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## Balancing Between Work and Life: Determinants and Dynamics

Asif Imtiaz<sup>1</sup>, Md. Mobarak Hossain<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer (Economics), Department of Management Information Systems, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup> Department of Management Information Systems, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Corresponding Author: Asif Imtiaz, Lecturer (Economics), Department of Management Information Systems, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka, Dhaka – 1000, Bangladesh. Tel: +880-1628-759566, E-mail: asifimtiaz.mis@du.ac.bd

### Abstract

Thumping a perfect balance between professional and personal life is necessary for upholding the standard of life. The purpose of this study is to discover the determinants those can significantly predict the extent of work-life balance. A sample of 293 workers ranging from 35 years of age to 45 years of age, was analyzed using factor analysis and multiple linear regression. Three latent constructs, i.e. "Organizational Support," "Managing Workers through Benevolence" and "Regularity and Flexibility of Working Hours" were extracted among which the last two constructs have a positive association with the extent of work-life balance while the other construct having no significant relationship. Females compared to males, have less control in balancing work and life, indicating gender divide in this sphere. These findings might be handy for the employing authorities, either public or private.

**Keywords:** Work-Life Balance, Organizational Support, Benevolence, Working Hours

### 1. Introduction

Work-life balance is essential for individuals' well-being, organizations' performance, and a functioning society (Darcy et al., 2012). In the present time, there has been a growing curiosity in the work-life interface in the human resource management literature regarding the source and the effect of the dispute between two spheres (Singh, 2013). It examines the concept of balance and its impact on the relationship between work and the rest of the life (Guest, 2002). Work-life balance emphasizes proper prioritization between professional work and personal lifestyle (En.wikipedia.org, 2017). Krassner (1958) said that anthropologist used a concept of happiness that is to have as little difference as possible between work and play. The concept work-life balance first used in the UK in the late 1970s to explain the balance between professional and personal life. In the United States, this phrase was first used in 1986 (Kanthisree, 2013). Research shows that maintaining work-life balance has always reflected social, economic, and workplace development (Lewis et al., 2007). Work-life balance has been framed up having the realization of making lives better for its employees, which in turn supports their individual growth as well as the improvement of the company. If an employee retains a good balance between profession and personal life, he or she produces a better outcome than the outcome would have been produced without a sustainable work-life balance. Thus it is beneficial for the organization to make an effective work-life balance policy (Clark, 2001;

Goodstein, 1994). Work-life balance can be influenced by demographical factors such as age, gender because these factors indicate the level of energy, ability to work and how keen the employee is to work (O'Laughlin et al., 2005). There has been a growing tendency of participation of women in the workplace (Tennant & Sperry, 2003). The greater participation of women along with men in the labor sector requests a better work-life balance among employees (Guest, 2002), though, realizing the fact that the challenges faced from the work and family life found to have some negative impacts on the well-being of employees and their families (Hochschild, 1997), they are given flexible working hours, extended job security which helps them to make a balance between household activities and professional work (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Research shows that the married women work fewer hours than married men and there is a significant difference between them in allocating time among professional work, domestic work and leisure over the life cycle (Fine-Davis et al., 2004). Younger and better-educated people may also perceive more work-life imbalance since they could be loaded with more work-pressure due to their level of energy and efficiency. Stress caused by excessive workload causes family-work conflicts and work-family conflicts (Hyman et al., 2003). However, some other factors like social, economic, organizational, and perceived control of work schedules impact on work-life balance (Keene & Quadagno, 2004; Hill et al., 2001). Higher levels of schedule control, since schedule control improves work-life balance, it might be more important to bind the unbinding working hours than altering working schedule (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001).

Work-life balance is about having a proper balance and control over when, where, and how to work. It increases effectiveness as well as satisfaction in both personal and professional life. The main success of any organization depends on the effectiveness of the employees, but the employees' effectiveness depends on the proper balance between personal and professional life. (Parvin & Kabir, 2011). The employers emphasized the topic and recognized that work-life balance is necessary in order to get the output efficiently from the employees because efficient output and a healthy work-life balance have a strong association (Hafeez & Akbar, 2015). To get an optimized output, one prerequisite is to have an effective motivation of employees in workplace (Bansal & Sharma, 2012) and an influencing motivation (Hall et al., 2013) leading the combination of two personal variables i.e. tendency to approach success and tendency to avoid failure (Atkinson & Feather, 1966) and those will be effective for deriving the satisfaction of employees (Singh, 2013). Work-life imbalance causes a depression that results in decreased productivity and higher absenteeism (Layous et al., 2011). Low level of work-life balance can cause employees to experience low morale, higher absenteeism, experiencing high turnover, and very poorer work quality (Seligman, 2011). Hill and his colleagues (2008) found that work-life balance policies are the keys to reduce stress, turnover, and absenteeism while exerting a positive impact on the employee's job satisfaction, productivity, and retention. McCarthy and his colleagues (2008) gave emphasis on the importance to implement proper work-life initiatives. These initiatives include flexible working hours, financial facilities, childcare facilities, counseling.

Research finds that there are many barriers to implement strategies relevant to work-life balance; although some achievements have made over the years, still some of the challenges are remaining (De Cieri et al., 2005). This particular study focuses on finding the dynamics of the extent of work-life balance of the workers from age slab 35-45. We chose this age group because from the past experience of the researchers, they came across the common perception that employees from this age-bracket have the highest probability to get engaged in both professional and family life. Thus, they must go through the path of balancing work and personal life. Therefore, we set the following objectives:

- To explore and establish the latent constructs working behind the movement of work-life balance of the employees in either way.
- To examine the effects of those latent constructs and demographic traits on the extent of the work-life balance of the employees.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### *2.1 Research Setting*

A cross-sectional study was designed based on a pool of employees aged between 35 to 45 years. This particular age group was selected because of the common and valid perception which assumes peoples of that age are

immensely engaged in both professional and household activities those are needed to be optimized to maintain a good work-life associated with a healthy familial and social life. 'Convenience Sampling Method' was chosen as the sampling strategy since this is a non-probabilistic sampling strategy which rivets samples being picked from that part of the population which is close to hand (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003). Our sample consisted of workers from both the public and private sector. They were informed of the purpose of the study and were provided with a consent form. They were neither involved in the process of development of the research design nor built any research item used in this study. But they were aware of the fact that the result of this study might be available to them upon request.

### 2.2 Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument by which the data were collected. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. First part contains demographic information as in gender and age while the second part contains self-developed questions which are inspired by and modified from the studies of Geurts et al., (2005); Greenblatt (2002); Thomas and Ganster (1995); Wayne, Randel and Stevens (2006); Voydanoff (2004) and Hill et al., (2001). In total, 302 questionnaires were sent to the participants through the internet. 9 participants were excluded due to null response and incomplete response. The ultimate cohort consisted of 293 employees (Male = 255, Female = 38) of different organizations aged from 35 to 45 [Mean = 38.94; (SD = 2.91)] on whom all the analyses were carried out.

### 2.3 Measurement

Data on self-developed items which are shown in Table 1 were collected using a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "Strongly Disagree" to (5) "Strongly Agree" indicating the level of agreement associated with each statement. We used the composite score derived from the level of agreement from the statements "You are satisfied with the working hours and as it fits with your private life" and "Your present way of life gives balance to your work" as the score representing the extent of work-life balance (out of 10). We recoded the information gathered on participants' gender as "Male = 1" and "Female = 0".

Table 1. Independent variables and definition

<i>Items</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Prsnl1	Work stress creates diseases like hypertension, diabetes, etc.
Prsnl2	Your company arranges events like a holiday camp, picnic to help to manage work and personal life.
Org1	Work-life balance policy in the organization should be customized to individual needs.
Org2	Your organization takes the initiative to manage the work-life balance of its employees.
Org3	Work-life balance leads to significant improvement in absenteeism
SocioEcon1	In house facilities of organization support work-life balance.
SocioEcon2	Your company offers available financial services to support your family.
SocioEcon3	You miss out quality time with your family because of the pressure of work.
SocioEcon4	Your company organizes social functions which are suitable for you and your families.
Time1	You need not to stay in the office for long hours or overnight and even on holidays, thereby don't feel depressed about your life.
Time2	Flexible working hours provided by the company due to their adoption of Work Life Management Policy is at a satisfactory level.

### 2.4 Statistical Analyses

We executed an Exploratory Factor Analysis to “identify the fewest possible constructs needed to reproduce the original data” (Gorsuch, 1995). Osborne and Costello (2005) noted, “The aim of factor analysis is to reveal any latent variables that cause the manifest variables to covary.” After completing the factor analysis, we ran a multiple linear regression taking the extent of work-life balance as the dependent variable depending on the factor score coefficients of the extracted factors, age, and gender.

$$\text{Work-life balance} = B_0 + B_1 (\text{Age}) + B_2 (\text{Gender}) + B_i (\text{Extracted Factor Score Coefficients}); \quad (1)$$

Where,  $i = 3 \dots n$

The exploratory factor analysis was done by using SPSS 16.0, and multiple linear regression analysis was performed using STATA/IC 13.0.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

The Bartlett test of sphericity came out significant ( $\chi^2_{55} = 246.048$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ) indicating the factorability of the correlation matrix. The value from Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was 0.633, which meant factor analysis was appropriate since there was sampling adequacy relative to the items developed (Malhotra & Dash, 2008). Based on the initial eigenvalues, we found that there are four factors those are associated with eigenvalue greater than 1.0. Those four factors accounted for around 53% of the total variances. Thus, four factors were extracted at the first stage.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.633
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	246.048
	df
	55
	Sig.
	.000

Table 3. Eigenvalues

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.127	19.333	19.333
2	1.310	11.910	31.242
3	1.227	11.157	42.399
4	1.133	10.300	52.699
5	.955	8.683	61.382
6	.892	8.108	69.490
7	.805	7.322	76.812
8	.738	6.709	83.520
9	.663	6.030	89.550
10	.635	5.776	95.326
11	.514	4.674	100.000

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Prsn11	-.341	.220	.506	.443
Prsn12	.481	.235	.123	.338
Org1	-.022	.642	.101	-.061
Org2	.659	.218	-.124	-.022
Org3	.102	.744	-.099	.091
SocioEcon1	.095	.574	.211	-.054
SocioEcon2	.532	.073	.601	.008
SocioEcon3	.105	.103	.797	-.114
SocioEcon4	.667	-.130	.199	.037
Time1	-.038	-.089	.071	.711
Time2	.216	-.006	-.239	.653

After analyzing the rotated component matrix, we eliminated three cross-loading items (Prsn11, Prsn12, and SocioEcon2) and again repeated the procedure. As expected, the Bartlett test of sphericity was significant even at 1% level of significance ( $\chi^2_{28} = 91.44$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ) and the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test (0.564) was upper than the cut-off value 0.5. Three factors were extracted because their respective eigenvalue were greater than 1.0.

Table 5: Rotated component matrix after offloading 3 variables those crossload

	Component		
	1	2	3
Org1	.649	.080	-.079
Org2	.143	.615	.098
Org3	.707	.110	.176
SocioEcon1	.659	-.028	-.094
SocioEcon3	.238	.457	-.451
SocioEcon4	-.094	.821	.087
Time1	-.003	.076	.550
Time2	.035	.079	.795

One item (SocioEcon3) cross-loaded again with more than one factor and thus dropped from the analysis. We reiterated the procedure one more time, and the Bartlett test of Sphericity ( $\chi^2_{21} = 67.43$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ) and value of KMO test (0.566) was satisfactory, again. Three factors or construct were extracted because of having eigenvalue more than 1.0, respectively. No cross-loading item was found, and we reached our destination finally.

Table 6: Rotated component matrix after omitting SocioEcon3

	Component		
	1	2	3
Org1	.668	.022	-.018
Org2	.166	.733	-.055
Org3	.700	.175	.097
SocioEcon1	.664	-.053	-.070
SocioEcon4	-.066	.794	.105
Time1	-.003	-.088	.756
Time2	-.003	.140	.742

Latent construct 1 is associated with 3 items (Org1, Org3, and SocioEcon1). Construct 2 is correlated with two items, such that Org2 and SocioEcon4. The final construct is having a correspondence with two items, which are Time1 and Time2. We named the latent construct 1 as "Organizational Support." We did so because customization of work-life balance policy by recognizing individual needs, work-life balance lessens absenteeism and in-house facilities enhance work-life balance have high loadings on this. Organizational initiatives to manage employees' work-life balance and making arrangements of social functions for workers' families have high factor loadings on the second construct, and therefore we can portray it as "Managing Workers through Benevolence." Absence of depression due to not so prolonged working hours more than regular hours at office and derivability of satisfaction due to flexible working hours have factor loadings more than 0.3 on the third construct and we labeled it as "Regularity and Flexibility of Working Hours."

### 3.2 Multiple Linear Regression

A multiple linear regression set up the fact that "Managing Workers through Benevolence", "Regularity and Flexibility of Working Hours" and Gender could statistically significantly forecast the extent of work-life balance with  $F(5, 287) = 14.62$ ,  $P = 0.00$  and these three variables could explain 20.3% variability in the degree of work-life balance of the workers. The greater the practice of the organization in managing workers through benevolence, the higher the composite score for the extent of work-life balance ( $\beta = 0.67$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ) controlling for other variables. The same relationship was found true when it came to the point of regularity and flexibility of working hours ( $\beta = 0.37$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ) set par. One astonishing fact came out as we observed the relationship of work-life balance and gender that was females were reported to be more off-balance than males ( $\beta = -0.58$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ). The other variables were statistically insignificant, even at 10% level.

Table 7: Result of Multiple Linear Regression

Satisfaction Level	Coefficient	Standard Error	t	$P >  t $	95% Confidence Interval	
Gender Bin	-0.577	0.300	-1.92	0.056*	-1.169	0.014
FactorCoeff1	0.006	0.099	0.06	0.954	-0.190	0.201
FactorCoeff2	0.670	0.101	6.58	0.000**	0.469	0.871
FactorCoeff3	0.373	0.099	3.74	0.000**	0.177	0.570
Age	0.03	0.034	1.06	0.289	-0.031	0.105
Constant	5.596	1.393	4.01	0.000**	2.852	8.340

Note:  $R^2 = 0.2030$ ;  $F(5, 287) = 14.62^{**}$ ; \*  $P < 0.10$ ; \*\*  $P < 0.000$

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Nowadays, it has been argued that achieving a balance between home and professional life is increasingly getting a priority for many people (Sturges & Guest, 2004). Work-life balance can impinge on the standard of life, job satisfaction, work stress, turnover absenteeism, and competitive environment (Singh, 2013). Lower family satisfaction can decrease working performance, decrease productivity, can cause higher absenteeism and poorer working quality; while higher satisfaction can draw better working performance (Forgeard et al., 2011).

Policies sensitive to employee's individual needs and in house facilities of an organization can together affect the work-life balance this organizational support leads to the improvement of absenteeism. Organizational initiative

to manage the work-life balance of the employees and arrangement of social functions for families of the employees make works enjoyable and things easier to manage. This benevolent way to manage the workers bears good fruit for the organization, also. Maximum employees staying long hours in the office or overnight even on holiday negatively affect the mind of employees so the organization should fix the time limit so that the employees can spend their quality time with their family and friends (Lobel, 1991). But the employees should be given more and more flexible working hours to make them satisfied and make a good work-life balance policy.

As found in the earlier studies, females compared to males are troubled more in terms of balancing professional life and personal life. One reason might be that they have to carry out the household chores and in most cases, they didn't get appropriate support from their counterparts. The long tradition of hiring housemaids are not much in action these days because of everlasting growth in RMG sector, which went against getting a bit of relief in household activities for women. Age has nothing to do with the work-life balance. Managing workers through benevolence is very important as well as the regularity and flexibility of working hours to determine the extent of work-life balance. This is relatable because workers expect that their authorities will understand that they too have families and personal life. Steps of the authorities to ensure enough family time makes workers happily engaged in their works. Regularity and flexibility of working hours responsive to the needs of employees create a breathing space for the employees and reduce the risk of being laid off because of shirking even for any valid reason.

Work-life balance is about having a proper balance between personal life and professional life. This study took people of age starting from 35 to 45 as the sample regardless of their employer authority- public or private. After doing subsequent factor analyses, three constructs were extracted successfully, which are "Organizational Support," "Managing Workers through Benevolence" and "Regularity and Flexibility of Working Hours." Among those, "Organizational Support" was found to have an insignificant association with the extent of work-life balance. Rest of the constructs significantly explained the reason for variation in the extent of work-life balance. Females were less in control with respect to balancing working life and personal life. Age was not a matter of significance in explaining work-life balance. This result may change if the age-slab sledges in either way. Future research could be directed in such a way where sample cohort will consist of working range population from a wide range of districts.

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