

Original Article

A Study on Employee Work-Life Balance at Nagapattinam

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Received: 03-07-2026

Revised: 03-24-2026

Accepted: 04-04-2026

Published: 04-06-2026

ABSTRACT

Work-life balance has emerged as a critical concern in contemporary organizational management. This study investigates the level of work-life balance among employees in Nagapattinam District and analyzes its impact on job performance, satisfaction, and overall well-being. A descriptive research design was adopted with a sample of 150 respondents selected through simple random sampling. Primary data was collected via structured questionnaire and analyzed using percentage analysis, chi-square test, Pearson correlation, and one-way ANOVA. Key findings reveal that 74% of employees experience frequent overtime, 80% believe work-life balance improves productivity, and 75.4% report mental exhaustion. Correlation analysis confirmed a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.451$, $p < 0.001$) between long working hours affecting personal life and stress reducing productivity. ANOVA results indicate a significant difference in mental exhaustion levels across age groups ($F = 3.303$, $p = 0.013$). The study concludes that flexible work policies, mental health support, and better workload distribution are essential for improving employee well-being and organizational productivity.

KEYWORDS

Work-Life Balance, Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction, Workplace Stress, Flexible Work, Nagapattinam District.

1. INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance refers to the degree to which an employee is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioral demands of both paid work and family/personal responsibilities. In today's era of globalization and intense competition, organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of employee well-being as a driver of sustainable organizational performance.

The modern workplace is characterized by long working hours, digital connectivity, high performance expectations, and blurring of work-home boundaries – all of which contribute to chronic work-life imbalance. Research consistently demonstrates that such imbalance leads to employee burnout, reduced productivity, higher turnover rates, and deteriorating organizational morale (Duxbury & Higgins, 2001).

In India, sectors such as Information Technology, banking, healthcare, education, and manufacturing are particularly susceptible to work-life conflicts. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this phenomenon by normalizing remote work, which – while offering flexibility – also created challenges in separating professional and personal spaces.

This study aims to empirically examine the factors affecting work-life balance among employees in Nagapattinam District, assess the impact on job performance and satisfaction, and propose actionable organizational strategies.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY

- To identify the factors affecting employee work-life balance in the workplace.
- To examine the impact of work-life balance on employee performance and productivity.
- To study the level of job satisfaction among employees due to work-life balance practices.
- To analyze the stress and challenges faced by employees in managing work and family responsibilities.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Most previous studies have mainly focused on employee satisfaction and organizational performance individually, but comprehensive studies on employee work-life balance in different sectors are very limited. There is also a lack of recent empirical studies examining how work-life balance practices influence employee mental health, productivity, stress management, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Furthermore, limited studies have been conducted in semi-urban and rural regions such as Nagapattinam. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this research gap by analyzing the impact of work-life balance on employees' personal and professional life across selected organizations.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A substantial body of research has examined the theoretical underpinnings and practical implications of work-life balance. Duxbury and Higgins (2001) demonstrated that high work-life conflict negatively impacts employers through reduced work performance, increased absenteeism, higher turnover, and lower commitment. Their work debunked the "myth of separate worlds," arguing that work-life conflict is a shared organizational problem.

Social Exchange Theory (SET), as articulated by Homans (1958), Blau (1964), and later reviewed by Ahmad et al. (2023) through a systematic analysis of 3,649 articles, provides a foundational framework for understanding reciprocal obligations between employees and organizations. Organizations that invest in employee well-being through work-life programs can expect enhanced loyalty, commitment, and performance in return.

Shin and Enoh (2020) found that Work-Life Balance Programs (WLBP)s—including childcare, elder care, financial assistance, and psychological counseling—effectively support employee well-being and professional development, though longitudinal assessment of their organizational performance impact remains limited.

Boamah et al. (2022) highlighted that during COVID-19, the blurred line between work and home intensified burnout, with direct implications for career satisfaction and turnover intentions. Mensah and Adjei (2020) further confirmed that failure to achieve work-life balance among European working adults negatively impacted their health outcomes.

In the Indian context, Goyal and Agrawal (2015) demonstrated that work-life balance policies in the banking sector serve as investments that improve productivity and reduce absenteeism. Kumari (2011) found differential stress impacts between BPO and education sector women employees, while Santosh and Jain (2016) confirmed that long commuting hours significantly erode the work-life balance of working fathers in metro cities.

Kumaraswamy and Ashwini (2015) noted that changes in family structures—nuclear families, dual-income households, single parents have further complicated the work-family interface. Shalini and Bhawna (2012) posited that quality of work-life balance is used strategically by organizations to attract and retain talent.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive research design to analyze the work-life balance of employees in Nagapattinam District and understand its impact on employee satisfaction, stress management, and work efficiency.

5.2. Sampling

A simple random sampling technique was used, giving each individual in the population an equal and independent chance of selection. The sample comprised 150 respondents from various occupational categories across the district.

5.3. Data Collection

Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire of 35 items organized around five objectives, employing a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Secondary data was sourced from textbooks, academic journals, company reports, and internet databases.

5.4. Statistical Tools

The collected data was analyzed using the following statistical tools:

- Percentage Analysis – for descriptive frequency distribution
- Chi-Square Test – to examine association between categorical variables
- Pearson Correlation Analysis – to determine the strength of relationship between continuous variables
- One-Way ANOVA – to test differences in mean scores across independent groups

6. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the 150 survey respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	Below 25	38	25.3%
	25–35 (Majority)	63	42.0%
	35–45	32	21.3%
	Above 45	16	10.7%
Gender	Male	69	46.0%
	Female (Majority)	80	53.3%
Marital Status	Single	72	48.0%
	Married (Majority)	76	50.7%
Education	Undergraduate (Majority)	60	40.0%
	Postgraduate	47	31.3%
	Professional	43	28.7%
Work Experience	0–2 years (Majority)	64	42.7%
	3–5 years	62	41.3%
	6–10 years	18	12.0%
	Above 10 years	6	4.0%
Nature of Job	Full-Time (Majority)	123	82.0%
	Part-Time	20	13.3%
Working Hours/Day	8–10 hrs (Majority)	91	60.7%

	Less than 6 hrs	34	22.7%
Work Mode	Work from Home (Majority)	113	75.3%
	Work from Office	18	12.0%

Source: computed

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

7.1. Awareness and Perception of Work-Life Balance

The survey findings indicate a high level of awareness regarding work-life balance among respondents. As shown in Table 2, 47.3% strongly agreed and 26.7% agreed that they are aware of the concept of work-life balance (combined positive: 74%). Similarly, 41.3% agreed and 30.0% strongly agreed that work-life balance is important to them (combined: 71.3%). Crucially, 70.7% of respondents indicated that work-life balance directly affects their happiness.

Table 2: Perception and Awareness of Work-Life Balance (n=150)

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Aware of WLB concept	7.3	6.7	12.0	26.7	47.3
WLB is important	4.7	7.3	16.7	41.3	30.0
WLB affects happiness	2.7	8.7	18.0	40.7	30.0
WLB improves productivity	3.3	7.3	9.3	38.0	42.0
Feel guilty taking personal time	6.0	2.7	9.3	39.3	42.7

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

7.2. Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance

The study reveals that several organizational and personal factors significantly affect work-life balance. As evidenced in Table 3, 76.7% of respondents reported that long working hours negatively impact their personal lives. Moreover, 78% felt that workload creates stress, and 74% reported their jobs require frequent overtime. A particularly concerning finding is that 72.7% of respondents receive work-related calls after office hours, reflecting a culture of boundary erosion in modern workplaces. Deadline pressure also emerged as a significant challenge, with 76% reporting that deadlines affect their personal time.

Table 3: Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance

Factor	Agree + Strongly Agree (%)	Disagree + Strongly Disagree (%)
Long working hours affect personal life	76.7%	9.3%
Workload creates stress	78.0%	6.7%
Job requires frequent overtime	74.0%	10.7%
Work calls after office hours	72.7%	10.0%
Deadlines affect personal time	76.0%	8.7%

Source: computed

7.3. Impact on Job Performance

The impact of work-life imbalance on job performance is substantial. Table 4 summarizes key performance-related findings. 74.0% of respondents agreed that stress reduces their productivity,

while 70.0% reported that lack of rest negatively affects their performance. A striking 91.3% of respondents acknowledged that they make more errors when stressed, underscoring the direct cost of stress on job quality. Notably, 89.3% of respondents affirmed that proper work-life balance improves efficiency one of the strongest positive associations in the study.

Table 4: Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Performance

Performance Indicator	Positive Agreement (%)	Neutral (%)
Stress reduces productivity	74.0%	15.3%
Feel motivated at work	64.6%	22.7%
Lack of rest affects performance	70.0%	21.3%
Make more mistakes when stressed	91.3%	–
WLB improves efficiency	89.3%	–

Source: computed

8. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

8.1. Correlation Analysis: Long Working Hours and Stress-Reduced Productivity

- **H₀:** There is no significant relationship between employee work-life balance and employee performance/satisfaction.
- **H₁:** There is a significant relationship between employee work-life balance and employee performance/satisfaction.

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between "long working hours affecting personal life" and "stress reducing productivity."

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Results

Variable	Mean	SD	Pearson r
Pearson Chi-Square	6.668	8	0.573
Long working hours affect personal life	3.97	1.064	0.451**
Stress reduces productivity	3.99	1.090	0.451**

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); $p < 0.001$; $N = 150$

The Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.451$ indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables, and the significance value ($p < 0.001$) is well below the threshold of 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Employees who experience long working hours encroaching on personal life are significantly more likely to report that stress diminishes their productivity.

8.2. Chi-Square Test: Workload Stress and Gender

- **H₀:** There is no significant association between workload creating stress and gender of the respondents.
- **H₁:** There is a significant association between workload creating stress and gender of the respondents.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test Results

Test	Chi-Square Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	6.668	8	0.573

Since the p-value (0.573) is greater than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no statistically significant association between workload-induced stress and gender. This suggests that workload stress is experienced equally across male and female employees.

8.3. One-Way ANOVA: Mental Exhaustion across Age Groups

H₀: There is no significant difference between age groups regarding employees' feeling of mental exhaustion.

H₁: There is a significant difference between age groups regarding employees' feeling of mental exhaustion.

Table 7: ANOVA Results – Mental Exhaustion by Age Group

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.303	4	2.826	3.303	0.013
Within Groups	124.031	145	0.855	–	–
Total	135.333	149	–	–	–

The ANOVA yielded $F(4, 145) = 3.303$, $p = 0.013$, indicating a statistically significant difference in mental exhaustion levels across age groups. The mean scores show an increasing trend: below 25 ($M = 3.79$), 25–35 ($M = 4.06$), 35–45 ($M = 4.47$), above 45 ($M = 4.50$). This suggests that older employees experience greater mental exhaustion, possibly due to accumulating job responsibilities and family obligations. Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

8.4. Challenges Faced by Employees

The study identifies several key workplace challenges that impede work-life balance among employees in Nagapattinam District:

- **Time Management:** 72.6% of respondents reported struggling with time management, which affects both professional output and personal life quality.
- **Work Pressure:** 80.7% reported facing work pressure regularly, with 48.7% strongly agreeing to its persistent occurrence.
- **Lack of Personal Time:** 68% of respondents indicated insufficient personal time, with implications for family and leisure.
- **Mental Exhaustion:** 75.4% of respondents reported feeling mentally exhausted. This is among the most significant findings of the study.
- **Family-Related Stress:** 78% reported that family expectations create additional stress, reflecting the dual burden faced by working individuals.

- Difficulty Concentrating: 69.3% of respondents reported difficulty concentrating due to extended working hours, which directly impacts work quality.

9. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Employees demonstrate high awareness of work-life balance (74% positive) but continue to experience significant challenges in practice.
- 74% of respondents face frequent overtime, and 72.7% receive work calls after office hours, indicating a pervasive culture of overwork.
- 80% of respondents believe proper work-life balance improves productivity – reinforcing the business case for WLB policies.
- Pearson correlation ($r = 0.451$, $p < 0.001$) confirms a significant relationship between long working hours affecting personal life and stress-induced productivity decline.
- Chi-square test results indicate no gender-based difference in workload stress ($p = 0.573$), implying workload stress is universal across genders.
- ANOVA results reveal significant differences in mental exhaustion across age groups ($F = 3.303$, $p = 0.013$), with older employees reporting higher exhaustion.
- 75.3% of employees work from home, yet 75.4% report mental exhaustion – indicating that remote work does not automatically translate to better work-life balance.
- 82.7% desire more paid leaves, and 92% want better management support – reflecting a gap between employee needs and current organizational policies.

10. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for organizational implementation:

- Flexible Work Arrangements: Organizations should institutionalize flexible working hours, hybrid work models, and compressed work weeks to help employees better manage personal and professional responsibilities.
- Workload Distribution: HR departments should conduct periodic workload audits to ensure equitable task distribution and prevent burnout among high-performing employees.
- Mental Health Support: Given that over 75% of employees report mental exhaustion, organizations must invest in Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), mental health counseling, and wellness initiatives.
- Boundary Management Policies: Clear guidelines should be established regarding after-hours communication, with a "right to disconnect" policy that protects employees' personal time.
- Leave Policy Enhancement: Expanding paid leave provisions – including mental health days and wellness leave would directly address the finding that 82.7% of employees desire more paid time off.
- Training and Development: Providing time-management and stress-management training can equip employees with skills to navigate competing demands more effectively.
- Age-Sensitive Policies: As ANOVA results show older employees face greater exhaustion, organizations should design targeted support programs for mid-to-senior-level employees.

11. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence of the significant and multidimensional impact of work-life balance on employee performance, satisfaction, and health among workers in Nagapattinam District. The correlation between long working hours and stress-induced productivity loss, the widespread prevalence of mental exhaustion, and the strong employee demand for organizational support collectively underscore the urgency of addressing work-life balance as a strategic Human Resource priority.

Organizations that proactively implement flexible work arrangements, provide mental health support, and foster a culture that respects personal boundaries are better positioned to attract talent, reduce turnover, and sustain long-term productivity. As the findings from ANOVA suggest, age-specific interventions may be necessary to address the escalating exhaustion experienced by older employee cohorts.

Ultimately, work-life balance is not merely a personal concern but a shared organizational and societal responsibility. Future research may extend this study to comparative analyses across sectors, genders, or regions, and could employ longitudinal designs to assess the impact of specific WLB interventions over time.

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