

Factors Affecting to Work-Life Balance of Accountants: Evidence from Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Managing an appropriate balance between work and life has been an unending challenge for accounting professionals. The study aims to find out the impact of work environment, job burnout and demographic differences on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. The questionnaire was self-administrated and snowball sampling method was used. Data analysis was performed considering the mean, ANOVA test, Levene's test for equality of variance and Pearson Correlation Coefficient. It was found that most accounting professionals in Sri Lanka don't have a proper work-life balance. Work Environment factor had a positive impact on the work-life balance. The job burnout factor had a negative impact on the work-life balance. Further, there isn't a difference in the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accounting professionals. The age of accounting professionals had no impact on work-life balance. And the marital status of accounting professionals had no impact on their work-life balance.

Keywords: *Demographic factors, Job burnout, Work environment, Work-life balance*

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Introduction

The key role of the accounting profession is to facilitate the stakeholders with relevant and reliable information to plan and manage organization resources. Accountants face tremendous pressure in their work-life due to the volatility in the business environment, complying with requirements of professional and ethical standards, and tax and legal requirements which have imposed tight deadlines.

Managing an appropriate balance between work and life has been an unending challenge for accounting professionals. Briefly, work-life balance is spending adequate and equal time at work as well as in personal life.

As per the study of Thilagavathy and Geetha (2021) on a systematic review of work-life balance literature, the determinants of work-life balance are categorized into three major areas namely organizational factors, individual factors, and societal factors. For the present study, the researcher has considered job burnout and work environment as organizational factors and demographic variables as individual factors. Being a practicing Accountant himself, and in association with fellow professional accountants, the researcher has been able to recognize these elements that will cause a considerable impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka.

Problem Statement

Lemmon (2019) explains in his study on stress levels of accountants that, 90% of accounting professionals have been stressed out due to their work in research conducted by AAT, and 43% had to obtain time off due to high-stress levels. This is further evidence that accountancy is one of the highly stressful professions to work in. The increased stress levels may adversely affect the work-life balance of accounting professionals. CABA a charity that supports the chartered accountant's well-being has conducted a study and identified several factors that have

caused high-stress levels in chartered accountants. Such factors are overworked (41%), office politics (33%), feeling undervalued (29%), failure to increase rewards or pay (29%), and having to attend many meetings (28%). These further prove that job burnout and work environment affect the work-life balance of accounting professionals.

Thilagayathy and Geetha (2021) in their study on a systematic review of work-life balance literature, identified a research gap in the literature on work-life balance and demographic factors that need to be addressed in future research. They further stress that most of the research that has been carried out on work-life balance and demographic factors has been conducted in developed countries such as the UK, the US, and European countries. In comparison, very little research has been conducted in underdeveloped and developing countries. The researcher has focused on Sri Lanka, which is a developing country, and the literature evidence that there is a research gap in the Sri Lankan context.

The present study has been established based on empirical evidence. It is vital to identify whether Sri Lankan accounting professionals face a similar situation. Similar studies were not found in the Sri Lankan context to identify whether job burnout, work environment and demographic variances impact the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Consequently, the researcher has identified a contextual gap and the researcher has focused this gap on the Sri Lanka context.

The researcher has mentioned the problem statement based on the above justifications and the problem statement is as follows,

“The necessity of recognizing the impact of work environment, job burnout and demographic differences on Sri Lankan accounting professionals’ work-life balance”.



Research Questions

The following are the five (05) research questions of the study.

- 1) What is the impact of the work environment on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka?
- 2) What is the impact of job burnout on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka?
- 3) Is there a difference between the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accountants?
- 4) What is the impact of age on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka?
- 5) What is the impact of marital status on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka?

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aims to find out the impact of work environment, job burnout and demographic variables on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka.

The objectives of the study were derived based on the above research questions.

- 1) To find out the impact of work environment on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka.
- 2) To find out the impact of job burnout on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka.
- 3) To find out the impact of demographic differences on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was derived in the context of Sri Lankan accounting professionals' work-life balance aspects. The

hypothesis defense is carried out further in the literature review chapter.

Hypothesis 1: - Work environment has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka

The available literature reveals that the work environment has an impact on work-life balance. Studies conducted by Smith et al. (2011), Thamrin and Riyanto (2020), and Mazerolle and Goodman (2013) emphasize that the work environment has a significant impact on work-life balance. Based on the available literature the above hypothesis was derived. The present study intended to find out whether, in the Sri Lankan context, the work environment has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals.

Hypothesis 2: - Job burnout has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka

Studies conducted by Thilagavathy and Geetha (2021), Smith et al. (2011), and Umene-Nakano et al. (2013) revealed that there was a significant correlation between work-life balance satisfaction and burnout. Based on the existing literature, the above hypothesis was derived. The study intends to find out whether job burnout has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in the Sri Lankan context.

Hypothesis 3: - There is a difference in the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accounting professionals in Sri Lanka

Previous studies carried out to find the impact of gender differences on work-life balance indicated that there is a significant difference between the perception of males and females regarding their work-life balance. In the study on the work-life balance of accountants, Smith et al. (2011) revealed that there is a significant difference between the work-life balance perspectives of male and female future accountants. Based on the



available literature the above hypothesis was derived and the study intended to find out whether there is a significant difference between the perception of male and female accountants in Sri Lanka.

Hypothesis 4: - The age of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka has an impact on work-life balance

A study conducted by Rabl and Kuhlmann (2009) on work-life balance revealed that the age of the employee has a significant impact on their work-life balance. Based on the available literature the above hypothesis was derived and the present study intended to identify whether the age of accounting professionals has an impact on their work-life balance in the Sri Lankan context.

Hypothesis 5: - The marital status of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka has no impact on work-life balance

Previous studies conducted by Malik et al. (2020) and Panisoara and Serban (2013) on the impact of marital status on work-life balance revealed that there is no significant difference between the levels of work-life balance of married and unmarried employees. They had postulated the same levels of work-life balance despite their marital status. The present study is conducted to identify whether, in the Sri Lankan context, marital status has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals.

Significance of the Study

Accounting professionals are a vital part of a business and a country's economic management. Accounting professionals assist the corporate strategy, provide guidance, and navigate towards corporate objectives. This study is significant since a well-maintained work-life balance will improve the productivity of an accounting professional, and it will help to equally

prioritize the demands of one's career and personal life.

The outcomes of this study would be useful for employers and policymakers since they could get an idea of the factors such as work environment, job burnout and demographic differences affecting the work-life balance of employees. Employers and policymakers could come up with favourable strategies to implement a proper balance of work and life for employees.

Further, the outcomes would also be a source for academics and future researchers and this thirst for information would lead to new results.

Limitations of the Study

The present study concentrates only on the elements namely work environment, job burnout and demographic differences that might have an impact on the work-life balance of accountants in Sri Lanka. There are several other elements or determinants of work-life balance which can be considered.

The findings of this study would be difficult to generalize since snowball sampling method has been used. Further, the findings will be valid from the perspective of accountants rather than other professionals.

Literature Review

As per the study on a systematic review of work-life balance related literature, (Thilagavathy and Geetha, 2021) categorized the factors impacting work-life balance into three major categories namely Individual, Organizational and Societal factors.

Delecta (2011) categorizes work-life balance into three major aspects namely work, family, and private. The work aspect considers factors such as work demands, working hours, and work intensity. Additional working hours take away the time allocated to spend on the family, intense work results in fatigue and emotional stress



which in return will affect the quality of personal/family life. The family aspect considers factors such as the individual's role as father, mother, daughter, son, etc., and family responsibilities such as household work, and taking care of children. The private aspect considered factors such as involvement in sports, spending quality vacation time, and engaging in personal development activities.

Jones and Taylor (2017) explain in their study the outcomes of a poor work-life balance, in which they have stated that a poor work-life balance will affect both employee and employer. The improper balance between work and life prone employees to burnout, which results in a disconnection between work and home life with a lack of energy for either, due to a state of continual physical and mental exhaustion.

Accounting professionals often face work-life balance issues due to the nature of their work activities. With the long working hours, busy work schedules, and forced to work within tight deadlines and often engage in multi-tasking, they are unanimously pushed into the improper balancing of work and life activities.

The quality of an employee's workplace environment impacts most on their level of subsequent performance. A favourable work environment allows workers to perform better, improve productivity, and maximize quality in their performance.

The work environment can be considered in two main aspects. One aspect is the physical work environment, and the other aspect is the non-physical environment.

Thamrin and Riyanto (2020) have stated that:

Environment or the working conditions are all physical aspects. psychological, and regulations that affect job satisfaction and productivity (Schultz 2010). Opinions about the work

environment according to BjörnHöber (2017) can be understood as encouraging employees to understand work and their participation in work. The working environment consists of the following two-dimensional indicator (Siagian 2014), among others: a. Physical work environment, including building workplaces, work equipment, facilities provided by the company, transportation facilities b. The non-physical work environment is the relationship between colleagues with indicator level relationships with colleagues, superiors' relationship with employees, and cooperation among employees (p.41).

Smith et al. (2011) study on the work-life balance of accountants reveals that:

To help achieve a healthy work-life balance, accounting employers offer the following flexible work arrangements: flextime, part-time work, job sharing, work-at-home options, summer or holiday hours, and telecommuting. Flextime is by far the most widely preferred flexible work arrangement with 64% of accounting employees using it and 55% of companies offering it (p.380).

The work environment is one of the factors which influence employees to perform their duties and task well. A good work spirit among employees could be created through a comfortable and positive work environment. A healthy, good work environment will encourage employees' feelings and productivity at work, so that they can foster employee enthusiasm or motivation to work more actively, effectively, and efficiently (Thamrin & Riyanto, 2020).

Organizations that have family-friendly policies such as childcare, flexible working



hours, and support networks can better meet the personal and domestic needs of their employees, which results in reducing the conflict between work and family life (Mazerolle & Goodman, 2013). Flexible work hours make it possible for employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and family. It has also been identified that flexible work hours are the source of ensuring work-life quality.

Job burnout is a kind of stress. Jones and Taylor (2017) state in their study that burnout is not simply excessive stress but a reaction to ongoing stress. It creates a negative attitude towards work and sometimes life as well.

Thilagavathy and Geetha (2021) have stated in their study regarding work-life balance and burnout that:

WLB is significantly influenced by work exhaustion (burnout). A negative psychological experience arising from job stress is defined as burnout (Ratlif, 1988). Increased work and non-work demand contribute to occupational burnout and, in turn, negatively predict WLB and employee well-being (Jones et al., 2019).

Many accounting professionals are experiencing job burnout due to overwork and linked increase in job stress (Smith et al., 2011).

Rabl and Kuhlmann (2009) explain in their study the possible age effects under three main constructs life-stage effects, career-stage effects, and cohort effects. Age is

Conceptual Framework

closely related to different life stages and these life stages can be categorized as childhood, early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood. The needs and priorities of employees differ at each of these life stages. When considering the career-stage effect, older employees do not begin each new learning cycle from the same starting point as their younger colleagues, but rather build on prior skills and experience. As per the Cohort effect, members who belong to a certain birth cohort carry similar professional identities and employment preferences due to similar economic, education and social conditions they have encountered.

Thilagavathy and Geetha (2021) have stated in their study regarding work-life balance and demographic variables that:

Work-Life Balance has significant variations with demographic variables (Waters & Bardoel, 2006). A significant difference was found between age (Powell et al. 2019), gender (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2020) and marital status (Powell et al. 2019) regarding Work-Life Balance.

A study on marital status and work-life balance done by Malik et al. (2020) reveals that single and married employees had the same levels of work-life balance, regardless of their marital status. They further stated that single employees will look forward to being married as they will be able to look after their parents and family to be. Therefore, the levels of work-life balance would be the same as a married employee.

Figure 01 indicates the conceptual framework of the study.



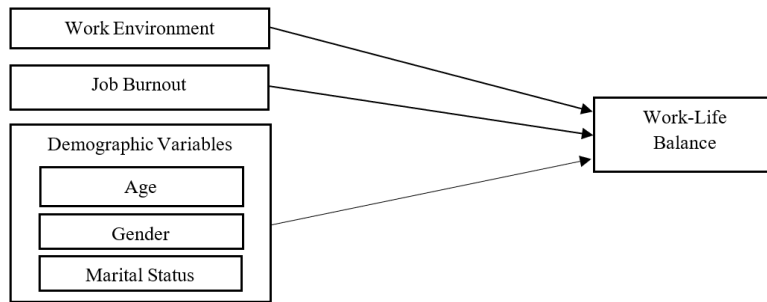


Figure 01: Conceptual Framework

Dependent Variable: - Work-Life Balance

Independent Variables: - Work environment, Job Burnout, Demographic Variables (Age, Gender, and Marital Status)

As elaborated in figure 01, If accounting professionals were facilitated with a perfect work environment, then they would attain a healthy work-life balance. If their work environment is not friendlier, then they will find it difficult to maintain a balance between their work life and personal life. Job burnout might have a significant impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals considering the nature of their work. Based on the demographic differences of the accountants, especially gender, age, and marital status, the balance between work and life may vary. Therefore, there is a need to identify the impact of these independent variables (Work environment, Job Burnout, Demographic Variables (Age, Gender, and Marital Status) on the dependent variable Work-Life Balance.

Methodology

The study considered the entire population of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka; hence the counting of the units in the population was impossible. The study consisted of an infinite population. Since the study consists of an infinite population, the researcher has considered the snowball sampling method to draw the sample from the population. The researcher had considered a sample size of 100 accountants in Sri Lanka, for the study

purpose. Primary and secondary data were used to achieve the objectives of the research. To collect primary data from the sample units, a structured questionnaire was used. The researcher had gathered quantifiable discrete data. A five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire to measure the responses. Indicators that are mentioned in the questionnaire were measured at the interval level. Answers to the questionnaire were helpful to clarify the research problem. The observation method was used to clarify the research problem. Secondary data was collected by analyzing research articles of previous studies. The questionnaire was self-developed (Appendix A) and it was designed as an online survey form and distributed among identified participants via several modes such as emails, LinkedIn contacts of the researcher, and WhatsApp. Being a chartered accountant, the researcher was able to connect with other professional accountants through LinkedIn, which is a professional networking site. The questionnaire was pre-tested using a pilot study with randomly selected ten accountants. The Cronbach's Alpha test was used to validate the questionnaire instruments. Mean, frequencies, ANOVA test, Levene's test for equality of variance and Pearson Correlation Coefficient were used as the data analysis tools to evaluate the specific objectives of the study.

Results

The researcher had considered a sample size of 100 accounting professionals in Sri Lanka.



Sixty-seven accounting professionals in Sri Lanka had dully responded to the questionnaire. The response rate of the study was 67%.

The gender, Age Group, and Marital status of the respondents are being discussed in this section.

Socio-Demographic details of the respondents

Gender

Out of 67 respondents, 24 respondents (36%) were females, and 43 respondents (64%) were males (Table 01).

Table 01: No. of respondents based on Gender

| Gender | Frequency | Percent % |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
| Female | 24 | 36% |
| Male | 43 | 64% |
| Total | 67 | 100% |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data 2022

Age Group

Out of 67 respondents, two respondents (3%) belonged to the 15-24 years age group. Fifty-five respondents (82%) were in the 25-54

years age group. Ten respondents (15%) belonged to the 55-64 years age group. And there weren't any respondents who belonged to the age group above 64 years (Table 02).

Table 02: Age group of the respondents

| Age group | Frequency | Percent % |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 15 - 24 Years | 2 | 3% |
| 25 - 54 Years | 55 | 82% |
| 55 - 64 Years | 10 | 15% |
| Above 64 Years | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 67 | 100% |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data 2022

Marital Status

Out of 67 respondents, 50 respondents (75%) were Married, and 17 respondents (25%) were Unmarried (Table 03).

Table 03: Marital status of the respondents

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percent % |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Married | 50 | 75% |
| Unmarried | 17 | 25% |
| Total | 67 | 100% |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data 2022

Work-Life Balance of Accounting Professionals in Sri Lanka



Table 04 indicates the mean ratings of the perception of accounting professionals on work-life balance.

Table 04: Mean ratings of the perception of accounting professionals on work-life balance

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Work-Life Balance | 67 | 1.00 | 4.80 | 2.8164 | .99081 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 67 | | | | |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data 2022

As per the results depicted in Table 4, the mean value for the variable work-life balance was 2.8164 and the Standard Deviation value was 0.99081. It indicates that most of the respondents disagreed with all most all the statements that were used to measure the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. As per the results the management has not given them a reasonable workload, their office work does not enable them to allocate time for physical fitness, they do not have sufficient vacation time, and they do not have time to spend with their friends and families due to office work, they have missed important personal events due to office work, they take their office work

to home and finally they are not satisfied with their current work-life balance.

The study further revealed that Sri Lankan accounting professionals do not have a proper work-life balance. Their perception of work-life balance indicates that they undergo an imbalance in their work and life. The researcher had further investigated the factors (work environment, job burnout, and demographic factors) which would have an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka.

Hypothesis 1: - Work environment has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka

Table 05: Mean ratings of the impact of work environment on work-life balance

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Work Environment | 67 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 3.5194 | .71948 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 67 | | | | |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data 2022

As per the results depicted in Table 05, the mean value for the variable work environment was 3.5194 and the Standard Deviation value was 0.71948. The standard deviation value received for this variable was less than one. Hence, the data were clustered around the mean values. The results indicate that majority of the accounting professionals in Sri Lanka had a neutral perception of the impact of the work environment on work-life balance. The neutral perceptions they had relating to the work environment were on the level of support management provides for a

sustainable healthy work-life balance, Office politics in their workplace, diversity and inclusiveness of the organization, employees' overall job security, friendly work atmosphere, appreciation of work by management and on the sound relationship they have with their supervisor.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to measure the first objective of the study, which is to find out the relationship between the work environment and work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka.



Table 06: Correlations

| | | Work-Life Balance |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Work Environment | Pearson Correlation | .740** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 |
| | N | 105 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 Source: Output of the analysis of survey data, 2022

As per table 06, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is 0.740, which is greater than 0.5. Therefore, there is a strong positive correlation between work environment and work-life balance. The results depict that the factor work environment has a positive impact on the work-life balance of the accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. There is a positive relationship between work environment and work-life balance. If the work environment is favourable to the

accounting professionals, then they would have a healthy work-life balance. Hence the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H₁) which is, “Work environment has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka”.

Hypothesis 2: - Job burnout has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka

Table 07: Mean ratings of the impact of job burnout on work-life balance

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Job Burnout | 67 | 1.33 | 4.67 | 2.8448 | .88231 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 67 | | | | |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data 2022

As per table 07, the mean value for the variable job burnout was 2.8448 and the Standard Deviation value was 0.88231. The mean value received for the variable job burnout indicates that accounting professionals in Sri Lanka disagreed with almost all the statements related to the impact of job burnout on work-life balance.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to measure the second objective of the study, which is to find out the impact of job burnout on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka.

Table 08: Correlations

| | | Work-Life Balance |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Job Burnout | Pearson Correlation | -.723** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | <.001 |
| | N | 105 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
 Source: Output of the analysis of survey data, 2022

As per table 08, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is -0.723, which indicates a negative correlation, and the value is less than zero. This concludes that both variables,

job burnout and work-life balance move in the opposite direction. The results depict that the factor of job burnout has a negative impact on the work-life balance of the



accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. There is a negative relationship between job burnout and work-life balance. If the accounting professionals undergo job burnout conditions, then they won't have a healthy work-life balance. Hence the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which is, "Job burnout has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka".

Hypothesis 3: - There is a difference in the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accounting professionals in Sri Lanka

The third objective of the study was to find out the impact of demographic differences on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Based on this objective a research question was derived, "Is there a difference between the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accountants?".

Table 09: Mean ratings of the impact of gender difference on work-life balance

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------|----|--------|----------------|
| Female | 24 | 3.0167 | 1.02349 |
| Male | 43 | 2.7047 | .96608 |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data, 2022

Table 09 indicates the mean values of work-life balance based on gender. As per the results, female accounting professionals had a mean value of 3.0167 and male accounting professionals had a mean value of 2.7047. It

indicates that both male and female accounting professionals in Sri Lanka had almost similar perceptions of work-life balance.

Table 10: Levene's Test for Equality of Variance - Work-Life Balance and Gender

| | | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Work-Life Balance | Based on Mean | .255 | 1 | 65 | .615 |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data, 2022

Decision Rule for Levene's Test:

If $p \leq 0.05$, the variance is significantly different.

If $p > 0.05$, the variance is not significantly different.

Table 10 indicates the test statistics for Levene's Test for Equality of Variance is 0.255 and the p-value is 0.615. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, this indicates that there isn't a significant difference in the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Both male and female accounting professionals in Sri Lanka have a similar perception of work-life balance. Hence the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which is, "There

is a difference in the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accounting professionals in Sri Lanka" is rejected and accepted the null hypothesis (H_0), which is "There isn't a difference in the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accounting professionals in Sri Lanka".

Hypothesis 4: - The age of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka has an impact on work-life balance

The third objective of the study was to find out the impact of demographic differences on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Based on this objective a research question was derived, "What is the impact of age on the work-life



balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka?"

Table 11: Work-Life Balance and Age Group

| Age Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-------------|----|--------|----------------|
| 15-24 Years | 2 | 3.4500 | .91924 |
| 25-54 Years | 55 | 2.7582 | 1.01502 |
| 55-64 Years | 10 | 3.0100 | .87870 |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data, 2022

As per the results depicted in Table 11, the age group 15 - 24 years had a mean value of 3.45. The age group 25-54 years had a mean value of 2.76. And the age group 55-64 years had a mean value of 3.01.

Table 12: Work-Life Balance and Age Group - ANOVA

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|------|
| Work-Life Balance * Age Group | Between Groups | 1.364 | 2 | .682 | .688 | .506 |
| | Within Groups | 63.428 | 64 | .991 | | |
| | Total | 64.792 | 66 | | | |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data, 2022

As per the results indicated in the ANOVA table (table 12), the significant value is 0.506 which is greater than 0.05. Hence age is not a significant factor which has an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Hence the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which is, “*The age of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka has an impact on work-life balance*” is rejected and accepted the null hypothesis (H_0), which is “*The age of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka has no impact on work-life balance*”.

Hypothesis 5: - The marital status of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka has no impact on work-life balance

The third objective of the study was to find out the impact of demographic differences on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Based on this objective a research question was derived, “What is the impact of marital status on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka?”

Table 13: Work-Life Balance and Marital Status

| Marital Status | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------|----|--------|----------------|
| Married | 50 | 2.7700 | .98752 |
| Unmarried | 17 | 2.9529 | 1.01804 |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data, 2022

As per the results depicted in Table 13, the married group had a mean value of 2.77 and the unmarried group had a mean value of 2.95.



Table 14: Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance - Work-Life Balance and Marital Status

| | | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Work-Life Balance | Based on Mean | .006 | 1 | 65 | .938 |

Source: Output of the analysis of survey data, 2022

Decision Rule for Levene’s Test:

If $p \leq 0.05$, the variance is significantly different

If $p > 0.05$, the variance is not significantly different

Table 14 indicates the test statistics for Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance which is 0.006 and the p-value is 0.938. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, this indicates that there isn’t a significant difference in the work-life balance perspectives of married and unmarried accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Both married and unmarried accounting professionals in Sri Lanka have similar perceptions of work-life balance. The marital status of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka has no impact on work-life balance. Hence alternative hypothesis (H_1) is rejected and accepted the null hypothesis (H_0) which is, “*The marital status of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka has no impact on work-life balance*”

Discussion

The present study was carried out in the Sri Lankan context and the study revealed that the work environment factor had a positive impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Smith et al. (2011), Thamrin and Riyanto (2020), and Mazerolle and Goodman (2013) came across similar findings as they found in their study, that the work environment has a significant impact on work-life balance.

The present study further revealed that the factor of job burnout had an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. The findings empirically confirm the theoretical arguments given by Thilagavathy and Geetha (2021), Smith et al. (2011), and Umene-Nakano et al. (2013), which have elaborated that the variables, work-life balance

satisfaction and job burnout have a significant correlation. The study results of Umene-Nakano et al. (2013) indicated that there were significant correlations between average work-life balance satisfaction scores and burnout scores.

The present study was carried out further to find out whether the gender difference had an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. The results revealed that there isn’t a difference in the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. The results generated through the present study is varying from the study findings of Smith et al. (2011), in which they revealed that there is a significant difference between the work-life balance perspectives of male and female future accountants. In the context of Sri Lanka, the present study results indicate that there isn’t a significant difference between the perception of male and female accounting professionals regarding work-life balance.

The present study was carried out in the Sri Lankan context, to find out whether the age of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka had an impact on work-life balance. The present study results revealed that the age of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka had no impact on work-life balance. The results generated through the present study vary from the study findings of Rabl and Kuhlmann (2009) in which they have revealed that the age of the employee has a significant impact on their work-life balance.



Finally, the study results revealed that the marital status of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka had no impact on work-life balance. The findings empirically confirm the theoretical arguments given by Malik et al. (2020) and Panisoara and Serban (2013) on the impact of marital status on work-life balance, in which they revealed that there is no significant difference between the levels of work-life balance of married and unmarried employees. They had postulated the same levels of work-life balance despite their marital status.

Conclusion

As the results indicated there isn't a proper work-life balance among the accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. The study revealed that the work environment factor had an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. The study results indicated that the work environment and work-life balance had a positive correlation. When the work environment is favourable and friendlier to the accounting professionals, they tend to postulate a healthy work-life balance. The job burnout factor had an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals, and it was a negative impact. The results further revealed that job burnout and work-life balance had a negative correlation. When accounting professionals endure job burnout, they do not postulate a healthy work-life balance. Hence the factor of job burnout had a negative impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. When considering the impact of gender differences on work-life balance, the study revealed that there isn't a difference in the work-life balance perspectives of male and female accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. Both male and female accounting professionals postulated a similar perception of work-life balance. The study results revealed that the age of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka had no impact on the work-life balance. Despite which age category they belong to, all the accounting professionals postulated a similar perception of work-life balance.

Marital status of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka had no impact on their work-life balance. Despite being married or unmarried, all the accounting professionals postulated a similar perception of work-life balance.

Recommendations

The study results revealed that the Sri Lankan accounting professionals have the perception that they do not posit a healthy work-life balance. The following recommendations can be implied in the Sri Lankan context to address this issue.

- Employers could implement an organizational policy on the work-life balance of employees.
- Adaptation of family-friendly policies within the organization to encourage the work-life balance of employees.
- Accounting professionals should practice the norm "Leave work at work". Most accounting professionals had stated that they take their office work home. This practice would hinder the time they would allocate for the well-being of themselves and their loved ones. Hence, it's recommended for them to adopt a new norm as to Leave office work at work and not bring it to their home.
- Practice saying "No" to the unreasonable workload given by employers. The study revealed that most accounting professionals had the perception that they do not receive a reasonable workload from their management. It's better if the accounting professionals had a strong will and oppose the unreasonable workload, to maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- Allocate "family time" and/or "self-care time" in your daily routine.



Future Research

In this present study, consideration is only made on three factors which might have an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. The factors were work environment, job burnout and demographic factors. Future research may be conducted considering other factors which might have an impact on the work-life balance of accounting professionals in Sri Lanka. There are several other elements or

determinants of work-life balance which can be considered.

Further studies may be carried out based on the accounting professionals who are working in different sectors (i.e. government sector, private sector) and the difference in the work-life balance of the accounting professionals in those sectors.



Appendix A - Questionnaire

Research Topic: - Factors affecting to Work-Life Balance of Accountants: Evidence from Sri Lanka

Part I: - Demographic details

Please place a tick (✓) in the relevant box

1.1. Gender: - Male Female

1.2. Age Group: 15-24 25-54 55-64 Above 64

1.3. Marital status: - Married Unmarried

Part II: - Work environment and Work-Life Balance

Please place a tick (✓) in the relevant box which reflects your agreement with the given statement

| | Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|------|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 2.1 | Office politics is not entertained in my workplace | | | | | |
| 2.2 | Office environment is composed with basic amenities to feel comfortable and relaxed at work | | | | | |
| 2.3 | Company provides all the tools and materials needed to perform my job | | | | | |
| 2.4 | In my view the management recognizes/appreciates my work | | | | | |
| 2.5 | I have a better relationship with my superiors | | | | | |
| 2.6 | The management supports sustaining a healthy work-life balance | | | | | |
| 2.7 | I have a friendly workplace atmosphere | | | | | |
| 2.8 | My organization is dedicated to diversity and inclusiveness | | | | | |
| 2.9 | I'm satisfied with my overall job security | | | | | |
| 2.10 | My organization has a safe work environment | | | | | |



Part III: - Job Burnout and Work-Life Balance

Please place a tick (√) in the relevant box which reflects your agreement with the given statement

| | Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 3.1 | I drag myself to work and have trouble getting started | | | | | |
| 3.2 | I have become irritable or impatient with co-workers, customers, or clients | | | | | |
| 3.3 | I have lacked the energy to be consistently productive | | | | | |
| 3.4 | My sleep habits have changed | | | | | |
| 3.5 | I have unexplained headaches, stomach or bowel problems, or other physical complaints | | | | | |
| 3.6 | I have become cynical or critical at work | | | | | |
| 3.7 | I find it hard to concentrate | | | | | |
| 3.8 | I feel disillusioned about my job | | | | | |
| 3.9 | I feel lack of satisfaction from my achievements | | | | | |



Part IV: - Work-Life Balance

Please place a tick (√) in the relevant box which reflects your agreement with the given statement

| | Statements | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 4.1 | The management gives me a reasonable workload | | | | | |
| 4.2 | My office work enables me to allocate time to physical fitness | | | | | |
| 4.3 | My office work allows me to take enough vacation time throughout the year | | | | | |
| 4.4 | My office work allows me to spend enough time with family, friends, and non-work activities. | | | | | |
| 4.5 | I'm satisfied with my current working hours | | | | | |
| 4.6 | I have not missed a personal event due to my office work | | | | | |
| 4.7 | I'm satisfied with my current work-life balance | | | | | |
| 4.8 | I never take my office work to home | | | | | |

Thank you for spending your valuable time to fill this questionnaire.



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