

## A Review of Study on Work Life Balance of Front Line Workers

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### Abstract

*There is huge need of Work Life Balance in today's dynamic professional, academic, government, private and other public service sector, where as front line workers plays an vital role in providing best of their service to the society for regular functioning as well as in emergency situations like healthcare, flood, natural disasters, security services, etc. In these types of situations the front line workers are the first one who fights with challenging situations with their courage and commitment to the work. Front line workers like Doctors, Nurses, Police, Volunteers, Drivers, Sanitation Workers, Health Workers, etc gives their best. According to WHO in the pandemic situation like COVID-19 front line workers have been under immense mental and physical pressure for the well being of society at their own risk. All the safety measures to frontline workers needs to be considered and applied at highest priority. The present paper studies, challenges and possible solutions for the front line workers to reduce the stress level and help them to work in healthy environment.*

**Keywords:** Public Service Sector, Frontline Workers, COVID -19, Stress, Healthy Environment

### 1. Introduction

**H**ealth care workers are disproportionately affected by the spread of the novel coronavirus 19. In the COVID-19 pandemic, like in the SARS outbreak, health care workers are at danger of contracting the virus due to their close contact with patients who are at high risk of contracting the illness. Epidemics like COVID-19 arise naturally, but it doesn't make health care providers any less responsible for keeping patients healthy. Healthcare providers also faced challenges, including the stigma of caring for COVID-19 patients, long hours, fear of illness and death, feelings of helplessness and despair after witnessing the deaths of those in their care, and the loss of paid time off.[1]

It is well-known that health care workers experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic have comparable challenges in their private and professional lives, and that they must deal with the anxiety and mental effects of the epidemic. Health care workers face a number of challenges owing to the outbreak, including the potential for spreading the infection to their loved ones and the difficulty of finding child care as nurseries close. Long-term

quarantine, fear of infecting families, possessing an infected family member, or dread of mortality have all been cited as explanations for the disproportionate psychological toll the COVID-19 epidemic has had on women, young individuals, and those with less job experience (Serrano-Ripoll et al., 2020). Several healthcare workers have avoided contact with their families out of concern for the spread of the virus, and as a result, they have been forced to live apart from the people they typically care for and are unable to perform their parental responsibilities. It has been noted, however, that there has been a shift away from a healthy equilibrium between professional commitment and worry for one's own safety and that of one's loved ones.[2]

An individual's professional and personal lives should be in harmony, and "work-life balance" refers to the state in which this is the case. Negative effects on health professionals' lives and actions stem from a lack of work-life balance. [3-4]

The extent to which an individual is committed to their profession is influenced by their ability to strike a good work-life balance. Work commitment is defined as "the degree to which an individual is invigorated by, fully engaged in, and expresses satisfaction with, his or her job." As the COVID-19

pandemic progresses, it has been noted that health workers face increasingly difficult working environments and conditions, including increased workload, pressure to perform, of both patients and hospital management. [5]

Physical tiredness, learned helplessness, health hazards, ignorance, anxiety, fear, despair, loneliness, difficulties sleeping, and psychological issues are just some of the challenges that health care workers face. Additionally, healthcare workers in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated significant burnout and intentions to leave their jobs due to their inability to cope with the physical and mental burden that arises from increased workload, extended working hours, a lack of time, and an increase in the number of infected patients. Professionalism and the ability to strike a good work-life balance are both severely tested by the COVID-19 epidemic.[6]

The issue of work-life balance for front-line workers has garnered increasing attention in recent years, as research has shown that poor work-life balance can have significant negative effects on their physical and mental health, as well as their job performance and overall job satisfaction. Front-line workers are particularly vulnerable to these negative effects, given the demands of their work and the limited opportunities for rest and recovery.[7]

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of work-life balance for front-line workers. The pandemic has placed significant additional demands on front-line workers, including increased workload, emotional strain, and the disruption of personal lives. The pandemic has also led to increased recognition of the essential role that front-line workers play in society and the need to support their physical and mental well-being.

As the world continues to grapple with the impact of the pandemic, it is crucial to recognize the challenges faced by front-line workers in achieving a healthy work-life balance. By prioritizing work-life balance and providing support to front-line workers, we can ensure that they are better equipped to perform their jobs and continue to provide essential services to society. This review of studies on work-life balance for front-line workers aims to shed light on the challenges faced by front-line workers and provide insights into how we can better support them in achieving a healthy work-life balance.[8]

## 2. Work Life Balance

The phrase "work-life balance" is often used to refer to the harmony between one's professional and personal commitments. Personal hobbies, family time, and social and recreational pursuits are just a few examples of the many facets of one's life outside the workplace. The concept of a "WorkLife Balance" is relatively new, having emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s in the United Kingdom and the United States, respectively.[9]

As a result of recent technology innovations and advancements, it is now feasible to fulfill work and job goals on a 24-hour cycle, which has led to some misunderstanding about the word. Work may be done outside of the conventional "9 to 5" time frame thanks to technology advancements like cellphones, email, video-chat, and more. The interplay between one's professional life and their personal lives has been the subject of several theoretical frameworks. Unfortunately, these hypotheses have not been combined into a single, all-encompassing framework to direct future study of work-family conflicts. Many theoretical perspectives on the workplace-family link inform the academic literature.[10]

## 3. Need For Work-Life Balance

Everyday consequences of an unsatisfactory work-life balance include:

- **The Influence of Stress:** Medical professionals are expected to maintain high standards in an ever-changing industry. In addition, there is continual pressure from above to succeed. So, doctors are forced to give up some of their privacy. The doctors' anxiety about the procedure as a whole lies at the heart of a number of issues.
- **Health issue:** There has been a dramatic increase in the percentage of doctors who suffer from conditions including high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. When it comes to the negative effects of lengthy and stressful work hours, female doctors take the most hit.[11]
- **Issues in relationships:** Since doctors are spending more time in the office, they have less time for their families at home. Medical professionals often resort to unethical coping mechanisms including alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, and inappropriate relationships when under pressure. There is also the possibility that the



doctor may use dishonest methods to get the job done.

- **Families in Disarray:** Physicians' relatives take the most damage. Struggling to reach a goal might cause you to lose focus on your loved ones. There has been a dramatic increase in the rate of families breaking apart.
- **Declining efficiency:** Those who work as doctors in hospitals seldom experience serenity. Both the personal life and the professional life of an individual are sources of worry and anxiety. Physicians feel frustrated without realizing it, and as a result, they fail to perform at their highest potential.
- **Danger to the hospital:** The doctor's abilities and performance are at a crossroads, and the whole thing begins with stress. It's possible that the hospital's objectives won't be met or that the doctor's satisfaction may decline as a result of this predicament. The whole medical facility is at danger either way.[12]

**4. The Challenge Of Work-Life Balance**

The challenge of work-life balance is the difficulty of maintaining a healthy and fulfilling personal life while also meeting the demands of a professional career. For front-line workers, this challenge is often intensified due to the nature of their work. They may have long and irregular work hours, physically and emotionally demanding work, and limited time for personal pursuits. The COVID-19 pandemic has added to these challenges, with many front-line workers having to work longer hours and juggle additional responsibilities, such as caring for family members, while still maintaining their essential roles. Balancing work and personal life is crucial for maintaining overall well-being, and finding solutions to this challenge is essential for supporting the mental and physical health of front-line workers.[13]

Here are some statistics related to the challenge of work-life balance:

1. A survey conducted by the American Psychological Association found that 44% of working adults reported that their job had a negative impact on their overall stress level, and 56% said that their job interfered with their ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

2. According to a study by the Families and Work Institute, 67% of employees reported that they struggle with work-life balance, and 43% of employees said that they would be willing to give up some pay for more flexibility at work.
3. A study by the International Labour Organization found that long working hours are linked to a higher risk of work-related injury and illness, as well as chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on work-life balance, with a survey by the Society for Human Resource Management reporting that 69% of employees are experiencing burnout symptoms while working from home, and 41% say they are struggling to maintain work-life balance.
5. A study by the World Health Organization found that poor work-life balance is associated with a higher risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems.

These statistics highlight the widespread nature of the challenge of work-life balance and the negative impact it can have on individuals' overall health and well-being. It is essential to find ways to support front-line workers in achieving a healthy work-life balance to prevent burnout and maintain their physical and mental health.[14-15]

**5. Impact Of The Pandemic On Front-Line Workers' Work-Life Balance**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on front-line workers, including their work-life balance. Front-line workers, such as healthcare professionals, grocery store workers, delivery drivers, and first responders, have been working tirelessly to keep society functioning during these challenging times. However, the pandemic has made it increasingly difficult for them to balance their work and personal responsibilities, resulting in significant physical and mental strain.[16]

One of the most significant impacts of the pandemic on front-line workers' work-life balance is the increased workload. As the pandemic spread across the globe, front-line workers often with minimal breaks or time off. Healthcare professionals, in particular, have been working in overdrive, caring

for COVID-19 patients and dealing with the increased demand for medical services. Many have had to work double shifts, sometimes for weeks on end, without adequate time off to rest and recharge.

In addition to the increased workload, front-line workers have also had to cope with the emotional toll of the pandemic. Many have had to witness the suffering and death of patients or colleagues, adding to their already stressful work environment. First responders, in particular, have been exposed to traumatic events, leading to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues.[17]

Another impact of the pandemic on front-line workers' work-life balance has been the disruption of their personal lives. With many schools and daycare centers closed, front-line workers with children have had to juggle their work responsibilities with caring for their children at home. This has been particularly challenging for single parents or those with limited support networks.

Furthermore, front-line workers have also had to deal with the fear of getting infected with COVID-19 while on the job. Many have had to work without adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), putting themselves and their families at risk. This fear and uncertainty have added to their already stressful work environment and made it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance.[18]

Despite these challenges, front-line workers have continued to work tirelessly to keep society functioning during the pandemic. However, the impact of the pandemic on their work-life balance has been significant. A study conducted by the University of California, San Francisco found that healthcare workers who were caring for COVID-19 patients reported higher levels of burnout, anxiety, and depression than those who were not. Similarly, a survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management found that many employees, including front-line workers, were struggling to maintain work-life balance while working from home.

To support front-line workers in maintaining a healthy work-life balance during the pandemic, employers must take steps to provide support and flexibility. This includes offering adequate PPE, providing counseling services, and allowing for flexible work arrangements, such as adjusted schedules or remote work. Employers can also

provide additional resources, such as childcare or financial support, to help front-line workers manage their personal responsibilities.[19]

## **6. Strategies For Improving Work-Life Balance For Front-Line Workers**

Front-line workers face unique challenges in achieving a healthy work-life balance, given the demands of their work and the limited opportunities for rest and recovery. However, there are several strategies that employers, policymakers, and front-line workers themselves can use to improve work-life balance.[20]

### **1. Flexible Work Arrangements**

One of the most effective ways to improve work-life balance for front-line workers is through flexible work arrangements. This can include offering part-time or reduced hours, allowing employees to work from home or telecommute, or implementing flexible scheduling arrangements. These arrangements can help front-line workers better manage their personal responsibilities while still meeting the demands of their work.

### **2. Supportive Work Environment**

Creating a supportive work environment is essential for promoting work-life balance for front-line workers. Employers can promote a positive workplace culture by providing support services such as counseling or wellness programs. Additionally, promoting a healthy work-life balance can be incorporated into the company's policies and practices, such as encouraging employees to take breaks, providing regular feedback and recognition, and encouraging a healthy work-life balance through company-wide initiatives.

### **3. Time Management Strategies**

Effective time management is crucial for front-line workers in achieving a healthy work-life balance. Employers can offer training and support in time management strategies such as prioritization, delegation, and goal setting. These strategies can help front-line workers manage their workload and personal responsibilities more efficiently, reducing stress and improving overall well-being.



**4. Resilience and Coping Skills**

Developing resilience and coping skills can help front-line workers better manage the stress and demands of their work. Employers can offer training and support in developing these skills, such as stress management techniques or mindfulness practices. Additionally, offering support services such as counseling can help front-line workers develop coping strategies and maintain positive mental health.

**7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the issue of work-life balance for front-line workers is a complex and multifaceted one that has garnered increasing attention in recent years, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Front-line workers face unique challenges in balancing their work responsibilities with their personal lives, including long and irregular hours, high levels of stress, and the emotional toll of their work. Overall, it is crucial to recognize the critical role that front-line workers play in society and to take steps to support their physical and mental well-being. By prioritizing work-life balance and providing support to front-line workers, we can ensure that they are better equipped to perform their jobs and continue to provide essential services to society.

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