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INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG PROFESSIONALS ACROSS DIFFERENT WORK DOMAINS POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Background: Work-life balance is about crafting and sustaining healthy work environment that enables individuals to maintain balance between work and personal responsibilities, thus strengthening loyalty, satisfaction and productivity.

Aims: This study aimed at identifying influence of emotional intelligence and work-life balance among professionals across different work domains and further explore the association between demographics and emotional intelligence, and work-life balance among professionals.

Methodology: In this quantitative cross-sectional survey, data was gathered using the adapted Emotional Intelligence Scale and Work-Life Balance Scale, from conveniently selected 234 professionals from different work domains such as nurses, doctors, police, teachers and engineers.

Results: Regression analysis showed a weak but significant influence of emotional intelligence on overall work-life balance among professionals (r=0.267; p<0.001). Significant relation was noted between emotional intelligence and dimensions of work-life balance namely; work-place-support (r=0.249; p<0.001), satisfaction with work-life balance (r=0.419; p<0.001) and improved effectiveness at work (r=0.317; p<0.001). Using ANOVA significant association was identified between level of income and emotional intelligence (F=3.605; p=.014); and between type of profession and work-life balance among professionals (F=6.558; p<.001).

Conclusion: This study provides an understanding about the influence of emotional intelligence on work-life balance among professionals across work domains post Covid-19 pandemic. The findings can be useful for stakeholders and policymakers in planning and implementing favorable strategies especially for those working from home and for those having to work beyond working hours sometimes even carry the workload home. Further exploration of determinants of work-life balance among professionals across individual work domains is recommended.

KEYWORDS: anova, domains of work, emotional intelligence, professionals, work-life balance.

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INTRODUCTION

Human Beings are deeply connected with the concept of work; a significant factor to achieve happiness and satisfaction. It favors the fulfilment of the basic as well as the deeper, psychological humans needs and helps them identify themselves, become independent and self-confident (Vlachou, et al., 2020). However, with globalization and engagement with newer technologies, individuals are confounded to sustain achallenging balance between workand personal life (Praya, et al., 2019). Striking a sense of balance between work and personal life is a dilemma. Work-life balance (WLB) forces the issue that human beings are equitably committed with employment and private life with equal importance at both ends(Hafeez & Akbar, 2015). The struggle of maintaining the overall balance at times leads to several mental and emotional issues that can impact competency and job satisfaction among individuals(Chauhan, Maheshwari & Goswami, 2020).

Further, workplaces have become highly competitive and stressful pushing individuals to continuously strive towards innovation and reach optimum productivity (Nanda & Randhawa, 2020). The ever-dynamic scenario and the rapidly changing rules of workplace judge individuals not merely in terms of social network, financial support, academic qualification or expertise but rather by their ability to handle themselves and collaborate with others(Abebe & Singh, 2023). Intelligence Quotient (IQ) has an important role in determining the success. However, Emotional intelligence (EI) which consists of decent knowledge about and the ability to manage own and others' emotions can help a person gain success as well as lever the increasing demand of the modern world for enhanced inter-personal relationships, mutual understanding and optimalworkplace productivity and satisfaction at work as well as in personal life(Abebe & Singh, 2023; Mehta &Maina, 2016).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF KEY CONCEPTS

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional Intelligence is the ability, capacity, skill to identify, assesses, manage and control the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups intelligently; a set of acquired skills and competencies that predict positive outcomes at home with one's family and at work (Mehta &Maina, 2016). It is a form of social intelligence that enables people to recognize their own and others' emotions and to make appropriate choices for thinking and action. Individuals who possess higher level of emotional intelligence are healthier, less depressed, more productive at work, and have better relationships (Moeller, Seehuus&Peisch, 2020).EI helps in understanding one's own conduct as well as relationship with others which play significant role in gratifying one's life and work environment (Abebe & Singh, 2023).Persons with high EI are known to better recognize potential stressors and cope up with stress using emotions(Joseph, 2015). EI has been linked with positive outcomes such as life and work satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, job performance, psychological well-being and physical health; and is considered to play a crucial role in the modern work life (Abebe & Singh, 2023; Mehta &Maina, 2016).

Work-Life Balance (WLB)

Work-life balance (WLB) is "the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in and equally satisfied with work and family roles". It is an individual's perception of a compatible, harmonious and holistic integration of work and nonwork routines that fosters growth and achievement of potential across domains and agreement with the individual's existing life

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priorities (Gragnano, Simbula & Miglioretti, 2020). It is about having a measure of control over or balance between the organizational, societal and personal life; and a major aspect of the quality of work and life of individuals trying to manage multiple roles. WLB is important for the organizations, employee and collectively for the total workforce of an organization as it can have a colossal impact on the qualitative and quantitative organizational performance(Banu & Duraipandian, 2014). A challenging and central issue affecting individual's wellbeing, growth and productivity, that equally impacts the organization(Prithivi&Thilagaraj, 2020). Balanced work-life increases effectiveness as well as improves satisfaction, in both the professional and personal life. Whereas, an imbalance can have harmful influence on a health, work tasks and personal life activities (Hafeez & Akbar, 2015).

Work and family have become increasingly important due to the changing nature and composition of workforce and the challenges and complexity of the work environment(Shabir &Gani, 2020). Although, organizations are trying to enable work-life balance through initiatives such as flex times, part time work, remote working, tele-working, provision of child care facilities, work from home, the dynamic scenario has changed the balance between work-life and personal-life(Prithivi&Thilagaraj, 2020; Sánchez-Hernández, et al., 2019). Many employees work on weekends, while some others need to start in the evening and continue through the night. To meet the deadlines and targets and manage the increasing workload, at times they need to be present at their work place for longer periods and work beyond the normal eight hours. Although digital technologyand devices help in the constant communication between the organizations and the employees, it reduces the individuals' time available at home and consequently leads to growing stress and work-life imbalance(Doble&Supriya, 2010; Khan &Fazili, 2016).

Working from home provides flexibility and the autonomy to manage time and as well as personal duties. It also averts distractions and supervision which might decrease employee stress. But there could be negative effects such as alienation, social isolation and detachment leading to poor motivation and performance. It eliminates the boundary between work and personal life which can create anxiety and stress due to work overload eventually affecting job satisfaction(Irawanto, Novianti& Roz, 2021). Work-life balance is about the creating and maintaining of supportive healthy work environments which can enable an employee to maintain theequilibrium between the work and personal responsibilities, thus strengthen loyalty and productivity of the employee (Prithivi&Thilagaraj, 2020). Further,COVID -19 has changed both professional and personal life of every individual, affected industries and organizations across the world (Irawanto, Novianti& Roz, 2021). Balancing the work and personal life has become overwhelming for every working-class professional (Prithivi & Thilagaraj, 2020).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Significant relationship of work-life balance (WLB) has been identified with organizational commitment (OC) among women employees in the healthcare (Shabir &Gani, 2020), work from home employees during Covid-19 Pandemic (Prithivi&Thilagaraj, 2020), work related and personal factors among women in garment units (Khare & Kapoor, 2019), demographics of teachers across universities and colleges (Punia & Kamboj, 2013), gender differences among IT professionals (Doble & Supriya, 2010). Relationship has also been reported between work-life balance and emotional intelligence across individual domains.Malik, Haider & Hussain (2019)

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identified that emotionally intelligent healthcare professionals manage their work-life balance better and are more satisfied. Naz, Ahmad & Batool (2021) reported significant relation between emotional intelligence and work-life balance of working women. Moh'd Abu Bakir (2018) found significant impact of Hospital managers' emotional skills on employees' work-life balance. Nanda & Randhawa (2020) proposed that emotional intelligence is a crucial construct impactingwork-life balance and thework-related well-being dimensions such aswork engagement, job satisfaction and job stress. Vasumathi, Sagaya & Poranki (2019) revealed that University faculty with high emotional intelligence planned their work appropriately avoiding long working hours and meetings beyond office hours.

Available literature indicates influence of and relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance among employees of individual work domains. The current study attempts to understand the influence of emotional intelligence on the work-life balance among professionals across different work domains post Covid-19 pandemic and further explore the association between the demographic variables and emotional intelligence as well as work-life balance among these professionals as depicted in the conceptual framework in figure 1.

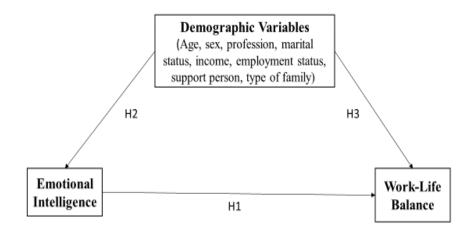


Figure 1. The Proposed Conceptual Model in the study

RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN THIS STUDY

- What is the influence of emotional intelligence on the work-life balance among the professionals across different workdomains post Covid-19 pandemic?
- What is the association between demographic variables and emotional intelligence among professionals across different workdomains post Covid-19 pandemic?
- What is the association between demographic variables and work-life balance among professionals across different workdomains post Covid-19 pandemic?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is a significant influence of between emotional intelligence on the work-life balance among the professionals across different workdomains post Covid-19 pandemic.

H2: There is a significant association between demographic variables and emotional intelligence among professionals across different work domains post Covid-19 pandemic.

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H2: There is a significant association between demographic variables and work-life balance among professionals across different work domains post Covid-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to identify the influence ofemotional intelligence on work-life balance among professionals across different work domains post Covid-19 pandemic. Atotal of 250 professionals from varied fields, such as nurses, doctors, police, teachers and engineers were conveniently selected for data collection by the researcher. The tools adapted in this study are the Emotional Intelligence (EI) scale (Law, Wong & Song, 2004) with four dimensions and the Work-Life Balance (WLB) scale of five dimensions developed by Banu &Duraipandian (2014). Reliability of the adapted versions was tested among 30 professionals and the Cronbach's alpha of the 12-item Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) was found to be 0.817 and the 26-item Work-Life Balance Scale (WLB-S) was 0.859. Both scales were used as five-point scales (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). After obtaining written informed consent from the selected participants, the tools were personally administered, and the participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement on each item. Higher score reflected greater work-life balance and higher emotional intelligence among the participants. The data was collected from March 2022 through October 2022. The responses were checked for completeness of data wherein 16 sheets were discarded and final 234 data sheets from 95 nurses, 28 doctors, 38 police personnel, 46 teachers and 27 engineers were entered in SPSS version 25 and used in the analysis of this study.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical Clearance was sought from the institutional ethics committee vide letter No. DHS/Sp. Cell/F.No.24-166(Ethics)/2021-22/1380 Dated 29/12/2021. The informed written consent was obtained from the volunteering participants after explaining the benefits, risks and the details of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data are analyzed based on the objectives of the study using descriptive analysis for demographic variables. Multiple regression analysis is used to test the influence of emotional intelligence on work-life balance. Correlation test is used to test the relation between emotional intelligence and work-life balance and the dimensions of work-life balance among participants. To test the association; demographic variables such as age, type of profession, income and support person are analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and independent sample 't' test was used to analyze sex, marital status, employment status, family type. The acceptance level of significance is at p < 0.05.

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Table 1. Description of participants by their demographic variables

n=234

Demographic Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage	
Age in years	21-30	103	44	
	31-40	85	36.3	
	41-50	25	10.7	
	51-60	21	9	
Sex	Male	98	41.9	
	Female	136	58.1	
Marital status	Married	131	56	
	Unmarried	103	44	
Type of Profession	Nurses	95	40.6	
	Doctors	28	12	
	Police	38	16.2	
	Teachers	46	19.7	
	Engineers	27	11.5	
Income	< 50000	133	56.8	
	50000-11akh	71	30.3	
	1lakh-1.5lakh	22	9.4	
	>1.5lakh	8	3.4	
Employment status	Permanent	158	67.5	
	Temporary	76	32.5	
Type of family	Nuclear	144	61.5	
	Joint	90	38.5	
Support person	Spouse	87	37.2	
	Parents	76	32.5	
	Family/friends	71	30.3	

Majority of the participants were in the age group of 21-30 years (44%), married (56%) females (58.1%). Most of them were nurses (40.6%), had monthly income of less than 50000 (56.8%) and were permanently employed (67.5%). Many were from nuclear family (61.5%) and spouse was the support person (37.2%) as shown in Table 1.

Table 2. Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance and dimensions of Work-Life Balance n=234

Emotional Intelligence (EI)	r'	'P' Value
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	0.267	<0.001
Work Place Support (WPS)	0.249	<0.001
Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL)	0.011	0.869
Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW)	0.117	0.073
Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance (SWLB)	0.419	<0.001
Improved Effectiveness at Work (IEW)	0.317	<0.001

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Table 2 show a significant positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance (r=0.267; p <0.001). There is significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and dimensions of work-life balance; Work-Place Support (r=0.246; p<0.001), Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance (r=0.419; p<0.001) and Improved Effectiveness at Work(r=0.317; p<0.001). However, the correlation between the dimension Work Interference with Personal Life (r=0.011; p=0.869)andPersonal Life Interference with Work (r=0.117; p=0.073 was not significant.

Table 3a. Regression analysis showing influence of Emotional Intelligence on Work-Life Balance among Professionals. n=234

Source of Variation	DF	Sum of squares	Mean square	F	Sig.	R	R^2	Adjust ed R ²	SE of the Estimate
Regression	1	2945.226	2945.226	17.803	<.001	.267	.071	.067	12.86
Residual	232	38379.92	165.431						
Total	233	41325.15							

a. Dependent Variable: WLB. b. Predictors: (Constant), EI

Table 3b. Coefficient

Model					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	В	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1 Constant	67.175	6.559		10.242	<.001
Emotional Intelligence	0.605	0.143	0.267	4.219	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: WLB

Table 3a and table 3b present results of multiple regression analysis which show that Emotional Intelligence accounts for statistically significant weak variation in Work-Life Balance (R^2 =0.071; p<0.001). The Beta Coefficient shows that with one unit increase in emotional intelligence the work-life balance will increase by 0.605

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Table 4. Association between Demographic Variables and Emotional Intelligence

n=234

	n=234						
Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	Test	
	_					Value	
Emotional Intelligence							
Age in	21-30	103	45.0583	5.06008	Between groups=3	F=.186;	
years	31-40	85	45.6824	6.27203	within groups=230	p = .906	
	41-50	25	45.5600	6.53886	Total=233		
	51-60	21	45.4762	7.37983			
Sex	Male	98	45.4694	6.01579	232	t=.206;	
	Female	136	45.3088	5.79849		p=.837	
Marital	Married	131	45.5038	6.24053	232	t=.374;	
status	Unmarried	103	45.2136	5.40815		p = .709	
Profession	Nurses	95	45.4316	6.35585	Between groups=4	F=.619;	
	Doctors	28	45.6786	4.83853	within groups=229	p = .649	
	Police	38	44.7895	4.38768	Total=233		
	Teachers	46	46.2391	6.42628			
	Engineers	27	44.2222	6.09119			
Income in	< 50000	133	45.1278	5.22003	Between groups=3	F=3.605;	
Rs.	50000-1lakh	71	46.3521	6.06182	Within groups=230	p=.014	
	1lakh-1.5lakh	22	42.4545	7.87236	Total=233		
	>1.5 lakh	8	48.8750	5.59177			
Employme	Permanent	158	45.4177	5.86821	232	t=.156;	
nt	Temporary	76	45.2895	5.93704		p = .876	
Type of	Nuclear	144	45.7014	6.13836	232	t=1.071;	
family	Joint	90	44.8556	5.42893		p=.285	
Support	Spouse	87	46.0920	5.37356	Between groups=2	F=2.056;	
person	Parent/s	76	45.6184	4.68748	within groups=231	p = .130	
	Family/friends	71	44.2394	7.34743	Total=233		

Data in table 4 presents that emotional intelligence is significantly associated with level of income (F (3, 230) = 3.605; p = .014). Professionals more than 1.5 lakhs per month (Mean=48.8750; SD=5.59177) showed higher level of emotional intelligence as compared to other income groups. Lowest emotional intelligence was noted among the group having monthly income of 1-1.5 lakhs (Mean=42.4545; SD=7.87236). There was no significant association between emotional intelligence and age (F (3, 230)= 0.186; p=.906), sex(t (232) = .206; p=.837), marital status (t(232) = 0.374; p=.709)of professionals. The association between emotional intelligence was also not significant with the type of profession (F (4, 229) = .619; p=.649), employmentstatus (t (232) = .156; p=.876), type of family (t (232) = 1.071; p=.285) nor support person (F (2, 231)= 2.056; p=.130) of professionals.

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Table 5. Association between Demographic Variables and Work-Life Balance.

n = 234

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	Test Value	
Work-Life Balance							
Age in	21-30	103	94.4660	15.67990	Between groups=3	F=.534;	
years	31-40	85	93.8471	11.38870	Within groups=230	p=.659	
	41-50	25	95.1200	11.96286	Total=233	-	
	51-60	21	97.9048	9.03274			
Sex	Male	98	94.3571	13.01011	232	t=255;	
	Female	136	94.8088	13.57968		p=.799	
Marital	Married	131	93.9466	11.93077	232	t=871;	
status	Unmarried	103	95.4757	14.91337		p=.384	
Profession	Nurses	95	95.8737	13.68665	Between groups=4	F=6.558;	
	Doctors	28	93.6786	10.50239	Within groups=229	P<.001	
	Police	38	86.1053	8.64241	Total=233		
	Teachers	46	99.9565	13.50548			
	Engineers	27	94.0741	14.57239			
Income in	< 50000	133	94.0376	13.32485	Between groups=3	F=.210;	
Rs.	50000-11akh	71	95.4366	14.41500	Within groups=230	p = .889	
	1lakh-	22	94.9545	10.77686	Total=233		
	1.5lakh						
	>1.5lakh	8	96.1250	10.62031			
Employme	Permanent	158	93.9747	12.74140	232	t=-1.069;	
nt	Temporary	76	95.9605	14.43832		p=.286	
Type of	Nuclear	144	94.2222	13.78275	232	t=577;	
family	Joint	90	95.2556	12.58728		p=.565	
Support	Spouse	87	94.2299	12.24622	Between groups=2	F=.620;	
person	Parent/s	76	93.7237	14.08034	Within groups=231	p=.539	
	Family/friend	71	96.0563	13.80361	Total=233		

Table 5 show that Work-life balance is associated with type of profession as indicated by the significant difference among the five professional groups (F(4, 229)= 6.558; P<.001) wherein teachers (Mean=99.9565; SD=13.50548)reported higher work-life balance as compared to nurses (Mean=95.8737; SD=13.68665), engineers (Mean=94.0741; SD=14.57239) anddoctors (Mean=93.6786; SD=10.50239). The lowest work-life balance is noted among police personnel (Mean=86.1053; SD=8.64241). There is no significant difference in work-life balance among the four different age groups (F (3, 230)= 534; p=.659), among male and female (t (232) =-.255; p=.799) among the married and unmarried professionals (t (232) =-.871; p=.384). Also, work-life balance is neither significantly associated with the level of income (F (3, 230) = 210; p=.889), nor type of employment (t (232) =1.069; p=.286), the type of family (t (232) =.577; p=.565) andthe support person (F (2, 231) =.620; p=.539) of professionals.

This study aimed to identify the influence of emotional intelligence on work-life balance among professionals across different domains of work post Covid-19 pandemic. The findings of multiple regression analysis show that emotional intelligence accounts for a statistically significant but

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low variation in work-life balance (R²=0.071; p<0.001). The Beta Coefficient shows that with one unit increase in emotional intelligence the work-life balance will increase by 0.605. The test of correlation show that there is a significant weak positive correlation between emotional intelligence and work life balance (r=0.267; p <0.001). Similar findings are reported by earlier researchers among female faculty of public sector universities in Pakistan (Naz, Ahmad & Batool, 2021), female professionals in Rajasthan, India(Chauhan, Maheshwari & Goswami, 2020)and Corporate sector employees in Pakistan (Qasim, Khaskhely&Pitafi, 2020), healthcare professionals in Pakistan (Malik, Haider& Hussain, 2019), faculty members' performance at Universities in Tamil Nadu, India (Vasumathi, Sagaya&Poranki, 2019) and police officers in MalaysianPeninsula (Kumarasamy, Pangil&Mohd Isa, 2016). The reason for the weak relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance in this study could be because the professionals are from different domains with different level and type of skill, knowledge and attitude requisite. Further in-depth study can be conducted to explore the level of emotional intelligence as well as work-life and the relationship between the constructs using larger sample and/or advanced statistical analysis.

There is a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the dimensions of work-life balance; Work-place Support (r=0.246; p<0,001), Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance (r=0.419; p<0.001) and Improved Effectiveness at Work(r=0.317; p<0.001). Emotional intelligence has no statistically significant relationship with the dimensions; Work Interference with Personal Life (r=0.011; p=0.869) and Personal Life Interference with Work (r=0.117; p=0.073. This could be due to the infant stage deviations in the work patterns and schedules brought about by the Covid-19 Pandemic across professions, wherein some professionals might have been working through online and/or offline modeand at varied timings during the data collection period

Findings also reveal a significant association between emotional intelligence and the level of income (F(3,230)=3.605; p=.014) wherein professionals earning higher income (Mean=48.8750; SD=5.59177) showed higher level of emotional intelligence as compared to other income groups. This finding can be used to explain that financial stability is an important determinant of emotional health, wherein professionals having higher earnings have less financial stress, therefore are able to control and manage emotions better. However, there was no significant association between emotional intelligence and age, sex, marital status, type of profession, nor with employment status, type of family nor support person of professionals.

Significant association is identified between work-life balance and type of profession (F (4, 229)=6.558; P<.001) wherein higher work-life balance was identified among teachers (Mean=99.9565; SD=13.50548) and lowest among police (Mean=86.1053; SD=8.64241). Teachers' work schedules are probably more streamlined and consistent as compared to police, nurses and physicians who work in shifts and at times continue working beyond single shift. Also having to deal with young minds every day, teachers might be feeling more productive and satisfied with their work, whereas nurses and doctors mostly work with the sick, suffering and with those in distress. Further, the emotional intelligence among teachers is also found to be higher than all other group of professionals which maybe favorable in maintaining better work-life balance. Lowest work-life balance is identified among police personnel. This could be becausepolicehave torush to places and people most of the time in order to deal with lot of crime and fraudulent behaviors that are disturbing and dissatisfying thus affecting their work-life balance. This finding can be further researched in depth for deeper understanding of factors

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determining work-life balance among professionals. Malik, Haider & Hussain (2019) reported that physicians maintained better work life balance than nurses and pharmacists in Pakistan. There is no significant association between work-life balance and age, sex, marital status, income, nor with employment status, type of family nor support person of professionals

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSION

Work-life balance is about crafting and sustaining healthy work environment that will enable employees to maintain a balance between work and home responsibilities thus strengthening loyalty and productivity. This study intended to explore some of the issues related to work life balance in the Indian context among professionalsacross different work domains post Covid-19 pandemic. All though weak influence of emotional intelligence on work-life balance has been identified among the professionals, there is a significant association between the income and emotional intelligence and between the type of profession and work-life balance. Further exploration of determinants of emotional intelligence as well as work-life balance among professionals from individual domains in the Indian context can be explored for deeper understanding. With the increase in number of dual career couples, it is crucial to adopt practices which would help improve productivity and enhance quality of work and family life. While most countries in the developed world have put in place family friendly work practices, the same is yet to be seen in good measure in India. Apart from flex time, part time, work from home and child care facility; supportive work environment and employee specific initiatives by organizations might improve work life balance among professionals.

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