

Social and Psychological Support for Personnel in Organisations: Work-Life Balance Programmes

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Abstract: *Objective:* The study aimed to explore the work-life balance concept, assessing the level and the peculiarities of work-life balance.

Background: The paper covers the psychological reconstruction of the concept of "the work-life balance" in terms of its implicit understanding and differentiated diagnosis.

Method: The main research methods are: theoretical – the study of literature on the research problem; empirical – a study on the methodology for assessing psychological well-being, as well as methods of descriptive and analytical statistics.

Results: It has been designed an inventory based on 16 statements divided into the work-life balance components by means of the factor analysis. Satisfaction with work and family roles have been found to have additive effects on happiness, life satisfaction, and perceived quality of life. The basic strategies in social and psychological programs in organisations have been analysed as focus strategies, "resource/refusal" strategies, adaptive strategies. Adaptive strategies are the ones helping to adapt to problems arising at work or/and at home.

Conclusion: Empirical findings suggest that involvement in multiple roles can improve psychological and mental health by buffering negative effects such as reduced. The use of individual adaptive strategies with the resource increase strategy perfectly contributes to the work-life balance achievement.

Keywords: Work-life conflict, work-life enrichment, social and psychological strategies, relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays professional development and productivity increase are associated not only with expert's abilities and skills as well as his or her career goals and motivation but also with the ability for time and energy management (the ability to divide one's time and energy between work and play). Over the past three decades, the issues of work-life balance have received extensive publicity and have been a subject to increasing investigation all over the world, but not in Ukraine. The today work environment becomes stressful, with many tasks and problems to solve. It is overloaded, imbalanced, complicated and often full of conflicts. In this climate, managing the boundary and balance between home and work is becoming more challenging. There is a need for organisations and personnel alike to find flexible and innovative solutions that maximise productivity without damaging personnel' well-being, their personal life, family relationships.

The need for work-life balance programmes in psychological and organisational support of personnel is determined by the following changes in the social, economic and psychological conditions of organisation activities:

- demographic and social changes that led to an increasing number of women in the professional sphere;
- development of technologies that ensure reconciliation of work and personal and family life can help to organise the work away from the workplace;
- modern challenges that have increased requirements for flexibility of employees and organisations to increase their capacity to respond to changes;
- the increasing number of employees with more than one job;
- the increasing of working hours, leading to personnel overload and therefore, the working

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environment becomes more stressful and requires a "discharge".

Work-life balance is a category defined by researchers as a person's subjective general assessment of the interrelation between work and other life areas, family, as well as the ability to combine these spheres properly [1]. In some modern research studies, a "work-life integration" term is also used. It reflects a fulfilled, healthy, and productive life, which combines work, relationship, entertainment; integrates several activity types focused on oneself, one's personal and spiritual development [2-4]. The term "work-life integration" is more general and includes "work-life balance". And the term "work-life balance" includes "work-family balance". The negative aspects of this interaction have been defined as work-family/ work-life conflict [2, 5-7], and the positive as work-family/ work-life enrichment [8].

The main work-life balance components include the load balance [9]. The analysis and summary of the researches of [2, 5, 10-15], which were devoted to the study of work-life balance/ work-family conflict, enrichment of work-life interface. The determinants and consequences of unbalancing, allowed us to create a model of work-life balance, which consists of the resource field and unbalanced field conflict and their outcomes.

M. Roche and J.M. Haar [8] noted that the imbalance between work and family roles and the resultant conflict requires greater attention by researchers. [16-18] distinguished several causes of work-life conflict. Among them are role stressors, role-playing environment, social support, work and family characteristics, personal characteristics. According to [4, 16, 19-21], work-life balance provides the following benefits for employees:

- time to focus on life outside of work;
- control of working life;
- employees feel that their life is in balance, their work is easier and more manageable;
- employees can manage their tasks better;
- they will be more motivated to work;
- stress levels among employees – employees, who have found the right balance between work and life, haven't worry about stress;

- employees would like to have more power because they feel better and feel that they can handle it.

Empirical findings suggest that involvement in multiple roles can improve psychological and mental health by buffering negative effects such as reduced. There are several mechanisms of multiple roles that allow them to be a resource:

- the accumulation of role privileges;
- different roles may act as "buffer" to each other or offset each other;
- getting additional resources and improving the performance of different roles;
- personal development and personal satisfaction through psychological experience gained from multiple roles.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors talk about certain difficulties in the balance between work and personal or family life of the personnel, which depend on several factors. This imbalance can be eliminated with the help of various organisational practices to help staff, with social support, as well as personal strategies for finding work-life balance. According to the results of the empirical study and the theoretical approaches, the basic strategy in professional productivity increase programs in organisations may be the following: focus strategies, "resource/refusal" strategies, adaptive strategies, every of which is manifested in a certain kind of an individual strategy [19, 20, 22-25].

The advantages were identified in the work-life balance for the organisation, which include:

- increasing of employees' motivation;
- balance helps employees feel valuable to the organisation and improving productivity and loyalty;
- less stressful work environment;
- increasing competitiveness in the labour market, increasing the number of potential employees, reducing the number of absenteeism etc.;
- the excellent reputation of the employer;

- the possibility of retraining employees that also help to expand knowledge, to increase flexibility, to improve teamwork, to increase personal interaction, motivation, and communication.

Work-life balance programs have the potential to significantly improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and retain organisational knowledge, particularly during difficult economic times [26]. In today's global marketplace, as companies aim to reduce costs, it falls to the human resource professional to understand the critical issues of work-life balance and champion work-life programs. Whether it be employees whose family members and/or friends are called up for military service, single mothers who are trying to raise their children and make a living, Generation X and Y employees who value their personal time, dual-career families struggling with their personal life, or companies losing critical knowledge when employees leave for other career opportunities, work-life balance programs offer a win-win situation for both employers and employees.

In order to examine the level of work-life balance, we have designed an inventory, based on 16 statements divided into the following 4 groups (which are the work-life balance components) through the factor analysis [1]:

1. absence of the load balance;
2. work time and content planning;
3. professional tasks complexity;
4. social intercourse.

The study has involved professionals from different fields of activity (n = 1138). The number of women and men as well as their age, professional sphere have been representative of the overall count of participants. The study also determined the relationship between the evaluation of the work-life balance and organisational parameters (a form of ownership, the sphere of activity, gender type of organisation).

The work-life balance has been generally assessed as average (M = 4.19). It should be noted that statistical analysis showed that they had scored the load balance lower (M = 3.15) than other components: professional tasks complexity (M = 4.18), work and content planning (M = 4.46), and social intercourse (M = 4.98). It is the social intercourse component (friendly relations with co-workers (M = 4.65), the support of a manager (M = 4.91), the absence of the sense of loneliness (M = 5.36), satisfaction with socialising (M = 4.99)) which has got the highest scores. Therefore, the social and communication components, interaction with a manager and colleagues are the most balanced ones and have been most positively assessed by the participants.

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. A study was approved by the Central Ethics Committee of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, November 3, 2019, No 1263-O. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Table 1: The Causes of Work-Life / Life-Work Conflicts

| Work-life conflict | Life-work conflict |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Stressors of professional roles:</i> Role overload (lots of job tasks). Role conflict. The amount of time which devoted to work (working time requirements).</p> | <p><i>Stressors of personal and family roles:</i> Role overload (lots of family responsibilities and tasks). Role conflict (performing of conflicting multiple roles).</p> |
| <p><i>Social support:</i> Lack of support from the organisation (care for the welfare of employees), management and colleagues.</p> | <p><i>Social support:</i> Low level of support from the partner or husband / wife, other family members.</p> |
| <p><i>Personality characteristics:</i> Neuroticism. External locus of control. Destructive coping strategies.</p> | <p><i>Personality characteristics:</i> Neuroticism. External locus of control. Destructive coping strategies.</p> |
| <p><i>Socio-demographic characteristics:</i> Gender. The number of children.</p> | <p><i>Socio-demographic characteristics:</i> Gender. The number of children.</p> |

RESULTS

Work-Life conflict is a form of inter-role conflict whereby role pressures from the work and family domains are incompatible [27]. Hence participation in one role is made more difficult by participation in other roles, such as work and family. Most causes of both types of conflicts are much more related to the work and its content than to the family or personal life. Generalisation and systematisation of the causes of work-life conflict enabled us to make the key groups of them (Table 1).

Also, according to [2], personal characteristics such as extraversion, openness to new experiences, harmonious interaction with others, conscious attitude were insignificant, unlike neuroticism and locus of control were significantly associated with both types of conflict. According to the researchers, strengthening and improving working and family characteristics that have helped shape the balance between these two areas is more likely and possible to improve in the short term than working with personal characteristics that are more difficult to change and to develop. Work-life / life-work conflicts have many important negative outcomes for individuals, their personal life, families and organisations. T.D. Allen distinguished among three different types of outcomes: work-related outcomes (work dissatisfaction); non-work-related outcomes (life dissatisfaction); stress-related outcomes (health problems, burnout, tiredness).

Additionally, the other negative consequences of these types of conflicts include: absenteeism, staff

turnover, low labour discipline, low motivation, lack of satisfaction in relationships, strife's, stress, exhaustion, emotional burnout, depression, role conflicts, deterioration of physical health, increased number of incidence among personnel. Let's now talk about resources (work-life enrichment) of the work-life balance, which increase the level of balance between work and other spheres of employees' life: personal life, family, social activities, interests, hobbies (Table 2).

By gender, a statistically significant difference was obtained only on the issue of business trips. Men are more likely to travel on business trips (3.34) than women (2.21), $p < 0.01$. At the same time, a statistically significant relationship was found ($\chi^2 = 14.82$, $p < 0.01$) between the workload balance and their marital status. A low balance has 41.9% of divorced employees and only 21.3% of single and 23.9% of married employees. The study showed that there is a correlation between the age and such characteristics of the work-life balance as work time planning ($p < 0.01$), interesting and complex work content ($p < 0.01$), and the number of tasks that need to be solved ($p < 0.01$), lack of feelings of loneliness ($p < 0.01$) and the communication with colleagues as with friends ($p < 0.01$): by age, these indicators increase.

The personal gender characteristics of employees (levels of masculinity and femininity) are also associated with certain characteristics of the work-life balance. The level of masculinity and femininity of employees is associated with such features of the

Table 2: Work-Life / Life-Work Resources

| Work-life enrichment | Life-work enrichment |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Organisational resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work autonomy A variety of job tasks Investigation of opportunities and resources Social support Leader support Support of colleagues Organisational support Professional skills Direct and long-term results Other physical, psychological, social and material resources of working environment | <p><i>Family, other areas of life resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family support Partner support Support of friends Relationship satisfaction Social activity Other physical, psychological, social and material resources of the personal life |
| <p><i>Personality characteristics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extraversion Low level of neuroticism | <p><i>Personality characteristics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extraversion Low level of neuroticism Personal flexibility |

"work-life" balance ($p < 0.01$), such as: influence on the content of work tasks, free planning of work time, evaluation of work as interesting and difficult, a large number of work tasks, solving many problems during the working day, a general evaluation of social contacts: the higher the level of both masculinity and femininity, the higher the evaluation of these characteristics. However, it is worth noting that the correlation of masculinity and these characteristics is stronger than the correlation of femininity. In addition, masculinity correlates positively with the issue of a business trip, and femininity is negative ($p < 0.01$). The level of masculinity correlates with the availability for work 24 hours a day ($p < 0.01$), while femininity does not. The femininity level positively correlates with such characteristics as the inability to separate work from free time and thoughts about working after the end of the working day ($p < 0.01$).

So, a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) is observed in questions about the impossibility of separating work from personal life among the personnel of state and private enterprises: in-state enterprises the situation is more complicated (3.15) than in private (2.65). On the issue of the possibility of allocating time for vacation, on the contrary, it is more difficult for private enterprise personnel (3.20) than for public personnel (2.84), ($p < 0.05$). Other problems related to the work-life balance are more difficult for the personnel of state organisations to solve: they have more work tasks (4.84 versus 4.45 in private, $p < 0.05$), they deal with a lot of problems during the working day (4.76 versus 4.38 in private, $p < 0.01$). But employees of state organisations feel less lonely at work, compared with the personnel of private enterprises (5.40 versus 5.24, $p < 0.05$).

Also, the low level of influence on the content of their work is observed in 34.9% of the personnel in the medical field and only 4.4% of the personnel in the field of social and legal protection. 63.1% of employees in the sphere of social and legal protection and only 17.5% of employees in the industrial and production sphere have a high level. 50% of the personnel in the field of social and legal protection and only 15.8% of the personnel in the education sector, 18% of the services sector 18.8% of the industrial production are free to plan their work. 35.1% of educational personnel and only 15.2% of the sphere of social and legal protection don't have such an opportunity. Such results are explained by the specifics of professional activity and the direct production responsibilities of personnel in various fields.

A relationship was also found between the sphere of activity of the enterprise or organisation and certain components of the work-life balance ($\chi^2 = 58.51$, $p < 0.001$). A high level of lack of balance of workload of personnel is observed at industrial enterprises (46%) and only at 9.8% of personnel in the service sector. High unbalanced workload has personnel in the service sector (51.2%) and social and legal protection of the population (41.3%) and only 12.25% of industrial enterprises. There is also a statistically significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 36.6$, $p < 0.01$) between the planning of working time and its maintenance by personnel and the scope of the organisation. A low level of personnel participation in planning their working hours is observed in 39.1% of the personnel of production enterprises, 37.2% of medical and 33.3% of educational institutions, and only in 10.9% of the personnel in the sphere of social and legal protection. At the same time, personnel of social and legal protection (37%) and services (31.7%) and only 14% of educational staff have a high level of planning.

Regarding the peculiarities of personnel social contacts in various areas of the organisation, no statistically significant difference was found; however, it is worth noting that the service sector staff has a low level of social contacts at work (36.6%). Also, no significant relationship is between the organisation's field of activity and content, the complexity of work tasks, however, we note that personnel in the sphere of social and legal protection (37%) and education (31.6%) have a high level of complexity. This level is observed in 15.9% of the personnel in the industrial and production sectors and 20.5% of the services sector. There is a significant relationship between the gender type of organisation (homogeneity – heterogeneity by gender) and such a component of the "work-life" balance as "planning of working time and its content" ($p < 0.05$): in homogeneity organisations, this indicator is lower than in heterogeneity ones.

DISCUSSION

M. Roche and J.M. Haar [8] suggested that the work-life interface may produce positive outcomes for the individual, and defined work-life enrichment as the extent to which experiences in one role improves the quality of life in the other roles. Therefore, the workplace can positively influence an employee's performance in their family, partner, social roles and this is called work-life enrichment. Alternatively, positive experiences in the family and other personal and social roles may increase employees coping

strategies, resulting in increased efficiency and work productivity, and is termed life-work enrichment. Results of enriching work-life interaction (work-life outcomes) are affecting various areas of life. They are manifested in job satisfaction, positive involvement in professional interaction, marital satisfaction, family and personal relationships, increasing productivity and improving the psychological and physical health of the individual. Professional achievements lead to a sense of satisfaction that "transferred" to family and personal life and enhance the pleasure of leisure activity. Performing multiple roles is a personal resource that enriches various spheres of life of the individual.

Focus strategies are the ones which demonstrate a direction or a way of solving problematic or stressful situations by co-workers. "Resource/rejection" strategies: coping strategies are directly related to the "work-family" interaction: demands decrease and resource increase strategies. Adaptive strategies are the ones helping to adapt to problems arising at work or/and at home. [6, 10, 18, 28] suggest the following interrelated levels of "work-life" integration disbalance: time, energy, and duties: a person spends more time and energy for work rather than other life spheres, and has too many work duties; attitudes and behaviour increase demands for professional skills and achievements, and eliminate intimacy; significance and criteria for self-assessment – a person has an image of the ideal self (the one he or she thinks he/she must be), and others' expectations, though as a rule, the achievement of such an image in real life is too exhausting for an individual.

In order to reach the work-life integration, a feeling of life fullness, some changes should cover the following three stages: the first one is balancing time, efforts, and duties; the second one is integration of occupational mastery and intimacy with others; and the third one is self-focus, which means being focused on one's own self-esteem, aspirations, and self-image. These changes are possible upon the condition of psychological support programs, sports psychologists' work who help to form the corresponding abilities and skills, as well as significant personal traits of professionals: motivation, self-confidence, persistence, psychological flexibility, lability, a low neuroticism level. Besides, according to research, active engagement into the interaction with family and entertainment after a business day contribute to a better recovery as compared to passive activities [3, 29-30].

One more important task regarding individual strategies of balanced achievement is the resources of

personal allocation. Resources personal allocation is a strategy according to which all desirable or necessary requirements are considered to stimulate a person to make a choice of where, when and how he or she spends resources in life [16]. The efficient resources of personal allocation not only decrease negative consequences but also contributes to positive results in the work-life balance achievement. It includes the following four stages: defining available personal resources, laying down requirements for work and private/family life, using efficient strategies of resources allocation; results review.

This task is often ignored in one's work and private life in cases when work requires performing professional duties which contradict the family ones, ignoring other requirements for personal resources (e.g. social or private life, other activities, religious requirements, sports, rest, etc.). Individual differences, external resources, human-environment interaction have a great impact on the resources of personal allocation. Despite the fact external resources are diverse, in general, they can be divided into two basic spheres: support as well as teaching and development of a personality.

CONCLUSIONS

Work-life balance is a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. Work-life balance from the employee viewpoint is the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities. Work-life balance from the employer viewpoint is the challenge of creating a supportive company culture where employees can focus on their jobs while at work. In the study, the work-life balance has been generally assessed as average. It is the social intercourse component (friendly relations with co-workers, the support of a manager, the absence of the sense of loneliness, satisfaction with socialising, which has got the highest scores. Therefore, the social and communication components, interaction with a manager and colleagues are the most balanced ones and have been most positively assessed by the participants. And it's the normal situation in Ukrainian organisations – it's one of the important job satisfaction indicators.

So, the causes of work-life / life-work conflicts can be divided into four categories: stressors of professional and family roles; social support; personal characteristics; socio-demographic characteristics of

personnel. Note that the stressors of professional and family roles and the sources of social support are differing from one another. But personal and socio-demographic characteristics in both types of conflict remain unchanged. In addition, studies have shown that social support from partner showed little connection with the life-work conflict. The basic possible individual work-life balance achievement strategies are as follows: focus strategies, “resource-refusal” strategies, adaptive strategies, every of which is manifested in a certain kind of an individual strategy. We believe that the main personal skills and traits contributing to the work-life balance achievement include the following ones: personal flexibility, a high level of self-discipline; trust-based relations; dynamic and independent work. These skills should be mature, and the work-life balance achievement psychological teaching programs for personnel can increase their level.

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