

A STUDY ON THE WORK LIFE BALANCE OF AIDED COLLEGE TEACHERS IN THE COVID PANDEMIC SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

Work life balance is about finding a right balance between work and life and feeling comfortable with both work and family commitments. Work Life balance does not mean an equal balance between work life and personal life. It is the happy medium between the minimum and maximum. The dimensions of Work Life Balance have changed drastically with the current pandemic. With the outbreak of covid 19 the teaching profession has become much more challenging as the pandemic compelled the transition from traditional offline teaching to online teaching that was entirely new to the teaching community. Balancing both work life and family life during covid 19 was not an easy task for the teaching community as they were using online mode of teaching and also compelled to work from home. Therefore, the present study tries to know the level of work life balance, the factors influencing the work life balance and the major work life issues of college teachers during the covid pandemic scenario and to suggest some ways and means to improve the work life balance of the teaching community. The study was conducted among 203 college teachers. Based on the study, it is understood that both work and family life are equally important to the college teachers. During the covid 19, 34% of the college teachers have not got the opportunity to comfortably work from home. The covid 19 has brought unfavorable impact on the work life balance of college teachers and as a result of covid 19 college teachers were able to maintain only

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a medium level of work life balance only. The level of institutional support received by the college teachers during the covid 19 is only medium. With the outbreak of covid 19 the working hours of the college teachers has also been increased and also the college teachers got sincere support from the family members to balance their work and family life. The study point outs that 40.9% of the college teachers were not getting sufficient time to spend with their family members. The major factors that influence the work life balance of college teachers were the technical know-how to carry out online classes and the attitude of the family members. College teachers also find it difficult to balance their work and family life during the covid 19 and the major work life issue faced by the college teachers is the increased level of physical and mental fatigue. In order to improve the work life balance of aided college teachers during the covid pandemic earnest efforts from the part of higher education department, university, government and institutional level is required and also to maintain a balanced work and family life college teachers should take measures by themselves. For all that, results of the present study would definitely help them.

INTRODUCTION

Work life balance is about finding a right balance between work and life and feeling comfortable with both work and family commitments. According to Jim Bird CEO of worklifebalance.com, Work-Life Balance (WLB) is a meaningful achievement and enjoyment in everyday life. Work Life balance does not mean an equal balance between work life and personal life. It is the happy medium between the minimum and maximum and it could be defined as the perfect integration between work and life both not interfering with each other. Work Life Balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between work on one hand life on the other. Everybody over this world has different priorities and lives. So, there can be no perfect balance a person can strive for. The best Work Life Balance is different for everyone.

The dimensions of Work Life Balance have changed drastically with the current pandemic the world is gripped with. The global outbreak of covid 19 has spread worldwide, affecting almost all countries and territories. The outbreak was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The world has changed in the blink of an eye and Covid 19 the new normal has brought several changes in the work and family life of the college teachers too. The shift from traditional physical classrooms to virtual platforms were one of the major revolutions that took place in the present scenario. Lockdown and social distancing have led to closures of schools, training institutions and higher education facilities. The online learning, distance and continuing education have become a necessity. Transition from traditional face to face classes to online classes was entirely a new experience for the teachers as well students. The educators were compelled to adopt online platforms that they were not prepared for. The general shift of the teachers working in the institution has changed and teachers has been forced to work from home with both work and family commitments.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers plays an important role in the learning and development of students. A teacher's role is not only imparting knowledge in a particular subject but also communicating helping students to develop positive attitude, and developing personality. These multiple demands make teaching job a challenging and highly competitive occupation. With the outbreak of covid 19 the teaching profession has become much more challenging as the pandemic compelled the transition from traditional offline teaching to online teaching that was entirely new to the teaching community. Balancing both work life and family life during covid 19 was not an easy task for the teaching community as they were using online mode of teaching and also compelled to work from home. Therefore, the present study tries to know the level of work life balance, the factors influencing the work life balance and the major work life issues of college teachers during the covid

pandemic scenario and to suggest some ways and means to improve the work life balance of the teaching community. So, the problem of the current study is stated as "A Study on the Work Life Balance of College Teachers During the Covid Pandemic Scenario.

Objectives of the Study

The study is envisaged to attain the following research objectives;

1. To know the level of work life balance among aided college teachers in the covidpandemic scenario.
2. To identify the factors influencing the work life balance of aided college teaches in thecovid pandemic scenario.
3. To know the various work life issues faced by the aided college teachers during the covidpandemic scenario.
4. To suggest some means and ways to improve the work life of aided college teachersduring the covid pandemic scenario.

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference between the level of work life balance of aided college teachers belonging to different age categories during the covid pandemic scenario

Significance of the Study

"The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms" (Education Commission,1966) put emphasis on the learning outcomes. In the process of learning teachers act as leaders for the students. So, it is essential that the teachers should have a balanced work and family life to handle their profession efficiently. The Covid 19 has made drastic changes in the work and family life of the college teachers. As the Covid 19 is new to humanity it is relevantto make a study on the work life balance of college teachers during

the covid pandemic scenario. The study tries to make an understanding on the various factors influencing the work life balance of college teachers during the covid 19 and aims to know the various problems faced by the college teachers and this study is made to give some suggestions to improve the work life balance of college teaching community. This study is significant as there were no detailed studies were carried out on the work life balance of aided college teachers in the Kottayam district during the covid pandemic scenario.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the present study is limited to evaluate the work life balance of aided college teachers working in the Kottayam district affiliated to MG University during the Covid pandemic scenario. The responses were collected only from the permanent aided college teachers working in the Kottayam district. As teachers play an important role in developing responsible citizens, the major concerns of this study were to know the level of work life balance of college teachers, major factors influencing their work life balance, major work life issues faced by the college teachers, various steps taken by the college teachers to maintain work life balance during the covid pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has adopted descriptive and analytical research design for the present research purpose. It includes gathering data that define events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data.

Sources of Data

The researcher has used both primary and secondary data sources to collect the information.

Primary Data

The primary data for this study has been obtained from the aided college teachers working in the Kottayam district. For the purpose of primary data, the researcher has developed and used a well-structured questionnaire in google form. In order to make the questionnaire effective and to ensure quality to the replies received, the researcher has paid attention to the question-sequence in preparing the questionnaire. Moreover, researcher had prepared a draft questionnaire on the basis of objectives of the study and literature review.

Then the drafted questionnaire was tested through pilot survey to find out relevancy of the questions, understanding of the questions by the respondents, willingness of the respondents to share the information, ease and time taken by the respondents for completion of the questionnaire.

Population of the Study

All the aided college teachers in the Kottayam district affiliated to MG university is regarded as the population of the study. Out of the potential respondents, a sample of 203 has been selected as respondents for questionnaire.

Sampling Method

As the colleges were closed it was not possible to directly access the respondents. So, the WhatsApp number and mail id of the aided college teachers in the Kottayam were collected from the official websites of colleges. In case of some college's details regarding WhatsApp number and mail id were not available from the website and in such cases the researcher tried to collect such details from the college diary of the respective colleges. A structured questionnaire was prepared in google form and sent to college teachers through WhatsApp and by mail. Even though the researcher has made earnest effort to collect contact details of the permanent college teachers in the Kottayam district,

the details regarding the college teachers of SN college Kumarakom and Sabareesha college Murikkumvayal were not found.

Sample Size

The sample size of the study is limited to 203.

□ **Secondary Data**

Secondary data were collected the through print media like books, magazines, Research Articles on Google Scholar, and such other internet websites and online reports of various research organizations, etc.

Research Instrument

A well-structured questionnaire prepared in google form is used as the research instrument for the study.

Tools for Data Analysis

The collected data is analysed with the help of the software called PSPP. The major tools used for the analysis of the data includes percentage analysis, mean score analysis, mean percentage score analysis and chi square test etc. The analysed data is presented with the help of appropriate tables and figures.

□ **Percentage Analysis**

Percentage analysis is used for the analysis of primary data collected. It refers to a special kind of rates used to determine relationship between the series.

Percentage = (Number of respondents / Total number of respondents) * 100

□ **Mean Score Analysis**

Under mean score analysis mean score of each variable is calculated to identify the most dominant and non-dominant variables. The dominant variables are located by identifying those variables with mean score greater than 3 (average).

□ **Mean Percentage Score Analysis**

MPS = (Mean Score / Maximum possible Score) * 100

Mean Percentage Score	Level
Less than 35%	Low
35% to 50%	Average
50% to 75%	Medium
Above 75%	High

Source: Loyd, B.H., & Abidin, R.R. (1985)

□ **Chi- square Test**

Chi square test of association is used to discover whether there is any relationship between two categorical variables. Chi- square analysis has been used for testing the hypothesis.

Period of study

The primary data for the study was collected during the months of February and March 2021 and the review of the relevant literatures for the study was conducted over a period of 20 years commencing from 2000 to 2020.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is confined to only the aided college teachers in the Kottayam district so the study does not cover the data regarding, Government and Self-Financing college teachers.
2. The study covers the assistant and associate professors only hence work life balance of guest faculties has not been studied.
3. Some of the college teachers were reluctant to cooperate as they were too busy at their works.
4. Due to the non-availability of the contact details, responses from the

college teachers working in Sabareesa college Murikkumvayal and S N college Kumarakom were not included in the study.

Research Gap

Through the review of various literatures, it is understood that various studies related to the work life balance of college teachers have been made. But the Covid 19 is new to humanity and studies relating to the work life balance of aided college teachers in the Kottayam district during the covid pandemic scenario have not been studied yet.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSION

The study titled "a study on the work life balance of aided college teachers in the covid pandemic scenario was undertaken to know the level of work life balance of college teachers, major factors influencing the work life balance of college teachers, to know the work life issues of the college teachers and to suggest some means and ways to improve the work life balance of the aided college teachers during the covid pandemic scenario. For the purpose of the study, data has been collected from 203 respondents using questionnaire and the collected data analysed and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools.

Profile of the respondents

Among 203 respondents majority (63.5%) of the respondents are females.

Most of the (47.8%) respondents come under the age group of 30 – 40.

Out of 203 respondent's majority (92.6%) of the respondents are married.

Most of the (86.2%) of the respondents are assistant professors.

Majority (45.8%) of the respondents are in the academic stream of arts.

Level of Work Life Balance of College Teachers During the Covid Pandemic Scenario

For the majority (92.6%) of the respondents, both work life and family life are equally important.

Among 203 respondents, majority (64.0%) of the respondents got the opportunity to comfortably work from home during the covid pandemic. But it is to be noted that the remaining 34% of the college teachers have not got the opportunity to comfortably work from home.

Among 203 respondents only Majority (44.8%) of the respondents are satisfied with their current work life balance during the Covid pandemic.

Majority (38.4%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the change brought by Covid 19 on their work life balance is unfavorable.

The level of work life balance maintained by the college teachers during the covid pandemic scenario is only medium with mean score 3.29 and mean percentage score 65.8.

Factors influencing the work life balance of college teachers during the covid pandemic scenario

The level of support received by the college teachers from the institution to adapt themselves with the online learning teaching and evaluation is medium as the mean score and mean percentage score relating to the level of support received from the institution are 3.60 and 72% respectively.

Majority (73.4%) of the respondents were of the opinion that their working hours has been increased due to covid 19.

Majority (91.6%) of the respondents got sincere support from their family members to balance both their work and family life when their work place has been shifted to home during the covid 19.

Among 203 respondents 59.1% of the respondents got sufficient time to spend with their family members. But it is also relevant that the remaining 40.9% of the respondents have not got sufficient time to spend with their family.

The present study identified 7 dominant factors that influence the work life balance of aided college teachers during the covid pandemic scenario. These factors were ranked on the basis of their mean scores and are as follows;1) Technical knowhow to carry out online classes and attitude of the family members 2) attitude of the institution 3) time provided to complete the syllabus, 4) ability to manage stress 5) availability of free time to spend with family 6) attitude of the students

Work life issues of the college teachers during the covid pandemic scenario

The current study identified 6 dominant work life issues faced by the college teachers during the covid pandemic scenario. The work life issues were ranked on the basis of their mean scores and are as follows 1) increased level of physical and mental fatigue 2) spending more hours at work than they would like at 3) hurried routine created by the covid pandemic 4) increased level of stress 5) interference of the demands of the family in the work life 6) ineffectiveness of online mode of teaching.

Steps taken by the college teachers to balance work and family life

Majority (52.7%) of the college teachers have taken steps to balance their work and family life.

The following are the major steps taken by the college teachers to balance their work and family life;

To maintain a balanced work and life some of the college teachers were prepared a new routine table and made it sure that they are following it.

In order to complete the duties of the home along with duties of the work some of the college teachers appointed full time helper to do house hold works and to take care of their children.

Prerecorded classes were also made by the college teachers and their YouTube link shared to students to save time and to complete their work on time.

Some of the college teachers have invested their time and money in technical advancements by learning new software and investing in technology gadgets to save time and energy.

Devotion of time for meditation and yoga practices were the next steps taken by the college teachers to keep themselves positive and to balance their work and family life.

While some of the college teachers engaged in extra activities such as reading, writing and listening music at the weekend, some other college teachers tried to complete the college works during the night time in order to avoid work life imbalances.

Finding time to spend with family was the next initiative taken by the college teachers to balance their work and family life. They also tried not to mix up family life with professional life.

While some of the college teachers took regular intervals during the working hours some other college teachers have rescheduled their working hours by taking online classes at flexible time.

Some of the college teachers reduced their leisure time and found more time in their work.

FINDINGS BASED ON TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

From the chi square test, it is found that the p value (.003) is less than .05 and hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H1: There is association between academic stream and level of work life balance of college teachers

SUGGESTIONS

Following are some suggestions to improve the work life balance of aided college teachers during the covid pandemic scenario.

Balancing both work and family life is not an easy task but through planning, prioritizing and scheduling the work and family obligations it can be made possible. Time management is the key thing.

Technical training for teachers is the need of the hour. This will enhance the quality of classes and allow a reduced stress level for teachers who have been introduced into a new and unfamiliar platform of knowledge dissemination. Institutions should invest in teaching platforms that are safe and professional. Dependency on personal cloud storage coupled with shared access is not only a chronic waste of cloud storage but also a possibility of privacy violation crimes.

The government order (on April 1, 2020) specifying 16-hour mandatory teaching work load per week has actually placed the teachers off the balance. This would mean that out of the total 5-hour UG/PG teaching time per day now one would have to engage 3-4 hours. This has affected quality preparation time for the classes. Whereas at the premier institutions of higher education elsewhere in the country this work load is 1-2 hours which makes sure teachers get adequate time for reading and preparing for classes. The effective workload of a

college teacher as per one estimate ranges from 75 to 90 hours per week in an aided college (instead of the UGC specified 40 hours). The urgent need is to improve teacher-student ratio at the college level.

Syllabus should be reframed since the college teachers are not getting sufficient time to complete the syllabus otherwise more time should be provided to the teachers for the completion of semesters so that teachers can complete their portions hassle free.

Keeping work and family life separated is another better way to improve the work life balance. Mixing up of the work life with family life would lead to work life imbalances. So, it is wise to keep both separated. Meditation and yoga practices can be adopted by the college teachers to stay positive and to manage their stress and to maintain a healthy balance between work and family life.

CONCLUSION

Work Life Balance is an essential ingredient for a satisfied life. The study on the worklife balance of college teachers during the covid pandemic scenario has been attempted to provide insights in to the level of work life balance of college teachers, various factors influencing the work life balance of aided college teachers during the covid pandemic and also the various work life issues that are faced by the college teachers while making effort to balance both work and family life. Based on the study it is to be concluded that the major chunk of the college teachers gives equal importance to both work and family life. During the covid 19 majority (64%) of the college teachers got the opportunity to comfortably work from home but it should be noted that a considerable (34%) portion of the teaching community have not got the opportunity to comfortably work from home. The covid 19 has made an unfavorable impact on the work life balance of aided college teachers and only 44.8% of the college teachers are satisfied with their current work life

balance. The results of the study shows that the level of work life balance of college teachers during the covid 19 is only medium and there is also significant difference between work life balance of aided college teachers belonging to different academic streams. Hence the level of work life among the college teachers is only medium it emphasizes the need for improved measures to maintain a healthy balance between both work and family of the aided college teachers. The level of institutional support received by the college teachers during the covid 19 was also medium. As the institution plays a vital role in the work life balance of college teachers there should be increased level of support from the institutions. The study revealed that with the outbreak of covid 19 the working hours of the college teachers has been increased and 41% of the respondents are of the opinion that they are not getting sufficient time to spent with their family members. Even during the pandemic period college teachers got sincere support from their family members to balance both work and family life. The major two factors that influenced the work life balance of the college teachers during the covid pandemic were the attitude of the family members and the technical know-how to carry out online classes. During the covid 19 college teachers were find it difficult to balance their work and family life and also the major work issues faced by the teaching community were the increased level of physical and mental fatigue, increased working hours and the hurried routine created by the covid 19. In order to improve the work life balance of aided college teachers during the covid pandemic earnest efforts from the part of higher education department, university, government and institutional level is required and also to maintain a balanced work and family life college teachers should take measures by themselves. For all that, results of the present study would definitely help them.