

THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF ACADEMICS

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is individual's achievement of harmonization and balance among working and non-working times. In particular, the work-life balance of academics has become a matter of curiosity over time. The aim of this research is to examine the work-life balance of academicians working at the Uşak University according to some variables. The study group of the study consists of 195 academicians (78 female, 117 male) working at the Uşak University. The analyses show that there is a significant difference between female academicians and male academicians regarding the work-life balance. On the other hand, it is found that the work-life balance of academicians did not differ in accordance with the academic position, field and tenure variables.

INTRODUCTION

In today's business life, employees strive to balance their work and personal lives. The reason for this is the increasing demand and expectation of individuals in both work and family life with the changing living standards (Bell, Rajendan & Theiler, 2012; Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001, Kuzulu, Kurtuldu & Özkan, 2013; Munn, 2013 ; Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005). As a result, work has become more influential on the family life and family life has become more influential on the work. This interaction has led to the emergence of work-family conflict and family-work conflict concepts (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). The work-family conflicts arise as a result of the job stress, career changes, long working hours, frequent travel requirements, communication problems at work, and working with difficult bosses that affect the individual's family life. The family-work conflict, on the other hand, arises with the effects of the presence of the small kids, the care of the elderly and intra-family communication on the individual's work life (Chernyak-Hai & Tziner, 2016; Greenhaus, 2002). Researches show that 40% of working parents experience work-family conflict in their lives (Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000). On the other hand, work and family may not always conflict. Based on this perspective, Greenhaus & Powell (2006) advocated the concept of work-family enrichment. Later on, this concept took the definition of "work-family balance" and "work-life balance" in time. "Life" in the work-life balance refers to the entire life of the individual outside the work (Carlson, Grzywacz & Zivnuska, 2009; Haar, 2013). This is the harmonious and balanced maintenance of the individual's work and non-work lives. Researches show a positive and significant relationship between work-life balance and work and marital satisfaction (Brough et al., 2014) and well-being (Frone, 2000), whereas negative and significant relationship with anxiety and depression (Haar et al., 2014), psychological stress (Brough et. al., 2014), and work stress (Behson, 2002).

In the literature, the findings that women have difficulties in establishing work-life balance are more common (Munn, 2013). However, it is noteworthy that studies conducted on this subject mainly focused on female samples (Bee, Baskar & Vimala, 2013, Madipelli, Sarma & Chinnappaiah, Pandu, Balu & Poorani, 2013; Sujata & Singh, 2011; Wattis, Standing & Yerkes). With the changes in the traditional roles of men and women, women have a greater role to play in the workplace and men have a greater role to play in the home life, which makes the establishment of work-life balance more important for individuals from both genders (Emslie & Hunt, 2013). Having difficulty in establishing a work-life balance leads to depression, anxiety, mood disorders and marital problems in both men and women (Ballica, 2010; Frone, 2000, Pandu, Balu, & Poorani, 2013). According to the 3rd European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) conducted in fifteen European countries,

10% of men and women are having difficulty balancing their work and family responsibilities. In Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, these figures are up to 22% for males and 25% for females (Paoli & Merllié, 2001). As a result, the work-life balance is crucial for work and life satisfaction of both genders (Haar, 2013).

The working environment is one of the other variables that may influence the level of work-life balance. Particularly those who work in institutions with intense work stress are more challenged to assure work-life balance. The people who are faced this challenge intensively are university employees. The increasing number of university students in recent years, the obligation to allocate time for both teaching and research, student instruction tasks, national and international competition are some of the factors behind this issue of working time. (Bell, Rajendran & Theiler, 2012; O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). According to Kinman & Jones (2008), academics in USA have a very low level of work satisfaction and are experiencing a high degree of work-life conflict. They are seriously considering leaving the academia. Similarly, it is shown regarding the academics working in Australian universities that the stress in the workplace affects the work-life balance negatively, leading to a higher level of work-life conflict and a decrease in psychological well-being (Bell, Rajendran & Theiler, 2012).

There has been an increase in the number of researches on work-life balance in Turkey since 2010 (Akın, Ulukök & Arar, 2017). These studies are mainly in the fields of economy, human resources and business (Ballica, 2010; Demirer, 2011 Kuzulu, Kurtuldu, & Ozkan, 2013, Özen-Kapız, 2002). On the other hand, there is a limited number of studies that investigate the work-life balance of academics. The research done by Apaydın (2011) was one of them; and according to the findings of this research, the members of the faculty can establish a balance between their work and their life, but the work-life balance decreases as the work dependency increases. According to the research made by Coşkuner (2013), perceived workload affects academicians' life satisfaction negatively because of work-family conflict.

AIM OF THE STUDY

It is known that men and women working in our country have difficulty in establishing work-life balances. There is a need for more research particularly on the work-life balance of academics. The aim of this research is to examine the work-life balance of academicians working at Uşak University in accordance to some variables (gender, academic position, field, tenure).

METHOD

Participants

The sample of the study consists 195 (78 female, 117 male) academicians working at Uşak University. 92 (47%) of the participants were teaching staff (research assistant, lecturer, instructor, expert) and 103 (53%) of them were faculty member (professor, associate professor, assistant professor). 55 (28%) of the academicians have master degree, 27 (14%) of them are PhD candidates and 113 (58%) have PhD degrees. Of these, 44 (23%) of them have tenures of 1 to 5 years; 52 (26%) of them have tenures of 6-10 years; 36 (19%) of them have tenures of 11-15 years; 26 of them (13%) have tenures of 16-20 years; and 37 (19%) of them have tenure of 21 years and over.

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form

It is developed by the researchers. It consists of questions that contain information about the participants' gender, academic position, field and tenure.

Work-Life Balance Scale

It was developed by Taşdelen-Karçkay & Bakalım (2017). It consists of 8 items and 7-point Likert type (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Validity and reliability studies were conducted with 274 (135 women and 139 men) participants consisted of full-time employees from Uşak with an age range 18-61. In this study, the scale was revealed to be in one-factor structure with factor loads ranging from .70 to .89. In the reliability study, Cronbach's alpha value was obtained as .92 and item total correlations were as .64 to .84.

A second study to prove the validity and reliability of the scale was carried out with a total of 356 (186 female, 170 male) employees aged between 21 and 62 years. The confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the one-factor model ($\chi^2 / df = 2.76$, IFI = .98, CFI = .96, SRMR = .025 and RMSEA = 07). In this sample, the Cronbach's

alpha value was found as .92 and item total correlations were as .62 to .84. In conclusion, the results of two studies have shown that the work-life balance scale is a single-factor, valid and reliable measurement tool (Taşdelen-Karçkay & Bakalım, 2017).

Data analysis

The demographic characteristics of the academicians in the study were examined by frequency and percentage analysis. Their levels related to the work-life balance items are determined by mean and standard deviation. The difference between work-life balance in accordance with gender, academic position, field and tenure variables was compared by t-test and one-way analysis of variance.

RESULTS

The findings of the work-life balance of academicians based on the views of academicians are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Academician’s View on their Work-life Balances

Items on Work and Life Balance	\bar{X}	Ss	Level
1) I can satisfy my own needs and the needs of important people in my life.	5,64	1,30	I agree
2) I can manage my roles related to family and professional life in a balanced manner.	5,42	1,25	I agree
3) I can make enough time for myself by preserving the balance between my professional life and family life.	4,78	1,39	I Partly Agree
4) I feel loyalty to my roles both in my professional life and my family.	5,28	1,29	I agree
5) I manage my professional and family life in a controlled manner.	5,28	1,27	I agree
6) I am successful at creating a balance between my multiple life roles employee/ spouse/mother/father, etc.)	5,02	1,25	I agree
7) I can deal with situations that occur due to the conflict between my roles that are specific to my professional and family life.	5,20	1,25	I agree
8) I am equally content with my roles in my family and professional life.	4,99	1,40	I Partly Agree
Total	5,20	8,53	I agree

As seen in Table 1, the views of the academicians (teaching staff and faculty member) regarding the work-life balance correspond to the "agree" ($\bar{X} = 5.20$) range. Based on these findings, it can be said that academicians at Uşak University can establish a balance between work and life. In consideration with above items, it can be said that the academicians have more difficulties in the items of "allocating enough time to myself by maintaining the balance between work and family life" and "being satisfied with family and work life roles in equal rates" than the other ones.

The t-test results of the academician’s views on work-life balance in accordance with the gender variable are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The t-test Results of the Academician’s Views on Work-life Balance in Accordance with the Gender Variable

Gender	N	\bar{X}	Ss	Sd	t	p
Male	78	4,99	1.22	193	-2,31	,021*
Female	117	5.35	,930			

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

As it is seen in Table 2, there is a significant relationship [$t(193) = ,021, p < .05$] between the views of academicians on the work-life balance in accordance with the gender variable. Based on these findings, it is concluded that male academics have a higher work-life balance than females.

The t-test results of the academician’s views on work-life balance in accordance with the academic position variable is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The t-test Results of the Academician's Views on Work-life Balance in Accordance with the Academic Position Variable

Academic position	N	\bar{X}	Ss	Sd	t	p
Teaching Staff	92	5.13	1.12	193	-.968	.334*
Faculty member	103	5.27	1.02			

As it is seen in Table 3, there is no significant relationship [$t(193) = .334, p > .05$] of the academicians' view on the work-life balance in accordance with the academic position variable.

Table 4. The t-Test Results of the Academician's Views on Work-Life Balance in Accordance with the Field Variable.

Field	N	\bar{X}	Ss	Sd	t	p
Social Science	129	5.19	1.008	193	-.119	.906*
Physical Sciences	66	5.21	1.178			

As it is seen in Table 4, there is no significant relationship [$t(193) = .906, p > .05$] of the academicians' view on the work-life balance in accordance with the field variable.

Table 5. The One-Way ANOVA Results of the Academician's Views on Work-Life Balance in the Tenure Variable.

Variable	Variance	Sum of the Squares	Sd	Mean of the Squares	F	Sig.
Intergroup		7,725	4	1,931	1,725	.146
Intra-group		212,708	190	1,120		
Total		220,432	194			

As it is seen in Table 5, there is no significant relationship [$F(4-190) = 1,725, p > .05$] of the academicians' view on the work-life balance in accordance with the tenure years variable.

DISCUSSION

According to the findings of this research, academicians are able to establish the work-life balance. This finding is parallel to Apaydin's (2011) research finding. The employees living in the Uşak province where the research is carried out can reach their homes and workplaces in a short time without experiencing the difficulty of transportation due to the crowded population. This may lead to lower levels of exposure to stress of the big cities. Accordingly, it can be considered that academicians are able to establish work-life balances more easily than those living in big cities. However, the other finding of the research shows that female academicians have more difficulties to establish work-life balance than males. In the literature, there are findings that show that the work-life balance of female employees is lower than that of males (Kuzulu, Kurtuldu & Özkan, 2013; Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). In the research conducted by Coşkuner (2013), women spend more time than their male counterparts on their families and face to more work-family conflicts than male academicians. This situation also adversely affects the life satisfaction of female academicians. This may have been the result of women's greater responsibilities in their home life, such as housework, food and child care. On the other hand, there are also researches in the literature finding no difference between men and women in terms of work-life balance (Haar, 2013, Pandu, Balu, & Poorani, 2013).

In this study, there is no significant difference between work-life balance of teaching staff and faculty member. In Apaydin's research (2011), professors declared having the work-life harmony more than the associate professors and assistant professors. In the study conducted by Kinman & Jones (2008), it has been revealed that both lecturers and researchers have experienced intense work-life conflicts arising from the perceived workload.

According to the other finding of the research, there is no significant difference between the work-life balance of the academicians working in the social sciences and physical sciences. On the other hand, according to the study made by Apaydın (2011), compared to other fields, the work life of the faculty member working in the field of physical sciences adversely affects the family life while the family issues adversely affect the work performance.

The last finding of the research is that there is no significant difference in the work-life balance of the academicians in accordance with their tenure. While no research finding has been seen in the researches conducted with academicians, Dilek & Yılmaz (2016) found that the work-life balance of teachers did not change in accordance with the total working period. In this regard, there is a need for more research findings to be made with academics.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research was carried out with the academicians working at Uşak University. It is recommended to conduct researches on the work-life balance with academicians in different universities and with different variables and their comparison as well as on the relationship between work-life balances of the academicians and different variables. On the other hand, conducting practical research to increase work-life balance will significantly enrich the literature in this regard.

This research has revealed that female academicians are more difficult to establish the work-life balance than male academicians. This finding is also parallel to many research findings. This may indicate that there is still the pressure of traditional gender roles on women employees. It is recommended that universities provide academicians with seminars and psycho-training on work-life balance, time management and stress management, and with psychological counseling support within the university for the academics.

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