

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON JOB SATISFACTION AMONG PHARMACISTS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Pharmacy profession has evolved significantly in the past few years but shortage of qualified personnel has increased pressure on previously employed pharmacists. Increased workload, unfavorable working environment, low job security and family responsibilities have tend to lower work-life balance which has reduced job satisfaction. The aim of this literature review is to summarize the research findings among developed and developing countries as well as Pakistan related to different work-life balance factors and its impact on job satisfaction. A total of 38 published articles were reviewed regarding work-life balance and job satisfaction of pharmacists. The review concluded that there is a need for reinforcing the relevant human resources policies and improving working conditions of pharmacists in Pakistan. There is a need to sensitize policy makers on subject of satisfaction of pharmacy workforce as it has a positive effect on individual, organization and quality of services in today's evolving healthcare system of Pakistan.

KEYWORDS: Job Satisfaction, Review, Work, Family, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, Pharmacy profession has undergone significant changes in response to a rapidly changing economic, political, and social environment.¹In current era of globalization, pharmacist's professional roles and responsibilities have evolved from a focus on medication dispensing to provision of clinical services.² With a change in roles, there has been a shortage of pharmacists in various practice settings across developing countries. Stressful job demands along with the shortage of pharmacists have an impact on work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction and burnout .³ Job satisfaction of health care professionals is considered to be associated with a number of factors at individual and organizational level, including salary and incentive packages, relationships with colleagues, work environment, workload, family demands, appreciation and relationship with management.⁴ All these factors lead to development of a major challenge for human resource management i.e. work-life balance .⁵The articulation of work-life balance has become a key feature in providing quality of life and retaining the productivity levels of an employee at the work place in turn improving his job satisfaction .⁶

In recent years the pressure has increased on pharmacists, as they are now legally required to be present at all times the pharmacy is open for the provision of pharmaceutical services. Age, having caring responsibilities, sector of practice, working hours and nature of job are significant predictors of work/life balance problems in the pharmacy workforce.⁷ Moreover, low salaries, lack of fringe benefits, job insecurity, lack of autonomy, nepotism, less social support,

political influences and improper career development structure are some of the important factors which lead to work-family conflict.⁸ The aim of this paper is to highlight the impact of different factors of work-life balance on job satisfaction among pharmacists. This paper focuses upon the work life balance issues faced by pharmacists worldwide by reviewing past and present literature. The main objective is to systematically identify and review the contemporary job related issues affecting pharmacy workforce around the globe.

METHODOLOGY

The electronic databases PubMed, Google Scholar and Science direct were searched for articles published from January 2003 to June 2015. The search terms used with each database were job satisfaction, pharmacists, work-life balance, work-life conflict and workload. Full text papers as well as abstracts were retrieved and included in review. A total of 38 studies were retrieved from databases related to work-life balance and job satisfaction of pharmacists. The studies were categorized on the basis of their country of publishing into developed countries, developing countries and Pakistan. Twenty six studies from developed countries, 10 from developing countries and 2 studies from Pakistan were included in this review (Table 1). Quantitative cross sectional surveys as well as qualitative studies were also included.

Table 1: Details of Country and Number of Included Papers

Regions	Number of Studies	Countries
Developed countries	26	USA, Australia, UK, Japan, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Italy, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands
Developing countries	10	Turkey, China, South Africa, Ghana, Malaysia, India, Taiwan, Iran, Qatar, Eritrea, Jordan
Pakistan	2	-
Total		38

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Work-Life Balance and Its Impact on Job Satisfaction in Developed Countries

The concept of work-life balance can be dated back to 18th century when in pre industrialization period, partial segregation of workplace and family life started to take place. During the industrial revolution in mid 1800s, men dominated the workforce in factories while household work was taken care of primarily by women. The history of work-life balance initiatives can be traced back to 20th century when W.K. Kellogg Company introduced reduced working hours with four shifts of six-hours instead of the usual three daily eight hours shifts which resulted in increased employee morale and productivity.⁹ In the late 20th century, the focus of research shifted from work-family and family friendly policies to a broader work-life balance perspective. Initially work life balance policies were focused on working mothers. In last decade of 20th century, focus was shifted from mothers to married and unmarried men and women having no children.¹⁰

Job satisfaction is a critical aspect for retention of healthcare professionals. On the contrary, turnover rate is high when an alternative job provides higher satisfaction. Various factors affected job satisfaction such as wages, work context, working conditions and social work environment.¹¹ In USA, pharmacists were satisfied with their jobs but majority experienced job stress and role overload leading to work-home conflict.¹² The work environment has become stressful and there is an increase in workload day by day in pharmacy profession. Community pharmacists were the ones influenced more by increased workloads as compared to others in health care profession.¹³ It was seen in UK that due to increased

workload and family needs and commitments female community pharmacists were unable to work up to their potential.¹⁴ Study of workload of pharmacist in UK revealed that community pharmacists found it troublesome in balancing work with-life and it was seen that there is increase in stress levels with increase in work.^{13, 15} Along with workload, working hours contributed significantly to work-family conflict. Job features such as work overload and overtime hours were significant triggers for work-to-family conflict.¹⁶ Prolonged working hours, frequent working overtime, and longer travelling to and from work were all contributing to increased levels of work-life conflict.^{17, 18} Trained Pharmacists were dissatisfied with their work burden, prolonged working hours and lack of assistance from their employers in Britain.¹⁹

Encouraging working environment increases overall performance of organization in many ways that is financial performance, staff and customer satisfaction as it was seen in small retail pharmacies in Australia.²⁰ Improvement in working conditions such as improved staffing, decreased workload and increased salary could lead to increased satisfaction among pharmacists.²¹ Physical working conditions in community pharmacies were a source of dissatisfaction among this group of pharmacists.²² Along with work environment, social support from family as well as co-workers plays an important role in maintaining positive work-life balance. In USA, schedule control and supervisor support for family and personal life helped employees manage the work-family interface.⁸ On the other hand Pharmacy technicians reported that they were getting support from their colleagues and managers but not from their employers in USA.²³

The noteworthy elements that affected work and family balance of pharmacy workforce in Britain included practice setting, age, ethnic background and work-hours. Working for extended hours was the most notable factor affecting work life balance. Community pharmacists were the most discontented among all in work life balance. Academicians reported to have a better work-life balance.⁷ Remuneration was also considered as an important factor of work-life balance affecting job satisfaction. Financial reward could contribute to greater job satisfaction. In Japan and USA, salary was highest ranked reason for dissatisfaction and less chance for promotion was important stressor for dissatisfaction.^{24, 25} In UK, female pharmacists had higher job satisfaction than male pharmacists, with the exception of conflict on physical working conditions. Pharmacists working in industry possesses overall the highest level of satisfaction while community pharmacists reported the lowest level of satisfaction with their job. Primary care pharmacists reported the highest levels of satisfaction with their working schedules. Pharmacists working in the other sector were most satisfied with their colleagues and with the task responsibility.²⁶

Literature review of studies conducted in developed countries highlight that further research is required to fully understand problems faced by pharmacists working in different settings. Past literature has studied workload as one of the major work-life balance issue of pharmacist. Other issues such as childcare, family demands, recreation, work environment, workplace culture have not been studied extensively. Further research should utilize mixed methods such as in depth interviews and focus group discussions for exploring interventions to reduce work-life conflict and improve job satisfaction.

Work-Life Balance and Its Impact on Job Satisfaction in Developing Countries

Research on work-life balance can be dated back to 20th century when the year 1975 was declared as international women year and the 1970s as the Women's Decade which led to the establishment of women's studies centers across India to release the first ever Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. Studies focused on working conditions for women in different sectors of the economy. Research was mostly focused on work and family roles of urban working

women and perceptions toward working women, stresses of balancing work and home duties and its impact on the psychological well-being of women. During 1980s, research was focused on work-family conflict of working couples. Research from a psychosocial perspective continued exploring gender differences in work and family roles. Studies also expanded their focus to examine the impact of globalization on female workforce participation.²⁷

Over the past few years, pharmacy practice in developing countries has witnessed a significant evolution. The pharmacist is now viewed as patient-centered healthcare professionals instead of the previous traditional dispenser roles.²⁸ Decreased number of professionals, motivation and work-life imbalance has led to a significant decrease in job satisfaction among pharmacists in developing countries.⁴ Among pharmacists, community pharmacists appeared to be the least satisfied and hospital pharmacists as most satisfied in a study conducted in Jordan. This can be contributed to the fact that community pharmacists felt that their skills were not properly utilized, such as patient care and applying their knowledge clinically as opposed to their seniors.⁶ Increase in job experience led to increased satisfaction whereas workload and salary was viewed as the most significant factor affecting work-life balance and satisfaction.^{6, 21, 29, 30} In Malaysia and Qatar, pharmacists were of the view that they were more inclined to stay in public sector and this behavior can be attributed to their ethnicity, greater job satisfaction, gender and organizational working environment.^{21, 31} Chinese hospital pharmacists were satisfied with their jobs while females were more satisfied than male employees. Highly qualified pharmacists were more satisfied than those having a bachelor degree.²⁹

Literature review reveals that extensive research has been done on impact of work related issues on job satisfaction but there is little evidence of the impact of family related issues on satisfaction in developing countries. Very few studies have explored pharmacist perceptions working in different sectors but have not covered all of the sectors such as industry, regulatory and academia.

Current Scenario of Pharmacy Profession in Pakistan

Pharmacy profession has continuously evolved in the past few years in Pakistan still the role of pharmacist has not been fully acknowledged in the healthcare system. The current professional role of pharmacists is of prime concern in the country. There is a shortage of pharmacists leading to absence at pharmacies and role is focused towards management rather than patient oriented. Statistics of Economic Survey of Pakistan revealed that healthcare workforce of Pakistan consists of 160,289 doctors, 12,544 dentists, 82,119 nurses, 29,000 midwives, 13,678 lady health visitors and 32,511 pharmacists. According to international standards, there should be 1 pharmacist per 6 doctors leading to a shortfall of 29,574 pharmacists in Pakistan.³² Distribution of pharmacists in various sectors revealed that 55% are engaged in the production of pharmaceuticals whereas 15% are working at the federal and provincial drug control authority and hospital pharmacy level while 15% are involved in sales and marketing of pharmaceuticals, 10% in community pharmacy, and the remaining 5% are working in teaching and research.³³

Work-Life Balance and Its Impact on Job Satisfaction in Pakistan

There is a lack of research in Pakistan on human resources issues among pharmacists. Limited evidence is available on work-life balance issues and job satisfaction of pharmacists working in Pakistan. Academic pharmacists revealed that salary, relationship with co-workers, promotion, job security and work environment had significant impact on job satisfaction.³⁴ Positive organizational environment helps improve work-life balance leading to increased professional satisfaction. Pharmacists at managerial positions revealed satisfaction with their work environment in pharmaceutical

industries. Pharmacists working in multinational were more satisfied in terms of capacity building opportunities, promotion and fairness for employees and organizational climate as compared to local industries employees. While social support provided for family matters was more noteworthy in local pharmaceutical industries.³⁵ Job satisfaction increased with level of experience in industrial pharmacists. Similarly another study conducted on industrial pharmacists showed that they were fairly satisfied with their jobs. Relationship with co-worker was ranked one of the most important factors for improving work-life balance while relationship with supervisor was least satisfying.³⁶

During the past few years, the pharmacy profession has expanded significantly in terms of professional services delivery in Pakistan. But in the case of Pakistan, there is a lack of a clear, long-term vision for human resource development in this profession. Shortage of qualified pharmacists has led to excessive workload for the previously employed pharmacists. Business targets have to be met and professional identities have to be managed and negotiated within the changing context of their employment. These all factors have led to an increased conflict between work and family roles thus affecting the productivity and ultimately leading to decreased job satisfaction. Continuous inability of employees to balance work and family responsibilities may contribute to organizational performance in terms of increased absenteeism & turnover, reduced productivity, decreased organizational commitment and decreased job satisfaction. The importance of maintaining work/life balance should not be underestimated among pharmacists. Work-life conflicts among pharmacists may have deleterious impact on the quality and safety of patient care.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this literature review was to summarize data regarding work-life balance and its impact on job satisfaction among pharmacists. It is concluded that work life balance is not simply essential for the health and well-being of individuals, but is also cost-efficient for institutions and improves work-environments. But increased workload, family demands and responsibilities, working long hours, unfavorable working environment, low job security and benefits all tend to lower work-life balance which ultimately leads to reduced job satisfaction. This reduced satisfaction may lead to increased turnover as well as compromise the services provided by pharmacists to the public. Among one of the key players in providing health services, pharmacists greatly impact on the health of a society and if they suffer low job satisfaction, their dissatisfaction may relatively threaten health in a society. To date, no research has been undertaken to explore pharmacists' perceptions on the impact of work/life balance on job satisfaction in the Pakistani pharmacy workforce. There is little empirical evidence of this in Pakistan and none to indicate whether certain groups of pharmacists experience greater difficulties in balancing their work and family commitments. Studies should be conducted to evaluate the impact of personal and work-based characteristics on work-life balance of pharmacists so interventions can be designed on factors that necessitate improvement.

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