



## Work life balance and job satisfaction: A study from private banks of Nepal

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### ABSTRACT

*Work and life are two inseparable yet conflicting spheres of an individual's life. Work-Life Balance is a healthy integration between an individual's personal life priorities, family demands and career goals. Organizational support is needed to help employees to balance their work life responsibilities. Work-life balance and job satisfaction are closely related. The study is done on a sample of 75 employees currently working in different branches of private banks of Rupandehi district of Nepal. Kano model is used to track the variables that have the highest impact on job satisfaction. Findings show that career growth opportunities and organizational initiatives for WLB are "Excitement Features" of job satisfaction. This study identified the organizational related variables, which are more important to enhance the job satisfaction of employees. The study empirically proves that organizational support to promote WLB enhances job satisfaction of employees.*

**Keywords**— Work life balance, Job satisfaction, Kano Model, Organizational support

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Work and life were considered as two separate spheres of a person's life. But due to the technological advancements that allow 24 hours' connectivity and accessibility, the boundary between personal and professional life has been blurred. Globalization and innovations in information technology have forced professionals to look for ways to integrate their work and personal life. Employees now believe on "Working Smarter Not Harder". Work-Life Balance (WLB) is about balancing the competing demands of family, personal and professional life and meaningful achievements in various domains of life. Though the banking industry is considered an attractive place to work for, employees have to work under high pressure. Their work life centres on meeting targets, closing daily transactions, answering customer queries and dealing with clients. When employees work for longer hours to meet stringent deadlines, be promoted and progress in their career path, their personal and family life gets affected since they start sacrificing their personal interests or compromising on their commitments towards the family. Hence, over a period their productivity starts to decline. Work-life balance should always be a consideration in career but often it is ignored. As the socio-cultural and economic context is changing, salary alone cannot determine the satisfaction of employees. What motivates employees is a good working environment, a sense of accomplishment and opportunities for personal growth and development. Banks can promote a work-life balance of their employees by initiating WLB programs. Employees too are unaware about the significance of work-life balance or consequences of ignoring it. Work should be enjoyable and meaningful so that one can give their best performance. Stressful hours of works with no joy and satisfaction to employees are worthless. In order to retain talents, banks have to focus more on providing personal and professional growth opportunities for employees and design appropriate HR strategies that match their needs. From an organizational perspective, this study will help the private banks to identify which factors they have to focus to promote WLB and enhance job satisfaction.

#### 1.1 Objective of the study

To identify the organizational related factors that lead to greater job satisfaction of employees.

### 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

WLB is a broad term for measuring work hours, accessibility and leave policies. Literature review shows that various factors determine the WLB of employees. **Kumari (2012)** studied various WLB variables in public sector banks of Punjab. The results indicated male employees scored high on WLB compared to females. Perception about WLB differs across gender. Females perceived their bank's effort for work-life programs and policies more positively than males. Flexitime, job sharing, and crèche facilities help employees to coordinate family and work responsibilities. The study also concluded perception about WLB differs across age groups.

**Valcour and Hunter (2005)** argued that position in the organization is another factor that affects the involvement of employees at work and at home. Managers in the key positions of organizations tend to have a high level of psychological involvement with their

jobs than the bottom line employees. Furthermore, use of communications technologies such as email, instant messaging, telecommuting, internet, and social media increased the inclination of these managers to spill over from one sphere of their lives to the other. Hence, the boundary between work and home does not exist for them. Job involvement is positively associated with work-family conflict among employees at upper levels of organizational hierarchy.

**Dizaho (2013)** used multiple regressions to analyze the impact of different variables such as leaves and breaks, hours of work, work schedules and support from top management on WLB. It was found that leaves and breaks are the highest and strongest predictors of WLB among all other variables. A similar study by **Kundnani & Mehta (2015)** identified working conditions, facilities, performance, supervisors support, job independence and satisfaction as the major factors, which affect the WLB of bank professionals. Over time, increased work schedules and targets have a negative correlation with job satisfaction. Employees faced challenges to maintain work-life balance and organizations need to consider employees as assets and take initiatives to facilitate employees by helping them to manage their work life cycle.

**Devi and Kanagalakshmi (2015)** studied different stress-related variables that affect WLB of female staffs in IT companies in Chennai. Workload, work pressures, long work hours, occupational stress and emotions create psychosocial pressure from both family and work. To overcome such pressures employees, use different extricating and stress management strategies with support from family and organization.

## **2.1 Work-life balance and employee satisfaction**

**Luthans (1973)** defined job satisfaction as “*a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience.*” It is determined based on how well results meet or exceed expectations. He proposed five important characteristics of jobs, which are viewed as highly important by employees. These include: “*work itself*”, “*pay*”, “*promotion opportunities*”, “*supervision*” and “*co-workers*”. **Buenrostro (2017)** argued in today’s age of competition, time is very precious, and employees want to optimize it as effectively as possible. Organizations need to support employees and provide them autonomy on where when and how they work. Adopting WLB policies results in higher productivity and satisfaction. The successful leaders and CEO’s are the ones who integrate and optimize their talents, time. Success depends on the abilities of these leaders to manage technology to yield the best performance. Work life need not be a balanced situation but it is about how one priority his necessities and uses technology and other benefits to avoid conflicts among various spheres of life.

**Mukhtar (2012)** studied the degree to which WLB factors impact satisfaction using factor analysis. Childcare responsibilities, family and institutional support, time spent on work and family responsibilities are important factors that determine the overall job satisfaction. Work-life balance policies influenced both individuals and organizational outcomes. The outcomes of better WLB are improved productivity, commitment and satisfaction.

**Obiagell, et al. (2015)** studied 262 employees from United Bank of Africa using correlation analysis. The study concluded bank’s leave policies have a positive relationship with staff’s efficiency in service delivery. Banks which offer leave policies motivate their teams inefficient delivery of services.

## **2.2 Work-life balance and job satisfaction studies in Nepal**

**Adhikari (2016)** studied the role of support from the organization and home in moderating correlation between work-life conflict and career satisfaction among 381 banking professionals in 14 commercial banks of Kathmandu Valley. Employees in the Nepalese banking sector have high satisfaction. Work-family conflict has an insignificant relationship with satisfaction. In addition, Nepal being a collectivist society, banking professionals respond to adverse conditions with greater affiliation with co-workers and do not separate their professional life from their personal life. The results also indicated support from family has a positive association with career satisfaction while support from work has no significant impact on work conflicts. The stud

**Shakya & Devi (2016)** studied stress levels of 180 employees in private and public banks. Extended hours of work with no intrinsic rewards and growth opportunities, inadequate compensation, role overload and no time to spend with family are the reasons for stress. Also, stress experienced by employees in private and public banks do not differ significantly.

**Bista (2016)** studied job satisfaction among 210 employees of different commercial banks in Nepal. Job satisfaction level was measured across different variables like gender, age and job experience. This study discovered different age group experienced a different level of satisfaction whereas no difference in job satisfaction exists across gender. Regarding the issues that affect satisfaction, employees ranked job security as the topmost factor followed by pay and promotion. Relationship with co-workers and supervisors, physical working conditions, future opportunities for career development were among the factors that significantly influence job satisfaction.

**Biswakarma (2016)** examined the relation of turnover intention with career growth in a sample of 290 employees in private commercial banks of Nepal. The study claimed that promotion speed and remuneration growth have greater influence in turnover intentions of employees.

**Subedhi (2016)** studied the important factors that lead to attrition in senior-level employees of commercial banks. The study claimed that skill development is the first priority among the employees followed by job security and good remuneration. 21.61% of respondents in this study said scope for career growth was the main factor that was missing in their previous organization. Other significant factors that led to attrition were organizational values, work environment, nature of job and compensation.

Upadhy (2017) on examining the level of employee satisfaction in the commercial banks of Nepal claimed though employees are satisfied with the job, they are willing to leave their organization if they get opportunities elsewhere. The study also compared the satisfaction level of staffs in public & private banks. In public banks, employees in the lower level positions were more satisfied with the facilities provided to them as compared to the employees from private banks. However, in the case of private banks job satisfaction was high among the employees in higher-level positions.

**3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Primary data for the study was collected through an online survey. A sample of 120 employees from various branches of private banks of Rupandehi district of Nepal was selected. The samples were selected using convenient sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. The questionnaire was sent online to employees. Finally, 75 valid responses were received for the research study. The researcher designed a self-structured questionnaire based on literature review, extensive reading and academia and expert’s suggestions. The questionnaire is based on 5 points Likert scale. To check reliability and internal consistency of the research instrument, responses were subjected to “Cronbach’s Alpha test”. The Cronbach’s Alpha value is calculated using SPSS as 0.924, which is greater than the minimum required value 0.6. This means the questionnaire has passed the test of rigour and hence can be considered to be reliable. Kano model is used to identify the categories to which different organizational related WLB variables belong and track the variables that lead to greater job satisfaction among employees.

**Table 1: Cronbach’s alpha reliability test results**

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized items	N of Items
0.923	0.924	47

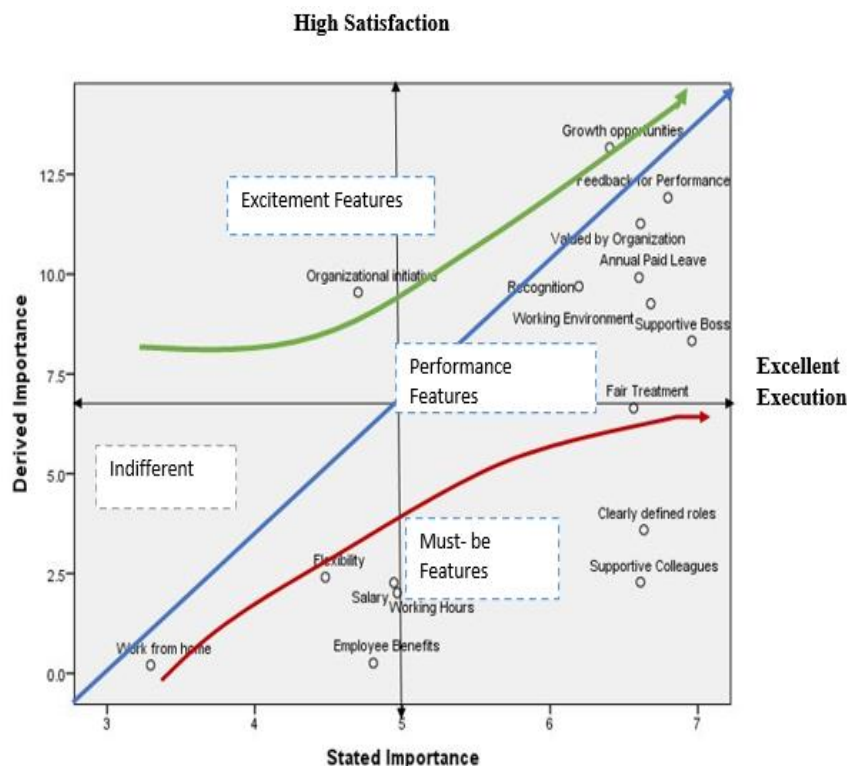
Source: SPSS Output editor

**4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Kano is a popular tool used for product development and customer satisfaction developed in the 1980s by a Japanese Professor Noriaki Kano. It is a tool to visually model the expected characteristics versus the level of satisfaction that each characteristic deliver. It is used to analyze user needs and determine what leads to greater satisfaction. It was adapted from the work of Herzberg’s Motivation-Hygiene Theory that classified factors influencing job satisfaction into two categories: hygiene and motivating factors. Based on the degree of stated and derived importance Kano model addresses the four types of needs:

- Basic needs or Must-be Features
- Satisfiers or Performance Features
- Delighters or Excitement Features
- Indifferent Features

Kano model is used in this study to identify the categories to which different variables belong and track the variables that will lead to high satisfaction among employees. The degree of stated importance of each organizational related WLB variables was calculated using relative weights of their mean and the derived importance was calculated using the correlation of each of these variables with employees’ opinion about overall job satisfaction. Figure 1 shows the scatter plot in which x-axis represents the degree of execution or stated importance and the y-axis represents the degree of satisfaction or derived importance.



**Fig. 1: Kano Model Analysis for factors influencing job satisfaction**



Fig. 2: Findings from Kano analysis

#### 4.1 Results and Interpretation of Kano Model

Findings from Kano model analysis shows that salary and benefits belong to the “Must-be” categories i.e. they are minimum expected benefits from any employers. Salary is a means to fulfil the basic needs of an individual. However, salary and benefits do not lead to job satisfaction. Employees expect their organization to provide career growth opportunities and take initiatives towards their personal and professional development.

**Must-be features:** Salary, benefits, working hours, clearly defined goals and supportive colleagues are the minimum expected features by the employees. Job satisfaction is not enhanced by these features. Though these do not enhance satisfaction, the absence of these leads to high dissatisfaction.

**Indifferent features:** Flexibility and work from home option emerged as neutral features in this study. Employees are indifferent about whether or not their banks offer them work from home option and job flexibility. Employees in private banks are not expecting that their banks will provide them with work from home option, as the nature of their jobs do not allow such flexibility.

**Satisfiers:** Feedback for performance, recognition, annual leaves, a supportive boss, fair treatment, comfortable work conditions, feeling of valued by the organization are performance features. Presence of these factors will motivate employees. These factors are similar to “Motivating factors” given by Frederick Herzberg in his Two- Factor Theory of Motivation. Banks have to offer these features to make their employees feel satisfied.

**Excitement Features:** Growth opportunities and organizational initiatives for WLB emerged as excitement features in this study. The employee does not directly demand these features but if provided they feel delighted. Banks have to initiate family-friendly policies and career advancement opportunities to their employees if they want to retain them in their organization.

The results from the Kano model analysis clearly shows that career growth opportunities and WLB initiatives are the most important organizational related variables that lead to higher job satisfaction. Banks can win the war on talent by offering these exciting features to their key employees.

### 5. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Work life balance is not about having an equal amount of time to spend at the office and at home. It is about how an individual is able to prioritize the various needs based on the demands of the situation. In this modern age powered by technology and smartphones, an individual cannot really separate the boundaries of work and personal life. It depends on their abilities to create a healthy integration between different roles. In the race of winning the competition and career success, personal life and loved ones should not be left behind. Also, one should not compromise his or her career and ambition by making an excuse of the family responsibilities.

From the organizational perspective, employees who are able to balance their roles at work and family are happier, motivated and productive. They contribute to organizational success. On the other hand, employees who are fighting a battle to meet the demands of family and work cannot give their best performance. Employees are important assets to any organization, organizational performance depends on the wellbeing of its employees. Organizations should take initiatives to assist employees in managing family responsibilities.

As an employer, it is the responsibility of the banks to take care of the overall wellbeing of employees, help them in their career growth and provide them with a supportive work environment. This enhances employee satisfaction. The results of this study also show that organizational initiatives are necessary to help employees achieve a better WLB. In this context, some suggestions to the private banks are:

- Encourage employees to take a vacation so that they get refreshed. Employees may hesitate to take leaves for vacation thinking that it affects their career growth. Creative incentives such as a family trip, tour packages can be introduced by banks in the form of rewards for recognizing employee performance. This kind of family-friendly policies will help employees to spend good time with their families and loved ones.
- Company outings and picnics at least once a year can be very helpful to increase the interaction among employees and develop a friendly relationship. This makes employees refreshed as well as encourages teamwork.
- WLB is all about managing time and stress. Banks can conduct training and workshops to encourage healthy lifestyles and effective time management. Interactive sessions with professional trainers in this area can help employees to acquire skills for the proper time and stress management. Also, they can encourage their employees to participate in yoga training, physical exercises, and offer gym memberships.
- Jobs in banks are of routine nature and monotonous. To make work meaningful and interesting, banks have to follow Job Characteristic Model of job enrichment, which provides task variety, autonomy, feedback and skill varieties. This not only makes job interesting but also helps to influence the attitudes of employees towards their job.
- Banks have to maintain an HR department that looks for the changing needs and expectations of key people in the organization. Tracking key people and offering them attractive benefits packages that match their needs will help to retain the talent. Good salary packages with efficient HR policies can reduce the employee turnover rate.
- WLB is not a gender issue. It is a matter of concern to all irrespective of the gender, marital status, age or position in the organization. The situations may differ according to demographics. But everyone equally struggles to juggle between their personal interests, family responsibilities and career. While designing the policies to support WLB, there should not be any bias. Perception of bias demotivates employees and also creates conflicts among them. Also, while designing the policies, banks have to clearly mention under what circumstances employees can receive the benefits from these policies.
- A WLB strategy is not a one-time fit all solutions. Priorities keep changing according to changing circumstances. Both the employees as well employers have to understand this. Employees need to make wise decisions regarding which opportunities to choose and which to decline based on their priorities at that point in time. Employers should be flexible enough to address the changing expectations to the extent that is practical.

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