

Work Life Balance of Doctors *Impact of Key Variables: A Study***M.SudhaMadhavi**

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ABSTRACT

Medical profession is a noble profession as Doctors contribute to the well being of the healthy society. Maintaining the Doctor's well being would enhance their effective and efficient delivery of services to patients. The present study intends to list the various variables impacting Work Life Balance of Doctors. The study covered 320 doctors from various disciplines of Medicine through a simple random method in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. The study focuses upon analysing the work life balance through variables viz number of working hours, number of sleeping hours, numbers of hours spending with the family and themselves. The study intends to identify the impact of the mentioned variables on overall work life balance achievement through application of general data analysis, and statistical techniques. The results reflected the strength of assessing the work life balance from the chosen variable data. The analysis has clearly shown that the overall satisfaction level of medical professionals has found to be having directly proportional relation with number of sleeping hours, number of hours spending with the family and number of hours spending on themselves. The study also found overall work life balance has inverse relation with the number of working hours.

KEY WORDS AND DESCRIPTION:**Evaluation, Impact, work life balance****Evaluation** could be defined as a way a person views on an aspect**Impact** is a measure of one's influence on another**Work life balance** is maintaining equilibrium between both family and work

Medicine is a profession in which dedication by the doctors to the wellbeing of others is of paramount importance. Careers in medicine historically demanded a selfless emphasis on caring for patients, sometimes at the expense of doctor's personal life. A doctor, particularly practicing in India, adapts well to the demanding working hours and spends excessive time to cure the patient's losing much of his personal time. Day in and day out he is busy in his noble work of lessening human misery. He is thus considered as a custodian to fight against the disease and contribute towards well being of patients.

As Doctors spend so much time on their profession, they are very much vulnerable to family disturbances and experience not having integrity in maintaining family life. This phenomenon is one of the reasons for the initiation of this study. A wide spectrum of social life in various countries has already proven that Work Life Balance is the key for a person's comprehensive satisfaction. Many professionals who were spending exceeding hours with the profession are prone to experience possible disturbances in their personal life. This background of Work Life Balance has inspired to pursue the present work.

WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work life balance is the term used to describe those practices at work place that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of people in achieving a balance between the demands of their family life and work lives. Work life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. The concept of work life balance has emerged from

the acknowledgement that an individual's work life and personal /family life may exert conflicting demands on each other. Conflict is a normal part of life and is a natural result of the demands arising from multiple roles of the person. In order to manage the negative spill over of conflict, it is important to balance the demands from both the domains. Work life balance is about adjusting work patterns to achieve overall fulfilment. A good work life balance enables to thrive and at the same time enables the people to easily combine work with other aspirations and responsibilities. Work life balance should not be understood as suggesting an equal balance or scheduling equal number of hours for each one's work and personal activities. A positive work life balance involves achievement and enjoyment. A good working definition of work life balance may be meaningful daily achievement and enjoyment in each of the four quadrants of the life i.e. work, family, friends and self.

UNDERSTANDING WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work life balance is an important area of HRM that is receiving increasing attention from government, researchers, management etc. (**Pocock et al. 2001**). Factors contributing to the work life balance issues are global competition, renewed interest in personal lives/family values and an aging work force (**Lock wood 2003**).

The growing relevance of work life balance in industrialized societies includes changing technology, changing values, and changing demographic trends. (**Sverko et.al 2002**) Though work life balance was initially construed as the concern for working mothers, it has been recognized as a vital issue for all professionals. (**Bird 2006**). Some organizations resonate the sentiment, "work is work and family is family" and basically the two do not mix, other organizations view work and personal life as competing priorities in a zero sum game in which a gain in one area means a loss in the other. (**Bailyn et.al 1997; Friedman et al 2000**). Work family facilitation is a process representing the synergies between the domain of work and family. Formally it can be defined as the extent to which an individual's engagement in one social system such as work or family contributes to growth in another social system. The study made by Dr. VijayaSardani (2013) reveals, one of every 3 doctors are dissatisfied due to lack of time for themselves or their families, it is found that 8.6 % of doctor's have high risk of exhaustion, 10 % have higher risk of burnout and 10 % develop drug addiction. Continued work stress leads to the burnout which is a work specific syndrome consisting of the components of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is the most commonly measured and reported of the three components and is characterized by a depletion of emotional, physical and interpersonal resources causing the individual to feel fatigued.

OBJECTIVE:

The study intends to evaluate certain variables affecting the work life balance, and measure the impact of same through data observation and applying few statistical techniques suiting to the data set.

SAMPLE

Hyderabad and Secunderabad are the fast growing cities in India with large number of corporate and government hospitals catering not only this state clientele but also to different parts of Southeast Asia. Hence, it was felt worthwhile studying work life balance of the critical health work force of these cities. A list of corporate hospitals was selected, and investigator interacted with HR managers of each hospital for administering the questionnaire to the doctors.

The sample was selected through a simple random sample method for 320 Medical doctors working in corporate hospitals located at Hyderabad and Secunderabad having a working experience of 7-10 years. The age group of the selected doctors has been with the range of 30-50 years who belong to various medical specialities. The sample of 320 doctors included several disciplines in medical field such as general physicians, orthopaedics, surgeons, paediatricians, dentists, psychiatrists, etc. Some of the hospitals where the doctors are working are Apollo, Yashoda, KIMS, Kamineni and SVSS medical and dental hospital.

TOOL USED

The tool used for the study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of 47 questions. A set of 20 questions were constructed with a 5 point scale format ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1), and few questions were in yes or no format. The questions were related to self evaluation of each medical doctor on number of working hours, number of sleeping hours, number of hours spent on family and on themselves influencing the overall achievement of work life balance.

PROCEDURE

Investigator visited each hospital and has taken consent from senior medical administrator to administer the questionnaire. Later the investigator visited each member of the sample (Doctor) in his/her chamber, taken consent and administered the questionnaire individually. The number of duly filled questionnaires was 320.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaires were collected and a database has been prepared in MS Excel/SPSS. The data was processed for analysis, Bar Diagram, Pie Charts and a specific regression model using SPSS called "Structural Equation Model" (SEM) was used to analyse the data statistically.

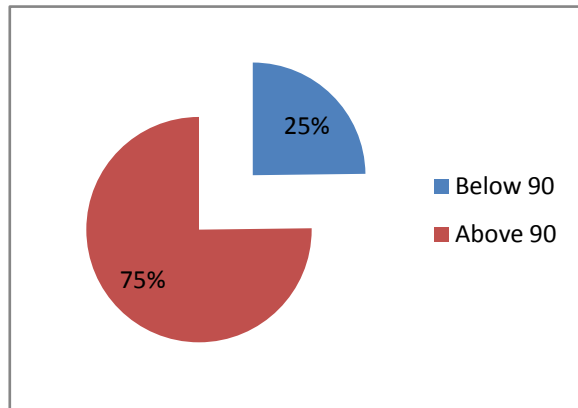
The analysis was related to three variables viz, number of working hours(variable 1), number of sleeping hours (variable 2), number of hours spent on family and on themselves (variable 3), and their impact on overall achievement of work life balance.

SCORING METHOD ADOPTED:

The questionnaire comprised of both ranked and non ranked variables where 1 is extremely high score for work life balance and 5 is a very low score on work life balance method of ranking. The cumulative score for the professionals has been calculated to know how the

individuals are faring on work life balance score. The threshold for moderate score has been fixed as 90 out of overall score of 135 (as the highest).

The following chart illustrated the scoring for the professionals, where it is observed only 25% of the professionals are scoring high on work life balance and the remaining have scored low in work life balance. The researcher would like to point out that there are several reasons which affect work life balance. On further analysis of different reasons pointed out by



medical professionals few of them are presented in following tables and graphs. Some of the key reasons which are swinging the work life balance to a low level as per medical professionals are long working hours; not being able to spent time with family, not being able to upgrade themselves with domain knowledge, and focussing upon patient's feedback and so on.

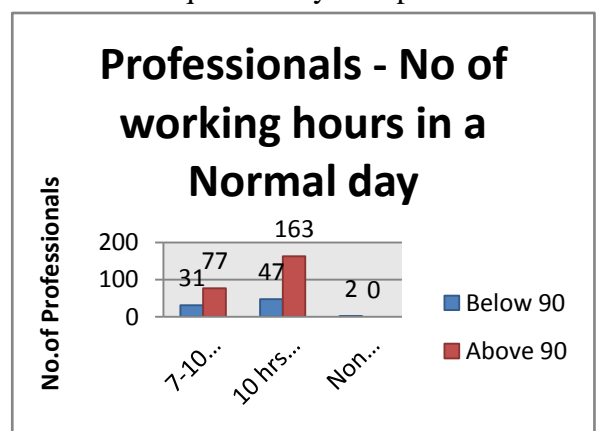
The researcher has studied the following variables which would possibly have greater impact on overall work life balance

VARIABLE-1

1) NUMBER OF WORKING HOURS IN A NORMAL DAY

The number of working hours is an important reason to assess work life balance. The data base has been divided into 2 categories one, the doctors belonging to working hour category of less than 10 hours per day and others working more than 10 hours per day. The graph shows that 163 doctors (51%) are spending 10-12 hours and few are working for more than 12 hours continuously. Such long hours of work would definitely impact human performance and it could be detrimental to their physical and psychological well being. The long working hours seem to be one of the important factors which are contributing to their low level of work life balance. By spending long hours in their hospitals and clinics they seem to be giving less time to their family and to themselves. Hence it is quite likely to upset their performance both at work and the roles which they play in their family.

VARIABLE -2: NUMBER OF SLEEPING HOURS PER DAY

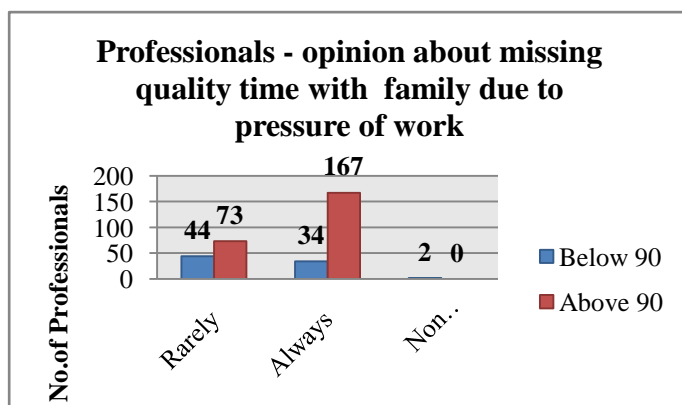


As an evident truth, sleep is an essential rest every individual requires and it provides the required healthiness for the next day to work. Individuals who often press their sleeping hours very regularly would suffer with lot of physical and mental fitness problems leading to overall inefficiency in the work in a long run. The above table statistically proves that 202 doctors (63%) have been experiencing inadequate sleep are scoring very low on work life balance.

VARIABLE 3: NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT ON FAMILY AND ON THEMSELVES

3.1 Professionals missing quality time with family or friends because of pressure of work?

Another significant variable impulsive upon over all work life balance is the amount of time spent on family or personnel life. It is often a direct variable representing the preference of the professional for wanting to spend time with the family.

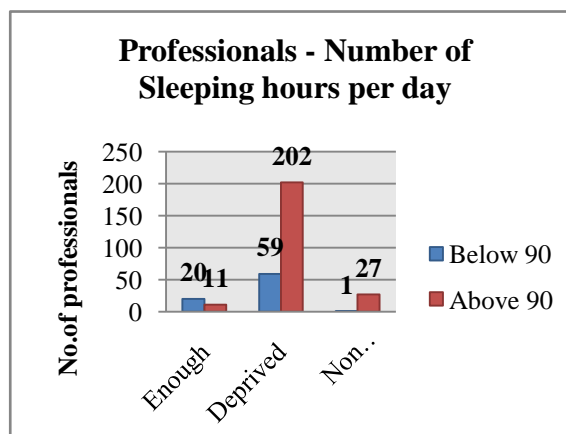


Many studies revealed adequately that professionals often not spending quality time for their family and themselves are affected by excessive work fatigue which is leading to stress and depression.

The individuals scoring very low on work life balance only due to work pressure is another way the data has been analyzed, and has depicted, work pressure certainly stood out the case for not being able to spend quality time with the family. The same has been shown in above picture.

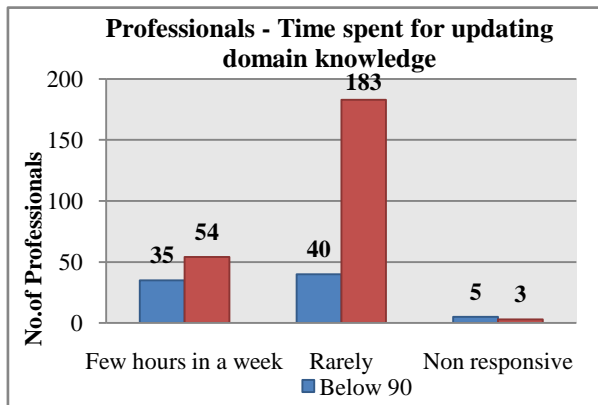
3.2) TIME SPENT BY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS IN UPDATING DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE

Domain knowledge question is particular designed to examine the thirst of the professionals to learn more and be active in changing medical innovations and practices. The professionals who were able to concentrate on this aspect seem to be more systematic and planned about their respective career. The more the individuals are planned, the more they would plan even on balancing on their work and family. The above picture illustrates that the professionals who are spending time on updating knowledge seem to have scoring good on work life balance and the professionals who rarely provide time on updation of domain knowledge are scoring very low on work life balance.



Long working hours, working without a break, sleep deprivation can compound and disturb the balance to the large extent.

The researcher felt that several factors contribute to work life balance and reviewing three important variables as a combination would find a possible impact on overall work life balance. It was felt relevant to apply SEM statistic to understand more deeply.



Structural Equation Model

The selection of the model was based on an intention to find relationships between multiple variables and their impact on lead independent variable which is overall work life balance. SEM describes relationship between variables, which is of two kinds. SEM model is similar to combination of multiple regression and factor analysis (Lynd D Bacon, in a SPSS Publication).

Since SEM Model is similar to combination of multiple regression and factor analysis this has been applied to the data of this study.

The Model depicts whether the relationship is positive or negative by loading the impact values ranging from 0-1, where 1 being high impact and 0 being low impact.

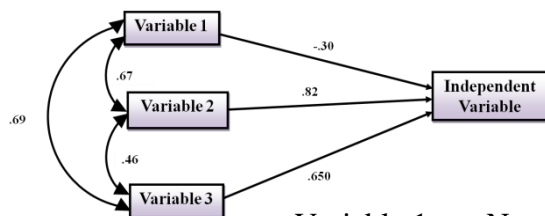


Figure 4

Variable 1: Number of Working Hours

Variable 2: Number of Sleeping Hours

Variable 3: Number of Hours spent on Family/Themselves

Independent Variable: Over all Work Life balance

The scores -0.3 of variable 1 i.e. number of working hours has shown negative impact on work life balance. The results revealed the professionals who are excessively working are devoting time, energy, resources completely to his/her profession, thus resulting in burn out also leading to low work life balance which has also been observed in the study of "Burnout and Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance Among US Physicians Relative to the General US Population" by Tait D Shanafelt et al (2012).

It may be noted that variable 2 (number of sleeping hours) score being 0.82 and variable 3 (time spent on family and on themselves) score being 0.65 seem to have a high and positive

impact on work life balance of the doctors. Their effort in spending productive time with family perhaps has a great impact on keeping the balance without tilting towards negative side.

FINDINGS

The analysis has clearly shown that the time spent on individual rest, quality time spent on family and on themselves has directly proportional relation with overall satisfaction level of medical doctors. The number of working hours as increased would affect inversely to work life balance as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since, the family life has strong bearing on work life balance, corporate hospital management may make effort in encouraging doctors to participate in the family activities such as get together, providing vacation to entire family, sanctioning leave on family occasions and extend care and support to the needy in the family.

Doctors could be made to adhere to stipulated number of hours of work beyond which they should not be allowed to carry on activities unless and until it is emergency.

Doctors may be made to go through regular medical check up and incentives may be extended to doctors maintaining good health.

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