
The Effects of Work - Life Balance on the Academic employees' Performance, Motivation and Job Satisfaction among Private and Public Universities of Kurdistan Region

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Abstract: The purpose of this study investigates the effects of work - life Balance on the academic employees' performance, motivation and job satisfaction among private and public universities of Kurdistan Region. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to obtain empirical outcomes. The questionnaires were distributed to the 396 participants among public and private universities in KRG. The results indicate that the employees of the academic world do face challenges of work-life balance in their careers. These challenges are more difficult on the private university employees than the public employees, and the public employees enjoy a fairly better degree of work-life balance than the private universities, even though the rate of the work-life balance culture within the public universities is not at an acceptable level.

Keywords: Work-life balance, job satisfaction, employee motivation and employee performance, Kurdistan, Erbil.

INTRODUCTION:

This research was conducted on the effect of work and life balance on the employee's performance within an organization. The business of today's world is vastly different than that of the 1970s. Organizations are evolving, new technologies are emerging, giant companies can turn into small companies in an overnight, and small companies can emerge as giants in an overnight as well, the whole concept of organizations are evolving as we have entered into a new and rapidly changing environment which makes the whole concept of certainty a crippling foundation.

In the Early 1990s, Kurdistan region emerged from nearly a century of suffering from repression and oppression. After the formation of a new parliament and the establishment of a semi-independent government, the region experienced an extraordinary boom in both economics and lifestyle. Alongside lifestyle and economic boom, the question of work-life balance became a major issue, especially when the foreign organizations started investing in the region that were offering their employees the flexibility to maintain their work-life balance. This posed a threat to the domestic organizations, they had to either adapt the work-life balance strategy or lose their effective personnel. Among the economic organizations, the academic organizations have become absorbed in this question as well, their efforts to maintain their employees by providing a work-life balance are producing the required changes to maintain such balance, and however, such changes are too slow to be visible. This is why the work-life balance is gaining popularity as a major challenge in the human resource management departments in Kurdistan region-based public and private universities. Poor work-life balance among employees in these institutions has been made manifest through high employee turnover and reduced retention, high costs of recruitment, low employee motivation to work, and reduced job satisfaction. These aspects justify the absence of a stable work life balance among these employees. (Fatih.Cura, 2014)

Lack of elaborate understanding of work life balance and its correlation with employee performance, employee motivation and job satisfaction has been cited as the major cause of overall low staff productivity in institutions of higher learning. There have been few or no researches in this area to clarify such existing gap between work and life balance, and no priority is given to such issue in many organizations. Thus, it is of paramount importance for a research to be conducted in this context in order to lay the foundation of the strategies required to maintain the work-life balance in the region. This is why this study will enhance the understanding of work-life balance of employees which is thought to enhance performance and delivery by public and private universities in Kurdistan region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the fast-changing world of organizations, the performance of the employees plays the key role in shaping as well as maintaining the organization competitive and effective. According to (Khan & Fazili, 2016), work-life balance plays a critical role in yielding potential positive outcomes such as high-affective commitment and increased performance. In contrast, work-life imbalance may trigger potentially negative employee behaviors and attitudes including decreased commitment, emotional exhaustion, and job responsibility burnout. This same attitude is reiterated by (Dr.Dabin 2015) who states in his research that the issue of work-life balance is increasingly becoming a phenomenon in the world as organizations attempt to provide a sound environment for their employees to foster more creativity and effectiveness. In their research, (Shankar, 2017) points out that among the major impacts associated with work-life imbalance is employee turnover intention. Turnover of employees has been positively associated with the incidence of reduction in organizational efficiency and performance. In addition, work-life fit absence shows a connection, through research, with job dissatisfaction which may potentially result in negative and undesirable outcomes like low performance and associated workplace defiance. (Richard L. Daft 2002) gives a very comprehensive example of the importance of the employee performance in maintaining the organization effective and competitive. In his blockbuster book, (organization theory), he presents the Xerox organization as the envy of the corporate world, this condition was manifested when their employees enjoyed the merits of a positive and people-oriented culture plus values such as risk-taking, respect and fairness, but such condition came to a standstill when the culture became too dysfunctional and the rivals caught up with Xerox's high-end digital machines. Even so, there is a strong belief among researchers that work-life balance or a lack of it may have significant influence on organizations and employees, even though such influence is yet to be adequately identified and measured.

Over the past two decades, many giant firms and organizations witnessed major layoffs as organizations were unable to catch up with rival products, thus, such organizations implemented a mixed strategy of massive cost-cutting and layoffs. According to (Richard L. Daft 2008) this was the case with Xerox or the 2008 economic meltdown when thousands of employees were laid off, and the burden of overtasking fell to the remaining employees, thereby they became too much under pressure to meet the organization's deadlines to the point where the companies suffered even more deadly blows and continued to bleed the red ink.

A lot of researches and studies have pointed out the dramatic benefits of work-life balance both for the employees and the organization. In their research, which was the first ever research done in this regard in the country of Oman, (Agha et al 2017) have concluded their research by clarifying that the existence of balance between the personal and professional life, for the academic and non-academic world, will further contribute to the organizational effectiveness, efficiency and positive organizational and professional outcomes for the employees and the organization at the same time. There exists ample literature that further identify a host of benefits accruing from work-life balance among employees. According to (Rehman & Roomi, 2012), one of those crucial benefits is the capacity to improve employee quality of life as well as enhancement of organizational effectiveness. The same researcher also point out that even though employees are assigned different professional tasks by the organization, yet there are also outsider tasks that the employees are concerned about, such as tending for their elders, childcare or household duties. It has been highlighted in the same research that work-life balance is achieved the moment the work and life domains coexist in harmony. Work-life balance, therefore, entails the capacity of an employee to successfully combine household and work accountabilities with disregard for their gender or age.

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

This research seeks to undertake an exploration of the factors which influence the achievement or attainment of work-life balance among Erbil-based public and private university employees. To gain deep understanding of this problem, the researcher designed research questions as follows:

- _ What are the impacts of work-life balance on the job satisfaction among the employees in Kurdistan region of Iraq in Private and Public Universities?
- _ What are impacts of work-life balance on the employee motivation among employees in Kurdistan region of Iraq in Private and Public Universities?
- _ What are the impacts of work-life balance on the employee performance among employees in Kurdistan region of Iraq in Private and Public Universities?

Respondents

This research is aiming at a particular academic unit or group of people (The employees in the academic world), and as it involves careful observations and probing into that particular unit, the research will take the form of "Case study" method. The number of employees in private universities, according to the data from the ministry of higher education, is 1844 employees. The number of public university employees in entire Kurdistan consists of 20360 employees. This is why a random group of (500) employees, from both private and public universities,

was given the survey questions in order to clarify the barriers and enablers of the existence/lack of balance and imbalance in their work-life. (Ministry of higher education 2020).

Procedures

The researcher has opted to use a mixed method research design which combines together the qualitative and quantitative methods to realize a fuller understanding of the factors influencing work-life balance, to enhance research trustworthiness, reliability, and validity, to minimize their weaknesses while emphasizing the strengths of individual methods in the study.

This research has clutched the two most important data collection and data analyses software systems (SEM/SPSS software) to bring about the validity and reliability of the analysed data that could produce credible results and conclusions for the research and the researcher. For each dimensions of the research topic, the Cronbach's Alpha is used to be tested on each dimension. For the hypothesis to be tested and cross-examined, the top-notch software program (SEM_ structural equation modelling) is applied. The research also applies Exploratory Factor Analysis to examine the validity of the test (Demir, Ali, Khan 2020).

Instrument

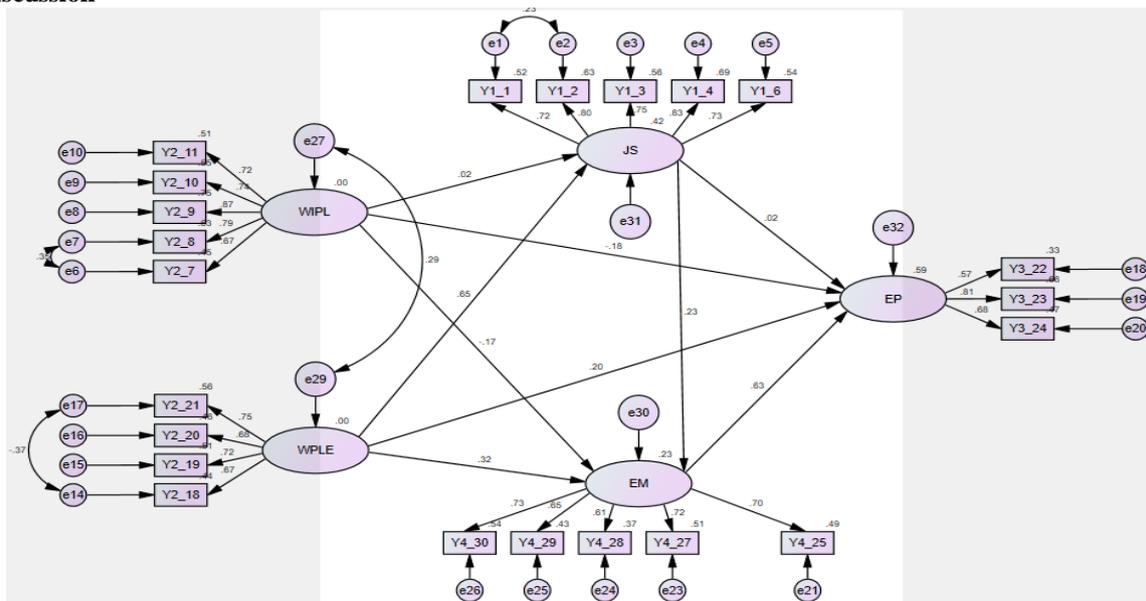
The researcher uses the questionnaire as the primary method of data collection. The researcher uses a closed-ended questionnaires in which the respondents are subjected to questions with predefined alternative answers. While such answer alternatives can either be ratio/interval or categorical questions, the researcher opts for categorical questionnaire questions. The questions are designed with predefined pieces of information to which the participants respond. A Google form was created to distribute the questionnaire among the population. The second canal was the use of Email services, it was through this canal that the questionnaire had been sent to a large number of population. Finally, the questionnaire was also distributed among the population via WhatsApp application where the population had access to fill out and answer the questionnaire questions. The second method of data collection is interviews, which will be conducted through video and telephone owing to the risk of exposure to Covid-19. Ten respondents are targeted for the interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

results

The research survey was responded by 396 responders from the different academic entities and educational institutions. The reliability and validity of the data accumulated from the survey questions prove that the outcome data is valid, sufficient and correct. This came into light after the data was checked for Cronbach's Alpha, which is 0.862. Thus, the data could be analysed based on different methods, and the outcome determines the data that was encompassed from the research survey.

Discussion



The final results of this study as well as of our data and model indicate a very strong relationship and link between work-life balance on employee motivation, performance and job satisfaction, but each dimension is affected separately and on different rates. The research data findings have shown that work-life balance plays an important role on the employee motivation and employee performance more than on job satisfaction. The first

equation indicates that the impacts of WIPL (Work Interference with Personal Life) on job satisfaction is not very significant. It is also worth mentioning that the P value of WIPL on job satisfaction is (%0.761) which is not significant since it is above (%0.05) as indicated in the research methodology, which elaborates that even though the employees, if they feel bad or feel that there exists no work-life balance in their professional and personal life, this lack of work-life balance does not significantly affect their job satisfaction. As for the WIPL on employee motivation, it demonstrates that there exists a negative impact of the lack of work-life balance on the employees. The P value of the WIPL on employee motivation is recorded as (%0.003) which also demonstrates that the higher the lack of work-life balance for the employees, the less motivation and enthusiasm for the employees towards their workplace and organization. This finding shows that while the negative impacts of work-life balance increase, motivation of the employees significantly decreases and vice versa. This is an integral factor for the senior staff and board of managers in boosting the productivity of the organization as well as of the employees, and the only mean of doing this is to create an atmosphere where there exists no negative feelings and impacts of the work-life balance on the employees. As for the relationship or impacts of WIPL on employee performance, the data demonstrates that the P value of the WIPL on EM is (%0.001), which in return demonstrates that WIPL negatively impacts or affects employee performance, which turns out to be a significant finding of the research. This factor reveals that the more WIPL the less employee performance, and vice versa. It also reveals that WIPL negatively impacts on the employee performance and employee motivation, thus, it is of paramount importance to be mentioned that these two factors contribute to the deterioration of the work-life balance for the employees.

In terms of the positive impacts of WPLE (Work Personal Life Enhancement) on the three employee dimensions (Job satisfaction, Employee performance and motivation). The data that has been mentioned in the model clears out that the impact of WPLE on job satisfaction is significant. The P value of WPLE on job satisfaction is highly significant since it is less than (%0.01). In addition, it also clarifies that when the WPLE increases, the employees' job satisfaction also increases. As for WPLE on employee motivation, the results and the data in the above mentioned table demonstrates that WPLE on employee motivation is also highly significant, it also clears out the fact that the P value of WPLE on employee motivation is less than (%0.01). This factor also clarifies that employees' motivation significantly and highly increases in proportion to the increase of WPLE, and vice versa. Lastly, the impacts of WPLE on employee performance, the findings of the data demonstrate that the P value of WPLE on employee performance is (%0.011) which is significant. It demonstrates that the WPLE on employee performance is very positive, the higher the WPLE, the more and higher the employee performance and vice versa.

The findings also demonstrates an important factor, and that is the positive rate of WIPL on job satisfaction is stronger and higher than the negative rate of the WPLE on job satisfaction. This factor reveals that the positive side of work-life balance creates more positive impacts on job satisfaction for the employees than the negative side of work-life balance, thus the positive side is more effective than the negative side of work-life balance on job satisfaction, even if the negative sides of work-life balance increases, it is still the positive side of work-life balance that is more stronger and consolidated for the employees in their job satisfaction.

Another noteworthy factor that is important to be mentioned is the positive and negative side of work-life balance on employee motivation. It is demonstrated that the positive impacts of work-life balance on employee motivation is higher and stronger than the negative sides of work-life balance on employee motivation. Even if the negative sides of work-life balance increases, it is still far less powerful than the positive side of the work-life balance on employee motivation because the positive sides of work-life balance are almost double or two times higher than the negative sides of work-life balance on employee motivation.

As for the negative and positive sides of work-life balance on employee performance, the data and research findings point the fact out that they both have more or less the same impacts on employee performance, it also reveals that the negativity and positivity of work-life balance on employees more or less have the same impacts on the employee performance.

Another round of findings of the data reveal that the impacts of job-satisfaction on employee performance is not significant, therefore job satisfaction is not related to employee performance significantly, or in other words: it does not matter if the rate of job-satisfaction is high or low on employees, whatever the rate of job satisfaction is, it does not significantly affect the employee performance. The strategic finding is that job satisfaction does not have a direct impact on employee performance.

On the contrary, employee motivation has huge and significant impacts on employee performance. It is also significant and important to mention that job satisfaction has a direct impact on employee motivation, which in return, has a direct impact on employee performance as job satisfaction indirectly has impacts on employee motivation, because the more job satisfaction increases. The more the employees' motivation increases which indirectly impacts employee performance, thus the employee performance increases. Thus, it is integral to mention that job satisfaction impacts employee performance through employee motivation. This confirms the literature review that for the employees to perform better, motivation is of paramount importance which is produced through job satisfaction. These factors are clearly shown in the table above.

The SEM model of our data analysing also demonstrated that the private university employees suffer more than the public university employees in having less or no work-life balance in their professional and personal lives. The data cleared out that the employees of the private universities suffer more because they have more long-working hours and they do not have a lot of holidays as the public universities. Besides, the policies of the universities from the private to public universities differ, thus the private universities are devoid of some of the merits that the public universities have, such as public holidays. The data also revealed that both (private and public) suffer from the lack of policies of having a balanced work-life, yet the data also does not shy away from demonstrating that the public universities, in regard to their work-life balance culture, are doing better than the private universities, This was reinforced by the survey data that were accumulated and analysed.

CONCLUSION

From the data that was gathered, examined and analysed, it has been proven that the employees of the academic world do face challenges of work-life balance in their careers. These challenges are more difficult on the private university employees than the public employees, and the public employees enjoy a fairly better degree of work-life balance than the private universities, even though the rate of the work-life balance culture within the public universities is not at an acceptable level. The challenges that face the employees differ from one range and rate to another. The important factor that has been gathered and proven through the data shows that employees are likely to feel more motivated as they feel the existence of work-life balance in their personal and professional life. In the fast-paced world of organizations, employees are tempted and compelled to maintain the desired performance to sustain a livelihood. What the data from the research clarifies is the fact that employees who believe that their performance is stable and never changes, are actually unaware that their performance dramatically changes in proportion to their motivation from the higher management team. The data reinforces the fact that employees' performance is actually indirectly impacted through their job satisfaction and employee motivation. This demonstrates that work-life balance has its direct impacts on job satisfaction and employee motivation, but on the contrary, work-life balance indirectly impacts the employee performance. Thus, for the management team to enhance and boost the employee performance, the data reveals that this could be done through boosting the job satisfaction of the employees which will inadvertently boost the employee motivation, thus together these two dimension pave the way for the employee to perform better. The lack of the former dimensions will result in the inexistence of employee performance boosting.

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