Impact Of Societal Work Life Balance Factors On Job Performance Of Academic And Administrative Heads Of North East Universities In Sri Lanka

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the impact of societal factors of work life balance on job performance. The study adopted survey strategy and the data were gleaned with the aid of self-reported questionnaire from all the academic and administrative heads of the North East universities in Sri Lanka. Of a total of 339 subjects, two hundred and fifty-seven (257) usable responses were obtained. Following the robust analytical procedures, the results of the study disclose that societal factors of work life balance have significant impact on job performance. This study provides valuable insights and guidance for high education sector in Sri Lanka. Further, the findings of the study will serve as a guide to academic and administrative heads in universities to improve their performance. Without any reservation, the study is beneficial for policymakers and government (UGC and ministry) in planning and implementation, decision-making, and performance evaluation process to consider the societal factors of work life balance to enhance the job performance.

Keywords: Societal work life balance factors; Job performance; Academic and administrative heads; Sri Lankan Universities.

Introduction

National economy can be stabilized with good job performance and productivity growth, specifically improved living standards, higher wages, higher goods production and so on (Griffin...
et al., 1981). Likewise, job performance is important for both organizations and individuals. The achievement of organizational objectives and mission is determined by the employee’s creativity, innovation and commitment. Hence, high-performing individuals are needed for achieving organizational goals, delivering specialized products and services, and attaining competitive advantage (VanScotter, Motowidlo and Cross, 2000).

The importance of studying job performance in the fields of organizational psychology and human resources management highlighted by many research scholars (Johari, Tan and Zulkarnain, 2018; Kengatharan and Kunatilakam, 2020; Ramawickrama, Opatha and Pushpakumari, 2017; Vijitharan, Harikaran and Nanthagopan, 2019) and pointed out that job performance is an outcome variable, moderating and mediating variable too. Performance entails the individual, group and organizational performance. Individual performance is needed to achieve group performance, unit/divisional performance, organizational performance, business performance, and ultimately national GDP performance. Although other dependent variables are equally crucial such as work satisfaction, commitment, engagement, stress/health, absenteeism, turnover and work-life balance, none of them can be achieved without individual performance (Campbell and Wiernik 2015).

Hence, high-performing employees achieve a greater sense of satisfaction, self-efficacy, mastery and pride than low-performing employees who tend to experience feelings of dissatisfaction or even failure. High-performing individuals also have wider career opportunities, better promotions, with awards and honors. They are also typically rewarded financially or non-financially. Performance is hence an important criterion for career development and success in the labor market. High-performing employees can easily get promotions and better career opportunities (VanScotter et al., 2000).

The most valuable organizational asset is the human resources; thus, the management needs to have a proper human resources management system in place. Work-life balance is the primary issue that the human resources management has to tackle (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Thus work-life balance is an important concern for most companies, political organizations, research institutions, families, individuals and trade unions both nationally and internationally. In the field of human resource management, work-life balance refers to the achievable integration between work and personal life.

Employees and managers have been demonstrating a growing demand for work-life balance solutions, leading to a heated debate on the topic amongst the research community (Gulbahar, Ch., Kundi, Qureshi, and Akhtar, 2014). Work-life imbalance affects the well-being and performance of both the employees and their organizations. A large number of employees find it difficult to strike a balance between their work and personal life (Kamau, Muleke, Mukaya, and Wagoki, 2013).
In this era of globalization, work-life balance has emerged as a crucial problem, gaining worldwide attention from companies, employees, researchers and policymakers alike (Devi and Sheshadri, 2016). Also, it is a prominence topic in the business and academic fields (Kumari and Selvi, 2016). Proper work-life balance contributes to the achievement of personal and organizational goals; on the contrary, work-life imbalance negatively affects both domains in the employees’ life (Bannur and Patil, 2015; Kengatharan and Kunatilakam, 2020; Kengatharan and Edwards, 2020). An imbalance in the work and personal domains can also decrease life and work satisfaction (Kumarasamy, Pangil and Isa, 2015). Hence, it is highly important to strike a balance between both domains (Bannur and Patil, 2015).

The public and private sectors have both shown growing concern about the issue of worklife balance (Maiya and Bagali, 2014). As one of the key human resource management issues, it is no surprise that the topic has been garnering significant attention from the government, researchers, and professionals alike (Atheya and Arora, 2014). With such attention, employees can prioritize their work and life roles in a balanced manner (Maiya and Bagali, 2014). Human resource professionals have been finding ways to enhance employee morale and retention via the provision of work-life initiatives that can affect organizational bottom line positively (Atheya and Arora, 2014). As previously mentioned, work-life balance has been a greatly highlighted topic in business and academic research (Kluczyk, 2013) as well as a rising challenge for employees and employers alike (Fatima and Sahibzada, 2012).

Worklife balance affects the well-being of the individual and the family as a whole (Kumari and Selvi, 2016) as well as organizational performance. It boosts job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, and productivity on top of reducing employee absenteeism and turnover. Hence, there is a need to develop and implement suitable coping strategies in managing work and family obligations (Grady et al., 2008 as cited in Kumari and Selvi, 2016). This is what organizations and employees of today are striving for (Nawas, 2016).

On the contrary, work-life imbalance can pose negative effects on employees, families, organizations and societies (Nayak and Pandey, 2014). It can result in demotivation, job dissatisfaction, low productivity, inefficiency and poor commitment on top of increasing errors, absenteeism, and turnover rate, all of which would ultimately lead to poor employee performance.

Employees today are unable to achieve their desired level of performance due to work life imbalance (Balaji, 2014). Many scholarly works have identified the importance of work life balance particularly on the well-being of professional working women and its impact on their work and family performance (Reddy et al., 2010). There is a global demand for solutions towards achieving work-life balance (Bird, 2006) particularly from the private and public sectors (Obiageli, 2015). Consequently, this study addressed to climax societal work life balance factors that impact on job performance of North East Universities’ academic and administrative heads in Sri Lanka.
Productivity, innovation, efficiency are tactical parameters for any organization to endure as well as to achieve in the present economic environment. There is a move in existing attitude of the employees in terms of ordering family needs, whether due to spouse's occupation, location restraints, being and caring with parents or children (Telang, 2013). Based on these evidences there is a link between performance of an employees’ in their work and other side of their family needs fulfillment. When an employee giving preference and prioritizing work side, family side will be penalized. Therefore, the studies related to work life balance is a must for each and every context, because modern generation workers give more priority for work life balance, and the employee recruitment process also considered this as an important phenomenon (Smith, 2010). Matter of handling workplace wants with personal life needs is acquisition of the standing among labors all over the world and researchers of higher education foundations are not out of it (Stanton, Noor and Young, 2009) and also other categories of employees in higher education institutions too.

Academic and administrative heads are the managers for their applicable department or division or units and centers, Regulates to a great degree, the excellence of the pupil practice of higher education and has a substantial influence on student learning and thereby on the influence that such institutes can make to society. For this the academic heads are openly contributed to this; the administrative heads are indirectly contributed to these attainments. Afterward, their inspiration is vital in defining the quality of this boundary. In addition, study is significant both in stimulating staff aware in their theme and in keeping their interest alive, and in building a research and publication profile for the institution. Strangely well inspired academic and administrative staffs can, with suitable provision, build a national and international standing for themselves and the institution in the research, reproducing and specialized areas. Such a profile may have a momentous impact on the ability of the institution to interest high talented students, research funds and consultancy agreements. However, such attainments depend on a remarkably high level of potential of them.

Employees and managers have been demonstrating a growing demand for work-life balance solutions, leading to a heated debate on the topic amongst the research community (Gulbahar, Ch., Kundi, Qureshi, and Akhtar, (2014). Work-life imbalance affects the well-being and performance of both the employees and their organizations. A large number of employees find it difficult to strike a balance between their work and personal life (Kamau, Muleke, Mukaya, and Wagoki, 2013).

Conservation of resources theory proposes that individuals strive to utilize and save resources. It asserts that used-up resources result in negative employee outcomes such as lower job satisfaction, decreased commitment and poor performance due to work life conflict (Kengatharan and Edwards, 2020). The attainment of work life balance and other positive outcomes is possible by replacing such resources with job autonomy, family support and spousal presence. The availability of such resources could alleviate the aforementioned challenges. Potential resource drains include the
responsibility of child-care and elderly-care (Premeaux et al., 2007). In general, this theory asserts that family and spousal support, as well as child and elderly care can affect employee behavior and job performance. Therefore, this current study re-visits this theory in predicting the societal factors of work life balance and job performance of academic and administrative heads in the Sri Lankan university considering their work resources and responsibility that could affect their work life balance.

Further above evidence indicated that there are various facets up setting work life balance of employees’ in different levels in the organizations among that, the scholars were separated individual level, organizational level, societal level, environmental level as well as other level factors. Regardless of the fact the researchers recognised some of the prominence societal factors of WLB. Also, there is a huge scarcity of empirical knowledge with respect to societal factors of work life balance which impact on job performance of university academic and administrative heads in Sri Lanka. Henceforth, there is a need to study “whether societal factors of work life balance impact on job performance of academic and administrative heads of North East universities in Sri Lanka or not?

**Need of the Study**

The studies on the relationship between WLB and job performance investigated by many scholars in Sri Lanka and foreign countries with different occupations, but the impact of societal factors of WLB on job performance has not been highlighted more as well as on academic and administrative heads of the university in Sri Lanka. Since most likely it is detected that their performance growths and career progressions are morally declining. Therefore, due to these motives have extended the need for this study in Sri Lanka, specifically in a developing country. Further, this study was planned to offer a new theoretical framework, to explain the societal factors of WLB that impact on job performance of academic and administrative heads of the university. This study would provide useful inputs to policymakers and administrators to formulate a model, that would enhance the job performance in the context of service organizations in Sri Lanka.

**Objective of the Study**

To investigate the connection between the societal factors of WLB and job performance of academic and administrative heads of the North East Universities in Sri Lanka.

**Review of Literature**

**Societal Factors Affecting Work Life Balance**

The notion of work life balance is typically examined together with dependent variables such as job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment, job performance, motivation, productivity, turnover intention, and organization excellence. Work-life balance and work life conflict are two distinct terms. Work life conflict would occur in the absence of work life balance.
Elliott (2003) asserted that family stress is mainly caused by child and elderly care, whilst work stress is primarily caused by lack of resources and perceived unfair criticisms. Except that women are demonstrated to experience greater stress than men due to the lack of a supportive spouse. Reddy et al. (2010) revealed that work family conflicts are produced by the factors of family size, age of children, work hours, and social support availability. Fatima and Sahibzada (2012) showed that work-life balance is positively affected by partner support, colleague support and job resources, but negatively affected by unfair criticism. Mendis and Weerakody (2014) categorized work-life balance into two aspects i.e. work-centered life and family-centered life in measuring work-life balance. Perera and Opatha (2014) indicated that work-life balance is driven by time management, nature of spouse, and understanding of existing work-family balance strategies. Poulos and Sudarsan (2014) categorized the elements of work-life balance into the four categories of individual, organizational, societal, and other factors. Societal factors include child care arrangements, spousal support, family support, social support, personal and family demands, dependent care issues, and family quarrel. SareenaUmma and Sahana (2020) demonstrated that work-life balance is negatively affected by workload and childcare responsibilities, but is positively affected by social support. Jeyarathnam (2017) showed that the work-life balance of female professionals is mainly influenced by the nature of their job, workload, job environment, organizational support, and family domain; the study’s correlation analysis confirmed the positive relationship between the five determinants. In the context of academic sector employees in Sri Lanka, their work-life balance is negatively affected by the factors of child care responsibility and elderly dependency, but positively affected by job resources, partner/spouse support and colleague support, and; the factor of working hours was shown to pose no significant effect (Pathiranage and Pathiranage,2020).

Based on all the above evidences, various determinants of work-life balance have been identified. They can generally be grouped into five categories namely individual factors, organizational factors, societal factors, environmental factors, and other factors. The societal factors of WLB mainly indicated by (Elliott, 2003; Fatima and Sahibzada, 2012; Helmlle, Botero and Seibold, 2014; Reddy et al., 2010; Pathiranage and Pathiranage,2020). This current study lists all the societal factors affecting work-life balance as identified in the literature review based on the underpinning theories and empirical evidences.

**Work-Life Balance and Job Performance**

Generally, work-life balance has been positively linked to both job performance and organizational performance (Harrington and Ladge, 2009; Parkes and Langford, 2008; Kim, 2014). Work-life imbalance has been proven to cause weaker performance and absenteeism (Frone, Yardley, and Markel, 1997). Work-life balance or imbalance can affect job performance positively or negatively (Soomro, Breitenecker and Shah, 2017). Wambui (2017) also concluded that work-life balance significantly determines an employee’s job performance. Varanasi and Ahmad (2015) asserted the

**Societal Factors of Work-Life Balance and Job Performance**

Poulose and Sudarsan (2014) identified the significant societal factors to work-life balance as child care arrangements, spousal support, familial support, social support, personal and family demands, dependent care issues, and family quarrel. Choudhary and Shrivastava (2015) stated child care, parental care, and family support as the societal factors that affect work-life balance. Sareena Umma and Sahana (2020) found that work-life balance is negatively affected by childcare responsibility, and positively affected by social support. On a similar note, Pathiranage and Pathiranage (2020) identified that the work-life balance of Sri Lankan academicians is negatively affected by child care and elderly care, but positively affected by spousal support under the societal factor. Several other studies also identified the correlation between societal factors and work-life balance (e.g., Elliott, 2003; Fatima and Sahibzada, 2012; Helmle, Botero and Seibold, 2014; Reddy et al., 2010). Since WLB had a significant relationship with JP, these societal factors also had a relationship with JP.

Further, Partner (spouse) and parents (family) of administrative officers in Sri Lanka are the significant factors which influence on job performance (Nilashini and Sangeevanie, 2018). And family support boost creative job performance (Karatepe, 2016). But the association between family demands with female employees’ job performance do not have significant relationship (Abolade, 2019). While childcare demands with performance of working mothers have negative relationship, further this negative relationship moderated by team support to positive and significant (Damoah and Ntsiful, 2015). Childcare influence the working mothers work performance, since childcare burdens lead to exhaustion, harm of attention and time (Meier, Musick, Flood, and Dunifon, 2014).

Based on the above, the researchers consider the prominence of societal factors as the factors of work life balance and under that (10) items were identified such as Child care arrangements, Family support, Spouse support, Social support, Nature of the spouse, Childcare responsibilities, Personal and family demands, Elderly dependency, Family quarrel and Family role strain for measuring the societal factors of WLB.
Further for measuring job performance there is no widespread dimensions for a particular context. Tasks, duties and responsibilities vary between professions even in the same organization. Therefore, future researchers can address this gap by determining the suitable measures for job performance for different professions in different sectors in different countries (Ramawickrama et al., 2019). This study bridged this gap by focusing on academic and administrative heads of universities in together and identified theoretically and empirically 68 indicators then group into seven dimensions to measure job performance (SareenaUmma, Kengatheran and Velnampy, 2021) i.e. nature of work, knowledge and skills, achievement factors, adaptive factors, contents performance factors, job-oriented factors, and disciplinary factors.

The present study reviewed notable studies on societal factors of WLB and job performance based on prevailing works of literature and subsequently document possible directions for future studies. Hence, the current study enhances the existing body of knowledge on the topic of societal factors of work-life balance and job performance by addressing the literature gap and providing endless paths for future revisions.

### Methodology

#### Sample Selection

The academic and administrative heads who were working in north east universities in Sri Lanka considered as the sample of the study. There are three hundred and thirty-nine (339), that embraced from university of Jaffna including Vavuniya campus, Eastern university of Sri Lanka including Trincomalee campus and South Eastern university of Sri Lanka. There were two hundred and fifty-seven (257) usable responses for this study.

#### Sources of Data

A structured questionnaire was utilized to collect the data for this study by utilizing a cross sectional survey approach. The questionnaire was sent to all respondents by using Google form.

#### Tools used in this Study

Structural equation modelling (SEM) with Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 23.0 were used to analyse the data for this study.

### 6.4 Conceptual Framework

![Conceptual Framework Diagram]

(Source: Developed for this study)
Hypothesis of the Study

H_A: There is a positive relationship between the societal factors of WLB and job performance of academic and administrative heads of the North East Universities in Sri Lanka.

Data Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Reliability and Validity of Data

Two levels of analysis including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural model. CFA was performed using AMOS to obtain additional information on the validity and the reliability of the research instrument used for the study.

The confirmatory factor analysis and reliability and validity of data were done. All factor loading, shown in Table 1: indicated values of more than 0.5, confirming that the items, included in the constructs, reported high reliability. Further, to establish validity and reliability of the constructs, Cronbach alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR) as well as average variance extracted (AVE) testing were employed.

All values of FL, CA, AVE and CR were above the threshold level, further analysis was carried out, with statistical confirmation of validity and reliability.

Table 1: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Reliability and Validity of Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>FL</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>CR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOCF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCF2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.802</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCF3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.791</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCF4</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCF5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.678</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCF7</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.691</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCF9</td>
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<td>0.732</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPKS</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JPKS1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPKS2</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JPKS3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.791</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPKS4</td>
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<td>0.809</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JPKS5</td>
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<td>0.815</td>
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<td>JPKS6</td>
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<td>0.763</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>JPKS7</td>
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<td>0.626</td>
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<td>JPKS8</td>
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<td>JPAF</td>
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<tr>
<td>JPAF3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.795</td>
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</table>
First Order CFA for Societal Factors (SOCF)

Figure 1 shows the results of first-order CFA measurement model, indicating that the six items such as SOCF2, SOCF3, SOCF4, SOCF5, SOCF7, and SOCF9 confirmed the composite indicators of SOCF whereas SOCF1, SOCF6, SOCF8 and SOCF10 were dropped since their standardised factor loading were below 0.50. The model fit the data in an acceptable level as follows: with Chi-square (df=9)=24.807; p=0.003; Chi-square/df =2.756; RMR= 0.018;
GFI=0.968; TLI=0.962; CFI=0.977; and RMSEA=0.083. The results showed that goodness-of-fit indices such as RMR, GFI, TLI and CFI significantly passed the cut-off value, including RMSEA of 0.083.

Figure 1: First Order CFA for Societal Factors (SOCF)

**Second Order CFA for Job Performance (JOBP)**

Figure 2 shows the results of second-order CFA, indicating that the seven components confirmed the composite indicators of JOBP such as JPNW, JPKS, JPAF, JPAD, JPCP, JPJO and JPDF. The model fit the data in an acceptable level as follows: with Chi-square (df=1271)=2226.703; p=0.000; Chi-square/df =1.752; RMR= 0.065; GFI=0.745; TLI=0.883; CFI=0.888; and RMSEA=0.054. The results showed that goodness-of-fit indices such as RMR, GFI, TLI and CFI significantly passed the cut-off value, including RMSEA of 0.054. The most important sub-scales in Job Performance were JPAD and JPJO due to its highest loading amongst the seven sub-scales.
Figure 2: Second-Order CFA for Job Performance (JOBP)

**Path Analysis for Testing Hypotheses**

The path analysis is the second main step of SEM analysis after determining the fit of the measurement model. Conventionally the relative chi-square is recommended to be less than 5.0, whereas GFI, AGFI, CFI, IFI, NFI and TLI should be greater than 0.90. Similarly, RMSEA and RMR are considered to be a good fit when the indices are less than 0.08 (Byrne, 2010; Hair et. al., 2010). Baumgartner and Homburg (1996) and Doll et al. (1994) also recommend a good fit if GFI and AGFI are greater than 0.80. Further, Hair et al. (2010) suggest that if any three to four of the above goodness-of-fit indices are within the stipulated threshold, then the structural model fits and further analysis can be conducted to test the hypotheses. The last part involves the confirmation of proposed relationship of the study based on the research hypothesis.
The goodness-of-fit indices of this model were computed based on the maximum likelihood (ML) method. As shown in Figure 4, the chi-square was significant with $\chi^2$ (df= 41)=87.701; $p=0.000$; $\chi^2$/df=2.139; GFI=0.939; TLI=0.955; CFI=0.966; and RMR=0.023. In addition, the RMSEA was 0.067, which was less than 0.08. Thus, the structural model in this study fits the goodness-of-fit indices to be used for hypothesis testing and further analysis.

Figure 4: The Structural Model of the Study with Standardised Regression Weights

Consequently, unstandardized and standardised regression weights in the hypothesised path model were obtained to investigate the path analysis, the result of which is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Unstandardized and Standardised Regression Weight in the Hypothesised Path Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
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<tr>
<td>JOB_PERF &lt;--- SOC_Factors</td>
<td>.384</td>
<td>.560</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>7.051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings of the study

The analysis of structural model shows that societal factors of WLB contributed significantly to job performance with the regression weight $R^2$ of 31% and societal factor of WLB had a significant impact with job performance ($\beta = -0.560$, $p=0.000<0.05$), supported with the hypothesis of the study. The finding is in line with the previous studies have also demonstrated a significant
relationship between societal factors and job performance. Accordingly, partner (spouse) and parents (family) support of administrative officers in Sri Lanka are the significant factors which influence on their job performance ((Perera et al., 2019). And family support boosts creative job performance (Karatepe, 2016). But the association between family demands with female employees’ job performance do not have significant relationship (Abolade, 2019). While Childcare influence the working mothers work performance, since childcare burdens lead to exhaustion, harm of attention and time (Meier, 2014). While childcare demands with performance of working mothers have negative relationship, further this negative relationship moderated by team support in the family (e.g. family, spouse and social support) to positive and significant (Damoah and Ntsiful, 2015). In societal factors most of the items are in the familial background, if one employee has a supportive system in the family side, the employee can manage the all family demand then contribute to job performance.

The research model and findings of the study would be applicable to the Sri Lankan state university academic and administrative heads on the issues of WLB and JP. Administrators of these organizations could sort out the WLB issues by aligning these societal factors of WLB and improve their employees job performance. This research is limited only to academic heads and administrative heads of North and Eastern universities in Sri Lanka. Hence, it disregarded other service category of employees. So, this study has generalizability issues as it was conducted only academic heads and administrative heads of universities in Sri Lanka, Future researchers may take this into account in expanding the study by using different sampling techniques, different factors of WLB and conducted in other service sectors as well as other service categories. Also, further studies might consider comparative studies with other service categories or provinces, national wise and international wise.

**Conclusion**

The outcomes of the study directed to the conclusion that societal factors of WLB have a significant impact on job performance. Hence, this study provides valuable insights and guidance for high education sector in Sri Lanka. The findings of the study will also serve as a guide to academic heads and administrative heads in universities to augment their performance. Furthermore, this study is beneficial for policymakers as it discovered the societal factors such as family support, spouse support, social support and nature of the spouse lead a better performance of Sri Lankan University’s academic and administrative heads. Therefore, policymakers and government (UGC and ministry) can direct the universities by the way of planning and implementation, decision-making, and performance evaluation process to consider the societal factors of work life balance to enhance the job performance.

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