FACTORS AFFECTING ON WORK LIFE BALANCE OF UNIVERSITY ACADEMICIANS (WITHIN ONLINE TEACHING PLATFORM)

Hathella H.V.R.G*, Wijesekara N.M. **

* Department of Economics and Statistics, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka
** Department of Economics and Statistics, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

ABSTRACT

The present study endeavors to examine the factors affecting work life balance of university academicians especially with regards to the online teaching platform. Being an extent that should be explored progressively, work life balance has been observed and analyzed by considering prevailing and dynamic conditions of the world. Primary data of 275 university academicians in Sri Lanka were employed in the study. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire which was distributed through emails. Multi stage cluster sampling was the used technique to select the academicians for the sample. The analysis was carried out by performing both factor analysis and multiple linear regression analysis while studying 30 causable factors. Factor analysis was done for obtaining a score for the work life balance and multiple linear regression was done for observing the effects. Results of the research indicated that marital status, residence, designation, working experience, engaging in research activities, being a victim of Covid-19 and presence of a helper at home were the factors that showed influential effects on work life balance of the university academicians, within the online teaching platform. As a whole, 53% of the academicians had been unable to maintain a balance in work and life during the online lecturing period. With the findings, the study provides empirical evidence that will assist academicians and university administrators in decision makings with respect to academicians' work and life.

Index Terms - Work Life Balance, Academicians, Online Teaching Platform

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The astonishing scope of the concept 'Work Life Balance (WLB) has already directed numerous scholars to the field of research. The current study as well is matted around the theme Work Life Balance because Work Life Balance is considered as an extent that should be explored progressively. With the dynamic working natures, the Work- Life Balance of working people is not something which can be taken lightly. The twentieth century is surmised as the beginning of this concept for the most part of women who faced difficulties in handling family responsibilities while working. Then it emerged being important with the realization that an individual's professional life and personal/ family life have the possibility to create conflicting demands (Rifadha, 2015). Work Life Balance is found on the conception that paid activities and one's personal life have to be seen less as competing priorities than as complementary features of a full life. It is regarded with the working life quality and its reference to the quality of life. In the current competitive world, it is indeed consequential for every organization to build up a pleasant atmosphere that can help employees to balance their personal life and professional life because individuals are left with less time for themselves (Prabhashani &

Rathnayaka, 2017). It will be great for the workers as well as the professionals to have it, all-a blissful family, a rewarding career, and private space and time for themselves.

2.0 RESEARCH ELABORATIONS

Work-Life is generally referred to as work life and family life. Work Life Balance is more often used to annotate the equilibrium between work-related responsibilities and commitment to outside paid work; having a balance in work and life means that this equilibrium is assumed to be in the right position for an individual (Jain & Ponde, 2020). It shows an extraordinary phenomenon- the separation of work and all other family roles, thus provoking the idea that works are not an integral part of life and it is a really burdening factor on one's life. Maintaining the balance between family as well as work responsibilities has become a major challenge for many professionals. The quality of work life is considered as a philosophy as a set of principles, that specifies people are the most significant resource in an organization in the fact that they are trustworthy, responsible, and capable of creating precious contributions. Therefore, they should be looked at with dignity plus respect (Jain & Ponde, 2020). Rawal (2021) defines Work Life Balance as maintaining an ideal balance between 'work' (career and work goals) and 'personal way of life' (fitness, pleasure, rest, spiritual aspirations, and family). The working conditions of people are alternating with the changes of technology, experiences, globalization pressures, changes in the workforce such as rise in women employment, political situations, environmental or natural conditions, etc. The busy lifestyles of contemporary workers are too complex and are attributable to a rat race. Thereabouts, they don't have enough time to look after their closed or loved ones and even themselves. Here, people find it hard in balancing their work life and family life (Tennakoon & Senarathne, 2020). Goyal (2014) states that the imbalance of work and life can hinder the spiritual growth of an individual. Those who are unable to hold up a balance between work and life may have to suffer from lack of productivity, work dissatisfaction, poor health, anger, stress every day, and burn-out physical as well as a psychological response to long-term stress. An individual to experience a better quality of his/her life, improved health and relations by living a balanced work-life. In order to maintain a successful family life as well as a work life, it is needed for the working community to manage and hold a balance between those two aspects of life.

Teaching is a highly respectable profession for society and social development. The job of academicians can be seen as the most stressful one among all other professions; it has the feasibility of affecting academicians' physical, psychological health (Shahid, Amdan, Alwi, Syazreena, & Hassan, 2016). Balancing work and personal life roles has always been an important issue and concern for organizational employees globally and among academicians in higher education institutions (Noor, 2011). University academicians face masses of the daily struggle to maintain a WLB and job satisfaction since they are accountable to guide the youth of a country who are stepping to build the nation in the future. Teachers indeed join the profession not only for getting a reputation within society and receive a handsome salary but also they are responsible for improving people's lives, especially students'. As teachers have substantial contributions to nation-building, it is not easy to separate their workplace and personal life (Malik & Allam, 2021). Working conditions of these professionals are formulated by long hours, high work intensity, extra jobs, sometimes hostile working environment, i.e. undisciplined students, plus the risk to certain disorders, particularly voice, musculoskeletal, mental/behavioral ones (Silva & Fischer, 2020). The daily workload of university academicians

is not limited to the time spent in the lecture hall. They are spending additional hours outside the work setting for the tasks such as getting prepared for lectures, correcting assignments, grading tests, coordinating activities, directing students, attending meetings, organizing or participating in events, consulting, directing project activities, student selecting, assessing, and undergoing faculty development schemes, working with pressure to grow and such things.

With the dawn of the year 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) announced a new disease caused by the Coronavirus declaring that there is a high risk of spreading the virus across countries as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, in January 2020 (WHO, 2020). However, the pandemic was able to invade the entire world and change peoples' living ways and work. It has triggered stressors in careers, personal finances, family, and social life which eventually stretched work-life balance. The working conditions of billions of people were shifted to the online mode while some had to remain jobless, with the policies of social distancing and lockdowns throughout the world that were imposed by governments for controlling the spread of disease among people. With this situation, virtual/ online working has replaced the usual working modes, and family life too has ceased to be unwonted. This made people work more online to keep themselves protective, productive and maintain their good performance amidst the virus outbreak. The main decision taken by most nations is to allow working from home to reduce the infection rate of Covid-19. This decision had a great influence on employees' work life balance.

Like other areas of public service and the wider industry, the education sector is not untouched and experienced new chaos and confusion during the lockdowns caused by the pandemic. This duration could be called a transformation era for the education sector including the higher education sector. Entirely new sets of problems for human resource management policies and procedures for supporting the achievement of work life balance of academic staff at higher education institutions have emerged from the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic (Kosanovic, 2021). Sri Lankan government, in March 2020 worked to impose an island wide curfew, banning nonessential duties, travel, and cosumpt with people outside their homes. After that, people had to experience and are experiencing lockdowns at different periods whenever new corona waves emerge. The universities were thrust into this turbulence because all the university buildings were suddenly closed, staff offices were off-limits and students were abandoned in their higher studies/ degree activities. The higher education system started to get executed within an online platform. However, it took nearly two months to start the online works relating to the universities. Both university students, as well as university lecturers, had to adapt to the new online platform for their works. In this case, the university lecturers are taken into consideration their aspect of work life balance.

Methodology: The research used both quantitative and qualitative data and the study covered the whole of Sri Lanka. Relevant data for the survey were gathered from the academicians; primary data for testing the hypotheses. The corresponding population was the university academicians in Sri Lanka. Thus, the unit of analysis was an individual university academician. As the academicians lived/worked dispersing in a large geographical area, the data were collected by the multi-stage cluster sampling procedure. The academicians were been first clustered according to their universities. There are seventeen universities in Sri Lanka, which are established under the authority of the University Grants Commission. Similarly, the academicians were grouped according to their universities. Through those universities, some

universities were selected through simple random sampling method, here using the lottery method. The academicians were then selected again by the simple random sampling method, here by using a random number table, until the relevant sample size was obtained. The sample size was 275. The sample size calculator for multiple regression was used to identify the minimum sample size, which was 268. Necessary data were collected through questionnaires. The google forms containing a structured questionnaire were e-mailed to the selected academicians. The gathered data and their analyses were presented in the form of tables, graphs, and diagrams. Independent variables in the study were the factors affecting Work Life Balance of academicians while, Work Life Balance was the dependent variable. Independent variables included gender, age, marital status, number of children, number of family members, profession's grade, individual income per month, experience in the profession, family support, spouse's profession, working hours, organizational support, holidays per month, technological knowledge, personality, confidence, stress, health issues, engagement in leisure activities and social support. The dependent variable was measured by three aspects; work life, family life, and personal life respectively. All the variables except demographic factors were measured by a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Descriptive statistics were used to study the demographic factors. A composite index was created to measure the dependent variable. For that, Factor Analysis was used. Then a multiple regression analysis was run using the formed composite index.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The responses did not contain any missing values and all the points had been answered. As it was able to collect WLB details of 276 university academicians, all the data were decided to taken for the analysis. But, due to the reason that one respondent had mentioning that he/she did not conduct online lectures during the concerning period, the data of corresponding respondent were ignored for the proceeding calculations. Thus, the whole sample size taken for obtaining results was 275.

Table 1 shows the sample profile of university academicians who participated in the study, in terms the 30 variables.

Table 01: Sample Profile

	Factor		Component	Frequency	%
1	University	Rank			
		1	University of Colombo	32	12
		2	Peradeniya University	30	11
		3	University of Moratuwa	21	8
		4	University of Ruhuna	14	5
		5	University of Sri Jayewardenepura	26	9
		6	University of Kelaniya	37	13
		7	University of Jaffna	11	4
		8	Rajarata University	13	5
		9	Open University	13	5
		10	Wayamba University	21	8
		11	Sabaragamuwa University	29	10
		12	South Eastern University	9	3
		13	Eastern University	7	3

	14	Uva Wellassa University	6	2
	15	University of the Visua &Performing Arts	6	2
		Total	275	100
2	Field of Lecturing	Aesthetics	6	2
		Agriculture	13	5
		Applied Sciences	7	3
		Arts	22	8
		Commerce	24	9
		Education	3	1
		Engineering	29	11
		ICT	16	6
		Languages	7	3
		Law	7	3
		Management	20	7
		Medicine	40	15
		Nursing	9	3
		Science	30	11
		Social Sciences	29	11
		Technology	13	5
		Total	275	100
3	Gender	Male	145	53
		Female	130	47
		Total	275	100
4	Age	<30 Y	41	15
		<35 Y	68	25
		<40 Y	49	18
		<45 Y	45	16
		<50 Y	31	11
		<55 Y	19	7
		<60 Y	16	6
		>=60 Y	6	2
		Total	275	100
5	Marital Status	Unmarried	62	23
		Married	213	77
		Total	275	100
6	Years for Marriage	Unmarried	62	23
		<1 Y	21	7
		<5 Y	50	18
		<10 Y	41	15
		<15 Y	51	19
		<20 Y	21	8
		>=20 Y	29	11
		Total	275	100
7	Race	Sinhalese	244	89
		Sri Lankan Tamil	21	7
		Sri Lankan Moor	8	3
		Other	2	1
		Total	275	100
8	Religion	Buddhism	227	83
		Hinduism	17	6
		Islam	8	3
		Catholic	16	6

		Other	7	2
		Total	275	100
9	Residence	Rural	29	10
		Semi Urban	118	43
		Urban	128	47
		Total	275	100
10	Sufficiency of Infrastructure	Not sufficient	25	9
		Sufficient	250	91
		Total	275	100
11	Education Level	Bachelor	48	17
		Master	109	40
		Doctorate	118	43
		Total	275	100
12	Designation	Temporary Lecturer	20	7
		Probationary Lecturer	81	29
		Lecturer	27	10
		Senior Lecturer	115	42
		Professor	32	12
		Total	275	100
13	Working Experience	<=2	49	18
		<5	50	18
		<10	50	18
		<15	44	16
		<20	27	10
		>=20	55	20
		Total	275	100
14	Average Working Hours per Week	<11 h	20	7
		<21 h	89	32
		<31 h	68	25
		<41 h	32	12
		<51 h	36	13
		<61 h	18	7
		>=61 h	12	4
		Total	275	100
15	Sufficiency of Holidays	Not Sufficient	110	40
		Sufficient	165	60
		Total	275	100
16	Conducting Lectures at other Universities	No	174	63
		Yes	101	37
		Total	275	100
17	Being an Office Bearer	No	31	11
		Yes	244	89

		Total	275	100
18	Engaging in Research	No	5	2
		Yes	270	98
		Total	275	100
19	Number of Children	0	114	41
		1	69	25
		2	62	23
		3	25	9
		>=4	5	2
		Total	275	100
20	Being (wife being) a Breast Feeder	N/A	62	22
		No	167	61
		Yes	46	17
		Total	275	100
21	Spouse Works in the Same Field	N/A	62	22
		No	159	58
		Yes	54	20
		Total	275	100
22	Number of Family Members	2	35	13
		<5	122	44
		<7	101	37
		<9	17	6
		Total	275	100
23	Number of Online Workers at Home	0	93	34
		1	64	23
		2	66	24
		3	35	13
		4	14	5
		5	3	1
		Total	275	100
24	Looking after Parents at Home	No	95	35
		Yes	180	65
		Total	275	100
25	Monthly Family Income	<100000	20	7
		<200000	38	14
		<300000	86	31
		<400000	61	22
		<500000	35	13
		>=500000	35	13
		Total	275	100
26	Having Borrowed Loans	No	84	31

		Yes	191	69
		Total	275	100
27	Being a Victim of Covid-19	No	227	83
		Yes	48	17
		Total	275	100
28	Spending Quarantine Periods	No	190	69
		Yes	85	31
		Total	275	100
29	Having a Helper at Home	No	210	76
		Yes	65	24
		Total	275	100
30	Attitude	Imbalance	26	9
		Balanced to some extent	104	38
		Balance	145	53
		Total	275	100

Source: Survey Data 2021

3.1 Factor Analysis

In order to obtain a continuous form of scores for the dependent variable coming in the study, the Factor Analysis was employed on 30 factors.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		**.914**
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Significance	**.000**

Source: Sample Survey, 2021

Table 3: Eigen Values for suitable components

Component	Eigen Value	% of Variance	Cumulative Variance
1 - 30	x.xx	x.x%	x.x%

There were altogether 30 components under WLB. But the results indicated that only the Eigen Values of 24 components were greater than one (1). Following the common thumb rule of taking the components having >1 Eigen values, a score for Work Life Balance was finally created as the last step of the factor analysis.

3.2 Significance of the selected variables

The regression analysis was performed with the best subsets and then the most significant variables were chosen with the use of ANOVA in the output.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance

Source	P-Value
University	0.763
Field of Lecturing	0.620
Gender	0.765
Marital Status	0.045
Residence	0.060
Education Level	0.867
Designation	0.026
Working Experience	0.015
Sufficiency of Holidays	0.747
Conducting lectures at other universities	0.620
Being an office bearer	0.599
Engaging in research/ project activities	0.046
Being a victim of Covid-19	0.048
Having a helper at home	0.041
Attitude	0.596

As the Independent Variables: University, Field of Lecturing, Education Level, and Attitude were statistically insignificant they were not taken for the further analyzing.

3.3 Regression Equation

The Regression model was finally fitted with 7 independent variables: Marital status, Residence, Designation, Working experience, engaging in research/ project activity, Being a victim of Covid-19, and Having a helper at home.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R^2	Sig
1	0.614	0.337	0.351	0.003

Source: Sample Survey, 2021

3.4 Regression Equation

WLB = 0.170 − 0.1002 Marital Status2 − 0.1001 Residence2 − 0. 0620 Residence3 + 0.0561 Designation2 + 0.1012 Designation3 + 0.1744 Designation4 + 0.2211 Designation5 − 0.1034 Working Experience2 − 0.0046 Working Experience3 − 0.1140 Working Experience4 + 0.1017 Working Experience5 − 0.1364 Working Experience6 − 0.2044 Engaging in Research2 + 0.1047 Victim of Covid-192 + 0.1021 Helper at home2

No previous researchers have revealed the same results as found in the present study with regards to many factors. Even though the variables have been utilized by many scholars to identify their effect on work life balance, the current study's findings do not tally with any of the past research findings. It emphasizes the importance of the results obtained and also the new knowledge added about the aspect of work life balance of major involving parties of the higher education sector.

Regarding the factor "Marital Status", it was proved as a significant factor for describing work life balance of university academicians. This result appears the same as the findings of Grzywacz & Carlson (2007) as marital status is important in the current context. The unmarried academicians were above the married academician in their condition of work life balance. This may have resulted because of the responsibilities of the marriage life and they may have to pay great attention to that aspect while balancing with their work.

The association between residence and work life balance of university academicians was statistically significant. The p-value of 0.060 caused to accept that there is a significant association between residence and work life balance. The results further showed that academicians who lived in rural areas had higher values of their work life balance status during the online teaching period than those who were in the semi-urban and urban areas.

The "Designation" of academicians acted noticeably to decide their work life balance. It may be because of the respective duties assigned for separate designation levels in the profession of Academician. With a significant P value of 0.026, it was accepted based on the designations: temporary lecturer, probationary lecturer, lecturer, senior lecturer, and professor.

The results for "Working Experience" were almost identical to the previous variable's results. The P-value of 0.015 specified that there exists a statistical significance between the years of working experience of academicians and their work life balance. The newer academicians did not have a good balance in work and life while the experienced individuals had been able to manage their works with family, however.

There were only a few academicians who were not participating in any research activity or project activity. However, those academicians' WLB was observed to be higher than that of those who conduct research/projects. This disparity and association with WLB were significant regarding the factor "Engaging in Research/ Project Activities.

"Being a Victim of Covid-19" factor gave some contrasting results depicting that those who suffered from Covid-19 had higher levels of WLB than those who had not suffered. This may have occurred due to the fact that they could have been able to obtain reliefs and other releases from their work. Anyhow, the factor became statistically significant with a P-value of 0.048 and indicating there is a significant association between being a Covid- 19 victim and work life balance of university academicians.

With a P-value of 0.041, it disclosed that "Having a Helper at Home" was important to have a balance in work life, the final statistically significant factor that can influence the work life balance of academicians. A helper would reduce the workload for an individual and so forth they could be able to maintain a balance in their work and life.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

4.1 Conclusion

Due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the higher education system of Sri Lanka, as well as all the other countries started to function in an online platform. Thus, university lecturers had to perform their professional activities while remaining at their homes. This added effects on their balance in work and life. The present study was conducted to investigate the factors affecting work life balance of university academicians within the online teaching platform.

4.2 Findings

This study provides a contribution to numerous research by analyzing the factors affecting work life balance with special reference to the university academicians, by referring to multiple possible effective factors. In the study, 50.9% out of 275 academicians do not have a work life balance while 49.1% are having a work life balance. This reflects that most of the academicians are in work life imbalance. The findings have revealed that marital status, residence, designation, working experience, engagement in research activities, being a victim of Covid-19, and having a helper at home significantly influence the work life balance of the academicians. At the same time, university lecturing, the field of lecturing, gender, age, years for marriage, race, religion, availability of infrastructure, education level, weekly working hours, having enough holidays, conducting lectures at other universities, being office bearers, number of children, being (spouse being) a breast feeder, spouse works in the same field, number of family members, number of online workers at home, monthly family income, having borrowed loans, spending quarantine days and attitude do not show noticeable effects on the WLB.

4.3 Policy Recommendations

The WLB is paid attention by many scholars and practitioners as it is proven that work life and family life may have conflicting demands. The retributions of work and life balance are multitudinous. The outcomes may be associated with personal satisfaction on work and life aspects of an individual. The "balance" most of the time becomes objective. Nowadays, organizations have realized the worth of the work life balance for their employees while trying to constitute policies for maintaining balance in work and life. The results of the study give out some important findings and insights into the work life balance of university academicians within the online teaching platform. As the happy and satisfied conditions of employees positively impact productivity, the obtained results can contribute to the decision-makers in the administration of university lecturers as well as the academicians to increase their performances and balance in activities. The respective decision-makers can develop mechanisms for maintaining work life balance of lecturers and create policies and strategies to eliminate issues that impact the WLB, after considering the observed influential factors. The academicians also can gain an idea of the common condition of their work life balance during the online teaching platform. Through that, they can have judgments on themselves by paying attention to the results obtained by the study. It will assist them in increasing life satisfaction as well as work satisfaction. This learning is helpful for other personnel who work as teachers and similar occupations because this study is evident as providing insights for respective

organizations, employers, and also the employees to take proper steps and decisions regarding the work life balance of the involving parties of the institutes.

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AUTHORS

First Author – Hathella H.V.R.G, Visiting Lecturer,

Second Author – Wijesekara N.M., Lecturer,