

Work Life Balance of Female Teaching Staff in Secondary Schools in Al Dhakiliya Region, Sultanate of Oman

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Abstract

The ever increasing organizational responsibilities and family commitments especially for female teaching staff in Oman, made them to find novel ways to balance work and life. Indeed, the support of management in this regard to female staff and their family assistance will help them not only to balance their work life but also to perform better in their career. This research paper is an attempt to find various support system provided by schools management, assistance of family members and other factors that affect the female teaching staff in Al Dhakiliya Region, Oman. Descriptive method was used to conduct the research and Chi-square test employed to test hypothesis.

Key Words: Work life balance, female teaching staff, and organizational support.

Introduction

Family – friendly work practices and other initiatives enable employees to balance their work and family lives have a large impact on employees' level of commitment and loyalty (Dessler, Griffiths, lioyd, 2007). Recognizing this, organisations are putting together a range of options to assist employees to better balance their lives. Women in Sultanate of Oman playing a pivotal role almost par with their Men counterparts. Statistics also show that female illiteracy rate declined by 6.2 per cent during the period from 2011 to 2015 compared to 2.4 per cent for males. Women constitute 41 per cent of the total manpower in the government sector. Having a balance between work and home life can be a challenge. Hence, it is pertinent to analyze the challenges that are faced by female teaching staff in schools and how they are balancing their career with home life.

The support of management also an important element in balancing female staff to balance their work life. Having a healthy work-life balance isn't just essential to your well-being – it also boosts the productivity. Some employers are now allowing their employees to work from home for a day so they

will be able to attend to important personal matters even while working. Also, there are bosses who require their employees to report for certain hours a day or report early so they can attend to their kids after office hours. Nurses in some hospitals are already enjoying this benefit of reporting for duty for only four days by taking 10 to 12 hour shifting schedules. A survey showed that the most effective alternative work schedule is letting employees work 10 hours a day and have three days of rest. By being able to report to work certain hours of the day where employees are more productive, they will be able to maximize their performance and finish their tasks on time. This will give them more time to start other tasks that need to be done later in the week.

However, the challenges in front of the women employees are almost common over the world. Research suggests that female respondents in all parts of the World are pressured for time, rarely have time to relax and feel Stressed and overworked most of the time, but women in emerging countries feel the strain even more so than women in Developed countries.

Statement of the problem

It is a fact that as many teaching staff of the present day have no interest in their profession but they continue their profession only as mechanical salary earners. The facilities available for female teaching staff to balance their work life are so meager that many of the talented persons do not think of becoming teachers but seek positions elsewhere.

As teaching is a noble profession which build the future nation by properly nurturing pupils as tomorrow's leaders, the teaching staff should be able to balance both their work and life. Especially the female teaching staff, who have more family responsibilities. Lack of support from school management and family members put them under stress and less productive.

Though the school female teaching staff occupy an important position in the development of nation, not much attention has been paid by the researchers to study the work life balance among school female staff. In this context, the researcher is interested to find solutions to the following questions:

1. How are they able to balance their work life?
2. To what extent the school management facilitate female teaching staff to balance their work life?
3. In what way the family members of female teaching staff are supportive?

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the extent of the role of female teaching staff's work life.
2. To study the school management and its contribution in balancing female teaching staff's work life.
3. To study the level of family support for female teaching staff's work life.
4. To analyse the self-management techniques to balance in this context.
5. To provide list of recommendation that could help the educational intuitions to achieve better work life balance of their female teaching staff.

Hypothesis

H_0 = There is a significance association between the marital status of respondents and their work load.

H_1 = There is no significance association between the marital status of respondents and their work load.

Review of literature

To provide flexible working arrangements to assist employees to balance their personal and work commitments. Daniels and Radebaugh (1997). Work life balance is essential to both employers and employees because of the number of benefits it offers. This is why more employers are making use of best practices to achieve this much needed banal Armstrong, M. (2000), Performance Management key.

Pleck's (1977) research suggests that family-to-work spill-over is stronger for women and the work-to-family spill-over is stronger for men. Research suggests that female respondents in all parts of the World are pressured for time, rarely have time to relax and feel Stressed and overworked most of the time, but women in emerging countries feel the strain even more so than women in Developed countries.

Women in India (87%) are most Stressed/pressured for time (Nielsen Survey, June 2011). Several studies have explained the effect of work-life conflict on the health of working women. ASSOCHAM's study based on the survey of 103 corporate female employees from 72 various companies/organizations across 11 broad sectors of the economy focused on the issues of corporate female Employees. One of their significant finding is that high Psychological job demands like long working hours, working under deadlines, without clear direction leads 75 percent of the Working females suffer depression or general anxiety disorder.

According to Pesters, Montgomery, Bakker and Schaufeli (2005), pressures from the job and family domains are often incompatible, giving rise to imbalance. Therefore, the concept of WLB, along with its implications, is a core issue that must be investigated as the number of working women is on the rise and the problems they face because of it is without doubt quite serious.

M. Collins & Jason D. Shaw (2003) suggested that an equally high investment of time and involvement in work and family would reduce work–family conflict and stress thereby enhancing an individual's quality of life. And so it goes without saying that married working women of this era can have a healthy quality of life only when work-life balance is maintained making the topic of work life balance for working women, the need of the hour.

The consequences for women may include serious constraints on career choices, limited opportunity for career advancement and success in their work-role, and the need to choose between two apparent opposites—an active and satisfying career, or marriage, Children, and a happy family life. Work and family balance, in a way, deals with the role balance of an individual both at home and work. Work-Life Balance Programs (WLBP) developed by employee friendly organizations can be a good solution to solve the problems of work-life balance. WLBP have been found to increase employee control over time and Place of work (Thomas & Gangster, 1995) and reduced work family conflict (Kossel & Osaka, 1998) and stress (Thompson & Prottas, 2006). Kirchmeyer (2000) views living a balanced life as “achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains, and to do so requires personal resources such as energy, time, and commitment to be well distributed across domains”.

Research methodology

This study is descriptive in nature. To achieve the objectives and to test the hypothesis of the study, a three part questionnaire was constructed consisting of personal information, select factors that are affecting work life balance and their suggestions to overcome the major difficulties.

Sampling and Sample size

Random sampling method adopted to collect responses from various school teaching staff in Al Dhakiliya region. A total of 108 completed responses have collected.

Results and discussions

Table 1. Organizational factors and Work Life Balance

Organizational factors and WLB	Mean value	Interpretation
Conducive working environment	4.1204	Excellent
Working hours	3.6574	Very good
Support from school administration	3.4444	Very good
Fitness of work schedule	3.3981	Very good
Career opportunity	3.2315	Very good
Available facilities at work place	3.4167	Very good
Training facilities	4.2593	Excellent
Open door policy of management	3.5463	Very good

It can be interpreted from the mean values of organizational factors toward work life balance that almost all factors are positively contributing for female teaching staff to balance their work life. Members of female teaching staff receive a continuous support from their respective school management and they highly regarded their conducive work environment. Training facilities is another factor is much appreciated by the staff members. However, the school management has to consider the development of the career of staff members.

Table 2. Support of family and Work Life Balance

Support of family and WLB	Mean value	Interpretation
Motivation from family/spouse	3.8056	Very good
Support of House maid	2.7778	Good
Transportation during overtime	2.7315	Good
Spouse sharing family responsibilities	3.1389	Very good

It is so obvious that the female staff members are motivated by their family members and share their family responsibilities. However, they still require exclusive support for managing their families through house maids. If they are arranged with transportation facilities during a time of peak like examination and other such works, their level of happiness will improve to high.

Table 3. Self-management and work life balance

Self-management and WLB	Mean value	Interpretation
Working on overtime	3.1389	Very good
Taking leave to manage family	2.7315	Good
Traveling long to stress out	2.713	Good
Working on holidays to complete tasks	2.9074	Good
Taking work to home	3.3611	Very good

Female teaching staff of Al Dhakiliya region practice novel ways to manage their work and life. Most of the respondents work over time to complete the tasks and if not possible at work place to complete them, then they carry the work to their home. The mean value is less for the respondents who work on holidays.

Test of hypothesis

H_0 = There is a significance association between the marital status of respondents and their work load.

H_1 = There is no significance association between the marital status of respondents and their work load.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.785 ^a	4	.029
Likelihood Ratio	6.652	4	.155
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.090	1	.014
N of Valid Cases	108		

6 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

It can be noted in the above table that Chi-square test $X^2 = 10.785$, $p = 0.029$, this tells that there is a statistical significant association between the marital status of the respondents and their work load.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal	Phi	.316	.029
by	Cramer's V	.223	.029
Nominal			
N of Valid Cases		108	

Phi and Cramers’s V test shows the strength of association between the two variables is high and it is statistically significant.

Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted as there exists a significant association between the marital status of the respondents and their workload.

Findings

1. Half (50%) of the sample respondents are belonged to the age group of 31 to 35 years.
2. More than half (55.6%) of the respondents have 3 to 5 children in their family.
3. As many as of respondents (51.9%) have 8-12 years of experience.
4. Most of the respondents (93.5%) are married.
5. Majority of respondents (86.0%) have 900 RO and above monthly income.
6. As much as 87 per cent of respondents have Masters.
7. Majority of respondents (79.6%) have 6-8 hours daily workload.
8. As many as of 40.7 per cent respondents have agreed of feel conducive working environment at work place.
9. More than half (54.6%) of respondents have agreed working hours are appropriate to complete the regular activities.
10. One fourth of respondents (25.0%) have agreed work overtime to complete the work.
11. As many as of respondents (30.6%) have disagreed take leave to manage family requirements.
12. Approximately half of respondents (48.1%) have agreed school administration helps to balance work and life.
13. Nearly two third of respondents (27.8%) have agreed family responsibilities affect work life.
14. Nearly two third of respondents (28.7%) have agreed personal life is influenced by office hours.

15. Approximately of respondents (50.0%) have agreed work schedule is fit to complete jobs.
16. Two third (33.3%) of respondents have not sure develop negative attitude with supervisor when feel under stress.
17. Nearly two third of respondents (29.6%) have strongly disagreed travel long when feel under stress.
18. It is 24.1 per cent of respondents have strongly disagreed to work during holidays to complete the work.
19. Nearly two third of respondents (30.6%) have taken work to home as don't have time during office hours strongly disagreed.
20. Around half (45.4%) of respondents have strongly disagreed special strategies to manage work and life.
21. More than half of respondents (50.9%) have strongly disagreed work increases their self-worthiness.
22. Approximately half of respondents (44.4%) have strongly disagreed that they have disagreements with colleagues.
23. One third of (36.1%) of respondents have strongly agreed family/spouse is supportive to work.
24. Half of respondents (50.0%) have agreed happy with present salary & other benefits.
25. As many as 38 per cent of respondents have agreed more chance to improve career at work place.
26. Nearly half of respondents only (42.6%) have agreed that they are happy with the available facilities at work place.
27. Almost half (48.1%) of respondents have strongly agreed balancing work and life improves the productivity of organization.
28. Half of respondents (50.0%) have agreed management helps to balance work and life.

Recommendations

Flexible working hours

It was found that 55.6 per cent of respondents have 3 to 5 children in their family, therefore school management shall use flexible workings hours with employees.

Fair working hours

Although majority of respondents positively agree with working hours, still around 20 per cent of them have negative attitude with working hours. Hence, school management could be fair with their working hours.

Training to balance work and life

It has been noted that only 50.0% of respondents responded that their productivity increased with the support of management, whereas the other half have disagreed to management support for the same. In order to be fair with all employees, the school management shall provide appropriate training programme for the required people to balance their work and life.

Available facilities at work place

Although some of respondents positively agree with the available facilities at work place, still most of respondents not happy with facilities at work place. School management may improve the facilities to help the staff to increase their performance.

Career opportunities at work place

Majority of respondents haven't received chance of career development, they have less morale to their job, and that may increase staff turnover. Hence, school management shall have a serious concern on developing the career of each staff.

Taking work to home due to insufficient time at workplace

Since, 30.6% of respondent used to take their work to home, which influence to personal responsibilities, and don't give enough time to their families. School management may prevent staff to take work at home through proper planning.

Negative attitude with supervisor under stress

Two third of respondents have negative attitude with supervisors when they feel under stress. Staff feel less loyalty to their school. Hence, school management shall relieve pressure of employee.

Family responsibilities

As many as 27.8 per cent of respondents have agreed family responsibilities affect work. That led to reduce productivity of organization. School management may make courses foe staff which enable them how to manage between work and family responsibilities.

Conclusion

To sum up, the female teaching staff are able to manage their work and life regardless of several variables. Though there is a significant association between the marital status of respondents and their work load, they are still able to manage their work life. However, their least concern of transportation and house maid is provided, they will be able to better manage their work life. It would be possible to improve the work life much better if the schools in the region should consider the above suggestions.

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