

HOW WORK RELATED STRESS AFFECTS PRIVATE LIVES

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Abstract

The balance between work and personal life is far too important for each of us. Being the only ones who are able to set limits, we have to look at this issue from different point of views: time management, stress management, organization rules etc. To be able to keep the balance between work and private life, it is essential to properly manage time and set priorities.

Keywords: *time management, work stress, organization*

JEL classification:

1. Introduction.

The balance between work and personal life refers to "combining work and personal life in such a way that both can be carried out successfully" and may vary depending on individual characteristics, family and society. Achieving this balance is beneficial both to the health and well-being of employees, as well as to the organizational performance (improving employee retention rate, increasing productivity, reducing absenteeism). Launched at the beginning of the 19th century in the United States, together with awareness campaigns of reduction in working time mostly in factories, developed and supported in the 70s-90s by numerous studies and programs of its importance in increasing the productivity and

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competitiveness of the firm, but abandoned in recent years into a cone of shadow as a result of the economic crisis, which has changed the hierarchy of priorities for most companies -the concept of "balance between professional and personal life" (work-life balance) continue to revise interest amid major transformations taking place in the labour market.

The development of communications technology has changed the way of doing business, allowing the emergence and development of new fields and economic markets, but it has generated greater flexibility of working time and places. Instead of the fixed working hours and a clear line between work and personal life, mobile technology facilitates on one hand work outside the office at any time and in any place, but on the other hand increasingly blurs the boundary between the two aspects of life of every individual. In close connection with the development of information technology, but with the same impact on the labour market, is globalization. In essence, globalization means mobility across borders — whether they capital or labor. Impact of globalization on working life and the personal, is overwhelming. Reducing barriers to trade allowed opening new markets, increasingly advanced levels of technology and means of communication and the demise of many professions and jobs, but also the emergence of new ones. The new economic context require skills and competencies of employees more and more diversified, generating not only unprecedented professional development opportunities thus far, but also a growing level of competition in the labour market. Forecasts show that, in a not so distant future, the demand on the labour market will be for creative and innovative employees who have the skills and technological skills that allow them to move easily in an ever-changing environment, to take quick decisions and solve problems, constantly adapting to change, which will put a strong pressure on the balance between professional and personal life.

2. Literature review.

The origin of the research work life balance can be seen from

the seminal work of Rapport and Rapport (1969), the research has been that both work and family needs time and energy. Work is an important source of income, financial stability and status where two partners come join hands together and earn and support and raise their children together. As work and family has no direct relationship with each other conflicts are inevitable to arise. Khan wolf, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal, (1964) from their seminal studies associated work life balance with role theory, that is conflicting expectations associated with different roles which the male and female has to play in their day to day life. The term 'work-life balance' is preferred due to the fact that it encompasses the experiences and needs of parents and non-parents alike, and is a more progressive theoretical framework in which to think about new ways of living and working that are satisfactory to all. In practice, it involves "adjusting work patterns so that everyone, regardless of age, race or gender can find a rhythm that enables them more easily to combine work and their other responsibilities and aspirations" (Pillinger 2001: 1). Drew, Humphreys and Murphy point out "that personal fulfilment is important inside work and that satisfaction outside work may enhance employees' contribution to work" (2003:13). Given the difficulties in comparing the costs and benefits of work-life policies, and assessing their net impact, employers often make decisions based on their values, attitudes or beliefs. Some employers implement work-life balance policies because they intuitively make sense. Some employers undertake an evaluation of their worklife balance policies after they have been implemented, in order to justify the decision (Evans, 2001).

Work and careers are seen as important aspects of the lives of individuals beyond basic financial needs. The workplace often provides fulfilment at a personal level, as well as being a social arena to develop relationships and receive support. (Redmond, Valiulis, Drew 2006). There is evidence also of what is known as 'the long-hours culture', a reference to the fact that patterns of working in Ireland (and, indeed, in most of the Western economies) are premised on the traditional model of a male career and lifestyle, stressing long hours, fixed schedules,

overtime etc. Long-hours cultures do not incorporate current patterns of working where childcare responsibilities and/or work-life balance needs must be taken into account (Drew et al. 2003: 12, O'Connor 1999: 237). Thompson et al (1999) developed a measure of work-life culture based on their definition of work-life culture as “the shared assumptions, beliefs and values regarding the extent to which an organisation supports and values the integration of employees’ work and family lives”. Kirby and Krone (2002) examined the effect of workplace conversations on the use of work-family initiatives. For example, co-workers complaining about “picking up the slack” for those using family leave will discourage use of such leave. The authors argue that the daily discourse can reinforce or undermine work-family initiatives. Kirby and Krone found that workplace discussions around work-family policies revolved around perceived equity and preferential treatment. These findings have implications on how to best alter workplace culture dynamics; just adding work-family policies to an existing workplace culture may result in under-utilisation. Recommendations follow those found elsewhere: integrate policies into the whole organisation, generate senior management support, provide training for managers on the benefits of policies and how to implement them, communicate success stories of using the policies, and communicate the wider benefits beyond women or employees with children. (McPherson, 2007).

3. Balance between professional and personal life doesn't mean eight- hours for work, eight-hour-relaxation and eight- hours sleep

The labour market is strongly influenced by demographic structure, which is currently still aging, in parallel with a very low birth rate. As a result, companies are looking to capitalize on older employees as much time as possible. Therefore, increasing the legal period of activity is matched throughout the many countries of policies and strategies of firms to attract and maintain employees needed, and these strategies targeting, in addition to many other features, and the

balance between work and personal life, as an indirect condition of personal satisfaction and motivation for loyalty, competitiveness and performance.

Viewed from an individual point of view, the balance between professional and personal life is personal and the optimum way of harmonizing the requirements of the two areas for the purpose of acquiring a sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction that, in turn, improves the quality of life and labor alike. And even though at first glance it seems a matter of time management, for most researchers the essence of balance between professional and personal life is not how long does allot of those two areas, but especially as we make this allocation.

The feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction gives harmony between work and relaxation and comes not just from an efficient management of time, but also in attitudes towards work, towards life and towards oneself, in the understanding that everything is done on one side the other side with energy. While, consciously or unconsciously, is perceived as a work area outside of life, as an obligation, chances to balance the two parts to significantly decrease, generating conflict between work and personal life, with effects not only on the physical and mental health of the employee, but also on the health of the organization in which it operates. Thus, at an individual level, we are talking about the effects of physical and psychic as well as fatigue, anxious, tense moods, irritability, frustration, indecision, acute vulnerability, organization-wide imbalance translates into absenteeism, labour migration, low productivity, generating much higher costs for the companies. That explains why the balance between professional and personal life is of interest both to companies as well as to the employee. By investing in and supporting the implementation of such programmes of job-personal life balance, companies invest in the success of their business.

Behind the success of every company are its employees first, i.e. the knowledge, energy, motivation and involvement of everyone. To remain competitive, the company must invest in programs of adjustment of personal needs of employees with the requirements of

working life, the so-called "family friendly" strategies. On the other hand, employees are increasingly interested in more, in addition to the financial side and friendly working environment, marked by flexibility and opportunities for career advancement, maintaining a healthy balance between the demands of professional and personal responsibilities. "Family friendly" strategies are a set of policies and solutions of organizational work adapted to the culture, goals and possibilities of each organization, which facilitates the employees of getting or improving the balance between professional and personal life. These include a variety of forms, ranging from the statutory (e.g. maternity leave), until flexible working time, work at home/internet (virtual offices), tasks with another employee, the work week condensed or reducing the number of hours worked each day/week (part time).

In the socio-economic conditions of today, in which women have entered the labour market these services shall ensure the harmonization of professional growth and care of children or other dependants, thus satisfying the employee by solving one of the major conflicts between work and family. The implementation of such programs, however, is not an easy process for companies, they must face various challenges, ranging from the strictly financial and technical (electronic equipment, safe net network, training) to create an organizational culture that supports them. And one of the aspects on which the managers insist, it is dismantling the myths relating to the meaning "family friendly" solutions.

4. Steps to achieve work-personal life balance

The first step in finding this balance, consists of putting in balance work and private life which varies from individual to individual. It is necessary to establish a set of rules that allows the attainment of performance at work, without being annoying, and, at the same time, there is plenty of time for family and/or friends. By creating realistic limits between the company and other aspects of life, it is necessary to prioritize tasks and events to which participation is needed, both at work and in private life. Another essential aspect refers to

maintaining a satisfactory time for private activities, without the slightest connection with the service.

Peter Druker, a management guru, suggests that people should focus only on the things they can really do. The rest should be delegated or neglected. More than an hour and a half can be saved, weekly, by delegating small tasks. In the end, what really matters is the fulfillment of the things that are urgent and important. As seen from the Eisenhower matrix, what is urgent is not necessarily important, and what is important is not necessarily and urgently. The decision to work overtime or to work extra, often without additional financial motivation may come from the desire to advance more quickly in the professional plan, on the one hand, or of the need to maintain a job, especially in the current economic context, on the other hand.

5. Conclusion

The many hours spent in the office, involving too much in the work can do more harm than good. Over time, the lack of involvement in activities with children, friends and relatives with the loved ones, giving up the activities and hobbies that relax tense moods and lead to acute frustration. On the other hand, a balance inclined in favor of family and personal activities reflects the lack of involvement in activities in the office, as well as in the quality of work that becomes increasingly weaker. Work-life balance is particular to each individual. For this reason, some manage to find this balance just between the two kinds of activities and others do not. Some maintain a long period of time inclined in favor of one of the "lives", while others maintaining an optimum balance to help them perform effectively both at home and at work.

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