

Dimensions of Work Life Balance and its Impact on Job Satisfaction of Clinical Staff in Cancer Hospitals

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Abstract: This paper presents an overview on the dimensions of work life balance and its impact on job satisfaction of clinical staff in cancer hospitals.

Keywords: dimensions, work life balance, job satisfaction, clinical staff, cancer hospital.

1. Introduction

Cancer is a terminal illness which sufficiently paralyses the minds of the victims, their families and the saviours like medical staff whose utmost priority is to save the lives. It involves excessive emotional burden. Caring for cancer patients inculcate a feeling of compassion, pain and helplessness among health professionals when they face with patient's sufferings, pain, deaths struggle to survive.

The hospitals are the zone of conflicts and stressful situations which badly impact the quality listening to clients and health care workers too. The adverse environment generates a sense of dissatisfaction in the job which further imbalance the professional and personal interference of the clinical staff. The adverse environment means over pressurized work load, non flexitime, unavailability of dedicated oncologists, when the patient is curable but at the same time patients are diagnosed with other complications, demands supporting the physical and emotional needs of the patients and many other conflicts.

The study documents and reflects the impact of non-equated balance of personal and professional life of cancer clinical staff due to adverse environment of hospital and critical illness of cancer patients. Oncologists, nurses and other cancer health professionals who are directly in contact with patients are found to suffer intense psychological & physical stress and burnouts. The traumatic illness of the patients and adverse environment of hospital leads to dissatisfaction in the job and their performances.

Historically, it is proven now that both work life balance and job satisfaction are significantly and positively correlated.

WLB and Job Satisfaction are vital areas of Human Resource Management. It is important to understand and analyse that why complexity are seen in the performances of hospital's staff especially in the case of oncology which requires an ultimate

and distinct level of interventions of oncologists and nursing care.

A. About Work Life Balance & Job Satisfaction

Work life balance practices are organizational changed nature of work which reduces the work and family conflicts and increases the employee's quality of life. Work is playing a central role for an individual and organizations. It is increasingly gaining importance in the lives of the people. It is proving to be a source of financial income, an opportunity to personal growth, a sense of safety and security, social status and self-actualization. These factors lead to personal satisfaction as well as satisfaction in the career/job. If a person lacks any of these satisfactions, that causes stress with negative consequences on health of workforces. Work life balance is the source of motivation and satisfaction which affects the individual's behaviour, strength and persistence of the behaviour. India is intense competitive labour market. It is a strong motivation factor for the organizations which always try to attract and retain the valued employees. Now a day the organizational awareness are increasing and several course of actions are adopted with regard to human resource policies and practices that address work life balance.

Work-life balance has been defined differently by different scholars. In order to broaden our perspectives, some definitions are presented.

Greenhaus (2002) defined work –life balance as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict.

Felstead et al. (2002) defines work-life balance as the relationship between the institutional and cultural times and spaces of work and non-work in societies where income is predominantly generated and distributed through labour markets.

Aycan et al. (2007) confined the subject only with work and family and put forward the concept of "life balance" with a more whole perspective.

Clark (2000) defines balance as "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role

conflict”.

Fisher (2001) work life balance, includes both work/personal life interference as well as work/personal life enhancement and gives three dimensions of work life balance, i.e.,

- Work interference with personal life
- Personal life interference with work
- Work/Personal life enhancement

Work life balance is the effective management of work and personal responsibilities. Good work life balance is the situation wherein the employees are capable enough to balance between work and non-work responsibilities. Consequently, positive impact of WLB improves the quality of life, increases employee's loyalty towards organization, enhances employee's productivity, flexibility in work hours, increasing motivation and morale of employees towards work, provides enough time for personal and family life and improved health conditions.

Susi. S said that work life balance drives for employee's satisfaction. There is a direct relationship between employee productivity & retention and work life balance. The imbalance of Work life generates dissatisfaction among employees towards their work which badly affects the decision making process. Dissatisfaction happens due to inadequate work organization, exhaustive workloads and increased lack of commitments among other workers. Consequently, workers develop psychological problems and a worse perception of their own health, besides greater turnover, reduced quality in the service, burnout, and other detriment to the workers, their health and quality of life.

Hence Job Satisfaction is an important phenomenon which directly impacts the professional and personal practices. Job satisfaction is reflection of fair organizational treatment. Job satisfaction depends on factors like individual, social, cultural, organizational and environmental factors. Every employee needs to be treated equally and respectfully.

Organization's work life balance practices flourish the organizational culture increasing employee's productivity and retention, decreases work life imbalance; reduces employee's psychological stress. Consequently, leads to better life balance and job satisfaction. Strong and cooperative culture of organization create retention of valued employees in the organization.

2. Defining Challenges of Staff of Cancer Hospitals

In case of oncology work life balance and job satisfaction varies from hospital to hospital. Even the variability is seen in the nursing team. However, there are numerous challenges which degrade the quality of services and treatment provided to cancer patients.

The challenges faced by nurses and other supporting onco-staff are as follows:

- The work life balance is gender biased. Female nurses are critically unable to resolve the conflicts between work and family life. The imbalance constitutes the traumatic stress and emotional burden. They remain with the patients for the longer period of time. Especially in case of pediatric

treatment the psychological and emotional burden is worsening. Repeated exposure to death and dying, pain and sufferings leave them in a panic situation which affects the treatment decision making process for current patients and also affective reaction to family.

- The intense and complex nature of treatment and proper management of professional perimeters, over pressurized workloads are not the very unique stressors and burnouts to oncology and palliative care staff. The cancer care staff is at high risk.
- The different hospitals have different protocols and the health workers are bound to follow it even if it is not satisfying their needs.
- The oncology staff may be dissatisfied with the leave arrangements of the hospitals to recover their work stress.
- In some of the hospitals the primary concern of area is staff shortages. The unethical practices by the hospitals increases the attrition rate and decreased nursing turnover increases the sufferings of the existing staff.
- The increased workload of staff influence absenteeism due to health issues which affects patient's satisfaction and safety and hence degraded the quality of care.
- Most importantly repeated encounters of unethical environment in hospitals lead to situation of job switching which badly affects WLB and satisfaction level.
- The job switching challenge is additional stressor to oncology department and is accountable to weak retention of valued employees.
- A compensation benefit is the key motivating factor of job satisfaction and work life balance. This benefit enhances the performance and standard of service delivery and facilitates the staff to be better towards organizational goal.
- Non-working hours and non-flexi time affects the productivity of the employees.
- The unavailability of dedicated oncologists in some of the hospitals.
- There is a psychological or physical family related stress and burnouts due to working situations in cancer hospitals.
- No such Work Life Balance Program is offered by cancer hospitals to subside the problems of personal and health of doctors and medical supporting staffs caused by the working conditions such as long working hours, over-pressurized work, night shifts and administrative burden.
- Job Dissatisfaction due to Work Life Imbalance, inadequate Time Management and lack of emotional support from family of oncology doctors and supporting staff affect the treatment decision making process of current cancer patients.

The challenges are variable in case of oncologists:

- The major and common problem which they face is when the patient is curable but at the same time the patients are diagnosed with other complications. The impact is majorly with kids and elderly treatment. This affects their

WLB.

- Their working hours are sometimes more than 12 hours.

The operating procedure for different oncologists can be different but the minimum and maximum agenda is to offer the patient best quality service and best treatment. With this motive they try to work with momentarily psychological impact so that there should be proper and effective treatment decisions and their management for current patient.

3. Findings from Literature

Surveys in the oncology confirm that professionals and supporting staff providing eminent care to patients suffer excessive and intensive career burnout. This kind of distress to continue working in a given field is emotional exhaustion and the lack of motivation (Allegra *et al.*, 2005; Grunfeld *et al.*, 2005; Kash *et al.*, 2000; Ramirez *et al.*, 1995, 1996; Shanafelt *et al.*, 2005; Whippen and Canellos *et al.*, 1991). Additionally, the professionals of oncology reported that there is a regular interference of their job responsibilities and their family and personal lives. It gives a sense of guilt and personal dissatisfaction (Allegra *et al.*, 2005; Geurts *et al.*, 1999; Grunfeld *et al.*, 2005; Linzer *et al.*, 2001; Warde *et al.*, 1999). A 2001 survey of nurses revealed the fact that hospital nurses were three to four times more likely to unhappy with their jobs than the average U.S. and almost one-quarter of U.S. nurses planned to leave their jobs in the next year (Aiken *et al.*, 2001). This survey proved Levels of Job Dissatisfaction and stress among other professionals also involved in cancer care. Employees can no longer afford to ignore the costs that the long-hours culture imposes on their work hours, were less likely to swap their shifts, reported a significant increase in work-life balance, job satisfaction, social support and ratings of community spirit (David *et al.*, 2003). This study evaluates the effect of burnout and supervisory social support on the relationship between work-family conflict, and intention to leave of cancer workers in an Australian health care setting. The study reveals that burnout mediates the relationship between work-family conflict (i.e., work-in-family conflict and family-in-work) and intention to leave the organization and that the mediation framework is stronger in the presence of higher social supervisory support (Rani *et al.*, Timothy *et al.*, Casimir *et al.*, (2009)). The survey investigated the relation between motivation and job satisfaction. This study shows that motivational factors to work in a cancer hospital are critical for job satisfaction among health care professionals (Diana Dias *et al.*, Ângela Leite *et al.*, Ana Ramires *et al.*, Paula Bicho *et al.*, (2016)). This document revealed the attributed level of work satisfaction among the oncology nursing personnel and analyzes the relationships between the levels of job satisfaction among oncology workers. It encompasses various aspects and attitudes which reflect how individuals feel about their work from all perspectives, including environmental, organizational and interpersonal. It's concept refers to the affective reaction to the work and results from a comparison of the real, desired and deserved results (Silva *et al.*, Velasque *et al.*, Tonini *et al.*,

(2017)).

4. Research Gap

In existing literature many investigations are done to explore a relationship between WLB and job satisfaction of clinical staff in hospitals of cancer industry. Doctors and nurses are an integral part of the hospitals providing quality health care services. The hospitals are positively focusing on the practical implications of WLB and job satisfaction to retain their valued employees and enhancing organizational pride. But the investigation and review of literature gives a direct hint that there is not much investigations done in the area of work life and job satisfaction of medical staff of oncology department. There is a clear indication of lack studies addressing work life balance and its impact on job satisfaction among doctors and nurses of cancer care hospitals.

No studies compared the WLB and Job Satisfaction between oncologists, assistant doctors working under them, other associated doctors like maxillofacial surgeon and also with the nurses. Oncology doctors are more balanced and emotionally strong because they understand the concept of detachment. The existing literatures do not focus on the area of study called detachment of nursing team.

The study also lacks the comparative level of psychological and physical stress and burnouts between male and female nurses.

In major the initial investigations did not address the professional hazards faced by the doctors and nurses.

- a) During Radiation treatment although the nursing team is protected and safeguarded by the protecting tools but still they are exposed to harmful and hazardous conditions.
- b) Today Covid situation, is became a new gap for the study. Doctors and nurses used to wear PPT kit for almost over 14 to 15 of working hours which created a lot of fatigue, health issues and psychological stress to them.

The existing literatures also do not focus on the emotional unbalanced environment of the cancer hospitals where the nursing team is associated with the palliative care of the patients who are terminally ill.

No studies investigated the WLB and Job Satisfaction of the doctors and nurses when they are trying to give the cancer patients to the best of the treatments and counseling but still they fail to save the lives of curable patient due to some other complications like diabetes, blood pressure etc. They are most affected by the sufferings of the small children.

Most of the studies did not focus on the strategies adopted by the oncology professionals to handle the vulnerable stress and career burnouts due to the limited number of successful treatment options for many cancers and the difficult conversations about end-of-life decisions.

No dimensions on management of oncology workforces are measured under unpredictable work schedules of patient's needs. These problems are highly magnified when there is shortage of workforces.

Most of the studies are conducted in context to generalised

health care service.

The purpose of this study is to identify, investigate, analyse the respective work life balance and job satisfaction of doctors and nurses working in oncology department of selected government, semi government and private hospitals. The study will also serve a purpose of handling the psychological and physical stress and burnouts of doctors and nurses which helps in increasing the productivity and providing the quality cancer care.

The survey reflects that students remain untouched and underdeveloped as physician-level cancer professionals to maintain the sufficient numbers of workforces to provide quality cancer care.

The racial and ethnic minorities are particularly challenging. The substantial gap is found due to lack of education and illiteracy among minorities of population in creating awareness about cancer, protocols of the hospitals and tactfully dealing the management between personal and professional life. It is difficult for the students and racial minorities to understand the issues related to WLB and Job Satisfaction in traumatic situation of cancer hospitals which is red alert in the retention and quality productivity and services to cancer patients.

5. Conclusion and their Possible Values

Work life balance of the stake holders (medical staff) working in cancer hospitals is of crucial importance for establishing and sustaining a productive work culture. Careers in oncology require individuals to deal with deaths and grieve regularly which sometimes create a sense of work life imbalance and dissatisfaction in careers of the oncology team. The quality management of hospitals play a vital role in ensuring the quality treatment and care and also in maintaining the quantity of the workforces.

In the current situation of Covid-19, the crisis in the workforce has created an opportunity to focus on threats. Developing and implementation of the strategic Work Life Balance Program & Job Satisfaction Model to bring revolution in the cancer care delivery system. This enhances the overall Human Resources Management and the performances of the medical staff and workforces of cancer hospitals.

This portion of the chapter also reviews the key strategies which ensure the workforce caring nature for cancer patients. The hospitals have sufficient numbers of professionals to meet the demand for cancer care. The oncology team of professionals providing care is functional and well-coordinated. The work life balance program is designed in such a way the workforce is trained and prepared with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to provide high-quality cancer care and passion for help is purely justified.

The study tries to report the investigation of relationship between Work Life Balance and Job Satisfaction of cancer medical staff caused by demographic factors such as age, gender, and marital status.

It will investigate and identify the operating procedures,

practices and policies offered by the cancer care hospitals. The study significantly determines the impact of psychological & physical stress and burnouts to ongoing changing protocols and intensive clinical scenarios of oncology department of hospitals. The study also reflects the patient nurse relationship which leaves a deep impression in the minds of the medical staff if any untold, unhappy and unexpected terminals happen. The medical staff also under goes unwanted emotional exhaustion even when they are not able to meet the expected demand or needs of the cancer patients due to shortage or absenteeism of workforces and over pressurized workload.

Hence the research highlights the holistic and interdisciplinary recommendations and competitive advantage of providing good WLB within the Cancer Care hospitals to improve workforce's Career/Job Satisfaction, enhancing the performances and collaborations, productivity of the workforces and quality treatment and care in turn increases the turnover of the hospitals and create a social value and goodwill of cancer hospitals in the existing or emerging market of cancer industry.

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