

Relationship between Stress and Work Life Balance

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is characterised by a high degree of role enrichment with a low degree of role conflict in work and non-work life domains (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). Stress as “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his/ her resources and endangering his/ her wellbeing” (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). This research aims to study the relationship between stress and work life balance. Research was conducted on a sample size of 60 participants of age group 21-35 years, working in the private sector, from Surat, Gujarat, India. The sample was selected through Convenience Sampling technique. Perceived Stress Scale and Work life balance scale were used to measure stress and work Life Balance of participants respectively. This research hypothesised that there will be no statistically significant relationship between stress and work life balance. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, and Pearson’s correlation through SPSS software. Results showed that there is no statistically significant relationship between stress and work life balance.

Keywords: *Stress, Work Life Balance, Perceived Stress Scale, Employees, Work Life Balance Scale*

In today’s time, where gender equality is on rise and individuals of a family work simultaneously, it is very important for the employees to manage stress and work life. Stress can ignite from family environment, workplace environment, relation with colleagues, managing kids etc. It is significant to maintain the dual responsibilities of home as well as workplace.

Work life balance is the state of equilibrium where a person equally prioritizes the demands of one's career and the demands of one's personal life. The concept of Work-life balance is becoming more and more important in the fast-changing working environment. Increased working hours have an adverse impact on the lifestyle of a huge number of people, which ultimately affects their social and psychological well-being. Work life balance has become an important concern to both employers and employees for most of the organisations. Work life balance basically deals with employees’ ability to prioritise both work and social life, family, lifestyle, health etc (Kaur, 2016).

Work Life Balance is a state where an individual manages real or potential conflict between different demands on his or her time and energy in a way that satisfies his or her needs for

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well-being and self-fulfilment. It is perceived strongly that work is an ultimate source of stress and distress among individuals. Job stress influences an employee's physical as well as mental condition (Clutterbuck 2003).

Work life balances satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum role of conflict (Greenhaus 2002).

Work life balance is the interaction between work and non-work in countries where money is primarily produced and dispersed through labour markets. Work life balance is a subjective phenomenon that changes from person to person (Felstead.et.al. 2002).

Work life balance initiatives are not only a concern for employees of a single country. In global communities also aspires to flexibility and control over their work and personal lives. There are many different ways to define and discuss balance but most seem to include the notions of flexibility, juggling, and sustainability (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, and Weitzman, 2001; Papalexandris and Kramer, 1997), (Brown, 2004), (Van Eijnatten and Vos, 2002).

Work-life balance and stress go hand in hand. What seems to matter in this regard is the importance workers place on balance in their lives and the effectiveness of workplace policies and practices in supporting them to achieve their goals (Ross & Vasantha, 2014).

Stress is mostly ignored by people who are in the position to manage it. Stress is a widespread phenomenon all around during all human lifespan. Every individual has experienced it throughout human history. The reason for the wide presence and inclusiveness of stress in human communities is the complexity of human social, personal, and ecological environment, multiple and simultaneous interactions of humans with surrounding issues, and diversity in stress expression. In psychological sciences, stress is a feeling of mental pressure and tension. Low levels of stress might be desired, useful, and even healthy. Stress, in its positive form, can improve bio psychosocial health and facilitate performance (Shahsavarani A. et al,2015).

Furthermore, positive stress is considered as an important factor to motivation, adaptation, and reaction to the surrounding environment. However, high levels of stress could result in biological, psychological, and social problems and even serious harm to people. Stress may be either external with environmental sources, or caused by internal perceptions of the individual (Shahsavarani A. et al,2015).

Stress is a feeling we experience when we lose confidence in our capability to cope with a situation. Stress arises from either a lack of assessment, or an incorrect appraisal of persons and environment; leading to unreasonable expectations and disappointment (Denise.A, 2002).

Stress in the workplace can have disastrous consequences. There are many causes in the workplace involving a complex combination of social, physical and psychological elements. Stress is difficult to measure as it influences individuals differently. Stress has a strong relationship with unhappiness as well as ill health among people (Blaug, Kenyon, & Lekhi, 2007).

Stress is not just a part of the job, a thing to be ignored or a price paid up for career success, it is found to be a cause of various stress related illnesses either directly or indirectly.

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Unhealthy work environment affects an employee's health both mentally and physically. Many organisations perceive stress as an indication of weakness and in order to avoid adverse results, it is kept hidden. Stress is mostly ignored by people who are in the position to manage it (Melanie Bickford, 2005).

Job stress can be defined as something in the work environment that is perceived as threatening or demanding along with giving an experience of discomfort. Job threat stress is described by individuals as qualities of work experience which induce feelings of being overwhelmed or nerve-wracked. Job pressure stress is the perception of work being demanding or time-pressured (Stanton, et al., 2001).

In order to reduce perceived job threat stressors on work-life issues and employee wellbeing, person-centred stress management techniques could be recommended. Examples are providing relaxation/mindfulness meditation classes, exercise promotion and providing facilities such as gymnasiums, promotion of healthy eating and providing good food choices, and counselling (Aderman, et al., 1983).

Lots of research has been done but very few of them concerned with particular population taken. Dearth of research has been observed pertaining to the employees of private sector of Surat City. Thus, this study aspires to study the relationship of Stress and work life balance among the population residing in Surat City.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

To understand the relationship of stress and work life balance.

Sample

The present study includes a sample of 60 employees (32 females and 28 males). Their age ranges from 21 to 35 years. Employees residing in Surat city were considered. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect the sample. Employees who had 3 and more 3 years of work experience were considered.

Criteria

Inclusion criteria

- Employees working in private companies were taken into consideration.
- Age ranges from 21-35 years.
- Employees from Surat city were taken into consideration.
- 3 and more than 3 years of work experience from the same organisations were taken into consideration.
- Only English speaking, reading and writing teachers were included.

Exclusion criteria

- Physically and mentally challenged individuals were excluded.
- Employees outside Surat city were excluded.
- Less than 3 years of work experience were excluded.

Hypothesis

There will be no statistically significant relationship between stress and work life balance.

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Procedure

In order to collect the data, google form was created and circulated among 60 employees from different workplaces in the month of April 2022. The form consisted of 4 Parts: Informed consent, Demographic details, Questionnaire, Debriefing section. Basic information about the study was already mentioned in the form and email address of the Researcher was provided in case the participants had any questions regarding the study. Demographic information including name, gender, age, city, education qualification, socio economic status, physical disability, marital status, years of experience email address was also collected. The main body of the form was in 3 sections i.e., it measured the perceived stress scale of employees. A validated psychological test was used in the upper part. There were separate instructions and were provided prior to the starting of the test. The respondents were asked to answer honestly. It was made sure that the participants' information was kept confidential. The aim of the study and information about the psychological assessment used were provided under the column of debriefing at the end of the questionnaire. It was made sure that all the ethics like sharing of the results, debriefing, withdrawal from the study etc. After the data was collected, it was statistically analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation.

Tool used

- 1. Perceived Stress Scale. (PSS):** The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. It is a 10-item self-report tool that is intended to gauge how unpredictable, unmanageable, and overburdened people believe their lives to be. The scale also includes a number of direct queries about current levels of experienced stress. The test- retest reliability and predictive validity of this scale has been found to be the strongest for shorter time periods. The 10-item self-report instrument has established reliability ($r=0.85$). Regarding the internal consistency of the PSS, Remor and Carrobles (2001) obtained a value of $\alpha=0.67$, and Remor (2006) a value of $\alpha=0.81$ (Cohen, 1994).
- 2. Work life balance scale:** Work life balance (WLB) is a self-report scale consisting of 27 items that are rated on 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.93 items to derive the scores with no item overlap (Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009).

Ethics

- Confidentiality was maintained.
- Informed consent from potential research participants was taken.
- Detailed debriefing to the participants was done.
- The participants had the right to withdraw from the case.
- Transparency was maintained during the entire research.
- Non-Discrimination among the participants was done.

RESULT AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1.1: Descriptive analysis for stress and work life balance.

Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Stress | 60 | 19.2833 | 4.22700 |
| Work-life balance | 60 | 78.0500 | 10.00241 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 60 | | |

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Table below includes a summary of the data the sample size is 60 and according to the study the people who are stressed have a mean score of 19.28333 and people's work life balance mean score is 78.0500. People who are stressed have a standard deviation of 4.22700 and people's work life balance standard deviation is 10.00241.

Table 1.2: correlation analysis for stress and work life balance.

Correlations

| | | Stress | Work-life Balance |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------|-------------------|
| Stress | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .068 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .605 |
| | N | 60 | 60 |
| Work-life Balance | Pearson Correlation | .068 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .605 | |
| | N | 60 | 60 |

Data analysis of correlation indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between the two variables. According to the survey, stress has no significance at 2-tailed is 0.605 and work-life balance has no significance at 2-tailed is 0.605.

H₀ -There will be no statistically significant relationship between stress and work life balance.

The hypothesis of the research states that there will be no Statistically significant relationship between stress and work life balance. For this purpose, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used. After analysis no statistically significant correlation was found between both the variables.

There has been no relationship between stress and work life balance as the correlation coefficient came out to be .068 which was not found significant. Thus, there will be no significant relationship between stress and work life balance because stress is not only at work life there are different kinds of stressors that everyone has to cope with. The various factors in terms of which individuals experience stress are family, relationships, household chores, education, health problems etc (kapur. r, 2021). It can be observed from the research table that the result is not in accordance with previous research done in this area. Researcher claimed that managing the conflict between work demands and family responsibilities has grown to be a serious challenge for organisations. Employees across all organisations are focusing more on the issue of work life balance. Handling escalating expectations from both the work and family was a significant source of stress for many employees, which even contributed to health issues. Men and women both endure stress due to varying responsibilities and obligations, while it is thought that work family role tension is more common among female employees (burely, 1994). So, according to this research it can be concluded that there are many factors affecting stress and work life balance and it's more incorporated in females.

Work orientation and, in particular, the degree to which work (or home) is a key life interest are among the personal characteristics that each person's perceptions of work-life balance are influenced by. Looking at the characteristics that affect work-life balance, the findings show that spouse support at home and co-worker support at work both favourably contribute to work-life balance, whereas child care issues, senior dependency at home, and unjust

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criticism at the workplace all negatively affect it. As a result, the research's findings demonstrate eleven factors that have been linked to work-life balance. Of the eleven variables, social support, organisational factors, stress factors, and IT variables are the main ones that influence a person's ability to balance their work and personal lives (kapur. r, 2021).

Thus, accepting our null hypothesis stating that there will be no statistically significant relationship between stress and work life balance.

CONCLUSION

Motive of the study was to study stress and its effect on work life balance. The result of the study reveals that there is no statistically significant relationship between stress and work life balance. Employees not only have work stress but they also have family stress, social life, health stress etc. They have to properly prioritize between stress and work. We can say that stress will have no relationship with work life balance because stress has many other factors associated with it.

Limitations

- The main limitations of the study are as participants of the study are from a particular private sector.
- The present study was based on a limited sample.
- The age group included in the study is very limited 21 to 35. A wider age group taken into study would lead to more generalisable results. This hampers the generalisability of the study.
- The data cannot be generalised as the number of Males and females are not equal, the data collected is biased towards females.
- General awareness has been increasing in the society with relation to stress, which makes the topic of the study a little less relevant.

Future implications

- The present research used non probability sampling techniques, future research can use probability sampling techniques
- The study only focused on employees working in the private sector. It can also be analysed both publicly and privately to determine any correlations and increase generalisability.
- In addition to this we can also see differences in working males and working females.
- Age range was not wide for current research, for future research can take a wide age range.
- The present study sample only included data from one specific city; future research may include data from one state or compare two states.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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