

Work-Life Balance – A Study of Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance and their Impact on Employee and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract - In today's business scenario, work-life balance is considered as an important and challenging concept by organizations and their employees. It has become a significant concern in recent years as work (professional life) and family (personal life) are the two most important aspects of an individual's life and the lines between professional and personal life have become very thin and increasingly blurred. With the advent and increased use of technology, people are expected to be always available, making it difficult to switch off from work. This regular and close connectivity has led to a situation where employees feel like they are always working and have no time for their personal lives. This paper aims to understand the concept of WLB, its importance from the point of view of organizations and employees, problems in maintaining WLB, and various initiatives taken by organizations for improving and maintaining WLB. It also includes the responses from employees (male and female both) of various public and private sectors on certain questions asked with the help of a questionnaire related to WLB.

Keywords- Work-life balance, job satisfaction, better physical and mental health, flexible work time, work from home, hybrid mode of working, workload management, employee satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

In the current fast-paced world, maintaining a balance between work and personal life has become increasingly challenging. Work-life balance refers to the proper management of time and energy, ensuring that one can fulfil responsibilities at work and have enough time to spend with family as well as engage in leisure activities. It is about setting priorities in both professional and personal life. Work-life balance is crucial in today's fast-paced world as it can affect both mental and physical health, relationships, and the overall quality of life. The importance of work-life

balance can be seen in several ways, including the following:

1. **Better Physical and Mental Health:** Maintaining a work-life balance can have a significant impact on physical and mental health. Overworking can lead to burnout, stress, and anxiety, which can result in a host of physical ailments such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and depression. A good work-life balance, on the other hand, can help reduce stress and promote healthy habits such as regular exercise, healthy eating, and sufficient sleep.
2. **Increased Productivity:** Working long hours without adequate rest can lead to fatigue, decreased concentration, and reduced productivity. A good work-life balance, on the other hand, can help individuals to recharge, refocus, and return to work with renewed energy and focus, resulting in better productivity.
3. **Better Relationships:** A poor work-life balance can lead to a strain on personal relationships, as individuals may not have enough time to spend with loved ones. A good work-life balance, on the other hand, can help individuals to maintain healthy relationships and prioritize their personal lives, leading to greater happiness and fulfillment.
4. **Job Satisfaction:** A good work-life balance can help individuals feel more satisfied with their jobs as they can achieve a better balance between work and personal life. This can lead to greater job satisfaction and motivation, as individuals feel more in control of their work and have time for personal interests and activities.
5. **Enhanced Creativity and Innovation:** Employees who have a good work-life balance are more likely to be creative and innovative. They are

more likely to come up with new ideas and solutions, leading to better business results.

6. **Better Time Management:** Work-life balance can help employees improve their time management skills. It allows them to prioritize their work responsibilities and personal commitments, leading to increased productivity and reduced stress.

Work-life balance is not only important for individual employees but also it is beneficial for organizations. The importance of work-life balance can be understood as follows:

1. **Increased Employee Retention:** Organizations that prioritize work-life balance are more likely to retain their employees. Employees who feel supported in their personal lives and have flexibility in their work schedules are more likely to stay with the organization for the long term.
2. **Higher Employee Engagement:** When employees have a good work-life balance, they are more engaged and committed to their work. They are more likely to be motivated and productive, leading to better business results.
3. **Improved Reputation:** Organizations that prioritize work-life balance are perceived as attractive employers. This can enhance their reputation and attract top talent in the industry.
4. **Reduced Absenteeism and Presenteeism:** Employees who have a good work-life balance are less likely to be absent from work due to personal reasons or physical and mental health issues. They are also less likely to engage in presenteeism, which refers to showing up to work but being unproductive due to stress, fatigue, or other personal issues.
5. **Enhanced Employee Well-being:** Organizations that prioritize work-life balance can help improve the well-being of their employees. This can lead to reduced stress, increased job satisfaction, and better overall health, resulting in improved productivity and job performance.
6. **Increased Creativity and Innovation:** Employees who have a good work-life balance are more likely to be creative and innovative. They are more likely to come up with new ideas and solutions, leading to better business results.

It is understood from the above explanation that work-life balance is crucial for overall health, happiness, and job satisfaction. It can have a significant impact on

physical and mental health, relationships, productivity, and retention of talent. Individuals and companies must prioritize work-life balance to ensure that they can achieve a fulfilling and healthy lifestyle. We also understood that work-life balance is not only beneficial for individual employees but also for organizations. By prioritizing work-life balance, organizations can improve employee retention and engagement, an organization's image and reputation, reduce absenteeism and increase presenteeism, enhance employee well-being, and foster creativity and innovation.

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a crucial role in promoting and maintaining work-life balance in the workplace. There are several initiatives that HRM can implement to help employees achieve a better balance between work and personal life. Some of these initiatives include:

1. **Flexible Work Arrangements:** HRM can offer flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting, job sharing, part-time work, or compressed workweek. This allows employees to adjust their work schedules to fit their personal needs and responsibilities.
2. **Paid Time Off:** HRM can offer paid time off such as vacation time, sick leave, and personal days. This provides employees with the opportunity to take time off work for personal reasons without having to worry about losing pay or risking their jobs.
3. **Employee Assistance Programs:** HRM can provide Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) that offer counseling and support services for employees facing personal and work-related issues. This can help employees deal with stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues that can impact work-life balance.
4. **Health and Wellness Programs:** HRM can offer health and wellness programs such as gym memberships, wellness classes, and health coaching. This can help employees prioritize their physical health, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being.
5. **Workload Management:** HRM can implement workload management initiatives such as task delegation, prioritization, and time management training. This can help employees manage their workload effectively, reducing stress and increasing productivity.

6. Career Development: HRM can offer career development opportunities such as training, coaching, and mentoring programs. This can help employees develop skills and advance in their careers while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

HRM plays a vital role in promoting work-life balance in the workplace. By implementing initiatives such as flexible work arrangements, paid time off, employee assistance programs, health and wellness programs, workload management, and career development, HRM can help employees achieve a better balance between work and personal life, leading to greater job satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sirgy, M., Lee, DJ. (2018) defined work-life balance as a participation in both the professional and personal spheres with no tension between their respective social positions.

V Kandaswamy Sharma, Dr. Beulah Suresh, and Dr. S Uma Mageswari (2018) explained that the expression work-life balance (WLB) was first used in the middle of 1970s to describe the harmony between a person's personal and professional lives. The adoption of Work-Life Balance (WLB) techniques is crucial for all employee classes. WLB practices are increasingly more important because of the rise in Dual Income Single Kid (DISC) couples and members of nuclear families in organisations. All professions have recently shown a growing interest in WLB, and numerous organisations are now concentrating on highlighting its importance. The days of WLB being limited to specific fields are long gone, and things are now entirely different. Individuals from all walks of life—employers, workers, professionals, stay-at-home moms, etc.—struggle mightily to maintain a decent WLB.

Dhas, Babin. (2015) explained that in order to enable employees to strike a balance between their professional and personal obligations and hence increase employee loyalty and productivity, work-life balance is about establishing and preserving supportive and healthy work environments. Programmes that promote work-life balance have been shown to affect employee recruitment, turnover, commitment, and satisfaction as well as absenteeism, productivity, and accident rates.

Gautam, Indu & Jain, Sameeksha. (2018) explained that Organisations can create and execute work-life balance policies with the assistance of employee-driven solutions. On the business front, it will lessen overtime, stress, and burdens; on the home front, it will boost flexibility and family and leisure time. WLB is a severe issue for organisations to accept because it impacts both their personal and professional performance. The well-being and contentment of workers ought to be the organisations' primary concerns.

Wood, J., Oh, J., Park, J., & Kim, W. (2020) found that employers are making a greater effort to establish work-life balance-promoting conditions for their staff members. Organisations that are focused on achieving organizational-level results also support raising worker engagement levels. The question therefore becomes: What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement? A related query relates to human resource development (HRD) professionals who aim to support companies in achieving their corporate objectives as well as employees in finding a work-life balance.

S. Shagvaliyeva and R. Yazdanifard, (2014) found that previously, Because of their duties in the home, women have asked for and utilised flexible working hours more than men have. Men, too, are eligible for flexible work schedules. Due to the evolving family patterns, both men and women now adopt flexible working arrangements, with both parents having equal family responsibilities and two sources of income. As a result, it's critical for both to accomplish work-life balance and successfully complete life's obligations. Flexible work arrangements are advantageous to employers as well as employees. Therefore, flexibility was initially brought to the workplace to assist workers who looked for siblings or had children in juggling their time between work and personal obligations.

Flexibility helps to better allocate work and personal duties since it allows people to choose when, where, and how much time they work. Finally, achieving both work-related and extracurricular obligations successfully results in a work-life balance, which raises general life satisfaction. From an employer's perspective, workplace flexibility offered a few significant advantages. Flexible working practices have several positive effects, including increased employee performance, more organisational

engagement, decreased absenteeism and employee turnover, and higher job and employer satisfaction. Ultimately, these benefits increase a company's production and profitability.

rAdnan Bataineh, Khaled. (2019) studied that Employers who provide their staff with sufficient possibilities to balance their jobs in the home and workplace will benefit from higher performance levels from their staff. Employees that maintain a healthy work-life balance are better able to do their assigned responsibilities with greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Felstead, Alan, et al. (2002) explained Employers pay for employees' attendance and time spent at a certain location. In the worker's world, the times and places acquired through the labour market might be seen as presence and attention. Employment demands presence and attention, but they are always a given and are under management's supervision and control. In order to coordinate, synchronise, and integrate the attention and presence of employment and non-employment, workers must unavoidably adopt conscious activities. Practices that improve employees' autonomy in this process might be characterised as work-life balance initiatives. Relative autonomy has two important characteristics in this case. First, there are methods that broaden the range of connections between the work and non-work domains for employees. Therefore, employees can relate work and nonwork in a multitude of ways, for instance, when they have the option to work full-time or part-time, have flexible hours, or split a job. Second, certain policies and practices allow employees to modify or vary how they define the domains of work and non-work. For instance, returner policies, paid holidays, sabbaticals, extended leaves, and parental leave all provide employees with the opportunity to define the parameters of work and non-work for themselves. To put it succinctly, work-life balance practices are those that, consciously or unconsciously, provide employees more leeway and autonomy in deciding how much time and attention to devote to their jobs.

Chimote, Niraj Kishore, and Virendra N. Srivastava. (2013) found in their study that While the employees' perspective emphasised that the benefits of work-life balance (WLB) include job satisfaction, job security, autonomy, stress reduction, and improved health, the organisational perspective revealed that the benefits of WLB include lowering absenteeism and turnover,

improving productivity and image, and ensuring loyalty and retention.

Kumar, Harish, and Sudeep Kumar Chakraborty (2013). explained that WLB guarantees both success and happiness, both in terms of accomplishments at work and pleasure in life. WLB is closely related to organisational effectiveness. WLB and organisational effectiveness are actively interacting. Work-life balance is now considered to be one of the most crucial workplace attributes in the present economic climate, second only to compensation. Organisations can benefit from WLB in a number of ways, including higher employee satisfaction and morale, less stress in the home and at work, more organisational effectiveness and efficiency, and more.

Dr. Urvashi Sharma and Rableen Kaur Rao (2018) discovered that an employee's life, whether personal or professional, is impacted by work-life balance in all aspects. A few factors, such as physical and mental health, devotion to work and family, and an unbalanced work-life schedule, can lead to stress, which in turn can cause conflict in the home and at work and affect both job performance and family harmony. Companies that give their workers flexibility through work-life balance can perform better and retain talented staff members, giving them an advantage over competitors.

Work-life balance is defined as the interplay between work and other activities such as family, community, leisure, social obligations, health, and personal growth, as stated by Dr. K. Veena Latha (2019) in his study. Work-life balance is about finding a delicate balance by giving this top priority. It is unique to each person and always evolving. A state of work-life balance is one in which workplace accommodations, supportive management, appropriate policies, and positive interpersonal relationships all help to reduce conflicts between work and home life. Work-life balance is thought to have an impact on employees' job happiness and performance. Employee work-life balance contributes to higher job satisfaction and lower levels of stress at work. Companies now understand how critical work-life balance is to their employees' creativity and productivity. In order to encourage their staff to work effectively, employers are now providing flexible work schedules, team outings to health care facilities, and daycare centres. As a result, when the company makes an extra effort to strike a healthy balance between work and life,

employees feel inspired and grow devoted to the company. Work-life balance rules present numerous issues for organizations because employees now expect the organization to look out for them in addition to their needs.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

What are the various factors that affect the work-life balance of employees in any organization?

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY The main objective of this study is to understand the various aspects and importance of work-life balance. The main objective of the research is to study the issues and factors affecting work-life balance. It also aims to identify those factors that prevent positive work-life balance and measures that lead to positive work-life balance and job satisfaction.

table 1

Total no of respondents	male	Female
97	64(66%)	33(34%)

table 2

Age Group (in years)	No of respondents
20-30	31
31-40	16
41-50	34
51-60	16

table-3

Sector of work	No of respondents (in%)
Public sector	51.5%
Private sector	44.3%
Other	4.2%

Table-4

Work hours per week	No of respondents(in%)
Less than 40 hours	15.5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a descriptive type of research approach for analyzing the various issues related to the work-life balance of employees in organizations.

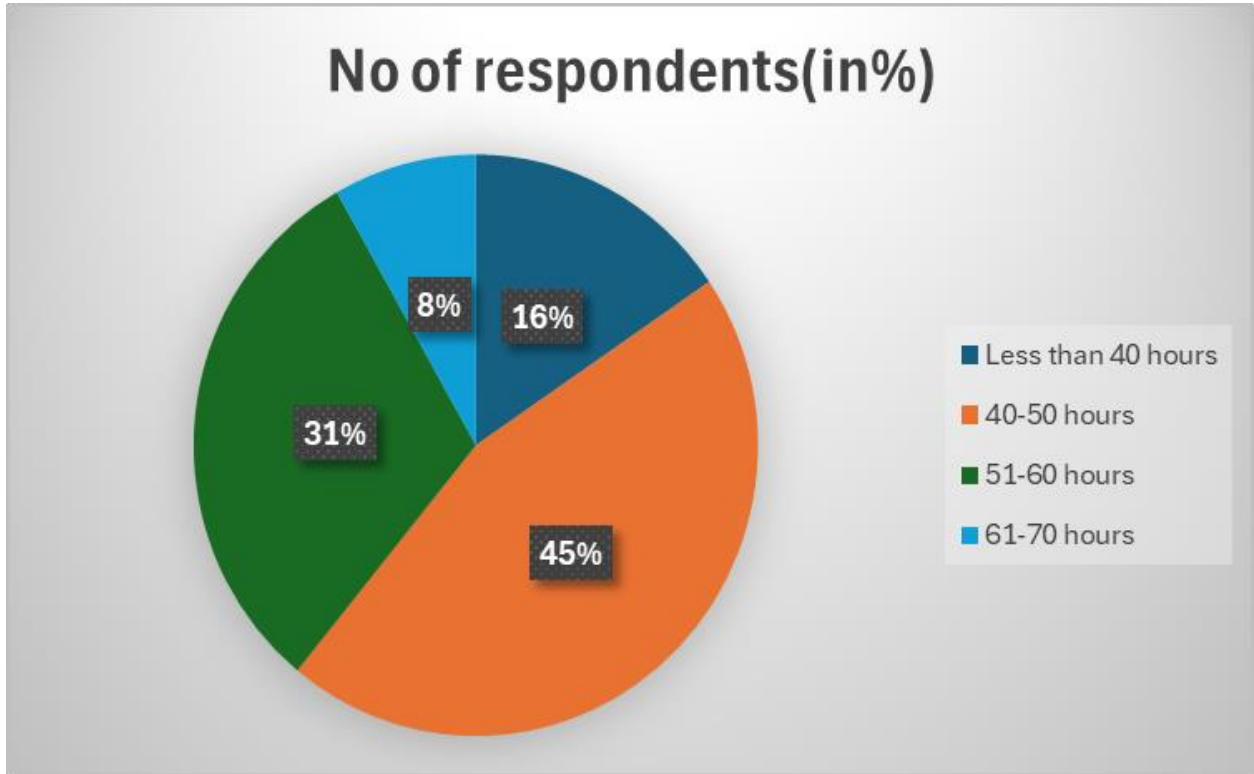
SAMPLING

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire sent and received online. Responses from 97 employees of different age groups (between 20-60 years) were received and analyzed, out of which no of male employees was 64 and no of female employees was 33. More than half of the respondents (51.5%) work in the public sector.

40-50 hours	45.4
51-60 hours	30.9
61-70 hours	8.2

figure-1



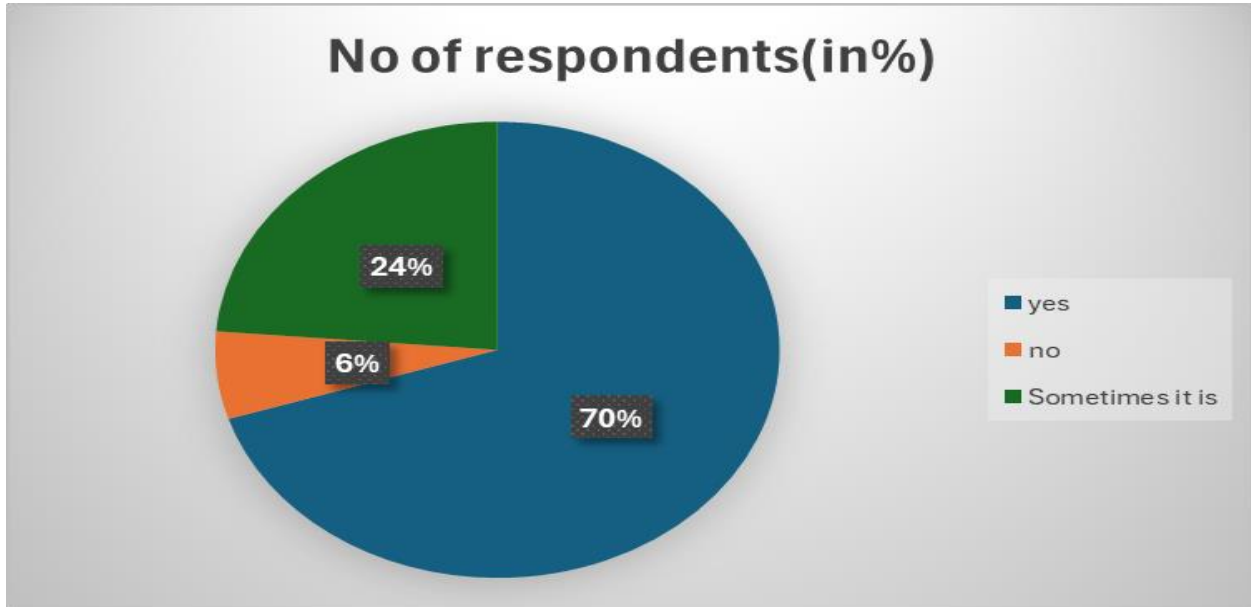
As per table-4 and figure-1,16% respondents are working less than 40 hours a week and 45% respondents are working 40-50 hours a week which they consider good for a positive work life balance. They are satisfied with their current life balance (refer table-11 and figure- 8 where around 60% of

respondents are very satisfied or satisfied). On the other hand, people working more than 50 hours a week find it difficult to balance their work and life and they are neutral or not satisfied with their current life balance (refer table-11 and figure-8)

Table-5

Workload manageable	No of respondents(in%)
Yes	70.1
No	06.2
Sometimes it is	23.7

figure-2

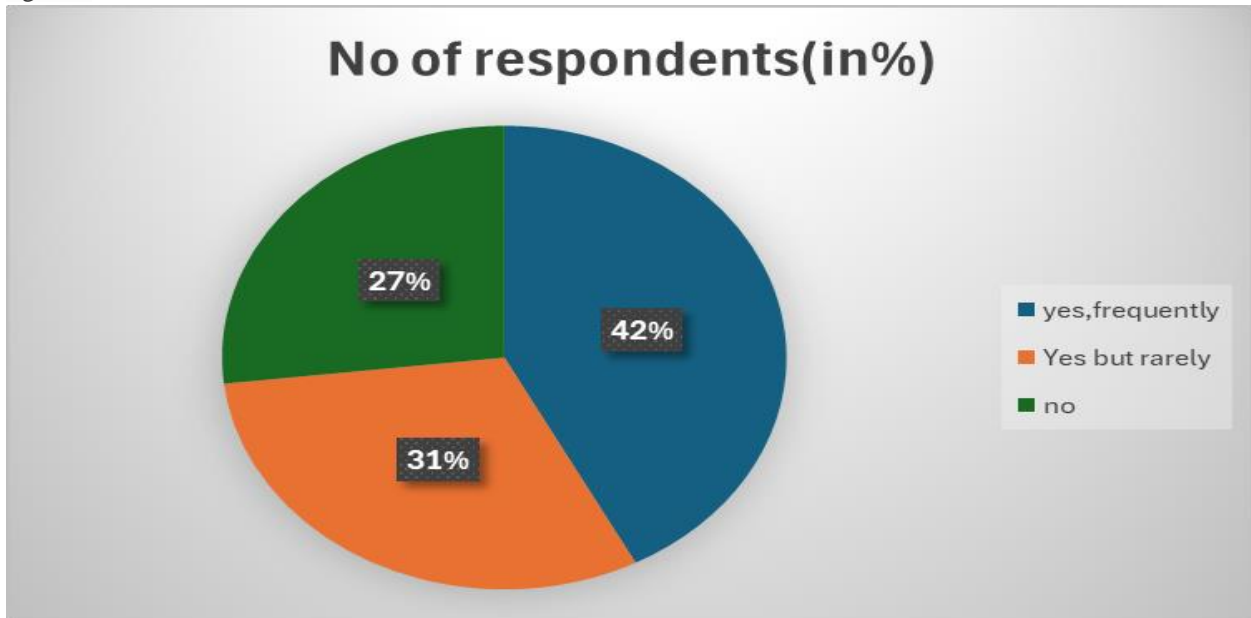


The above table and figure show that for 70% of respondents, their work is manageable which leads to job satisfaction and better work-life balance. So, organizations should initiate process improvements, better planning, skill development, technological upgradation, etc to make work more manageable.

Work beyond office hours	No of respondents(in%)
yes,frequently	42.3
Yes but rarely	30.9
No	26.8

Table-6

figure-3

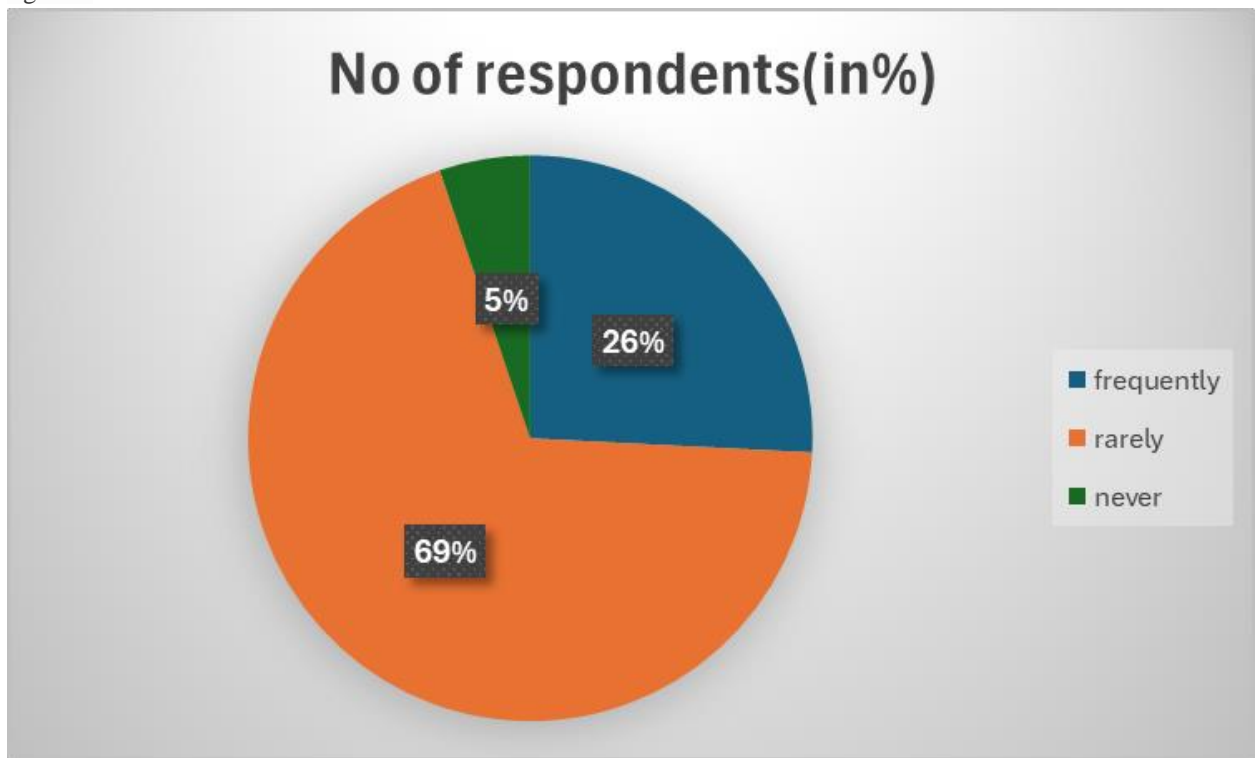


Employees who do not work after office hours or if they do, but rarely are enjoying their personal and professional lives and are satisfied with their respective jobs (refer to table-11 and figure-8). They have a better work-life balance.

Table-7

Breaks during work hours	No of respondents(in%)
Frequently	25.8
Rarely	69
Never	5.2

figure-4



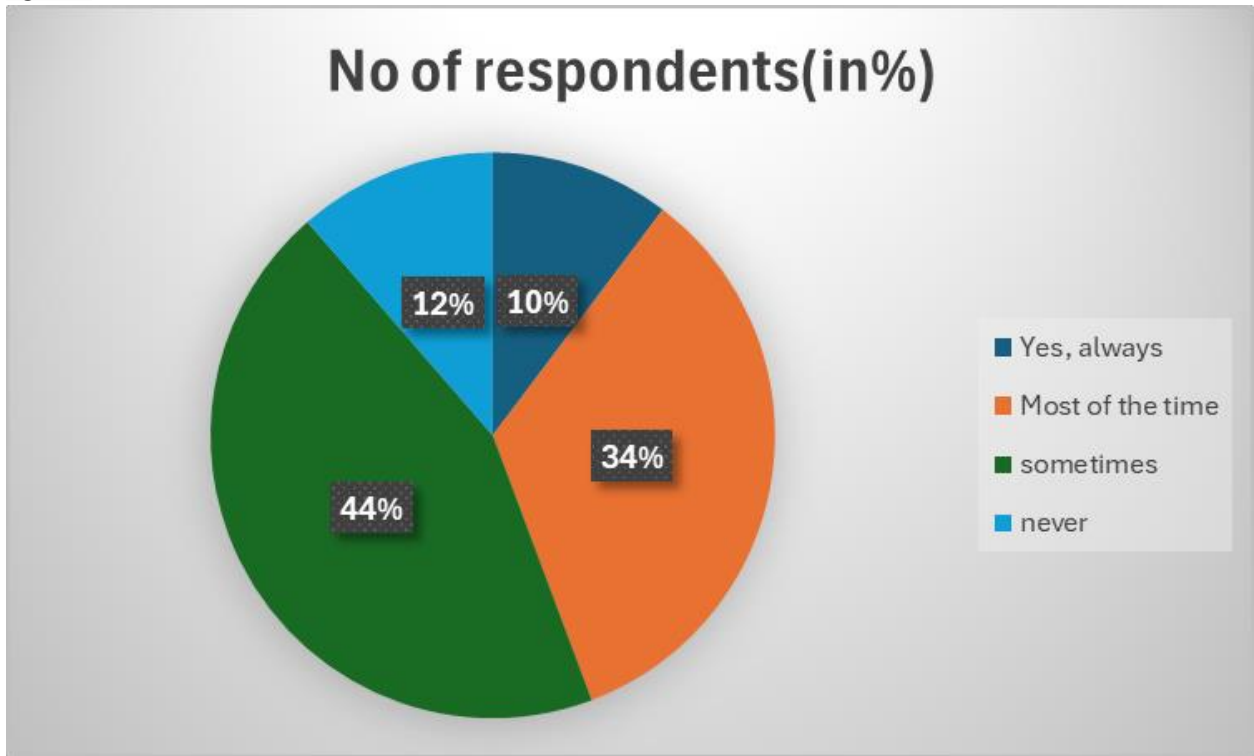
From the above table and figure, interpretation can be made that if work life is manageable, employees need not take frequent breaks during work hours.

Table-8

Disconnect from work at home	No of respondents(in%)
Yes, always	10.3
Most of the time	34
Sometimes	44.3

Never	11.4
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figure-5

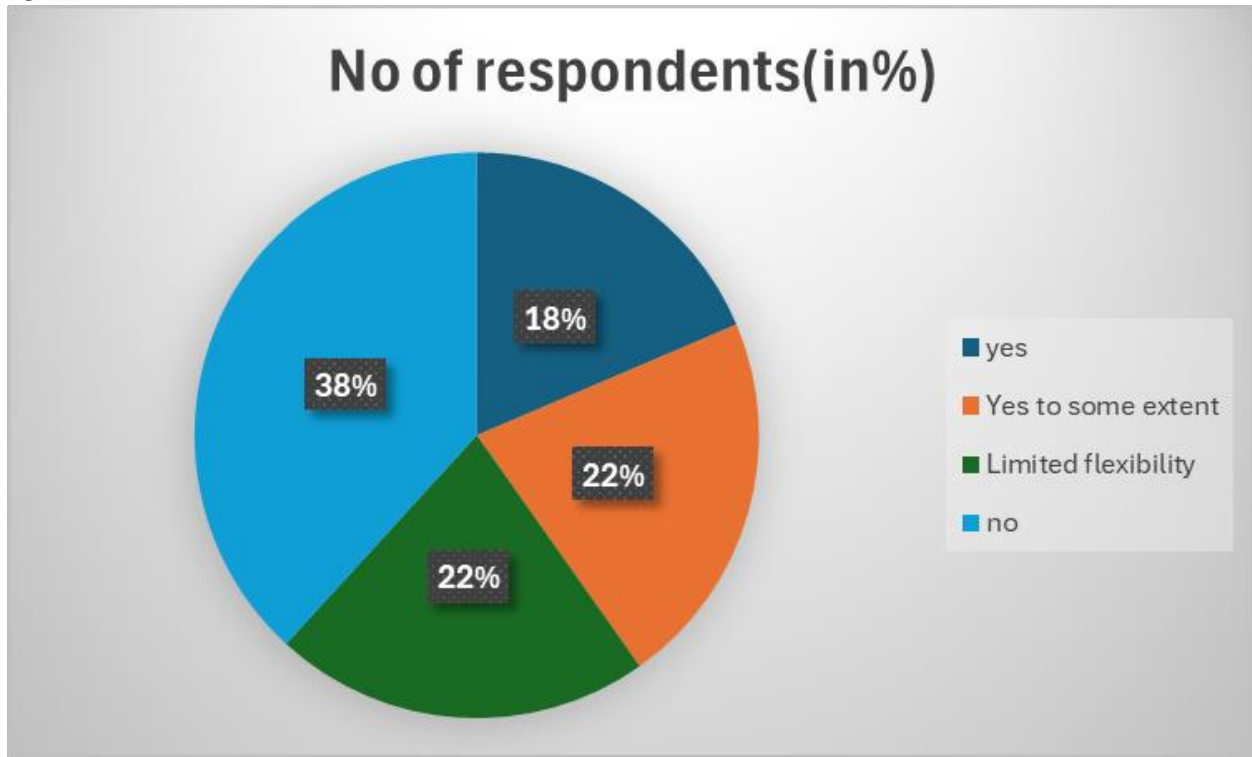


The above table and figure show how many respondents bring work to home either mentally or physically. Those who carry a workload to home are not able to enjoy their time with family and friends and are not satisfied with their work-life balance. Those who can disconnect themselves from work at home are satisfied and enjoy their work life.

Table-9

Work flexibility	No of respondents(in%)
Yes	18.6
Yes to some extent	21.6
Limited flexibility	21.6
No	38.2

figure-6

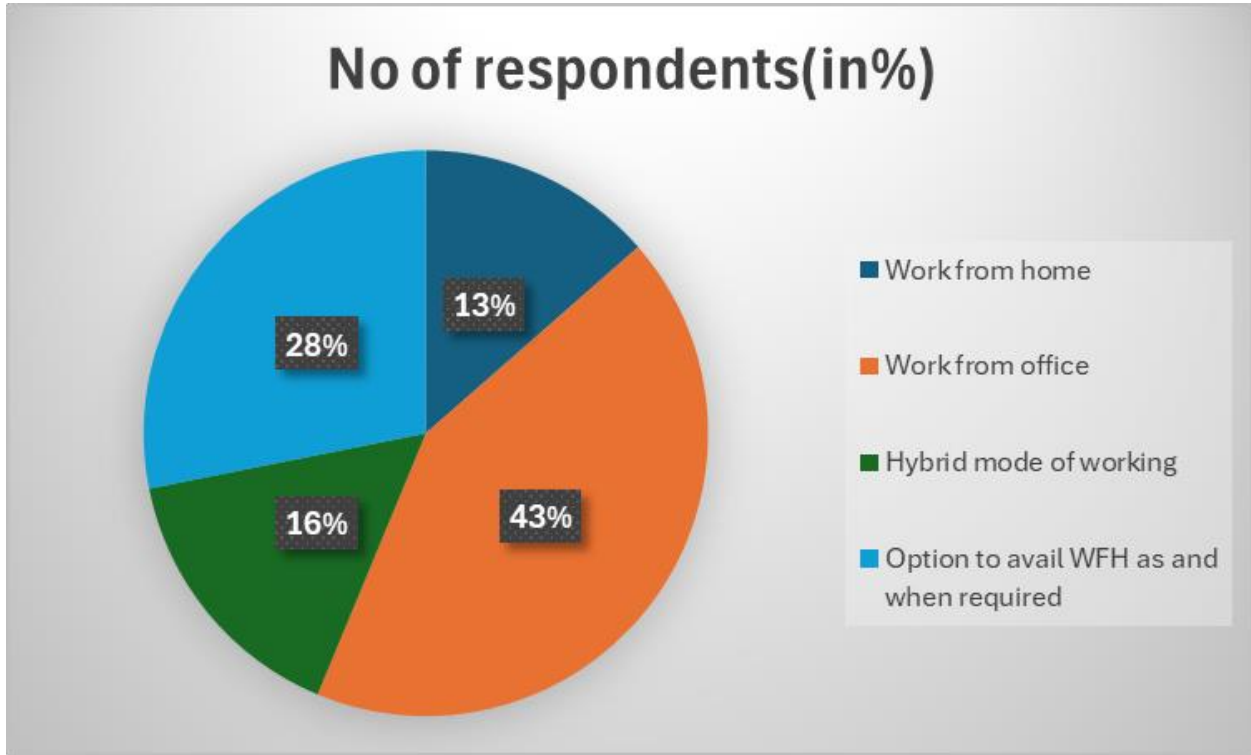


Flexibility in work is a great contributor to maintaining the work-life balance of the employees in any organization. Data in the above table and figure shows that employees having flexibility in their work either full or partial or to some extent have chances of better work-life balance as compared to employees having no work flexibility at all. It increases job satisfaction and promotes better work-life balance for employees as shown in table-11 and figure-8.

Table-10

Preferred mode of work	No of respondents(in%)
Work from home	13.4
Work from office	42.2
Hybrid mode of working	15.4
Option to avail WFH as and when required	27.8

figure-7

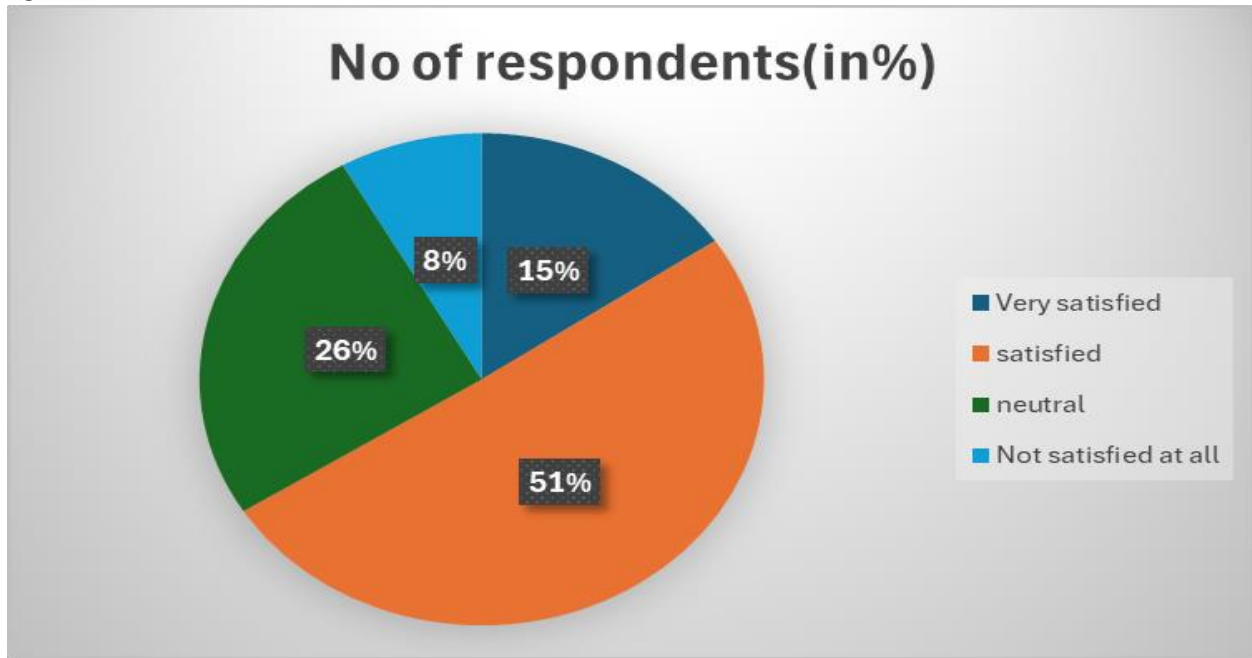


Nowadays most employees prefer other modes of working over the traditional mode of work i.e. work from the office. They are looking for other options that make their work-life balance better and increase their level of job satisfaction. As seen in the above table and figure only 43% of respondents prefer work from the office and 57% of respondents prefer work from home, a hybrid mode of working, and the option to avail work from home as and when required.

Table-11

Satisfaction level wrt WLB	No of respondents(in%)
Very satisfied	15.5
Satisfied	50.5
Neutral	25.8
Not satisfied at all	8.2

figure-8



The above table and figure exhibit the satisfaction of respondents at their respective jobs. There are various factors contributing to this-

1. More than 60% of respondents' working time is within the limits i.e. 48 hours a week. They get enough time for family, friends, hobbies, sleep, and other activities beyond work.
2. For 70% of respondents work is manageable. They are not overburdened which reduces work stress and increases job satisfaction.
3. More than 55% of respondents are not/ rarely working beyond office hours. They don't bring work home. They get time for their priorities other than work.
4. More than half of our respondents have flexibility in their respective jobs which increases the sense of independence and belongingness to the organization.

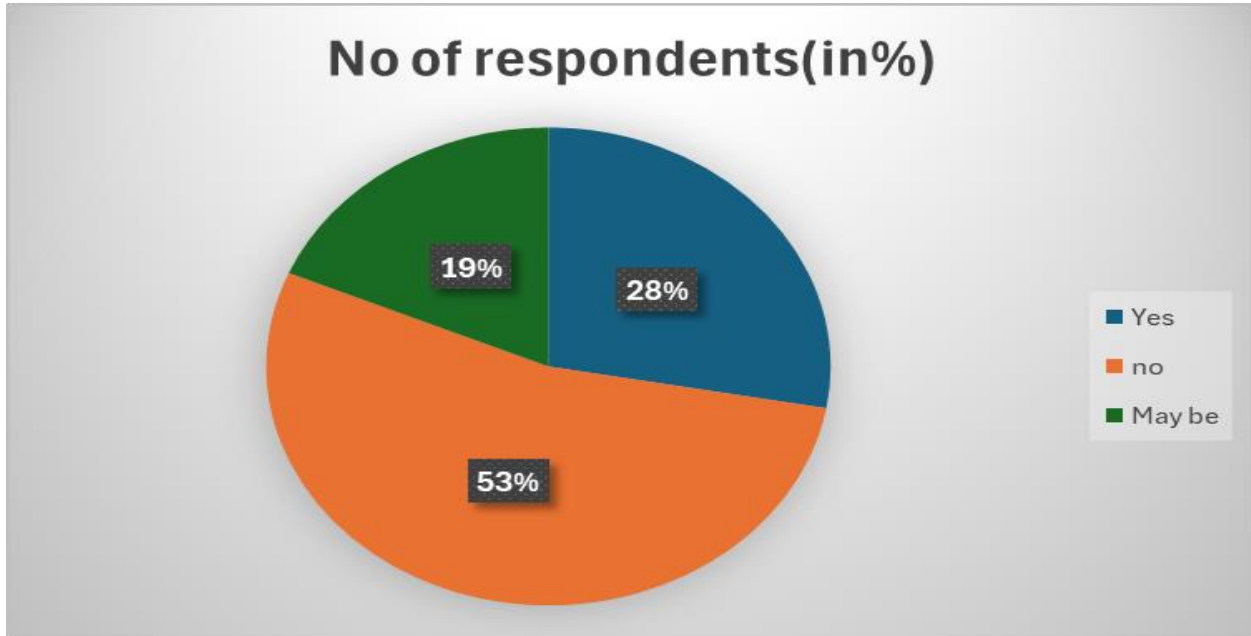
5. 57% of our respondents are looking for/ favoring new modes of work like work from home, hybrid mode of work, etc as against the conventional method of working i.e. work from the office. This certainly makes work-life balance better and positive.

It is shown in the table and figure that 65% of respondents are very satisfied and satisfied with their current work-life balance. More than 70% of respondents are satisfied with their respective organizations about work life balance initiatives (as shown in Table 13 and figure-10)

table-12

Impact of COVID19 on WLB	No of respondents(in%)
Yes	27.8
No	53.6
May be	18.6

figure-9

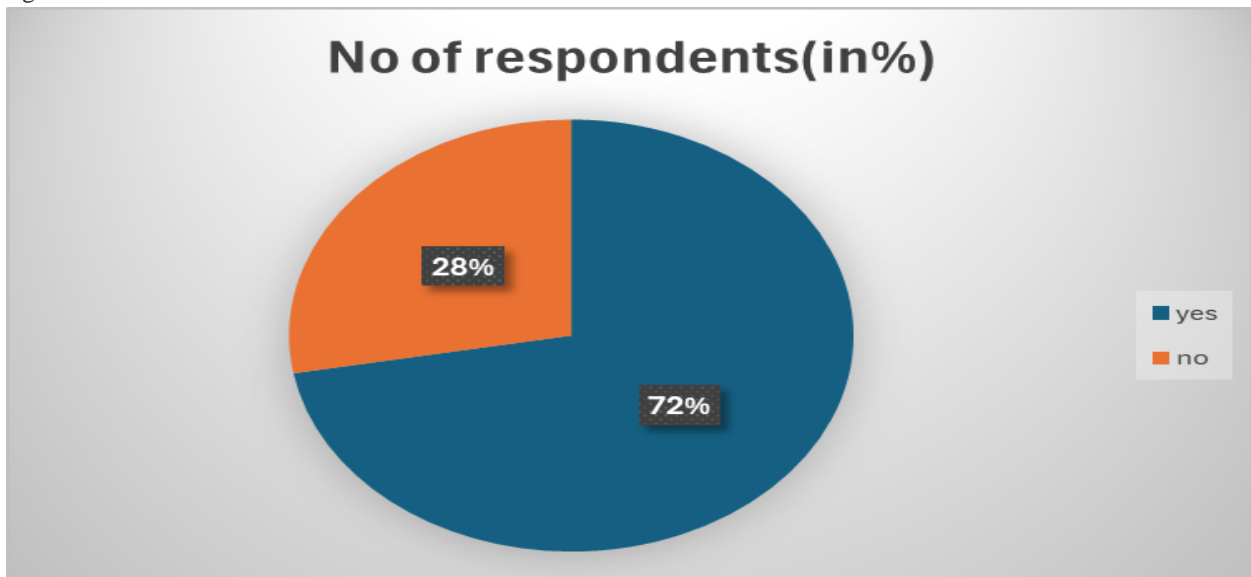


As COVID-19 has brought many challenges and changes, respondents were asked if they found any major changes in their work-life balance after the pandemic. Their response was almost 50-50 towards this question.

Table-13

Employee satisfaction wrt organization’s WLB initiatives	No of respondents(in%)
Yes	72.2
No	27.8

figure-10



As explained above, most of the respondents are satisfied with the work-life balance practices of their organizations. As per our respondents, factors that contribute to positive work-life balance include flexible working hours, supportive company culture, adequate time off and vacations, remote work options, manageable workloads, supportive colleagues and supervision, hybrid mode of work, and so on. On the other hand, overload of work, unsupportive company culture, poor time management, the attitude of supervisors, fewer holidays, less time for self and family, poor opportunities for career growth, family issues, etc. are the factors that prevent a positive work-life balance.

STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

I do acknowledge that there may be some other factors also which are not included and explained in the above analysis, and they may have a significant impact on the work-life balance of employees in any organization. It also misses the more quantitative analysis of data as it does not include any statistical tools and techniques.

CONCLUSION

The study identified and explained various job-related and personal factors that have a significant impact on the work-life balance of employees in an organization. Organizations and HR management need to understand those factors and frame the policy after considering those factors so that employee satisfaction, motivation, and retention can be increased. There is a need to give more emphasis to policies and programs that positively affect WLB so that employee turnover, work stress, absenteeism, and employee grievances can be minimized. Rishi Bhushan Kumar and Dr Ravish Chandra Verma (2022) found that the global rise of a new active lifestyle, combined with epidemiological constraints, necessitates the development of guidelines on how to reduce the harmful consequences on Work-Life Balance. They also discovered that work-life balance has a 720-degree impact on employees, as their personal and professional lives are intertwined. Employee happiness in both personal and professional life, physical and mental health, devotion to work and family, and a work-life balance out of screwy results

in Stress, which leads to family conflict and poor job performance. Organizations that provide flexibility to their employees by allowing them work-life balance can retain good personnel and perform successfully, giving them an advantage over their competitors.

Sami A Khan (2013) found that we cannot ignore the realities of the workplace today, which have produced more stress and made the lives of individuals more complex, extending beyond the physical boundaries of the organization. There is a need to adopt a well-thought-out work-life balance (WLB) initiative that should be strategic, credible, and coherent with the business and HR policy framework at the firm level. It will surely enhance the corporate image as well as help in institutionalizing a performance-based culture in the firm. WLB is a growing cause of concern for all stakeholders, and it should be pursued religiously to seek a mutually beneficial solution for the organizations and the employees in the long run.

Fernandes, Jackson (2023) explained that one is often forced into problems to accomplish their goals and maintain financial, emotional, and mental stability. The entwining of family duties, self-esteem, self-independence, and belongingness leads to confusion, mental pain, and finally, an unhappy and depressed individual. Issues with work-life balance are growing more common today. Keeping a healthy balance between work and personal life is essential to achieving both personal and professional/organizational goals. It's vital to keep a healthy balance between one's personal and professional lives because imbalances negatively impact both. A healthy individual can efficiently handle a range of responsibilities at work and home.

In conclusion, the research conducted has shed light on the complex interplay of factors that affect work-life balance, which is an essential component of contemporary employment. After analyzing a broad range of literature and empirical data, a set of critical insights has emerged, which are as under:

1. Individual Characteristics: Personal factors such as gender, age, marital status, and caregiving responsibilities can influence how individuals perceive and manage their work-life balance. Women, for instance, often face greater challenges in balancing work and family

responsibilities due to societal expectations and traditional gender roles.

2. **Workplace Flexibility:** The degree of flexibility afforded by employers significantly impacts employees' ability to manage their professional and personal commitments. Flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting and flexible hours, empower individuals to better integrate work and life responsibilities.
3. **Organizational Support:** Organizational support, including policies, resources, and cultural norms, plays a pivotal role in facilitating work-life balance. Companies that prioritize employee well-being through initiatives such as parental leave, wellness programs, and supportive managerial practices foster a conducive environment for balance.
4. **Technology and Connectivity:** While technological advancements have revolutionized the way we work, they have also introduced challenges to work-life balance. Constant connectivity through email, messaging apps, and remote collaboration tools blurs the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to increased stress and burnout.
5. **Individual Preferences and Boundaries:** Individuals' preferences, priorities, and boundaries significantly influence their perception of work-life balance. Factors such as family commitments, career aspirations, and personal interests shape how individuals navigate the demands of work and personal life.

Based on these findings, attaining work-life balance necessitates a comprehensive approach that addresses both individual and organizational factors. Employers need to acknowledge the significance of establishing supportive work environments and implementing policies that enable employees to effectively manage their personal and professional lives. Similarly, individuals should prioritize self-care and advocate for their well-being while juggling their work and family responsibilities. By cultivating a culture of work-life balance, organizations can enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall success.

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