

Voice of Faculty: A Work Reflection on Work-Life Dis/harmony in Higher Academia

Swetha Suram

Asst. Professor, Dept. of Management Studies, University College of Commerce and Business Management, Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda,

Alugubelly Monika Reddy

Dept. of Computer Science and Engineering, Noble College of Engineering and Technology, Hyderabad

Abstract: *Faculty's ability to balance multiple life-roles is directly related to their physical and mental well-being, and their career performance and success. Family and work are the two most important domains for many Faculty's. When conflicts between these two domains occur, there are potentially adverse effects for individuals, families and organizations. Work engagement, work-life balance, and occupational commitment and are all factors affecting faculty's decisions to remain in the classroom. One should note that teachers' personal lives are intimately linked to their performance in their professional lives. Therefore, the major objective of the present study is work-life balance (WLB) issues faced by faculty of higher education in Hyderabad. To achieve this end, data were collected by area sampling (cluster-random) paired with semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. A survey is conducted on 12 educational institutions of Hyderabad taking sample of 180 teachers to know the real status of work-life balance. In the Questionnaire, Likert's five point scale was employed to determine scores. The study finds that the work-life balance situation is moderate which can be improved by ensuring flexible working hours, transport facility, residential facility, child care center, encouragement for career development, flexible work arrangements/job sharing, reduced working hours & workload for the faculty in higher education.*

Introduction

The concept of work-life balance has gained attention in the Western world in recent years with considerable policy activity around issues such as flexible work practices and “family-friendly” hours. Policies which promote work-life balance are promoted as a win-win for both individuals and organizations, with apparent benefits such as improved recruitment and retention rates, increased productivity and reductions in worker stress. The negative effects of not achieving work-life balance (or work-life conflict) include stress, depression and anxiety. These are serious for the individual and also have the potential to influence one's family and friends (Allan, Loudoun, & Peetz 2007). Known as a profession that eats its young (Archer, 1999; Osborne, 1992), the teaching profession can expect to lose between 30% and 50% of teachers within their first five years on the job (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2003; Levine & Haselkorn, 2008; Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). For decades researchers have focused on determining the cause of faculty's attrition in an effort to reduce its occurrence. The multiple roles assumed by faculty's (e.g. guide, friend, coach, surrogate parent, teacher, spouse, parent, sibling) influences both the professional life and the personal life (Flores & Day 2006). Adams, King, and King (1996) reported that the relationship between work and family life is a bidirectional phenomenon, whereby both can interfere and support the other. In a recent study by Barnes, Crowe, and Schafer (2007) and The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003) clearly

outlined the faculty retention problem in many organizations. Organizations today face heightened competition on a worldwide basis, employees are experiencing increasing performance pressures, and hours spent at the workplace may be increasing (Schor, 1991). Due to globalization many organizations have raised their expectations regarding time, up-to-date knowledge, research facilities development and work commitment. These expectations may be particularly difficult for faculty to meet, since faculty still performs multiple tasks and their commitments with family and friends (Hochschild, 1989 and 1997). The inability to balance work and life has severe implications because it affects every aspect of faculties' lives. The stress created from being pulled in multiple directions has negative consequences for psychological and physical well-being (Kinman & Jones, 2004).

When faculty are spread too thin attempting to satisfy all of the competing demands on their time, they are not able to complete any task to the best of their ability causing all their roles to suffer. Productivity at work is affected and the quality of faculty's relationships with friends and family are disturbed. This psychological stress stemming from their inability to give 100 percent at work and at home can also produce problems for their health. Better work life balance creates high levels of employee satisfaction. It provides a solid return for the organization as well as the workforce. Work-life balance programs can also help by reinforcing recruitment, raising employee retention, decreasing absenteeism, limiting late comers, powering up productivity, Promoting participation in training, contending with competition and engaging the emerging labor market (Better Balance, Better Business 2004).

Work/life balance not only affects faculty and their friends and families, but it is also relevant to organizations quality and standards to some point. Faculty are the main workforce of a higher education institute and if organizations want to compete in the globalized education system, they have to maximize their use of the available talent pool. Work/life imbalance takes a toll on faculty's job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Kinman 2001). If faculty do not receive adequate support from employers in managing their work and home demands, they are more likely to opt for part-time work or leave paid employment entirely. This has significant association with absenteeism and in the quality of the education and ultimately limits faculty's full participation in the work force preventing organizations from hiring the best person for each job. Poor work/life balance has negative implications for organizations development and quality, as well as for individual faculty and their families. Furthermore, work life balance has a great influence over the organization. In the present study we have focused on the faculty because of the fact that faculty is the backbone of higher education and education is the backbone of a nation's development. So, for the development of nation the work-life balance should be improved.

Objectives

The main aim of this study was to administer an exploratory survey on work-life balance to faculty in higher education and analyze their relationship with job satisfaction. Specifically, we intended to investigate whether faculty job has a detrimental (work-family conflict) or advantageous effect (work-family enrichment) on family life, and vice versa (family-work conflict, family-work enhancement). Furthermore, particular attention was paid to socio-demographic variables to determine whether the insight of balance between participants' job and personal life varied according to them.

Methodology

To know the real status of work-life balance, a survey is conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire on 180 teachers of 7 government and 5 private education institutions of Hyderabad. In the Questionnaire, Likerts five point scale was employed to determine scores, where respondents were asked to rate each attribute on 5-point scale ranging from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied, (1=highly dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=somewhat satisfied, 4=satisfied, 5=highly satisfied) the data so collected was subjected to Factor Analysis. The questionnaire cover all the variables such as educational qualifications, nature of work, pay, job security, promotional opportunities and family & work life balance. Within the questionnaire we have also included items related to specific constructs of work-life balance (i.e., subjective importance of work, locus of control, flexibility and work autonomy) in order to analyze the presence of possible implications and/or correlations with it. The secondary data and information were obtained published articles and survey reports on work-life balance. The data thus collected were tabulated first manually after when they were analyzed by employing statistical techniques like percentage.

Sample characteristics

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondent's gender, age, experience, position, income and area of academic discipline. The distribution of gender shows that 60 % of respondent were male and 40 % female. The following table shows that the majority of the respondents were aged less than 55 years. It was observed from the result of the data analysis that about 23 of respondents were new comers and have below 5 years' experience, and 32 % reported that they spend more than 15 years for their current job. The distribution of position shows that the majority of respondent were lecturers/assistant professor's i.e. 52.78% and rest of them were associate and professors. Majority of the respondents (53.33%) have only master's degree.

The distribution of income shows that the majority of respondents are taking salary less than Rs. 40 000 and it is a true fact that faculty of private colleges of Hyderabad are taking salary that hardly fulfill the basic needs of life.

General findings

To know actual picture of work-life balance of faculty in Hyderabad region a survey has been conducted. The analysis and interpretations of the opinion survey has been appended below:

- Satisfaction with timing of work
- Satisfaction with personal benefits
- Satisfaction with support for career development
- Satisfaction with time left for family
- Satisfaction with taking days off
- Satisfaction with taking days off for sick relatives

Table 1: Details of the Respondents and Respondent Demographics

Factor	Parameter	No of Respondents (%)
Gender	Male	108 (60)
	Female	72 (40)
Age	Below 35	61 (33.89)
	Below 45	45 (25)
	Below 55	52 (28.89)
	above 55	22 (12.22)
Experience	< one year	21 (11.67)
	1-5 years	38 (21.11)
	6-10 years	36 (20)
	11-15 years	27 (15)
	16-20 years	35 (19.44)
	20+ years	23 (12.78)
Position	Lecturers/Asst. Professor	95 (52.78)
	Assoc. Professor	64 (35.56)
	Professor	21 (11.67)
Qualification	Master's degree	96 (53.33)
	Master's with	48 (26.67)
	Doctorate	36 (20)
Income	<Rs. 20,000	43 (23.89)
	Rs 20000 to 40000	67 (37.22)
	Rs 40000to 60000	43 (23.89)
	Rs 60,000+	27 (15)
Discipline	Science	61 (33.89)
	Social Sciences	32 (17.78)
	Management	41 (22.78)
	IT	46 (25.56)

Working hours and time to travel

Faculty were asked about their satisfaction about their working hours and travel time and from workplace. Nearly 46 % of the employees were dissatisfied with their working hours and travel time. 20% said that they were somewhat satisfied. The remaining 33% said that they were satisfied with their working hours and travel time. They have also said that there is no flexibility in working hours due to the work overload.

Holiday entitlement

Faculty were asked about their satisfaction about their Holiday entitlement. Nearly 46 % of the employees were dissatisfied with their working hours and travel time. 20% said that they were somewhat satisfied. The remaining 33% said that they were satisfied with their working hours and travel time. They have also said that there is no flexibility in working hours due to the work

overload. Most of the employees said that they are eligible for paid holidays usually in the summer vacation for the students but few employees said that they are not yet eligible for this. Employees were asked whether they have used all of their holiday entitlement in the past three years and most of them cited that they are not using the holiday entitlement completely.

Able to fulfill personal life and adequately perform work responsibilities

In the present study data was also collected on “able to have a fulfilling personal life and adequately perform your work responsibilities”. Respondents reported that 36% were highly dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction, 31.67% were somewhat satisfied. The remaining responses included 21.67% satisfaction and 10.56% high satisfaction.

Good work-life balance for faculty will help to develop organization & faculty

Faculty were asked about their satisfaction in regards to good work-life balance for faculty helps provide a more effective and successful agricultural education profession. Respondents reported 27% strongly agree, 34 % moderately agree, and 20.0% somewhat agree. The remaining responses included 13.3% slightly disagree, and 6.1% strongly disagree.

Able to spend time for family

As a response to the statement, “able to spend time with family, 25%and 28% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’ that is, only 53% respondents replied that they are not able to spend enough time with family and friends. Whereas, 19%, 11%, and 16% respondents showed respectively ‘somewhat agree’, ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’, it means, 47%respondents replied that that they are able to spend enough time with family and friends.

Table 2: Faculty response for work-life balance

Statement	Highly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied
Working hours and time to travel	21.11%	25.56%	20%	15%	18.33%
Holiday entitlement	11.67%	46.67%	21.11%	13.33%	7.22%
Able to fulfill personal life and adequately perform work responsibilities	13.33%	22.78%	31.67%	21.67%	10.56%
Good work-life balance for faculty will help to develop organization & faculty	6.11%	13.33%	20%	33.89%	26.67%
Able to spend time for family	25%	28.33%	18.89%	11.67%	16.11%
My family is cooperative to maintain a work life balance	6.11%	5%	11.67%	33.89%	43.33%
My organization is cooperative to maintain a work life balance	31.11%	37.22%	10.56%	11.67%	9.44%

My family is cooperative to maintain a work life balance

As regards the statement, “My family is cooperative to maintain a work life balance”, 6% and 5% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’ that is, 11% respondents replied that their family is not cooperative. Whereas, 11%, 34%, and 43% respondents showed respectively ‘somewhat agreement’, ‘agreement’ and ‘strongly agreement’, it means, 89% respondents replied their family is always cooperative in ensuring work-life balance. The faculty do not experience a conflict of family interfering with work.

My organization is cooperative to maintain a work life balance

As regards the statement, “My organization is cooperative to maintain a work life balance”, 31% and 37% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’ that is, 68% (31%+37%) respondents replied that their organization is not cooperative enough in ensuring their work-life balance. Whereas, 11%, 12%, and 9% respondents showed respectively ‘somewhat agreement’, ‘agreement’ and ‘strongly agreement’, it means, 32% respondents replied that their organizations as well as their colleagues are cooperative in ensuring their work-life balance.

Employee attitudes to work-life balance

- **Working arrangements**

Most of the employees feel that reduced working hours, time off for family emergencies and events, time off in college holidays can help them to balance their work life.

- **Employee satisfaction**

Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the following aspects of their work: the work itself, the hours they work, their job security, and the amount of pay they received. On the whole, employees were happy with their working arrangements and with other aspects of their work, although satisfaction with pay was lower.

Ways to Improve the Work-life Balance of the faculty of higher education:

We sought suggestions from the respondents to improve their work-life balance situation. The respondents mentioned many factors that can improve their work-life balance situations. The suggestions arise from the respondents are as follows:

- Flexible working hours
- Transport facility
- Residential facility
- Career advancement and encouragement for higher education
- Flexible work arrangements/ job sharing
- Reduced working hours & workload
- Child care and education

Conclusion

Though, much progress on work-life balance has made over last few years in India but still miles to go. From the survey it is found that 61% faculties replied that their jobs disturbed them in providing time to their family. Whereas very few respondents replied that their personal or family life disturbed them in doing their jobs. Therefore, the study reveals that both family and job of faculty are being affected due to work-life balance situation. But this work-life conflict should be minimized for the betterment of the organization, teachers themselves and for the family of the teachers. Faculty will be able to contribute to both family as well as organization only when the organization will ensure flexible working hours, transport facility, residential facility, encouragement for higher education, flexible work arrangements/ job sharing, reduced working hours and workload.

References

- Adams, A. G., King, L. A., & King, D. W. (1996). Relationships of job and family involvement, family social support, and work-family conflict with job and life satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 4(4), 411-420. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/apl/index.aspx>
- Allan, C., Loudoun, R., & Peetz, D. (2007). Influences on work/non-work conflict. *Journal of Sociology*, 43, 219–239.
- Archer, J. (1999). New teachers abandon field at high rate. *Education Week*, 18(27), 1-3. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/index.html>
- Barnes, G., Crowe, E., & Schaefer, B. (2007). The cost of teacher turnover in five school districts: A pilot study. Retrieved from National Commission on Teaching and America's Future website: http://www.nctaf.org/resources/research_and_reports/nctaf_research_reports/index.htm
- Better Balance, Better Business: Alberta Human Resources and Development, ISBN 0-7785-1606-7, Retrieved October 11, 2012 from <http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/betterbalance.pdf>
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters. *Educational Leadership*, 60(8), 6-8. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership.aspx
- Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(2), 219-232. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2005.1009.1002
- Hochschild, A.R. (1989). *The Second Shift*, Avon, New York, NY.
- Hochschild, A.R. (1997). *The Time Bind*, Metropolitan Books, New York, NY.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2003). Is there really a teaching shortage? Retrieved from Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy website: <http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/publications/reports.html>
- Kinman, G. (2001). Pressure points: A review of research on stressors and strains in UK academics. *Educational Psychology*, 21, 473-492.
- Kinman, G., & Jones, F. (2004). *Working to the limit: Stress and work-life balance in academic and academic-related employees in the UK*. London: Association of University Teachers Publications.

- Levine, A. E., &Haselkorn, D. (2008). Teaching at the Precipice. *Education Week*, 28(11), 32-34. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/index.html>
- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2003). No dream denied, a pledge to America's children, summary report. Washington DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.nctaf.org/resources/research_and_reports/nctaf_research_reports
- Osborne, E. (1992). A profession that eats its young. *Agricultural Education Magazine*, 64(12), 3-4.
- Schor, J. (1991), *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, Basic Books, New York, NY.
- Strizek, G. A., Pittsonberger, J. L., Riordan, K. E., Lyter, D. M., &Orlofsky, G. F. (2006). Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the Untied States: 2003-2004 Schools and staffing survey (NCES 2006-313 Revised). Retrieved from US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics website: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubSearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006313>

