

Medical Professionals' Work-Life Balance during Covid-19: The Case of Bhopal City

By

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Abstract

Work-life harmony Despite being a hot subject in recent years, some businesses and job descriptions still do not support a healthy work-life balance. The majority of researchers concentrated on female nurses or physicians for their studies, however researchers have demonstrated that work-life balance impacts everyone equally, regardless of gender. More instances of medical staff members operating under challenging circumstances are coming to light during pandemics. Work-life balance should be prioritised even in a pandemic. A questionnaire was distributed to 100 respondents who were randomly selected, and information was gathered through face-to-face conversation. The results of this study show that organisational elements, as well as mental and physical wellness, have a significant impact on the work-life balance of medical professionals. The issues that medical professionals confront in managing their work-life balance will be made socially relevant by this research.

Keywords: Work life balance, Doctors, Nurses, Wellbeing, Stress, Emotional

Introduction

The notion of work-life balance is one of the key things that prospective workers seek for in a company since it helps to improve quality of life. Their preferences are evolving as quickly as the workforce. Programmes that aid with enhancing work-life balance have a beneficial effect on employee morale and absenteeism, thus utilising them is a win-win scenario (Lock Wood 2003). Initiatives to promote work-life balance are advantageous for both employees and the business. Spending time with family and taking a break have a direct good influence on satisfaction, whereas working longer hours has the opposite effect (Madhavi, 2016).

Cases of the coronavirus first appeared in China. Later, this spread to practically every country and region of the world. There aren't any particular COVID-19 medications or vaccinations available right now. However, there are several clinical studies examining possible therapies that are still running. As of the first of August 2020, there were 17,30,295 instances of COVID-19, of which 11,26,825 had recovered, a high number when compared to other nations. This was only achievable as a result of stringent procedures implemented by the government and 24/7 medical staff. Since medical professionals have to put in long hours, it is important to look into how they balance work and life. When tackling the COVID 19 issue, health professionals are seen as frontline critical workers as well. Healthcare systems in the majority of countries, whether they are developing or developed, are being put to the ultimate

test during this crisis, and healthcare workers are risking their lives to try to stop the spread of the coronavirus (Nagesh & Chakraborty, 2020).

While conducting a study of the literature, it was discovered that while there were several articles published on medical professionals in western nations, there were relatively few publications on medical professionals in India, and the majority of these papers had sample populations that were gender-specific. Researchers made some recommendations, such as job sharing, limited working hours, and required vacation days per year, but medical professionals cannot use these during a pandemic because they must work long hours because the number of COVID cases in India is rising at an exponential rate. Men and women equally struggle with maintaining work-life balance, thus it is important to understand what characteristics might assist medical professionals have a better work-life balance even during a pandemic.

Review of Literature

A comparison study done to compare physician burnout to that of other US workers revealed that physician burnout was much higher than that of other US workers. This implies that action should be taken to lessen their burnout (Shanafelt, et al., 2012).

For physicians examined in the US, work-life balance has been poorer over time, and measures are needed to enhance it (Shanafelt, et al., 2015). The biggest issues for the resident in paediatrics were burnout and depression (Fahrenkopf et al., 2008). Comparing doctors' work-life balance to those of people in other professions, it was subpar. The physicians might better manage their professional and personal lives if they worked five days per week and shared jobs.

There are both organisational and individual factors that impacts work life balance of physicians. There is a strong impact of occupational stress on work life balance (Zaheer, 2016). One of the recent researches that focused on female doctors and nurse concluded that employee friendly policies should be kept in place for more flexibility perspective (Goyal, 2014). Family friendly policies would produce significant difference in work life balance of medical professionals (Sharma et al., 2016). Only those professionals had a positive work life balance who were satisfied with their patients and family life where as professionals who were satisfied with their profession had negative impact on work life balance (Madhavi, 2016). If there are work life balance practices it would be more impactful if it gives more autonomy to employees and more control over their work. Building a culture in an organisation that supports work life balance is not a small task but has to be achieved in order to have a better performance of employees (Lazăr et al., 2010). Certain factors like participation of employees in policy framing and decision making on important things, organisation conveying their policies effectively can help in achieving balance between work and personal life of employees (Chaitra et al, 2016). Only 34.17% women doctors of Kanyakumari district were satisfied with their work life balance. Policies like parental leave, job sharing and child care will help female doctors to have a better work life balance (Malar et al., 2018).

Recurring review of work and personal life satisfaction would help in understanding the work life balance of female nurses (Boohen et al., 2012). Factors that have positive impact on work life balance are organisational support, job engagement and emotional intelligence while the factors having negative impact are unrestricted workload and excessive used of advanced technology (Kumarasamy, et al., 2015). A recent study focused on Nigerian doctors suggested that long working hours have adverse effect on work life balance and institutional culture plays an important role as it can put more importance on people working in shifts and

for a particular number of hours a da. (Adisa, et al., 2017). Work life balance varies from person to person as it depends on socio-economic resources, gender and cultural upbringing (Emslie & Hunt, 2009)

A supportive work environment plays an important role in maintaining the resiliency of clinicians during COVID-19. Asserting the importance of wellness of clinicians would help them give the best services possible during pandemic (Dewey et al., 2020). All the medical staff would be more stressed during covid-19 so it would be helpful if the organisation can have transparent communications with them so that their anxiety is under control and provisions like getting their family check on priority should be given since they have a high chance of transmitting covid-19 virus (Adams et al., 2020). Reward and recognition strategies for employees would help them to be more motivated and thus reduce attrition (Sood & Jain, 2020).

Methodology Adopted

Primary data was collected from the respondents consisting of 30 doctors, 30 nurses, 20 medical assistants and 10 medical students who were working in hospitals and 10 pharmacists having pharmacy in hospitals using purposive sampling technique. Data was collected through a well-designed questionnaire and data is collected through hospital visits and personal interaction with the sampled respondents.

A set of 24 questions were designed with 6 questions for basic details like name, age, gender, marital status and profession. 18 questions were constructed with 5-point Likert scale from Agree (5) to Disagree (1). These questions were based on stress, satisfaction, working hours, family time and organisational factors. The data was analysed using SPSS software.

Results and Discussion

For this research self-made questionnaire was sent to medical professional through online and snow ball sampling was done. Questionnaire items were selected from literature review. Respondents had 5 options, 1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree. A total of 100 responses were collected out of which 63% were female and 37% male. All of them were from different age categories and 60% of them were not married. A work life balance scale was constructed using 2 items from the questionnaire. Higher score indicated higher level of work life balance. The items are: "I am satisfied with my daily work schedule" and "I am able to balance work-life and personal life". Further the items from questionnaire was divided into two components: Organisational factors and Emotional and physical wellbeing

(a) Organisational factors

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for organisational factors for Organisational factors

Particulars	Mean	Std. Deviation
WLB	2.917	1.149
Workplace facilities relaxation	3.438	1.3857
Flexible working hours	4.438	.9119
Holidays paid time off	4.663	.728
Re-join after maternity/ paternity	4.825	.522
Open communication	3.500	1.4142
Working culture	2.788	1.515
Adequate breaks	3.413	1.2396

Table 2: Correlation (Organisational Factors)

		Correlations							
		WLB	Workplace facilities relaxation	Flexible working hours	Holidays paid timeoff	Rejoin after maternity/ paternity	Open communication	Working culture	Adequate breaks
WLB	Pearson Correlations	1	.370**	.059	-.150	-.010	.039	.330**	.294*
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000	.300	.092	.463	.366	.001	.004
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Workplace facilities relaxation	Pearson Correlations	.370**	1	.127	-.080	-.050	.236*	.370**	.365**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000		.131	.247	.329	.018	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Flexible working hours	Pearson Correlations	.059	.127	1	.378**	.136	.103	-.050	.085
	Sig (2-tailed)	.300	.131		.000	.114	.181	.327	.228
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Holidays paid timeoff	Pearson Correlations	-.150	-.080	.378**	1	.442**	.080	.198*	.100
	Sig (2-tailed)	.092	.247	.000		.000	.241	.039	.189
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Rejoin after maternity/ paternity	Pearson Correlations	-.010	-.050	.136	.442**	1	.034	.096	.100
	Sig (2-tailed)	.463	.329	.114	.000		.381	.198	.233
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Open communication	Pearson Correlations	.039	.236*	.103	.080	.034	1	-.090	.025
	Sig (2-tailed)	.366	0.018	.181	.241	.381	.210		.412
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Working culture	Pearson Correlations	.330**	.370**	-.050	.198*	.096	-.090	1	.370**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.327	.039	.198	.210		.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Adequate breaks	Pearson Correlations	.294*	.365**	.085	.100	-.080	.025	.370**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.004	.000	.228	.189	.233	.412	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

There is enough evidence to suggest that “My workplace has sufficient facilities for relaxation” and “I am given adequate number of breaks during work” has a positive correlation with Work life balance which suggests that if these two factors are increased which means better facilities and more number of breaks during work will have a positive impact on work life balance.

Table 3: ANOVA - Organisational factors

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.883	7	3.269	2.89	.000 ^b
	Residual	84.45	72	1.131		
	Total	104.333	79			

(b) Emotional and physical wellbeing

Table 4: Descriptive -Emotional and Physical wellbeing

Particulars	Mean	Std. Deviation
WLB	2.917	1.1492
Stressed at work	3.538	1.1357
No time care my health	3.650	1.2739
Sense of personal achievement	4.200	1.0361
Appreciation from society others	3.975	1.2115
I feel to take break	2.900	1.5476
I don't take initiative at work	2.638	1.5282
Personal health wellbeing	4.575	.8385
I take vacation year	3.325	1.5733

Table 5: Correlation (Emotional and Physical Wellbeing)

		Correlations								
		WLB	Stressed at work	No time care my health	Sense of personal achievement	Appreciation from society others	I feel to take break	I don't take initiative at work	Personal health wellbeing	I take vacation year
WLB	Pearson Correlations	1	.460**	.460**	.210*	-.050	.330**	-.170	.200*	.080
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.030	.330	.000	.060	.040	.240
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Stressed at work	Pearson Correlations	.460**	1	.600**	.300**	.100	.500**	.400**	-.100	.300**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.300	.000	.000	.200	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
No time care my health	Pearson Correlations	.460**	.600**	1	-.100	.080	.420**	.340**	.300*	.210*
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.270	.230	.000	.000	.010	.020
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sense of personal achievement	Pearson Correlations	.210*	.300**	-.100	1	.180	.300*	.300*	.000	.210*
	Sig (2-tailed)	.030	.000	.270		.060	.010	.010	.490	.030
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Appreciation from society others	Pearson Correlations	-.050	.100	.080	.180	1	.100**	.100**	.200**	.100*
	Sig (2-tailed)	.330	.300	.230	.060		.000	.000	.000	.010
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
I feel to take break	Pearson Correlations	.330**	.500**	.420**	.300*	.100**	1	1.00**	.300*	.250**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.010	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
I don't take initiative at work	Pearson Correlations	-.170	.400**	.340**	.300*	.100**	1.00**	1	.200*	.300**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.060	.000	.000	.010	.000	.000		.001	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Personal health wellbeing	Pearson Correlations	.200*	-.100	.300*	.000	.200**	.300*	.200*	1	-.001
	Sig (2-tailed)	.040	.200	.010	.490	.000	.000	.001		.370
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
I take vacation year	Pearson Correlations	.080	.300**	.210*	.210*	.100*	.250**	.300**	-.001	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.240	.000	.020	.030	.010	.000	.000	.370	
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

There is enough evidence to suggest that these factors “I feel stressed at work”, “I do not get time to take care of my health”, “Due to absence of work- life - balance I feel to take a break or change my profession” and “I do not feel like taking initiative at work” have negative correlation with Work Life Balance which means that more of these factors persists more it will have negative impact on Work Life Balance. On the contrary there is enough evidence to suggest these factors “My job provides a sense of personal achievement”, “Personal health and well-being provides support for career development” and “I take at least one consecutive full week of vacation each year” have positive correlation with Work Life Balance which means that more these factors increase better will be Work Life balance.

Table 6: ANOVA for emotional and physical wellbeing

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	39.388	8	4.923	5.382	.000 ^b
	Residual	64.945	71	0.915		
	Total	104.333	79			

This research has highlighted that organisation factors and physical wellbeing plays a significant role in work life balance (Dewey et al., 2020). This research used correlation to understand the relationship exist between factors taken from literature review and sample responses. This study has consistent results with literature review (Kumarasamy, et al., 2015). This study also holds greater significance as in today’s pandemic situation, not only hospitals and related staff, but also general public should value the medical professionals who are going extra miles in managing the lives of common men.

Conclusion

Even though there has been a lot of research done on Work Life Balance but most of it has not been applied to organisations. No doubts some organisations are looking into it and are coming up with various organisational initiatives to improve it. But during a pandemic organisation are not giving importance to work life balance for medical professionals. The analysis clearly suggests that organisations have to look into individual factors which are causing stress among employees. There should be constant counselling of all the employees. It is pertinent to create a healthy working environment especially during pandemic. The frontline workers are at high risk of catching covid-19 so they may get demotivated to work so keeping employee moral up is important during pandemic. Organisation should regularly send employees mails regarding importance of Work life balance. There are limitations to this study like due to lockdown questionnaire was sent through social media and due to the current pandemic situation, there were limited number of responses that were received. Not many researchers have focused on work life balance of medical professionals during a pandemic so researchers should work on it after the pandemic is over as there would be more clarity on the issues and solution.

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