

Perspectives on Work-Life Balance and Suggestive Design for Healthier Work-life among Employees

Dr. Anthea Washington¹ and Dr. Kannan Mahalingam²

¹(Senior Lecturer, Caledonian College of Engineering, Sultanate of Oman)

²(Principal, Madurai Institute of Social Sciences, Madurai, India)

Abstract: *Work-life balance is a key issue for both the employers and the employees. Much has been studied on providing and improving work-life balance for the employees. It is an accepted fact that work-life balance cannot be delivered as a single capsule and hence to be effective need to consider several factors that aligns with both the organization and the human capital. This paper attempts to study the preferences of employees on work-life balance and suggests a design for enhancing work-life balance among employees. The study concludes that both the organization and the employees will have to collaborate for achieving a balance work-life.*

Keywords: *Work-life balance, employees' preferences, work pressures, stress, benefits of WLB*

I. INTRODUCTION

Today's employees are constantly working under pressure. This pressure is either self-induced or forced upon them by the company. An employee feels that he/she needs to climb the ladder of success, compete with his/her peers and show the world that they are best among few. This creates undue pressure in them. They try to juggle between their personal, family and work life, take unfinished work home, burn the midnight oil and come to work the next day feeling anxious and depressed that they have more to do. On the other hand, the demands of the corporate world are exceeding every day. Employees are reminded to achieve their targets, meet deadlines and keep their organisation among the top companies. The problem gets more complicated with the availability of technology. Employees are glued to smart gadgets, answering phones and replying to mails. As a result, their life is compromised. They fail to realise that they are losing their personal quality of life. They compromise on their family, health and personal needs.

Employees, irrespective of the sector or nature of work, pay no or least thoughts on having a balance between work and personal/family life. It is imperative that they understand that a balance between work and personal life is the key for both organisation's and employee's success. Scott (2016) cites a research by Corporate Executive Board (2009) on 'The Increasing Call for Work-Life Balance' that work life balance ranks second as the most important workplace attribute, only next to compensation. It is best at this point to understand the opinion of experts on the meaning of work-life balance.

Work life balance is explained as a positive relationship between work and such aspects as family, leisure, personal growth and so on. It is the relationship between and effects of salaried work on other factors of life such as family, health, entertainment and personal development.

According to New Zealand State Services Commission (2005), it refers to creating a productive work culture; a culture in which tensions between work and family life is reduced. It states that work life balance is having the 'right' combination of paid work and other aspects of an employee's life.

Ari Horie, founder and CEO of Women's Startup Labin her response to 7 Minute Read, Leadership has a slightly different view on work life balance as quoted by Giang (2016). She prefers not to use the term 'balanced' as it give the notion of 'right' and 'wrong'. She recommends that 'work life design' is used instead as it gives a healthier perspective.

Work life balance has been talked about for many years now; Corporates around the globe have been involved in designing various strategies and implementing programmes for enhancing the work life balance of their employees. Employees are encouraged to go through several internal and external training sessions on this much debated topic. For example, many companies are following the system of flexi timings, child care and such other initiatives, to make sure that taking care of family needs does not interfere with work life (Rothbard, 2001).

However there is no one formulae for achieving a completely successful work life balance among employees. Still, employees have not found one easy way for maintaining a healthy balance between work and their personal life.

This is largely due to the fact that different people have different priorities and pressures in life and the companies which have recognized this have been more successful than others in delivering results. There is no 'ideal' solution for work life balance; each employee is different and further to that life's challenges, needs and personal commitments change over time. The 'balanced' work life recipe may not be the same even for the same employee over the passage of time.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The concept of work life balance is abstract. It changes from individual to individual; depends on the social-cultural factors, family demands, employers' expectations, needs of the employee, present challenges and motivations. Delecta (2011) emphasized that "work life balance is a subjective phenomenon that changes from person to person".

But the fact remains that healthy work life practices are imperative for both work productivity and employee's personal development. The success lies in identifying the key aspects that would lead to a balanced work life. This rests with both the employers and the employees. A 'one pill' solution will not work for all employees or for all companies at any point of time. What will work is to clearly identify individual needs and priorities by the employer taking into consideration his current challenges and stressors and then design a custom-made programme for improving his work life balance.

This study focuses on studying the preferences of employees on work-life factors and attempts to suggest a model for achieving a healthier work-life balance among the employees, that will by large be successful. This study is different from few other studies as it covers a target population from different countries, having different life styles and cultures but all working as expatriates in Oman. As expat work-force, living away from the home country, they face different challenges at work and in their personal lives and hence the authors wanted to study their preferences in terms of personal, social needs etc.. The problem under study is to understand the relationship of work-life preferences in terms of personal factors such as marital status, nationality, income etc and these factors have a compelling influence on the employees.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the relationship between work-life preferences and personal factors such as age, income, nationality and gender
- To find the preferences of respondents in terms of social needs, personal needs, team work needs, time management and work itself
- To depict a suggestive design for a healthier work life balance among employees

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on work-life balance are many and varied and have drawn the attention of organisations for the past several years. In an attempt to promote a healthy work-life balance at the work place, many organisations, academicians and researchers have conducted studies focusing of various perspectives of work-life balance.

Konrad and Mangel (2000), Hill et al (2001), Beauregard (2009) have conducted studies on work-life balance programmes/practices/impact in organisations. Some of these include flexible hours, child care, job sharing, part-time employment etc. Smith and Gardner (2007) studied the effectiveness of various initiatives for work-life balance, Greenhaus et al (2003), Kotowska et al (2010) studied the relation between work life balance and quality of life. Other studies include role of HRM in maintaining work/family life balance (Wei et al, 2013), measuring Quality of work life (Chandra,2013; Delina& Raya, 2013), experiences of work-life balance and causes of imbalance (Murphy and Doherty, 2011), work imbalance and high levels of stress (Kofodimos,1993); work-life balance and effect of employees on job satisfaction (Arunika & Kottawatta (2015); Saif et al (2011); Yadav & Dabhade (2014); Maran et al (2013) and work and family life conflict (Sandhu (2006); Reynolds (2005);Nadeem & Abbas (2009))

Rife & Hall (2015) cite a survey by Society of Human Resource Management in 2002 that 70% of employees have an unhealthy balance between work and personal life. Imbalance in work-life causes several problems and hinders an individual's efficiency and productivity. This is found to be true in several studies. To cite a few, Kotowska et al (2010) reported that more number of Europeans suffered from some kind of work-life conflict such as too little time with families, not having time for social contacts, lack of time for pursuing personal hobbies and interests and lack of time for taking up family responsibilities.

Longer work hours and work pressure may lead to fatigue, anxiety or other adverse psycho-physiological consequences that can have a negative impact on the quality of home and family life. (White, et al, 2003).Baral &

Bhargava, 2010 report that employees with lower levels of perceived control over their work experience high levels of work overload and work-life imbalance. Higher the perceived work-life conflict, lower is the career satisfaction (Martins et al., 2002)

Lockwood (2003) had cited a study by Rutgers University which reports that about 90% of working adults are concerned they do not spend enough time with their families. It was also cited that about 70% of respondents felt that they don't have a healthy balance between their personal and work lives. Francene Sussner Rodgers (1992) study reported that 28 percent of the men and 53 percent of the women stated that work-family stress affected their ability to concentrate at work. Cinamon & Rich (2010) have found that work life balance issues affect one's identity, well-being and quality of functioning.

Emirates 24/7 news (2013) reports that about 38 percent of UAE employees have stated that they receive very little or no support from company for achieving a healthy work life balance. In UAE, about 57 percent of business professionals feel that they spend more time away from home, which has shown that overall work-life balance in the UAE is lower when compared to other countries. (Gulf News Careers, 2016)

Several studies have stressed the need for maintaining work-life balance. These studies report the positive effects of having a healthy work-life balance. For example, Lazar et al (2010) report that employees who were more favorable towards their organisation's initiatives for work-life balance also reported lower intent to leave the organization and expressed high levels of job satisfaction. About 60% of people reported in Hoechst Celanese document that the ability to balance work with personal and family responsibilities was very important for staying in the company (Landauer, 1997).

Goveas (2011) reports that having a successful work life balance will lead to a more satisfied workforce, thereby contributing to increased productivity and further the employees would be more ethical, fair and honest. It was stated that lack of work life balance leads to higher levels of stress and lack of task control.

A survey conducted by job site Bayt.com and YouGov, a research and consulting organization showed that nearly 74 percent of the employees in Oman believe that work-life balance is very important for job motivation. (Muscat Daily, 2013). Employees who have low work-family conflict report higher levels of job satisfaction, (Thomas/Ganster 1995), high contentment with work-life balance implies less intention to change to a new job (Anderson et al, 2002) and advance in their career (Lyness/Judiesch, 2008).

Many studies report the strategies followed by organisations to improve work-life balance. To state a few, Rothbard, (2001) has recorded that organisations have policies such as flexi-time, child care and such other mechanisms to deal with work life balance issues. Jennings & McDougald, (2007) state that factors such as "job autonomy, schedule flexibility, hours worked, the amount of social support provided by supervisors and coworkers, and the existence of family-friendly work policies directly influence work-life balance." Greenhaus et al (2003) suggested high investment of time and involvement in work and family would reduce both stress and work-life conflict and further improve quality of life.

It is believed that work-life balance cannot be prescribed as a capsule to employees and each organization will have to tailor-make their strategies such that it benefits all its employees. Policies and strategies will have to be employee-friendly and companies need to take efforts for providing a conducive environment for the individuals to be productive employees. This is rightly pointed out by Karthik (2013) who is of the view that work life balance increases efficiency and therefore the productivity of the employee increases. This in turn leads to both personal and professional satisfaction. It was also reported by Bloom et al. (2007) that larger firms generally have better work life balance practices for improving the performance of the organization.

Manoj Kumar & Mohammed (2014) suggest that every organization need to frame HR policy for providing work-life balance. They believe that balanced work-life leads to employee's health and hence organisations need to put into practice various strategies such as insurance schemes, time management, planning & prioritizing tasks etc. to maintain healthy work-life balance.

Haddon & Hede (2010) in their study state that perception of work life balance and the links between perceived work like balance and its consequences to employees and employers lies with the individual, interpersonal and organizational factors. They are of the view that the responsibility of achieving work life balance lies with both the individual and the organization. They also found that perceptions of work life balance have an impact on life, job satisfaction, well-being, mental health and individual performance. It is based on this viewpoint that a model is suggested in this paper for improving work-life balance at work place.

V. METHODOLOGY & TOOL

This is a descriptive study based on primary data. The study was conducted among 96 respondents who belonged to different nationalities such as Indians, Sri Lankans, Arabs and few other nationals from Europe, South

America and Philippines living in the Sultanate of Oman. Simple random, sampling method was adopted for data collection. The respondents were working in different sectors such as educational institutions, Government and private organisations. The scale developed by Pareek and Purohit (2010) consisting of 36 items was administered among the respondents. The scale covered six dimensions which include Social needs, personal needs, Time Management, Team work, Compensation & benefits and work. Each component had six statements focusing on the respective need. Data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Tests such as One-way Anova and 't' test were computed in order to arrive at inferences. The paper comes up with a suggestive design for achieving a healthier work-life balance at work place. This calls for action from both the employees and the employers.

VI. ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Table: 1 Frequency Table based on Socio-Economic Factors

S.No	Factors	Frequency	Percentage
	AGE	n	%
1.	Below 30 years	28	29.2
	30 - 40 years	43	44.8
	Above 40 years	25	26.0
	Total	96	100.0
	QUALIFICATION		
2.	B.E/B.Tech	60	62.5
	PG	25	26.0
	M.Phil	11	11.5
	Total	96	100.0
	NATIONALITY		
3.	Indian	40	41.7
	Srilankan	23	24.0
	Arab	15	15.6
	Others	18	18.8
	Total	96	100.0
	INCOME		
4.	> RO 500	40	41.7
	RO 501 - 1000	49	51.0
	RO 1001 - 1500	7	7.3
	Total	96	100.0
	MARITAL STATUS		
5.	Married	51	53.1
	Single	45	46.9
	Total	96	100.0

The above table shows the frequency distribution of the selected respondents based on the socio-economic factors. There were 28 respondents (29.2%) who were below 30 years old, 44.8% in the 30 – 40 years age range and 26% of the respondents above 40 years of age. Among the total respondents, 62.5% of them had a B.E or a B.Tech degree, 26% of them had a PG degree and about 11.5% of the respondents had a M.Phil degree. The respondents belonged to different nationalities. (40 Indians, 23 Sri Lankans, 15 of Arab origin and few others from Philippines, South America and Europe). With regard to the monthly income, 41.7% of them earned below 500 Omani riyals, 51% of them earned in the range of OMR 501 – 1000 and 7% of them earned in the range of Omani OMR 1001 – 1500. It was seen that 51 respondents were married and the rest were single.

Table: 2 One Way Anova Results for the different dimensions based on AGE

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Significance
SOCIAL NEEDS	Below 30 years	28	50.19	10.68	.094
	30 - 40 years	43	45.97	11.88	

PERSONAL NEEDS	Above 40 years	25	51.37	8.57	2.423	P > 0.05 Not Sig
	Total	96	48.61	10.92		
	Below 30 years	28	52.27	8.06	3.884	.024
	30 - 40 years	43	48.00	6.52		P < 0.05
	Above 40 years	25	51.37	5.74		Sig
Total	96	50.13	7.03			
TIME MANAGEMENT	Below 30 years	28	47.36	5.58	2.195	.117
	30 - 40 years	43	49.56	11.55		P > 0.05
	Above 40 years	25	43.87	13.52		Not Sig
	Total	96	47.43	10.93		
TEAM WORK	Below 30 years	28	50.64	12.42	.748	.476
	30 - 40 years	43	49.36	7.88		P > 0.05
	Above 40 years	25	52.38	9.56		Not Sig
	Total	96	50.52	9.79		
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS	Below 30 years	28	51.53	6.64	2.218	.115
	30 - 40 years	43	48.00	9.56		P > 0.05
	Above 40 years	25	46.20	11.79		Not Sig
	Total	96	48.56	9.60		
WORK	Below 30 years	28	48.99	8.46	3.261	.043
	30 - 40 years	43	54.11	7.19		P < 0.05
	Above 40 years	25	51.71	9.71		Sig
	Total	96	51.99	8.47		
TOTAL SCORE	Below 30 years	28	50.16	2.96	.611	.545
	30 - 40 years	43	49.17	3.41		P > 0.05
	Above 40 years	25	49.48	4.86		Not Sig
	Total	96	49.54	3.71		

df = 2,95

One way Anova test was computed for the different dimensions in order to find out the significant relationship among the variables. Table 2 shows the Anova results for the dimensions social needs, personal needs, time management, team work, compensation and benefits and work itself with respect to age factor. The total score for the dimension 'social needs' showed a mean value of 48.61 (SD = 10.92). The mean value of those below 30 years was 50.19 (SD = 10.68), for those in the 30 – 40 years, the mean value was 45.97 (SD = 11.88) and for those above 40 years, the mean value was 51.37 (SD = 8.57). The F value was 2.423 and there was no significant difference among the groups with respect to this dimension. However, those in the 30 to 40 years age group had lesser social needs as compared to the other two groups.

For the next dimension 'Personal needs', the mean value for the below 30 years age group was 52.27 (SD = 8.06), mean value for 30 – 40 years group was 48.00 (SD = 6.52) and for those above 40 years, the mean value was

51.37 (SD = 5.74). The F value was 3.884 and since $P < 0.05$, there exists significant difference among the three groups. Those in the 30 – 40 years age group have less ‘personal needs’ than the other two groups.

As far as ‘time management’ is concerned, the mean score of all respondents was 47.43 (SD = 10.93). Those below 30 years age had a mean value of 47.36 (SD = 5.58), respondents in the 30 – 40 years age group had a mean value of 49.56 (SD = 11.55) and those above 40 years had a mean value of 43.87 (SD = 13.52). The F value was 2.195 and there was no significant difference among the three groups. Those respondents in the 30 – 40 years age group had shown higher scores on time management.

With regard to the dimension ‘compensation and benefits’, the total mean value obtained was 48.56 (SD = 9.60). The respondents below 30 years of age had scored higher mean value (51.53; SD = 6.64) than the other two groups. The F value was 2.218 and there was no significant difference among the groups. For the dimension ‘work’, the total mean value was 51.99 (SD = 8.47). The respondents below 30 years of age had scored a mean value 48.99 (SD = 8.47), those in the 30 – 40 years had got a mean value of 54.11 (SD = 7.19) and those in above 40 years had scored a mean value 51.71 (SD = 9.71). The F value was 3.261 and since $P < 0.05$, there was a significant difference among the groups. It was seen that those in the 30 – 40 years age group had more inclination towards this dimension than the other two groups.

Table : 3 One Way Anova Results for the different dimensions based on NATIONALITY

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Significance	
SOCIAL NEEDS	Indian	40	49.83	6.81	1.748	.163 P > 0.05 Not Sig
	Srilan kan	23	44.78	13.84		
	Arab	15	52.26	12.30		
	Others	18	47.72	12.32		
	Total	96	48.61	10.92		
PERSONAL NEEDS	Indian	40	48.89	5.67	3.624	.016 P < 0.05 Sig
	Srilan kan	23	50.58	5.52		
	Arab	15	55.04	9.22		
	Others	18	48.19	7.99		
	Total	96	50.13	7.03		
TIME MANAGEMENT	Indian	40	44.93	9.32	1.886	.137 P > 0.05 Not Sig
	Srilan kan	23	48.77	12.02		
	Arab	15	46.70	12.62		
	Others	18	51.89	10.53		
	Total	96	47.43	10.93		
TEAM WORK	Indian	40	49.52	11.69	.362	.780 P > 0.05 Not Sig
	Srilan kan	23	52.22	5.74		
	Arab	15	50.60	7.70		
	Others	18	50.50	11.16		
	Total	96	50.52	9.80		
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS	Indian	40	47.33	8.26	2.831	.043 P < 0.05
	Srilan kan	23	49.68	9.73		
	Arab	15	44.48	10.88		

	Others	18	53.28	9.76		
	Total	96	48.56	9.60		Sig
WORK	Indian	40	52.23	7.07	2.352	.077 P > 0.05 Not Sig
	Srilankan	23	53.48	10.03		
	Arab	15	46.98	11.63		
	Others	18	53.75	4.02		
	Total	96	51.99	8.47		
TOTAL SCORE	Indian	40	48.79	2.01	1.454	.232 P > 0.05 Not Sig
	Srilankan	23	49.92	4.49		
	Arab	15	49.35	6.45		
	Others	18	50.89	1.97		
	Total	96	49.54	3.71		

df = 3,95

Table 3 shows the one way Anova results of the different dimensions based on Nationality. It was seen that for the dimension 'social needs', the total mean value was 48.61 (SD = 10.92). The mean value obtained by respondents from Arab nations was 52.26 (SD = 12.30) and the mean value of obtained by Indian respondents was 49.83 (SD = 6.81), both of which was higher than the other groups. The F value was 1.748 and there was no significant difference among the groups.

The total mean value of the dimension 'personal needs' was 50.13 (SD = 7.03). The mean value scored by Indians, Sri Lankans, Arabs, respondents from other countries were 48.89 (SD = 5.67), 50.58 (SD = 5.52), 55.04 (SD = 9.22) and 48.19 (SD = 7.99) respectively. Those respondents from Sri Lanka and Arab nations have shown higher personal needs than the other groups. The F value obtained was 3.624 and since $P < 0.05$, there exists significant difference among the groups with respect to this dimension.

For the dimension 'time management', the total mean value was 47.43 (SD = 10.93). The mean value obtained by respondents from Sri Lanka was 48.77 (SD = 12.02) and those from other countries like Philippines, South America and Europe was 51.89 (SD = 10.53.) They had scored preference for time management than the other two groups. However, there was no significant difference among the groups.

The dimension 'team work' had a total mean value of 50.52 (SD = 9.80). The respondents from Sri Lanka had a mean value of 52.22 (SD = 5.74) which was higher than the other groups and those from Arab countries had a mean value of 50.60 (SD = 7.70). There was no significant difference among the different groups with regard to this dimension.

With respect to 'compensation and benefits' the total mean value was 48.56 (SD = 9.60). Only respondents from Sri Lanka and other nations had scored higher mean values (mean 49.68; SD = 9.73 and 53.28; SD = 9.76 respectively) The F value was 2.831 and since $P < 0.05$ there was a significant difference among the groups.

The dimension 'work' had a total mean value of 51.99 (SD = 8.47). The mean values obtained by Indians, Srilankans, and other nations were 52.23 (SD = 7.07), 53.48 (SD = 10.03) and 53.75 (SD = 4.02) respectively. There was no significant difference among the groups.

Table : 4 One Way Anova Results for the different dimensions based on INCOME

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Significance	
SOCIAL NEEDS	> RO 500	40	44.51	9.51	7.599	.001 P < 0.05 Sig
	RO 501 - 1000	49	50.47	11.30		
	RO 1001 - 1500	7	58.98	3.75		
	Total	96	48.61	10.92		
PERSONAL NEEDS	> RO 500	40	49.52	6.13	1.011	.368 P >
	RO 501 - 1000	49	50.13	7.96		
	RO 1001 - 1500	7	53.61	3.75		

	Total	96	50.13	7.03		0.05 Not Sig
TIME MANAGEMENT	> RO 500	40	45.77	11.15	3.928	.023 P < 0.05 Sig
	RO 501 - 1000	49	49.95	10.71		
	RO 1001 - 1500	7	39.31	4.07		
	Total	96	47.43	10.93		
TEAM WORK	> RO 500	40	47.96	11.49	2.576	.081 P > 0.05 Not Sig
	RO 501 - 1000	49	52.08	8.43		
	RO 1001 - 1500	7	54.21	3.40		
	Total	96	50.52	9.79		
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS	> RO 500	40	48.58	9.84	.004	.996 P > 0.05 Not Sig
	RO 501 - 1000	49	48.59	9.98		
	RO 1001 - 1500	7	48.25	5.83		
	Total	96	48.56	9.60		
WORK	> RO 500	40	51.50	8.58	2.094	.129 P > 0.05 Not Sig
	RO 501 - 1000	49	53.19	8.58		
	RO 1001 - 1500	7	46.47	4.46		
	Total	96	51.99	8.47		
TOTAL SCORE	> RO 500	40	47.97	3.94	6.985	.001 P < 0.05 Sig
	RO 501 - 1000	49	50.74	3.32		
	RO 1001 - 1500	7	50.14	.63		
	Total	96	49.54	3.71		

df = 2,95

Table 4 presents the one way Anova results for the different dimensions based on Income. It was found that the total mean value for the dimension 'Social needs' was 48.61 (SD = 10.92). The respondents who earned on the income bracket OMR 501 – 1000 and those who earned between 1001 – 1500 scored a mean value of 50.47 (SD = 11.30) and 58.98 (SD = 3.75). The F value was 7.599 and since $P < 0.05$, there was significant difference among the groups for social needs.

For the dimension 'Personal needs', the total mean score was 50.13 (SD = 7.03). Those in the OMR 501 – 1000 and OMR 1001 – 1500 income bracket scored higher mean values than the other group. However, there was no significant difference among the groups with regard to personal needs.

The dimension 'Time management' had a total mean value of 47.43 (SD = 10.93). Only those respondents in the OMR 501 – 1000 income range scored high on this dimension. Further, since $P < 0.05$, there was significant difference among the three groups. The dimension "team work" had a total mean score of 50.52 (SD = 9.79). The respondents earning less than OMR 500 monthly scored a lesser mean value as compared to the other two groups. The F value was 2.576 and the groups did not differ significantly.

The dimension 'compensation and benefits' had a total mean value of 48.56 (SD = 9.60). The respondents earning less than OMR 501 and those earning in the range OMR 501 – 1000 scored higher mean value than total mean. The F value was .004, and there was no significant difference among the groups. The dimension 'work' had a

total mean value of 51.99 (SD = 8.47). The respondents in the income range OMR 501 – 1000 scored a mean value of 53.19 (SD – 8.58), which was higher than the other two groups. However, the groups did not differ significantly. However the overall results showed a significant difference among the groups for this factor.

Table 5: ‘t’ Test Results for different Dimensions based on Marital Status

Dimensions	Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	‘t’ value	Significance
SOCIAL NEEDS	Married	51	50.20	10.52	1.536	P > 0.05
	Single	45	46.80	11.21		Not Sig
PERSONAL NEEDS	Married	51	49.63	6.26	-.734	P > 0.05
	Single	45	50.69	7.85		Not Sig
TIME MANAGEMENT	Married	51	48.73	11.11	1.242	P > 0.05
	Single	45	45.96	10.65		Not Sig
TEAM WORK	Married	51	51.68	8.34	1.237	P > 0.05
	Single	45	49.20	11.16		Not Sig
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS	Married	51	48.65	9.64	.094	P > 0.05
	Single	45	48.46	9.67		Not Sig
WORK	Married	51	52.90	8.44	1.119	P > 0.05
	Single	45	50.97	8.48		Not Sig
TOTAL SCORE	Married	51	50.30	3.16	2.174	P > 0.05
	Single	45	48.68	4.11		Not Sig

Table 5 shows the ‘t’ test results for the various dimensions based on marital status. It was observed that for the dimension ‘social needs’, the mean value was 50.20 (SD = 10.52) for those who were married and 46.80 (SD = 11.21) for the single respondents. The ‘t’ value was 1.536 and there was no significant difference between the two groups.

For the dimension ‘personal needs’, the mean scores for the married and single respondents were 49.63 (SD = 6.26) and 50.69 (SD = 7.85) respectively. The groups did not differ significantly. For the next dimension ‘time management’, the mean values obtained by the two groups were 48.73 (SD = 11.11) and 45.96 (SD = 10.65) respectively. The groups did not differ significantly.

For the dimension ‘team work’, the mean scores obtained were 51.68 (SD = 8.34) and 49.20 (SD = 11.16) by the married and single respondents respectively. The ‘t’ value was 1.237 and the groups did not differ significantly. The dimension ‘compensation & benefits’ had a mean value of 48.65 (SD = 9.64) and 48.46 (SD = 9.67) for the married and single groups respectively. However, the groups did not differ significantly. For the dimension ‘work’, the mean value for the married group was 52.90 (SD = 8.44) and for single respondents was 50.97 (SD = 8.48). The ‘t’ value was 1.119 and it was seen that the groups did not differ significantly.

VII. MAJOR FINDINGS

Respondents who were below 30 years of age and those above 40 years had higher social needs and personal needs. Those in the 30 – 40 years age range are able to manage their time more effectively than other respondents. Similar findings were reported by Taysig & Fenwick (2001) that older adults report greater success with work-life balance. Surprisingly, those in the 30-40 years age group had lesser personal and social needs. This implies that employees in this age group have more work concerns than other needs. It is highly likely that these employees suffer from work-life imbalance.

The respondents in the 30 – 40 years age group have lesser inclination towards team work. The other respondents prefer to work in teams to complete their work. It needs to be noted that people who get support from

different sources such as coworkers, community and financial Resources are able to better deal with work-family conflict (Martins et al, 2002). It is therefore essential that employees across all age group have a positive attitude towards working in teams.

Those below 30 years had agreed that they are compensated and get benefits for extra efforts in the organization, which is not agreed by others. Respondents in the 30 – 40 years age range enjoy their work than other respondents who are older in age. This is rightly in tune with Bardwick (1986) who is of the opinion that as people matures in their career and has reached a position; they will not be as tolerant of work - family conflict because they don't consider it worth-while to put in extra hours at work.

It was seen that respondents from India and Arab countries have more social needs than those from Sri Lanka and other countries. Concerning personal needs, those from Sri Lanka and Arab nations were able to satisfy their personal needs more effectively than others. This implies that they were in fact better in balancing work-life issues than other respondents. They might be spending more time with family and meeting their personal needs more effectively. This has been pointed by Greenhaus et al (2003) who found that individuals who spent more time on family than work enjoyed higher quality of life than those who spent more time on work than family, who actually experiences highest levels of stress and work-family conflict. It is reported by Perlow & Porter (2009) that employees who spend more time at work than other things in their lives have job dissatisfaction, which leads to lack of productivity.

Those respondents from Sri Lanka and other countries like Philippines and Europe were able to manage time effectively both at home and at work than others. Thushari (2009) has reported that if employees are oriented on effective time management, it will lead to having a balance between personal and work life. In his research among Software Engineers in Sri Lanka, a positive relationship was found between Time Management and Work Life Balance. It shows clearly, as supported by research, that effective time management is one important factor for work-life balance.

Respondents from Sri Lanka and Arab countries have shown higher preference for team work as compared to others. Similarly, those from Sri Lanka and other countries agree that they are compensated for efforts put in their organization. Respondents from India, Sri Lanka and other countries mostly enjoy their work.

This study clearly shows that those respondents from Sri Lanka in particular, were able to manage time effectively and be able to satisfy their personal needs too. Further, they enjoy their work. It can be inferred from this that they might be enjoying better work-life balance than respondents from other countries.

Byrne (2005) is of the opinion that employees who enjoy work-life balance feel that they have a fulfilled life and experience less role conflicts at work and outside work. It stands to reason that employees need to enjoy their work. They need to be fulfilled by the kind of work they do and this requires mutual efforts taken by the employees and the employers, Employers also need to provide a work environment that makes work an enjoyable experience.

Respondents earning more than OMR 501 monthly have shown higher preference for social needs, personal needs and preferred to work in teams. Those earning in the range OMR 501 – 1000 were able to manage time effectively. Respondents earning less than OMR 501 and those in the range OMR 501 – 1000 agreed that they got compensation and benefits for the work they put in. Those in the OMR 501 – 1000 income range were happy with the work itself.

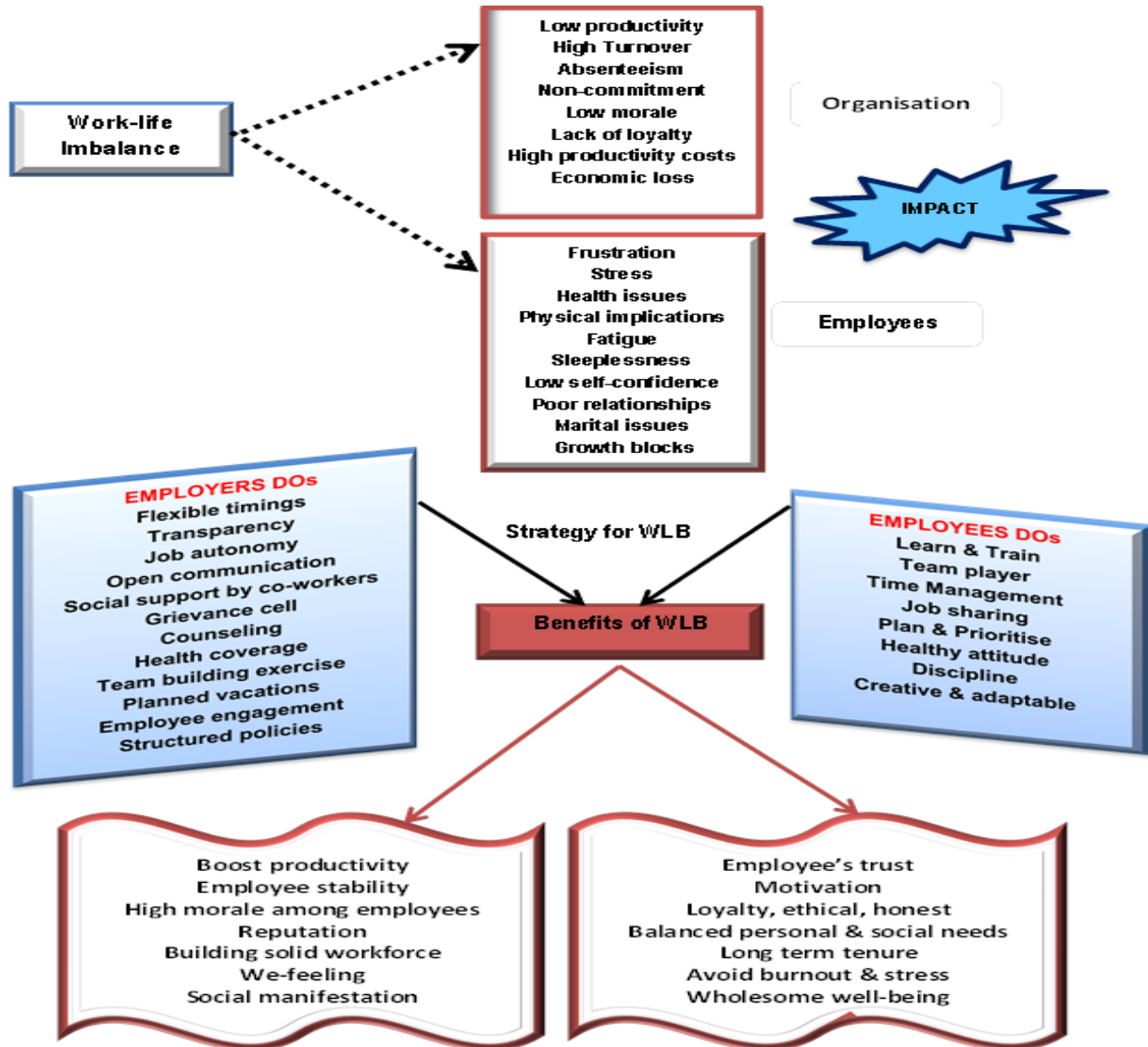
Married respondents had more preference for social needs, time management skills, team work, compensation and benefits and work itself when compared to those who were single. This clearly implies that married people need to have a balance between work and family life. They need to learn the art of work-life balance for achieving a productive life both at work and at home.

Delina and Raya (2013) have found in their study that married women find it very hard to balance work and family life and that in the health sector about 76.7% of them have difficulty in balancing work and personal life. They stress the need for work life balance for having life satisfaction.

VIII. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Achieving Work-life balance has always been a challenge to both the workforce and the employers. With the current economic scenario, particularly in the Gulf, employees go to any extent to safeguard their jobs. They don't mind working longer hours, for lesser package and under stressful conditions. This has led to severe implications in other walks of life. Nevertheless, there are companies who are concerned about their employees' well-being and take steps to provide them with a healthy atmosphere to work. But, as stated earlier, it requires conscious efforts from both the employers and the employees to achieve work-life balance. The authors have taken efforts to provide a suggestive model for work-life balance as follows.

Suggestive Design for Healthier Work-Life Balance



Work-life imbalance impacts both the organisation and the employees negatively. As much as employees suffer from health issues, stress, family-life conflicts, low self-confidence etc, the organization too faces several problems such as high productivity costs, employee turnover, economic loss, low morale and lack of loyalty. Therefore, both the organization and the workforce need to take collective efforts for enhancing work-life balance. The above model shows that organisations need to further promote the concept of flexible timings, have a transparent culture, give job autonomy, have counseling and grievance cells, promote team-building exercises, have employee engagement programmes and structured policies that will pave way for achieving work-life balance. The employees too will need to be willing to learn & train, be team players, manage time effectively, opt for job sharing, plan & prioritise, develop healthy attitude, discipline and be creative & adaptable at work. These strategies, it is believed will enhance work-life balance in organisations.

All said and done, it is to be accepted that one specific method will not result in positive work-life balance. Both employers and employees will have to chalk out what suits them and develop strategies that will lead to mutual benefits both in the short-term and long-term.

IX. REFERENCES

- Anderson, S.E.; Coffey, B.S.; Byerly, R.T. (2002): *Fomal Organizational Initiatives and Infomal Workplace Practices: Links to Work-Family Conflict and Job-Related Outcomes*. *Journal of Management* 28(6): 787-810.
- Aranika, MMA & Kottawatta, H (2015), *The Effect of Work Life Balance on Employee Job Satisfaction among Non-Executives in the Public Banking Sector in Colombo District*, *Human Resource Management Journal*, 2015, Vol. 03, No. 01,
- Baral, R. & Bhargava, S. (2010). *Work-family enrichment as a mediator between organizational Interventions for work-life balance and job outcomes*. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 25(3), 274-300.
- Bardwick, J. (1986). *The Plateauing Trap: How to Avoid it in your Career... and your Life*. New York: AMACOM.
- Beauregard, T. Alexandra and Henry, Lesley C. (2009) *Making the link between work-life balance practices and organizational performance*. *Human resource management review*, 19 . pp. 9-22. ISSN 1053-4822
- Bloom, N., Kretschmer, T., & Reenen, John V. (2007). *Work-Life Balance, Management practices and Productivity*, AIM Research Working Paper Series: 056, Advanced Institute of Management Research, ISSN: 1744—0009
- Byrne, U. (2005). *Work-life balance*. *Business Information Review*, 22(1), 53-59.
- Chandra A, 2013, *Study on Measuring the Quality of work life among Third Grade employees in Naini Industrial Area*, *Intemational Journal of Technological Exploration and Learning*, Vol 2, No 6, [Online] Available from: https://archive.org/stream/Htpijtel.orgv2n6318-321CRP0206P06.pdf/318-321CRP0206P06_djvu.txt
- Cinamon, R. & Rich, Y. (2010). *Work family relations: Antecedents and outcomes*, *Journal of Career Assessment*, 18 , 59 -70.
- Delina G & Raya RP, 2013, *A study on Work-Life Balance in Working Women*, *Intemational Journal of Commerce, Business and Management*, Vol. 2, No.5, 274
- Delecta P 2011, *Work life balance*, *Intemational Journal of Current Research Vol. 3, Issue, 4, pp.186-189*
- Emirates 24/7 news (2013), *'Work-life balance most motivating factor for employees in UAE'*, [Online] Available from: <http://www.emirates247.com/news/emirates/work-life-balance-most-motivating-factor-for-employees-in-uae-2013-01-08-1.490305>
- Francene Sussner Rodgers, 1992, *When the Business Case Is Common Sense: Coming to Terms with America's Family Challenge*, *ACA Journal*
- Giang V (2016), *7 Minute Read, Leadership*, [Online] Available from: <http://www.fastcompany.com/3037096/9-different-definitions-on-the-meaning-of-work-life-balance>
- Greenhaus JH, Collins KM and Shaw JD, 2003, *The Relation between Work-Family Balance and Quality of Life*, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, v63 n3 p 510-531
- Goveas S, 2011, *Effect of Work Life Balance and Ethics on Quality of Service*, *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, Vol. 2 No. 23
- Haddon B & Hede A (2010), *Work-Life Balance – An Integrated Approach The case for joint and several responsibility*, Report to the Queensland Law Society
- Hill, E. J., Hawkins, A. J., Ferris, M., & Weitzman, M. (2001). *Finding an extra day a week: The positive influence of perceived job flexibility on work and family life balance*. *Family Relations*, 50, 49–58, [Online] Available from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2001.00049.x/abstract>
- Jennings, J. & McDougald, M. (2007). *Work-family interface experiences and coping strategies: Implications for entrepreneurship research and practice*. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(3), 747-760.
- Karthik R. 2013, *A Study on Work-Life Balance in Chennai Port Trust*, Chennai, IDEAS, [Online] Available from: http://www.managein.net/bk_issue/abst_6_7.htm
- Kofodimos, JR (1993), *Balancing act: How managers can integrate successful careers and fulfilling personal lives*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Konrad, A.M., & Mangel, R. (2000). *The Impact of Work-Life Programs on Firm Productivity*. *Strategic Management Journal* 21:1225-1237
- Kotowska, E.I., Matysiak, A., Styr, M., Pailhe, A., Solaz, A., Vignoli, D., Vermeylen, G. & Anderson, R., (2010), *Second European Quality of Life Survey: Family life and work*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, pp.1-96.
- Landauer, J. 1997, *Bottom-line benefits of work/life programs*, *HR FOCUS*, 74, 7, 3-4.
- Lazar I, Osolian C & Ratiu P, (2010), *The Role of Work-Life Balance Practices in Order to Improve Organizational Performance*, *European Research Studies Volume XIII, Issue (1)*, 2010
- Lockwood NR (2003) *Work/Life Balance Challenges and Solutions*, *SHRM® Research Quarterly*, Society for human resource management
- Lyness, K.S. and Judiesch, M.K. (2008): *Can a Manager Have a Life and a Career? Intemational and Multisource Perspectives on Work-Life-Balance and Career Advancement Potential*. In: *Journal of Applied Psychology* 93(4): 789-805.
- Maceda C, 2016, *Healthy work-life balance is key to job productivity*, *Gulf News Careers*, [Online] Available from: <http://gulfnnews.com/business/sectors/careers/healthy-work-life-balance-is-key-to-job-productivity-1.1041405>
- Manoj Kumar, M & Mohd K, 2014, *WORK LIFE BALANCE: THE HR PERSPECTIVE*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Research Vol: 1 Issue XIV*
- Maren, R, Pitarelli, F & Cangiano, F 2013, *'Work-life balance and job satisfaction among teachers'*, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Family Studies*, Vol. 18, pp. 51-72.
- Martins, L.L.; Eddleston, K.A.; Veiga, J.F. (2002): *Moderators of the relationship between work-family conflict and career satisfaction*. In: *Academy of Management Journal* 45(2): 399-409.
- Murphy, F., & Doherty, L (2011). *The experience of work life balance for Irish senior Managers*. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol.30 Iss:4, pp.252-277
- Muscat Daily, (2013), *32% of employees in Oman are highly motivated: Survey*, [Online] Available from: <http://www.muscatdaily.com/Archive/Oman/32-of-employees-in-Oman-are-highly-motivated-Survey-1ysv>
- Nadeem, MS & Abbas, Q 2009, *'The Impact of Work Life Conflict on Job Satisfactions of Employees in Pakistan'*, *Intemational Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 4, No. 5, pp. 63-83.
- New Zealand State Services Commission, 2015, *Work-life balance: a resource for the State Services*, [Online] Available from: http://www.ssc.govt.nz/upload/downloadable_files/WorkLife_Balance_main_content_and_Supplement.pdf

- Pareek, U., & Purohit, S. (2010). *Training Instruments in Human Resource Development and Organisational Development*, 3rd edition. New Delhi, Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company Ltd. 489- 553.
- Perlow, L. A., & Porter, J. L. (2009). Making time off predictable & required. *Harvard Business Review*, 87(10), 102-109. [Online] Available from: <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy.foley.gonzaga.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=44284106&site=bsi-live>
- Reynolds, J (2005), *In the Face of Conflict: Work-Life Conflict and Desired Work Hour Adjustments*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Volume 67, Issue 5, pages 1313–1331, [Online] Available from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.17413737.2005.00219.x/abstract;jsessionid=8B5B645F2EC43120D2966A5A056E034E.d02#02>
- Rife AA & Hall RJ, 2015, *Work-Life Balance*, *SIOP White Paper Series, A White Paper*, Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.
- Rohbard, N. (2001). Enriching or depleting? The dynamics of engagement in work and family roles. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46, 655 - 684.
- Saif, IM, Malik, IM & Zahid, M 2011, 'Employee Work Satisfaction and Work - Life Balance: A Pakistani Perspective', *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, Vol 3, No. 5.
- Sandhu, H.S. et al (2006). Work-family conflict among women executives in service sector: an empirical study, *Journal of Advances in Management Research*, Vol. 3 Issue: 2 : 68 80
- Scott K, 2016, What is Work-life balance, *The Works, Northeastern University Career Development Blog*, [Online] Available from: <http://www.northeastern.edu/careers/blog/what-is-work-life-balance/>
- Smith J & Gardner D, 2007, Factors Affecting Employee Use of Work-Life Balance Initiatives, *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* Vol. 36, No. 1, [Online] Available from: http://www.psychology.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/36-1_Smith-Gardner_pg3.pdf
- Tausig, M. & Fenwick, R. (2001). Unbinding time: Alternate work schedules and work -life balance. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 22 (2), 101 - 120.
- Thomas, L.T. and Ganster, D.C. (1995): Impact of Family-Supportive Work Variables on Work-Family Conflict and Strain: A Control Perspective in: *Journal of Applied Psychology* 80(1): 6-15.
- Thushari, W.K.S. (2009). Time management and work life balance of software engineers in Sri Lanka, University 'of Moratuwa, [Online] Available from: <http://dl.lib.mrt.ac.lk/handle/123/1028>
- Wei C, Yili CL & Tian CY, (2013), How Can HRM Help Organizations Build the Supportive "Work-Life/family" Balance Culture?, *International Journal of Business and Social Science* Vol. 4 No. 9
- White, M., Hill, S., McGovern, P., Mills, C. & Smeaton, D. (2003). High-performance management practices, working hours and work-life balance. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 41(2), 175-195.
- Yadav, RK & Dabhade, N 2014, 'Work Life Balance and Job Satisfaction among the Working Women of Banking and Education Sector – A Comparative study', *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 181-201.