



# The Journal of **ARSYM**

*A Publication of Students' Research of the*  
**Annual Research Symposium in Management**

*Published by*  
**Faculty of Business Studies and Finance**  
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

## **The Journal of ARSYM**

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The Journal of ARSYM (JARSYM) is a refereed journal published bi-annually by the Faculty of Business Studies & Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. The aim of the JARSYM is to disseminate high-quality research findings on a variety of timely topics generated by the undergraduate and postgraduate researchers in the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, it opens up avenues for the undergraduates involved in the industry to share their inventions, state-of-the-art discoveries and novel ideas. The main philosophy behind the JARSYM is to enhance the research culture within the faculty, thereby within the Wayamba University. All research articles submitted are double blind reviewed prior to publishing. Views expressed in the research articles are not the views of the Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka or the Editorial Board.

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## **Aims and Scope**

The Journal of ARSYM (JARSYM) is a refereed bi-annual journal committed to publish undergraduate research papers of the Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. The JARSYM publishes theoretical and empirical papers spanning all the major research fields in business studies and finance. The aim of the JARSYM is to facilitate and encourage undergraduates by providing a platform to impart and share knowledge in the form of high quality and unique research papers.

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- Publication in the Journal of ARSYM is based upon the editorial criteria cited and the evaluation of the reviewers (each manuscript will be sent two reviewers).
- Priority is given for novelty, originality, and to the extent of contribution that would make to the particular field.

The journal welcomes and publishes original articles, literature review articles and perspectives and book reviews describing original research in the fields of business studies and finance. The core focus areas of the journal include;

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## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A STUDY AMONG MACHINE OPERATORS IN APPAREL INDUSTRY IN GAMPAHA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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### ABSTRACT

In today's dynamic business environment, work-life balance (WLB) has become one of the key issues faced by many employees all over the world. Maintaining work life balance is an issue increasingly recognized as of strategic importance to organization and of significance to employees. A lack of work-life balance also has an adverse effect on their employer's prospects for success in many aspects. These disadvantages associated with WLB can impact both the employee and employer. The individual level adverse consequences will have a negative impact on the performance in an organization. The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between work life balance and employee performance. The researcher cascaded work-life balance as work-family priorities conflict and employee assistance programs. The researcher selected four well known factories out of the apparel factories located in Gampaha district. The target population was one thousand six hundred (1600) machine operators in the apparel industry. The sample size was three hundred and ten (310) respondents based on the Krejcie and Morgan Table (year?). This investigation has used the convenience sampling method. Data were gathered through questionnaires. For the purpose of hypothesis testing, the data were analyzed through SPSS software. Through correlation results, the researcher found that, there was a positive relationship between work-family priorities conflict and the employee performance, I as well as a positive relationship between employee assistance programs and the employee performance. Finally, findings of the study revealed that there was a positive relationship between work life balance and employee performance to a significant level.

**Keywords:** *Employee performance, Work life balance, Apparel industry.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In today's busy working environment, many people face the problem of balancing work and family life. Despite the worldwide quest for work life balance here on referred to as work life balance (WLB), very few have found an acceptable definition and concept. WLB does not mean an equal balance; it is about adjusting the working pattern to allow employees to combine work with their other responsibilities such as caring for children or elderly relatives.

WLB is a combination of interactions among different areas of one's life. The advantages and disadvantages associated with that balance or imbalance can affect multiple levels of society. The disadvantages associated with WLB can impact both employees and employers. For the employee, consequences will have a negative impact on work-life satisfaction, mental and physical health and on individual performance in an organization (Gguest, 2001). For employers, the consequences of poor work-life balance will cause poor performance, absenteeism, sick leave and higher turnover, recruitment and training cost (Department of Trade and industry, 2001) With regard to the apparel sector of Sri Lanka, it can be seen that most of employees face this problem. Because of that reason/ As a result the industry faces a lot of problems.

An organization needs to magnetize and preserve valued employees in the highly competitive labor market. It is a strong motivating factor for increased organizational awareness and action regarding implementation and management of work-life balance strategies. WLB is an important area of human resource management that receives increasing attention from government researchers, management, and employee representatives and popular media. WLB, from the employee perspective, is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home. Employers view the benefits or the working conditions that they provide to help employees balance the family and the work domains as work-life benefits (Russell & Bowman, 2000). Initially, the concept of work-life conflict focused on the impact of family demands on work. Now it extends to the impact that work has on individual stress, relationships and family well-being (Russell & Bowman, 2000).

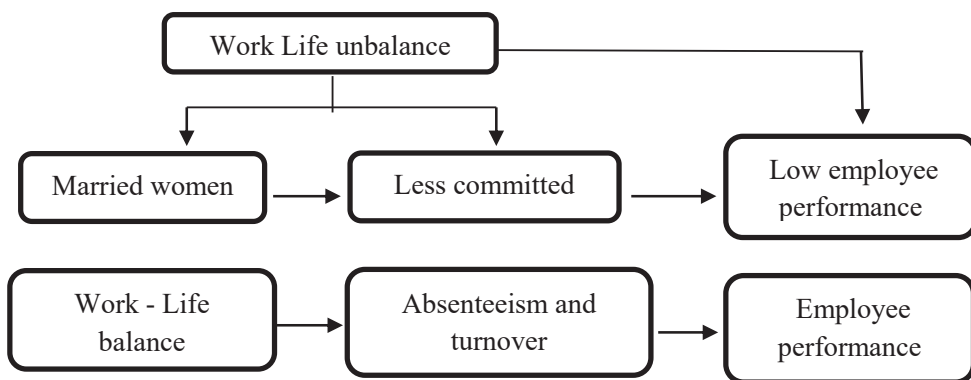
Work-to-family conflict occurs when experience at work interface with family life inflexible work hours, work overload, interpersonal conflict at work, unsupportive supervisor organization. Family-to-work conflict occurs when experiences in the family interface with work life primary responsibilities for children, elder care responsibilities, interpersonal conflict within the family unit, and supportive family members. Employee performance means the ability of an employee to perform the job in a particular way leading to both organization and the employee to achieve their

common goals and objectives (Mendis & Weerakkody, 2014). Thus, employee performance is very important for the organization to become successful.

This research intends to identify whether there is a relationship between work-life balance and employee performance.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Apparel industry is one of the leading value adding business sectors which creates a higher number of job opportunities in Sri Lanka (Department of Trade and industry, 2001). In Sri Lanka, the apparel sector is very important to increase the labor productivity, since it is a labor-intensive industry. Therefore, organizations need to establish effective HRM practices that encourage the employees for high performance. Most of the organizations have not given the top priority to the work-life balance of their employees. Consequences of poor work-life balance will be poor performance, absenteeism, sick leave and high turnover and training cost (Department of Trade and Industry, 2001). Campbell (1994) proved that married women with children were significantly less committed to their work in his research. Accordingly, they show poor performance on their work.



Kumari (2012) mentioned that work-life-balance on women employees affect women employees' absenteeism and turnover. So, it highly affects the women employee performances.

But there is less research based on the relationship between work-life balance and employee performances. Therefore, the researcher found a research gap in this regard. By conducting this research, the researcher expected to fill the existing research gap. No substantive empirical study has been conducted to investigate how work-life balance influences employee performance in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. Then,

this study formulated the research problem as, “is there any relationship between work life balance and employee performance?”.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the present study are to identify the relationship between work-family priorities and employee performance, and to identify the relationship between employee assistance programs and employee performance.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Employee Performance**

Employee Performance can be described as the “responses in the form of behaviors reflecting what has been learned by the employee or the kind of training that the employee has received; it encompasses the outcome of the mental and psychological capabilities” (Faiza and Nazir, 2015, p.). Employee Performance is a concept that is increasingly popular amongst scholars of management sciences, as employee performance is vital to both individuals and the organization. “Employee Performance contributes to the overall betterment of the processes of the organization particularly in terms of efficiency and productivity” (Abualoush *et al.*, 2018)

“Employee performance has linkage to the activities and tasks employees carry out in effective and efficient manner, and it also dictates how much employees contribute to the organization and among the contributions of employees are output quantity, work attendance, and accommodating attitude” (Abualoushet al., 2018b).

### **2.2 Work Life Balance**

“Work-life balance isn’t only about families and childcare. Nor is it about working less. It’s about working smart. About being fresh enough to give all you need to both work and home, without jeopardizing one for the other. And it’s a necessity for everyone, at whatever your stage in life” (Department of Trade and Industry, 2001). “Reducing stress and absence through employer flexibility should not only result in a more satisfied and more productive work force, but also have a knock-on effect on improved recruitment and retention” (Human Resource Management International Digest, 2004).

The achievement of better WLB can yield dividends for employers in terms of having a more motivated, productive, less stressed workforce, increased productivity, and reduced absenteeism. WLB can have impact on both individuals as well as the organization. The independent variable of this research is work-life balance and it can be divided into two main areas as work-centered life and family-centered life. Simply, work-centered life means that people give more priority to their work than their family. This will cause work-to-family conflicts. Most probably, work-centered life

occurs due to reasons such as inflexible work hours, interpersonal conflict at work, work overload, and unsupportive supervisor. Family-centered life means that people give more priority to their families than their work. This causes family-to-work conflicts. Most probably family-centered life occurs due to reasons such as primary responsibility for children, elder care responsibilities, interpersonal conflict within the family unit and unsupportive family members (PsycINFO Database Record (c), 2010).

### **2.3 Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict (Work-Family Priorities Conflict)**

“Work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in the shape of negative spillover from work-to-family domains” (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Mäkelä and Suutari, 2011; Byrne and Barling, 2017). “It actually determines the degree of stress for an employee when employees spend more time working, which results in less time available for the family. The conflict between the two roles, work and family, is inevitable because both pull in opposite directions, which are simply incompatible with each other as the two realms invoke different demands, priorities, norms, expectations, and requirements” (Fredriksen and Scharlach, 2001). Past studies on conflicts in the work and family environments tend to be unidirectional, investigating how work affects family, while today, these conflicts are reported to be bi-directional” (Frone *et al.*, 1992; Rothbard, 2001; Mäkelä and Suutari, 2011), which means not only does work spill over to affect family issues, but family affairs can also spill over into the work realm. The two concepts are sufficiently different in nature and scope to warrant independent examination” (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2005).

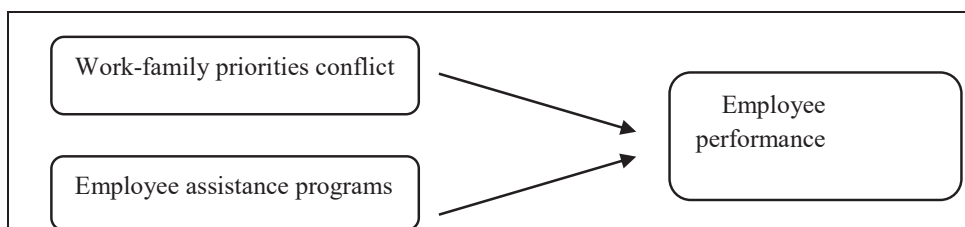
### **2.4 Employee Assistance Programs**

Employee assistance program can be defined as work-based intervention programs designed to identify and assist employees in resolving personal problems (e.g., marital, financial or emotional problems; family issues; substance/alcohol abuse) that may be adversely affecting the employee’s performance. Employee assistance program plans are usually 100% paid by the employer and can include a wide array of other services, such as nurse lines, basic legal assistance and referrals, adoption assistance or assistance finding elder care services. Employee assistance services can be made available to not only the employee but also to immediate family members or anyone living in their home. (SHRM, 2015). Employers recognize that a wholistic approach to wellness results in a happier, more productive employee. According to the Employee Assistance Professionals Association, an employee assistance program utilizes specific core technologies to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification, and resolution of personal and productivity issues.

An employee assistance program, typically consists of a group of professionals, such as lawyers, therapists, counselors and financial experts, who contract with an employer to provide advice and guidance to employees. EAPs help them address personal, non-work issues, and concerns that could possibly affect their work life. Employee assistance programs (EAPs) began in the 1940s by providing employee services that primarily focused on the effect of alcohol use and abuse on job performance. Over time, this emphasis was broadened to include other personal issues that negatively affect job performance. Tremendous growth in EAP services began in the early 1970s. During that period, EAPs helped employers address a growing list of employee concerns and proactively deal with workplace problems that could lead to violence, physical and mental health issues or declining morale among workers. Today, the vast majority of Fortune 500 companies offer EAPs that deliver a variety of health and productivity services to improve organizational performance, as well as assist individual employees and their dependents. (Attridge, 2005).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The researcher developed a model to conceptualize the theoretical framework of the study.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study**

*Source: Author, (2020)*

The research approach was deductive. The researcher used structured questionnaire as the survey method to collect quantitative data. The researcher focused individuals to collect the data (Machine operators). The methodology was quantitative.

The model shows the dimensions of the work-family priorities conflict and employee assistance programs' dimensions as independent variables, and employee performance as a dependent variable. The target population of this study was married machine operators who work in the Apparel industry. The researcher selected four well-established apparel organizations located in Gampaha district. Out of 1600 population, the researcher selected 310 as the sample based on the convenience sampling method. The researcher used primary data to conduct this research. Primary data on work-life balance and employee performance from the employee's

perspective has been collected through questionnaires. Goulding (2005) mentioned that, there are three ways to design target questions - to use questions already exist in other established questionnaires, adapt questions already used in other questionnaires or design new. Therefore, for this research, the researcher designed a new questionnaire using already developed questions (Mwangi, L.W. *et al.*, 2015).

The questionnaire for this study consisted of total twenty-three (23) questions that were developed based on main independent and dependent variable. There were four sections in the questionnaire section 1 consisted of demographic variables such as gender, civil status, age, no. of children, job seniority, monthly income. Section 2 included the target questions related to work- family priorities conflict, in section 3 employee assistance programs and in section 4 employee performance in five-point Likert scale were included. Those were stated as 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4- Agree 5- Strongly Agree.

After the data gathering, the data were analyzed by using statistical package for social science; SPSS version 21. The researcher used measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, measures of skewness, and coefficient of correlation analysis to find the relationship between variables for test the hypotheses. Researcher used both regression and correlation results for testing hypotheses.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The kurtosis values of the work - family priorities conflict, employee assistance program and employee performance remained as 0.842, -1.127 and -1.397 respectively. It showed that, the values were between -3 and +3. Therefore, it revealed that, the data set of conducted research was normally distributed. The Cronbach's Alpha values of work life balance, employee assistance programs and employee performance remained as 0.969, 0.809, and 0.938 respectively. All the variables were greater than 0.8. Therefore, all variables related to this study were reliable to conduct this research. The data related to the variables of this research were gathered through a questionnaire based on five-point likert scale. The lowest value was interpreted as number one and it was named as strongly disagree. The highest value was number five mentioned as strongly agree. The sample was female dominant, because 98.7 percent of it was consisted of females and the remaining 1.3 percent remained as males.

##### **4.1 Summary of the Findings**

The followings are summaries of responses on work-family priorities conflict. For the question, "whether I feel mentally and physically tired during my working hours", 8.1% strongly disagreed, 43.5% disagreed, 22.3% neutral, only 17.1% agreed on statement. On whether if work gets difficult, my colleagues will help me, 37.7%



strongly disagreed, 27.1% agreed, 31% neutral, only 4.2% disagreed to this statement. When asked whether I am clear what my duties and responsibilities are, 48.4% strongly agreed, 40.6% agreed, only 11% of machine operators' neutral on this statement. Asked whether I am pressured with work long hours, 7.4% strongly disagreed, 38.7% disagreed, 12.6% neutral, 35.5% agreed, only 5.8% strongly agreed. On the statement of I have to work very fast while working hours, 17.1% strongly agreed, 24.2% agreed, 36.5% neutral, 21.9% disagreed and only 0.3% of respondents strongly disagreed. When asked whether I am satisfied with my daily working hours, 46.1% strongly agreed, 15.5% agreed, 30.3% neutral, only 8.1% disagreed.

On the statement of "I have ability to complete my target (per hour)", 27.7%, 31%, 29.4%, 11.9% respectively of the machine operators strongly agreed, agreed, neutral, disagreed. Asked whether my working hours prevent me from having more quality time with my family, 55.5% disagreed, 11% neutral, 28.1% agreed, only 5.55% strongly disagreed. On the statement of I work long hours because it gives me financial power that would benefit my family, more than 50% (52.9%) strongly agreed, 43.2% agreed, only 3.9% disagreed. Asked whether I attend to all my children school activities whenever required, 7.7%, 42.9%, 20.6%, 28.7% respectively of the machine operators strongly agreed, agreed, neutral, disagreed on this statement. When asked I will take time off from work and be with my children if they are sick and has to be cared for at home, only 19% strongly agreed, 35.8% agreed, 33.2% of machine operators' neutral and 11.9% disagreed. On the statement of Sometimes I feel a separation of my family and children due to my job, 23.5% agreed, 21.3% neutral, 37.1% disagreed and only 18.1% strongly disagreed. Finally, when asked whether I can have sufficient leave for the essential reasons, 3.9% disagreed, 47.1% neutral, 45.8% agreed, only 3.2% of machine operators strongly agreed.

The followings are summaries of responses on employee assistance programs. When asked whether counseling services have enabled them to successfully manage life challenges, 53.9% neutral, 32.3% agreed, only 13.9% of respondents strongly agreed on this statement. On the statement of counselling programs help me to do work with free mindedly, more than 50% (50.6%) agreed, 37.4% neutral, 11.9% disagreed. Asked whether health programs generally improve my attendance rate, 10%, 40.6%, 43.9%, 5.5% respectively of the machine operators strongly agreed, agreed, neutral, disagreed on this statement. Asked whether health programs keep me contributing at work, 5.5% strongly agreed, 33.5% agreed, 58.1% neutral, only 2.9% disagreed on this statement.

## **4.2 Descriptive Analysis and Correlation Analysis**

**Table 1: Descriptive statistic, Correlations**

variable	mean	std. dev.	pearson correlation	sig. values
work-family priorities conflict	3.47	0.188	0.401	0.000
employee assistance programs	3.49	0.559	0.646	0.000
work life balance	3.48	0.539	0.679	0.000

Source: Survey data, (2020)

According to the Table 1, all the Pearson correlation values have consisted of a positive sign. It means that variables have a positive relationship. The Pearson correlation values of employee assistance programs and overall work-life balance was closer to one another? It revealed that there is a strong positive relationship. But value of work-family priorities conflict was closer to zero. It means that there is a relatively weak positive relationship. The mean value of 3.65 overall job performance means that machine operators' job performance is in a moderate level. Mean value of work-family priorities conflict, employee assistance programs and overall work life balance have 3.47, 3.29 and 3.48 respectively.

### 4.3 Regression Analysis

**Table 2: Regression Results**

model summary				
model	r	r square	adjusted r square	std. error of the estimate
1	0.401 <sup>a</sup>	0.161	0.158	0.494
1	0.646 <sup>b</sup>	0.417	0.416	0.412
a. predictors: (constant), work-family priorities conflict				
b. predictors: (constant), employee assistance programs				
b. dependent variable: employee performance				

Source: Survey data (2020)

According to the regression analysis, R value of work- family priorities conflict was 0.401, thus, there is a low positive association between work-family priorities conflict and employee performance. R square value was 0.161 which indicates that, 16.1% of the variation in employee performance is explained by work-family priorities conflict. According to the linear regression analysis R value of employee assistance programs was 0.646. It means that, there is a high positive association between employee assistance programs and employee performance. R square value was 0.417

which indicated that, 41.7% of the variation in employee performance is explained by employee assistance programs.

#### 4.4 Testing of the Hypotheses

**Table 3: Summary of Testing Hypotheses**

hypothesis	r value	p value	accept / reject
H1: there is a positive relationship between work-family priorities conflict and employee performance.	0.401	0.000	accepted
H2: there is a positive relationship between employee assistance programs and employee performance.	0.646	0.000	accepted

*Source: Survey data, (2020)*

#### 5. CONCLUSION

In today's busy working environment, a lot of people face the problem of balancing work and family life. WLB does not mean an equal balance; it is about adjusting the working pattern to allow employees to combine work with their other responsibilities such as caring for children or imbalance can affect multiple levels of society. Employee performance means the ability of an employee to perform the job in a particular way that is leads to both organization and the employee to achieve their common goals and objectives. If there is any relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, that will affect the whole organization's performance negatively or positively. Through this research, the researcher tried to identify if there is any relationship between work life balance and employee performance.

The researcher selected two variables as independent variables. Those were, work-family priorities conflict and employee assistance programs. Target population of this research was married machine operators who worked in Apparel industry. Researcher selected four apparel organizations. Out of 1600 population, the sample was 310 machine operators. The researcher used convenience sampling method as the sampling technique. Researcher used questionnaires to collect primary data.

Researcher used SPSS analysis to measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode), measures of dispersion (standard deviation), and measures of skewness, and coefficient of correlation analysis to find the relationship between variables for test the hypothesis.

Through correlation results the researcher found that, there was a positive relationship between work-family priorities conflict and the employee performance, there is a positive relationship between employee assistance programs and the employee performance. Finally, the researcher will be able to conclude that there is a relationship between work life balance and employee performance.

Therefore, the researcher provided some recommendations that would help the companies increase employee performance by keeping their machine operators' healthy work-life balance. Also, it was advised to arrange small meetings monthly or weekly for machine operators. Through those meetings, managers or leaders can get some understanding about machine operators' problems related to their daily working targets, their grievances such as leave issues, conflicts between machine operators and supervisors or colleagues, problems regarding their salaries. On the other hand, if they do not have clear understanding about their duties and responsibilities, these small meetings will help the managers and leaders to give awareness about it.

And it was also advised to conduct training sessions as needed. Through that, Managers can give some duties to supervisors or team leaders, to identify the persons who need some further training. And then, the company will be able to conduct special training sessions for them. Through that, if some machine operators work with high pressure about their targets or if some machine operator cannot complete their targets or if they feel mentally or physically tired during working hours, he or she will be able to train again and work effectively than before. Furthermore, the researcher advised to keep an active and efficient human resource management department, and conduct counseling programs. Through that, company should give knowledge related to the how to manage their jobs with their personal life. And also, should give knowledge about, how improve their physical wellbeing, social wellbeing, environmental wellbeing, mental wellbeing and economic wellbeing and should provide counseling services. For that, the company can provide some health services, physical fitness facilities and financial assistance services from financial institutions.

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