



A Comparative Study of Work Life Balance among Higher Education Students in ASEM Courses

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ABSTRACT

Emergence of the phrase Work Life Balance came up in 1986 when amid many Americans there was prevalence of detrimental work place practices like neglecting families, leisure activities and friends in order to achieve their work place goals.

The importance of work-life balance has been gaining ground in recent years to capture a wider range of groups, including students combining full-time study with part-time employment. Finding a balance can be complex and challenging for many individuals and students. In this paper we have explored how undergraduate and postgraduate students balance the competing demands of work, study, and social activities.

A lot of research has been done over the past years for understanding the relationship between works, personal life. Optimum balance in life is obtained when balance between the factors like emotional, intellectual, imaginative, spiritual and physical is obtained. A neglect of one factor jeopardizes other.

Balance should be established between workload distribution, leisure time, time spent with family social relationship and extra-curricular activities so as to engender academic excellence.

This paper contributes to the prevailing literature as it pays attention to the various streams Arts Science, Engineering and Management course (ASEM) students' of varying lifestyles school-work-personal lives. Findings of this study will provide a cognizance of the Work/school-life balance issues faced by university students. The research could be helpful to the various stakeholders of a University, the curriculum designers, program coordinators etc.

The study is based on a sample size restricted to four institutes. Furthermore, there is need to do similar studies with a larger sample size to make results more generalized.

Keywords-- family, lifestyles, leisure, Work-life balance

For efficient functioning of one's life, it is necessary to obtain optimum balance between the different roles one plays. A student has a multitude of roles: a partner, worker, friend, classmate, etc.

The Work Foundation has defined WLB as:

“Work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. It is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society.”

A large focus only on academics can affect personal relationships. Similarly, over indulgence in relationships at the cost of ones academics or work can be counterproductive for student's overall performance, which again affects the individual and his various relationships. Hence it is crucial to strike optimum college and life balance. Work-life balance thus refers to, "The extent to which individuals are equally involved in-and equally satisfied with-their work role and their family / personal role [11]. College-life balance is important for optimal academic functioning. Students often prioritize academics at the expense of personal factors, including relationships and exercise. This can lead to a decline in academic performance, as general health and well-being are critical to optimal academic functioning. The quality of your relationships can determine the health of your school/life balance. A large focus on academics can cause strife in personal relationships, minimizing your sense of support. Similarly, a preoccupation with relationship issues at the expense of academics or work issues can be detrimental to performance, which can put further strain on the individual and the relationship. Finding ways to integrate school and personal life is essential

I. INTRODUCTION

II. METHODOLOGY

The methodology includes Data collection, types of Questionnaire, Processing of data and finally analysis, interpretation of data along with outcomes. In this paper the data is collected from Secondary as well as Primary Sources.

The study conducted is exploratory, conclusive and based on multi-cross sectional design.

III. PRIOR APPROACH

Concept of Work-life balance is not restricted to single country or industry rather it is a prevailing concept in many nations and across all occupations (Akdere, 2006) [9].

The author examines [10] the concept of work-life balance. Work-life balance has been explained as feeling productive and satisfied in both work and personal life spheres (Greenhaus and Allen, 2011) [11]. With exponential rise in competition in almost all spheres of one's life imbalance has become quite common concept in everyone's life.

A quality life is shaped both by 'aspects of daily life' and the level of satisfaction derived from these aspects (Camporese, Freguja and Sabbadini 1998)[12]. Having an acceptable leisure life is important. Indeed, research has shown that the so-called 'person-centred' attribute of leisure, that is satisfaction with leisure, exhibits the strongest correlations with reported quality of life (Lloyd and Auld 2002) [3].

Ziedner, [8] found out that students are more stressed due to their academic workload and work pressures, whereas personal and social factors have less impact on students stress. Clift and Thomas (1983) [7] observed that there are large amount of course work assignment that are given to the students and that lead to stress. There are many disadvantages associated with work life imbalances among students and it impact student's personal and professional lives.

Author [6] suggested that factors such as the number of friends, financial satisfaction, perceived discrimination etc. affect the student satisfaction level. Kai-wen [5] suggested that male students feel stronger stress related to family factor in comparison to the females; students who are in higher grades feel more stress from mental/physical/ school and emotional factors. In addition to this, students who take a student loan also feel more stress than those who do not. Suicide among students is increasing nowadays and the major reason behind the suicide is work-life conflict.

Engineering and science students also face difficulty in maintaining their personal and social life (Lee et.al. 2001) [10]. Psychology students also face work-life imbalance owing to the nature of study and experiments they are required to undertake. It can be concluded that all such courses which include vocational training leads to stress and work life imbalance among students

Students juggling work in addition to competing obligations from school and home may experience greater challenges in striking a balance. In these cases, it is even more crucial that you are adept at attending to different roles and setting priorities.

On the other hand, part time students work more and they earn more money comparison to full time students. Thus, there is lack of balance between work and life among students and this leads to stress, bad performance, health problem etc. (Kai-Wen, 2003) [5]. Various dimensions of the work/life/study balance were discovered by Gayle and Lowe (2007) [11] for higher education students who were studying at an education college. It was found that a specific set of work/life/study challenges present themselves to these students.

Author [8,1] Given that a balance between personal and academic components of students' lives has been identified as helpful for successful degree completion.

From review of literature it was found that a very less number of researches have been conducted on students of higher education on aspiring to acquire good School-Work-Life Balance. So in this paper we explore and analyze the balance and issues in school-work-lives of Arts, Sciences, Engineering and Management (ASEM) graduate, post graduate and doctoral students.

IV. RESEARCH GAP AND OBJECTIVES

According to Stimpson and Filer (2011), "work-life balance is a topic discussed more frequently in the literature concerning faculty than graduate students in higher education"

Further, Most of the studies on students' work life balance have been conducted in western countries (e.g. Warren 2004; Robotham 2001; Clark, Raffae & Lee, J. S., Koeske, G. F., & Sales, E.; Kai-Wen. (2003). Work-life balance amid students is an evolving phenomenon in India, received less focus and has very important implications for the all the stakeholders of universities, vis a vis students, faculty, employees etc. This sets the emerging point of the current research of school-work-life balance amid different streams and types of students.

Research Objectives of the study:

- To compare the work-life balance/ imbalance and its effects on the lives of students of Arts, Sciences, Engineering & Management (ASEM) streams on the following parameters:

1. Health and Sports
2. Personal and social relationships and Leisure
3. Utilization of flexible time during course hours

V. RESEARCH DESIGN, TOOLS AND DATA COLLECTION

The objective of the research is to identify the factors affecting school-work-personal life balance in Arts, Sciences, Engineering and Management (ASEM) streams students' of varying lifestyles in colleges of Allahabad. The methodology includes Data collection, types of Questionnaire, Processing of data and finally analysis, interpretation of data along with outcomes. In this paper the data is collected from Secondary as well as Primary Sources.

The study conducted is exploratory, conclusive and based on multi-cross sectional design. Quantitative data was generated to test the research hypothesis. A survey-questionnaire that suits to the local and social settings of Allahabad has been developed. The questionnaire was made after study and analysis of extensive literature review. The questionnaire included 12 questions of open-ended, close-ended & scale type of questions. The questionnaire was personally-administered and some sent through emails with a small motivating note to respondents so that their neutral opinion is recorded. The study was conducted on students of Arts, Sciences, Engineering and Management (ASEM) courses of graduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels and of varying lifestyles from Institutes in Allahabad.

The questionnaire is based on various categories and factors of school-work-Life balance of students which included academic performance, placement related information, career plans, university environment, course study hours, leisure activities, health and sports related information, satisfaction levels, personal information like family, relations, friends, peers etc.

The responses from 200 students were collected and were subjected to statistical analysis such as simple percentage analysis. The age groups of the sample are between 17-35 years. The instrument was based on a 5-point Likert Scale.

The sample related to the present research includes the Students of Art, Science, Engineering and Management courses from Institutes in Allahabad.

VI. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses have been constructed to analyze data.

Various researches have been done related to the theme of WLB on different levels of students of various courses, for UG & PG students (Dr. Aravind .S Kumar, Dr. P. Paramashivaiah Shivakumar), social work students (Tobin et al. 1994), doctoral students (Edna Martinez et. al.) and law students (Clarke et al. 1986) and found various factors responsible to achieve a sound school-work-life balance.

The hypotheses in this paper deals with evaluating differences in factors of school-work-life balance between students of different streams like Arts, Sciences, Engineering and Management (ASEM) courses.

H1-There is no significant difference between Arts, Sciences, Engineering and Management students on the parameter of health, leisure and sports.

H2- There is no significant difference between Arts, Sciences, Engineering and Management students on the parameter of handling personal and social relationships.

H3- There is no significant difference between Arts, Sciences, Engineering and Management students on the parameter of flexible time during course hours.

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

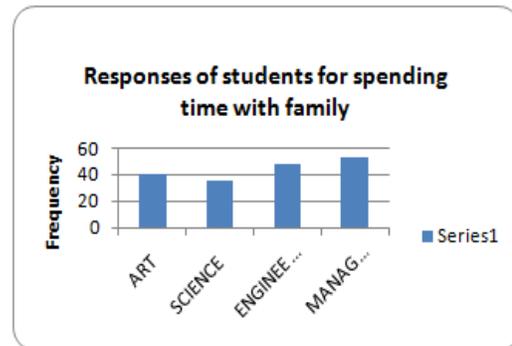


Figure 2B

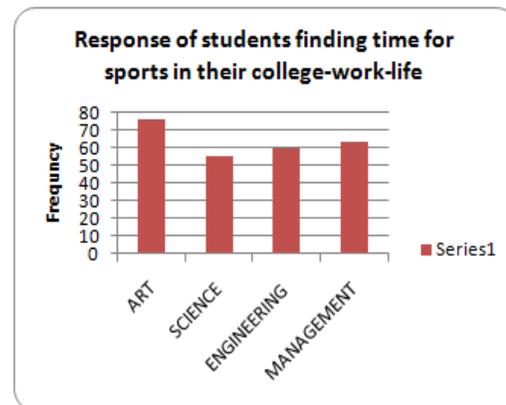


Figure 1A

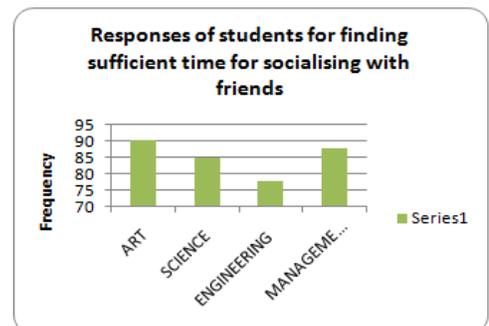


Figure 2A

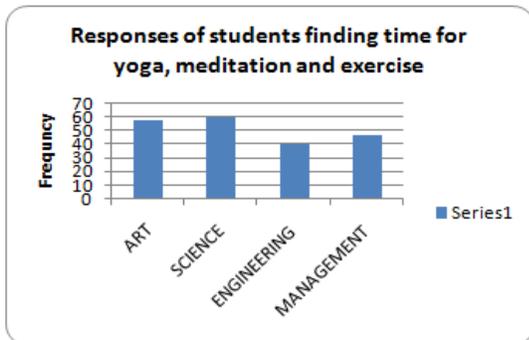


Figure 1B

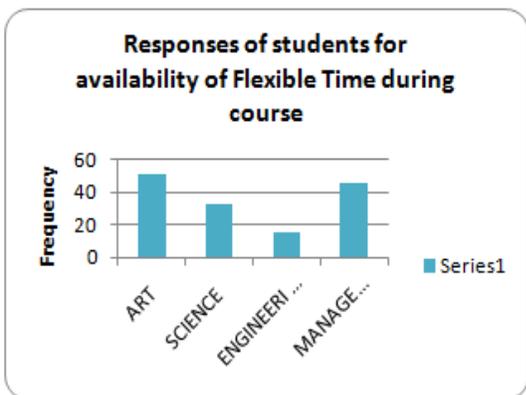


Figure 3A

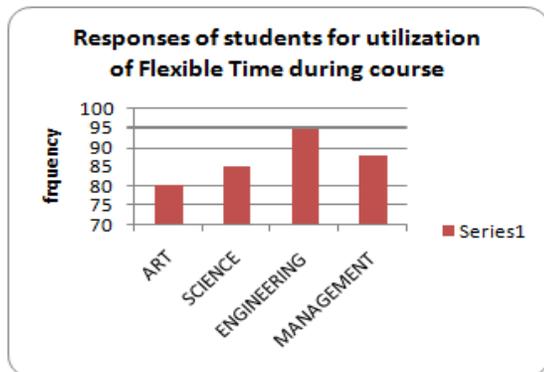


Figure 3B

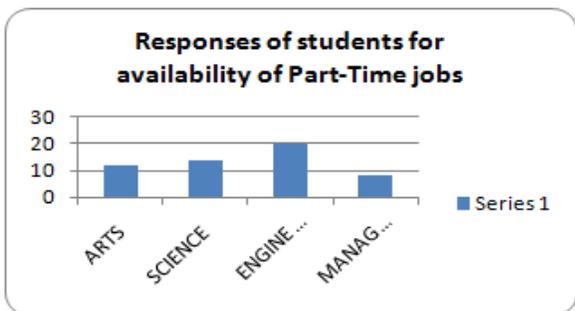


Figure 3C

Analysis was conducted using SPSS. Statistical analysis such as simple percentage analysis was used to examine differences between respondents from different courses. The results were evaluated on each parameter of students work-life balance to test the hypotheses of the study.

Among 200 student responses, 76% of Arts stream, 55 % of Science stream, 60% of Engineering and 64% of Management course students were able to find time for sports in their school-work-life schedule (Figure 1A).

On parameter of health, likewise finding time for yoga, meditation and exercise the responses of students for ASEM streams were recorded as 58%, 60%,40% and 47%.The students of science courses were found to be more concerned towards health or were able to extract more time towards their healthy lifestyle (Figure 1B).

On personal and social life and relationships it was observed that around 0.5% of students left the questions. Among obtained responses it was found that more than 75% students of ASEM courses were able to find sufficient time for socializing with friends (90% of Arts,85% of Sciences ,78% of Engineering and 88% of Management) (Figure 2A).

On spending sufficient time with family about 40% of Arts 35% of Sciences, 48% of Engineering and 52% of Management (Figure 2B).

On utilization and availability of Flexible Time during course it was observed that maximum availability of Flexi-time was to Arts students (50% of Arts, 32% of Sciences, 15% of Engineering and 45% of Management) (Figure 3A). On utilization of Flexible time it was found that although only 15% Engineering students had Flexible time but their utilization was maximum (80% of Arts,85% of Sciences ,95% of Engineering and 88% of Management) (Figure 3B).

From Table- 3A & 3B, it can be inferred that the level of utilization of Flexible time was maximum for engineering students although the availability of Flexible time was least for them. This might be due to the fact that among all the courses maximum number of part time jobs was available for engineering students (12% of Arts,14% of Sciences, 20 % of Engineering and 8% of Management) (Figure 3C) and secondly majority of engineering students during Flexible time pursued their hobbies.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Significant difference was observed between institutes on the dimension of Personal Relationship. Significant difference was observed among students from different courses on the dimensions of Health & Leisure and Academic Performance. It may be because of the differences in workload, training requirements and nature of course. Students in professional courses usually experience more work-life pressures. Arts students were

able to find more time for sports in their school-work-life schedule as compare to Management, Science and Engineering students. On parameter of health, likewise finding time for yoga, meditation and exercise the responses of students for ASEM streams were recorded and found Science courses students are more concerned towards health or were able to extract more time towards their healthy lifestyle. Level of utilization of Flexible time was maximum for engineering students although the availability of Flexible time was least for them.

Thus, the null hypothesis H1, H2, H3 was not Accepted.

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