because of increasing problems related to employee health, monotony at work place, declining levels of productivity and efficiency at the employee level. The imbalance also has a negative impact in the personal life of working people-some of which have even become social hazards- increasing number of divorces, infertility due high stress levels, advent of nuclear families etc.

Professionals today seem to be more interested in jobs that give them increased flexibility at work. Working people have different needs at different stages of their working life. As a result, people strive for balance in their working hours and their personal commitments. Work life balance has now become a sensitive issue because it offers obvious benefits to organizations and its employees.

Successfully addressing this issue can lead to a healthy synergy in the working environment of an organization and its employees. Organizations can look forward to a phenomenal increase in

efficiency and working hours and their personal commitments. Work life balance has now become a sensitive issue because it offers obvious benefits to organizations and its employees.

Successfully addressing this issue can lead to a healthy synergy in the working environment of an organization and its employees. Organizations can look forward to a phenomenal increase in efficiency and as an ideal place to work in - a place that endows greater volition (flexi-timings etc.) and freedom; and a place that is fun to work in. Employees with a working environment that is conducive.

Employee retention may also be seen as an important driver to this. Organizations now focus on grooming their employees who are now not considered merely a work force but regarded as the 'Human Capital' of the organization.

Need and Benefits of Work Life Balance:

To understand the need of work life balance, one first needs to understand about work life imbalance, as with the understanding of the origin, causes and effects of this imbalance, the balancing act becomes easier. The corporate world of today is exceedingly demanding. The work culture varies from organization to organization.

Today the deadlines are getting tighter and an individual's job is not only to match that deadline but also to give quality output. Due to this work pressure it becomes exceedingly difficult to maintain a family life. It becomes very difficult to have the engagement of mind with the engagement of body. In every individual's life there are four stakeholders- own personality, job, family and society.

It is very important to give equal importance to all the stakeholders. A person who is a workaholic and does not enjoy his family life cannot be termed a successful person. When a life encounters such imbalance then the peace and harmony of life vanishes and there is an adverse effect of it on the work life too. To avoid such situation one should always try to avoid this imbalance in life. The transition from work life imbalance to work life balance has obvious benefits to an organization and its employees.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Organizations are becoming more and more demanding in terms of output. The businesses are being operated in terms of volume and not in terms of values. This disturbs the balance between work and life in employees' lives. The organizations are too exacting in their demands and because of the very high competition, they are able to dictate terms upon the individuals.

As the organizations are basically the profit driven entities they are rarely bothered about the personal life and work-satisfaction issues of the employees. Thus they are least concerned at their level with work life satisfaction. Organizations have the work force in plenitude and as far as the people are ready to work as three people instead of one, they don't bother about the consequences the employees may face with this stressful work atmosphere.

Individuals are equally responsible for creating work life imbalance, as the silence adopted by the individuals is a major factor responsible for work life imbalance. As people do not raise their voice against the unfair amount of work delegated upon them, they land up with unfair amount of work for themselves. Due to 'high ambitions' of the individuals they put themselves under much more pressure than they can handle. People tend to escape from making decisions and from taking stands. Work life imbalance is creating a different kind of lifestyle. People are having different professional and personal goals, which are often contradictory, and this is ultimately bringing imbalance in their lives.

Discrimination with Working Women:

Work life imbalance also comes with a different social perspective- How to address the work life imbalance in the lives of the women work force. The society over the years has recognized women's need to legal and financial independence. Women work force now constitutes a significant percentage of the total work force in any organization today. Gender equality and responsibility for caring however, are contested issues. The transition to motherhood still continues to have practical and emotional consequences. When women take break from their careers to fulfill their right to motherhood, it is considered unprofessional. Moreover, it also affects their professional stature when they return to work.

These tend to reinforce gender in-equalities at work place. As a result many women have to make the difficult choice between family and career, surprisingly, the situation as homemaker and as a professional person. So if she has to make a trade-off sometimes, she must take it in her stride and balance it in the other spheres as soon as possible.

The concept of Work life balance is becoming more and more relevant in a never-dynamic working environment. The role played by the individual is as important as that of the organization in managing this tumultuous see saw. One of the novel approaches to this is by the use of one's emotional intelligence. This will help people realize what they want to do, which in turn will lead to stronger organizations based on stronger values, orientations and ethics.

1.9.1 Tips to maintain Work Life Balance:

1. Don't overbook: This may seem unusual to people who try to crowbar as much as possible into every workday. The problem is: Things rarely go according to a prearranged agenda. That means a lot of time falling through the cracks chasing down appointments, unreturned phone calls and other items that simply aren't going to happen. Don't try to plan on doing too many things. Assume that only 50% of the things you plan on doing today will actually get done. If you don't, you'll just waste valuable time trying to find out why things didn't happen."

2. Prioritize ruthlessly: The secret to booking your time effectively boils down to knowing what's important and what the sharpest knife possible in trimming the essential from the secondary. Learn to ask questions that help you determine the level of urgency. Negotiate longer lead times whenever you can and don't give into the instant-and-immediate answer syndrome. Treating everything as top priority is draining and depleting.

3. Learn how to say no: One of the biggest land mines to effective time management is recognizing you don't have to agree to everything and with everyone. Use your priority criteria to identify requests that simply aren't worth your time. "I've learned that saying no to one thing opens the door to saying yes to something else.

4. Organize: Bringing your time into line isn't just a matter of scheduling. The mechanics of how you operate can be every bit as important. That means organizing most every element to allow as smooth a workflow as possible. Everything in your business should be set up using logical systems so anyone needing anything can find it when they need it. Eliminating clutter and the chaos it causes will give you a gift of 240 to 288 hours every year.

5. Use technology: Although personal habits and practices can do wonders for time management, don't overlook technology the most effective use of your workday. For instance, Microsoft Outlook with Business Contact Manager lets you organize a wide array of customer and product particulars, allowing quick and easy access. Sticky notes are one of the worst things in the world. You should live by your database. That way, nothing is ever forgotten.

6. Don't Overdo It: Many businesspeople are gun shy about using technology out of fear that they'll remain too much in touch—that their time will be consumed by intrusive e-mails and cell phone calls. Fair enough. Part of effective time management is knowing when to shut things down. Turning off a cell phone or of communication establishes boundaries. In short, it helps you balance your personal and professional time.

7. It won't always be perfect: Try as we all may, time management isn't an exact science. Don't stress out—and waste time in the process—by obsessing over every second of time. Do what you can and enjoy whatever time you spend more pleasantly or productively. Be grateful for what goes right and learn from your mistakes. Act as if they were scenes in a movie that you get to retake.

Importance of Work/Life Balance:

The value to employers of satisfactory work /life balance for their employees should not be underestimated in both a social and economic context. It is vital that employers are equipped with the tools necessary to assist them to grow and expand successful businesses, especially if

unemployment rates are low and there are skill shortages in areas relevant to the business. **Work / life balance is about providing employees with flexible work arrangements to enable them to both participate in the workforce and fulfill their family and lifestyle commitments and desires.** The willingness of a business to accommodate an employee's work/life balance may be a deciding factor in them accepting a particular position, or remaining in a current workplace. This makes work/life balance a key attraction and retention strategy and a business imperative.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

This research thesis examines the **relationship between work/life balance and job stress**. The pattern is clear that the workers who have experienced difficulties in balancing work and personal life also are likely to report more job stress. Indeed, the 55 percent of survey respondents who found it harder to balance work-life reported often or always being under stress in their job, compared with 26 percent of those who found work-life balance easier to achieve. **So there is an inverse relationship between Job Stress and Work/Life Balance.**

Demographic factors alone do not help explain work-life balance. Probing this more deeply, multivariate statistical analysis (simultaneously testing the influence of relevant job, organizational and demographic characteristics) confirms that the level of job stress has dependent effect on work/life balance. High stress is equated with work/life balance difficulties. **Workload** also appears to have dependent effect on work/life balance, to some extent. **Working hours** also influence work/life balance.

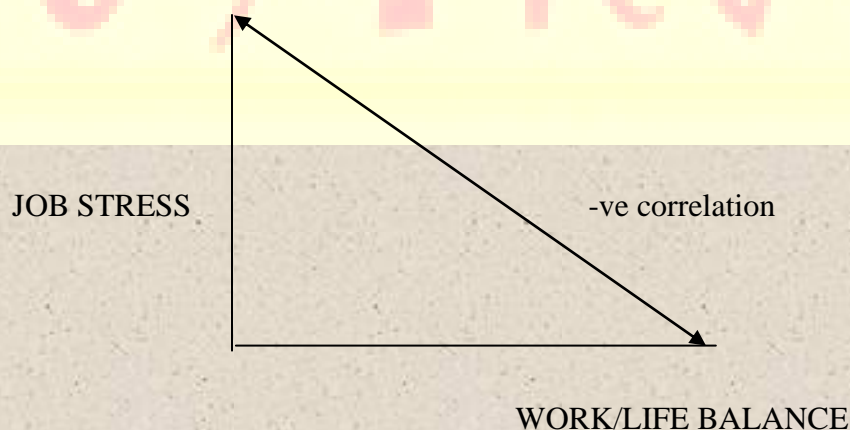


Figure: 5.1 A Model of Job Stress-Work Life Balance

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

To Maintain Work Life Balance

1.1 Getting Balanced:

- Make balance a priority and commit to it - make it a change that you want!
- Make note of where your energy is going (actual balance) and decide on how you would like your life to be (ideal balance)
- Make plans to achieve balance by setting reasonable goals and removing obstacles
- Stay focused and motivated by getting others involved in your attempts to balance and by making dates, reminders and other changes to your routine that support your plans.

1.2 For Work (paid, voluntary, home duties, study)

- Know your role and responsibilities - expectations
- Accept your limits (time, energy, skills) as a natural part of working life
- Take proper breaks to relax or energize
- Manage your workload by prioritizing, and when appropriate, by seeking assistance or delegating
- Slow down – your inbox will never be empty
- Talk to your colleagues - shared problem solving brings other options and support
- Seek good advice and 'perspective' by asking helpful questions such as - 'what is the best step to take here?'
- Learn to say no to things that are not 'essential'
- Cultivate a sense of humor, creativity and fun at work

- Think ahead and set achievable goals
- Focus on the positive aspects of your work & personal Life. Record and remember these often.
- Learn to accept what you cannot change; take positive steps to change what you can.

1.3 For Physical Well-being

- Regular activity & exercise (walk; swim; ride; sports) improve general and heart health, increases energy and concentration
- A healthy, balanced diet provides excellent stress buffering.
- Reduce your intake of caffeine; nicotine; alcohol; drugs
- See your GP, dietician, exercise physiologist, etc

1.4 For Relaxation - (Leisure, Rest)

- Make a list of pleasant activities and do more of them - e.g. movies, reading, music, massage, time with pets
- Make time for rest and ensure a healthy sleep pattern
- Try to reduce intensity - don't book yourself full

1.5 For Social Self

- Spend time with children, family, friends and people you like and get involved with social activities regularly
- Add more fun and play to your life - games and parties
- Build a support network in your friends and family for talking and sharing regularly- reduce isolation

1.6 Personal Development (identity, self esteem, learning)

- Make time for yourself to reflect on your achievements, strengths, goals etc
- Take up a new hobby or interest
- Talk about people, the world and your thoughts on life
- Listen to what others have to say

Conclusion:

Stress causes medical problems and also affects work/life balance. The report described the relationship between stress and work/life balance and explained common source of work related stress. Organization can play their part in helping to employee for work/life balance, by implementing changes in organizational structure, culture, nature of job and by changing their lifestyle and behavior and using psychological & cognitive technologies. Everybody feel some sought of stress, either on their actual job or real personal life. So, we should avoid stress and keep the balance between personal & professional life. Thus, it can be concluded from the above discussion that there are differences between working and non-working women regarding stress, extraversion, Psychoticism, neuroticism, lie scale and depression. The findings of the study indicate that working married women have to face more difficulties in their lives like they experienced more stress and depression as compared to non-working married women because working women have to face more problems as compare to non-working women. They are facing home problems as well as job problems. That's why they are showing more stress and depression. The results of study also revealing that non-working women are high on Psychoticism, it means non-working women are hostile to others, solitary, carefree, cruel, lacking in feeling & empathy.

It concludes that working married women found high on stress, neuroticism, lie scale and depression. This is happened because they are facing more difficulties in their lives as compared to non-working married women.

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