

Work-Life Balance: Work-Life Balance: Implications For Employees At Unam Rundu Campus During Covid-19

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Abstract

The focus of this study was to explore the impacts of the COVID-19 on the work-life balance of employees at the University of Namibia Rundu Campus. The study was conducted by choosing 10 participants who were randomly selected according to the departments where they work. The data generation processes was obtained through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and narratives to get insight and quality data. During interviews, open ended questions were used and other questions arose naturally through the process. The semi-structured interviews were used to enable the researchers to get indepth information by probing participants' responses. This assisted to elaborate on incomplete answers by being flexible and getting clarification on the experiences of workers during the challenging times of COVID-19.

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Participants were grouped in 2 strata comprised of teaching and non-teaching staffs. The participants were given questions ahead of group discussions to be aware of the topic concerned and to make them feel comfortable during discussions. The narrative approach also called 'story telling' was used by the researchers to give voice to the participants to elaborate on their own experiences. Thus asking the respondents questions about their understanding of work-life balance and how the COVID-19 impacted their lives added valuable data to the research. The overall findings of the research show that the COVID-19 pandemic has actually added more pressure to the already strained situation of the employees and has some how compromised on the work quality. The findings also revealed that dealing with pandemics especially those that restrict movements of people is a complex task. Therefore, the experiences of coping with the situation differ among individual employees and organizations because every employee's situation is unique and each organization experiences the daily challenges differently in various contexts.

Keywords: *Work-life balance, COVID-19, Pandemic, Well-being, Organisational support.*

Introduction

The novel coronavirus has not only entirely brought the social-economy of the world to a standstill, but has specifically affected many sectors of society. The corona virus has changed lifestyles and many individuals and organizations alike have adopted a new way of proceeding with activities. Three of the major sectors, work, school and family life are all happening in homes. Many working couples find it difficult to balance between work responsibilities and family life. This is mainly due to the fact that they are more involved in one role than the other, as a result compromising on the quality of one of them. A number of authors have defined work-life balance in different ways but the bottom line is that all the definitions point in one direction which has to do with a situation where one is striving to attend to both professional and family activities.

Kelliher, C. Richardson, J. Boiarintseva, G. (2019), state that work-life is considered to describe the relationship between an individual's professional responsibilities and his/her private life, with satisfactory work-life balance referring to the preservation of time devoted to private life. Brough, P. Timms, C. O'Driscoll, M. Kalliath, T. Siu, OL. & Sit. C. (2014), describe work-life balance as individual perception of the compatibility of different activities of the individual and the support of self development and achievement of ones' life priority. Amidst the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, work-life balance and work-life conflict have become major issues for workers. It has indeed become a challenge especially for married couples to perform their office duties and responsibilities at home

(Hassan, Abdullah, & Ismail, 2017). They have to manage children, manage the housework and continue on their office duties. A balance has to be stricken for them to move on with their normal life. Babhin (2015) suggested that improvements in people management practices, especially work time and work location flexibility, and the development of supportive managers, contribute to increased work-life balance. (Karkouljian, Srour, & Sinan, 2016), stated that balancing work and family demands is a struggle that almost all employees deal with on a daily basis, consequently incurring high levels of job-related stress which can negatively influence employees and organizations. Although, remote workplaces reduce boundaries between work and personal life, it causes personal stress to spread to work, and ultimately resulting in burnout. Employees experience "mix of business and home life", which causes troubles for both managers and workers in terms of long-term wellbeing (Peasley, Hochstein, Britton, Srivastava, & Stewart, 2020). While workplace stressors intrude into personal life disturbing mental health, the reverse dynamics are also noticed.

In his definition, Delecta. P, (2011), says work-life balance is an individual's ability to meet their work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities. Similarly, Lockwood (2003), defined work-life balance as a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. Many things in life such as individuals' family, work and organization, social environment are the determinants of work life balance. Although the concept 'balance' in this case could be taken to imply equating, or giving 'equal' attention to work

and life, this does not necessarily have to be the case. Various factors will determine which activity one gives more attention to, compared to the other. Some of these factors could be the type and urgency of the activity to be done, individual preferences, cultural factors, environmental factors or even political influences. Most importantly, it depends on the perspective of the defining individual or institution. These factors could also lead to a situation where a conflict arises in paying a fair attention to either the work or life activity leading to non-accomplishment of one of them. Congruently, this conflict usually arises because of the inability to meet the demand for work and family harmoniously causing them to be more involved with one role and have difficulty in performing the other role (Sirgy, M. & Lee, DJ. 2018). Babhin (2015) stated that a posited benefit from working from home is that it allows workers to schedule their work around other commitments. Both parents do more childcare and spend more time with children when they work from home, hence the gender gap in childcare is reduced. Brough (2020) also indicated that specific job demands can actually enhance levels of work–life balance. Working from home has generated more intensive family interaction and increased the interdependence of family members (Richard & Settersten., 2020). There is a mixture of views concerning the way people’s work-life balance has been affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. The present study was therefore aimed to carefully examine the experiences of workers at Rundu Campus on COVID-19, to understand how these workers negotiate their daily activities and, to explore the effects of this pandemic on the workers’s work-life balance.

Theoretical framework

This study followed the interpretivist theoretical framework in order to examine the implications of the COVID-19 on the employees. The reason being that the researchers wanted to find out the social reality on the ground pertaining to the experiences of employees at UNAM Rundu campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study explored through interviews, focus group discussions and narratives in order to obtain responses from participants.

Research Methodology

Research design

Examining the implications of the Covid-19 on the workers at UNAM was the focus of this study. As this deals with human experiences and their interpretation of the world, the research moved towards a qualitative research design that is descriptive, interpretive and explorative (Vos, 2002, as cited by Ponelis, 2015). The interpretive method and the phenomenological approach were selected as the researchers were dealing with lecturers and administrative staff's experiences of teaching and working from home during the pandemic. This has provided insight into the experiences of a chosen group of people (Greef, 2011), the staff working at UNAM.

Population

The population focused on lecturers and administrative staff. These were selected because of the interest and belief that they will provide authentic

data for this type of study, as their work can be continued remotely (from office and home).

Sampling

The selection of participants was done using stratified random sampling method. The criteria to be included in the study was that a participant should be either a lecturer from one of the three departments (Education, Nursing and Management Science), or should be a campus administrative staff. In total, 10 participants were nominated as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Profile of the participants.

	Profiles Names	Qualification	Years of working experience	Gender	Role	Age
1	Kiwi	PhD	6-10	M	Lecturer	30-40
2	Pear	Masters	6-10	M	Lecturer	40-41
3	Mango	Masters	0-5	M	Lecturer	41-50
4	Cherry	Masters	21-30	F	Administration	41-50
5	Pineapple	Masters	6-10	F	Lecturer	30-40
6	Orange	Masters	0-5	F	Lecturer	51-60
7	Strawberry	Honors	0-5	M	Lecturer	20-30
8	Avocado	Masters	10-15	M	Lecturer	40-50
9	Mango	Honors	0-5	F	Administration	30-40
10	Lemon	Masters	6-10	F	Administration	30-40

Research instrument and data collection method

To gain in-depth insight into the study, individual interviews, focus group discussions, and narratives (telling stories) were conducted. To generate data, the following questions were asked:

- 1) What do you understand by work-life balance?
- 2) Elaborate on your experiences on work-life balance as you work from home during COVID -19.
- 3) What is the effect of COVID-19 on work life balance?
- 4) What do you think about the organizational support?

In the focus group interviews, participants were assigned to four different groups. The first three groups consisted of educators in the faculties of Education, Economics, and Nursing while the administrative staff formed the last group. The reason for doing focus group interviews was to obtain multiple viewpoints and perceptions by generating a large amount of concentrated data in a short period of time. Wessel (2008) indicates that the focus group interviews are useful because they communicate a willingness to listen, leaving the participants feeling empowered and supported in a group discussion.

Data analysis

Thematic coding analysis was used to analyze data. Braun and Clarke (2006) indicate that thematic analysis organizes and describes data set in detail and; furthermore it interprets various aspects of the research topic. Inductive analysis moving from specific data to general categories was utilized. After generating data from interviews, the researchers prepared and organized the

data (Schumacher & McMillan, 2014) to facilitate coding. The data was then transcribed into themes to make sense of it. Thereafter, the categorized data were described and developed into patterns to get more insight. Individual and focus group interviews were analyzed, synthesized, summarized and interpreted. During the narratives, the researchers focused on the context and quotations of participants by arranging the participants' statements logically aiming to minimize mistakes and give their true meaning. This was followed by framing the narrative in a naturalistic context and phenomenological experiences of participants presenting their own language (Schumacher & McMillan, 2014). This enhances the understanding of this study and extends the findings to future research studies and practices.

Results and Discussion

The data from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and narratives are presented in the following paragraphs. Four main themes were identified to answer the research questions. Each theme is supported by verbatim quotes from the participants. Slavin (2007) alludes that it is of vital importance to use direct quotations from the participants in data analysis to elucidate and corroborate the arguments.

THEME1: Staff understanding of work-life balance

The respondents' understanding of work-life varied in their answers to the interview questions. Most of their responses were based on the management of time spent between work and personal/private life. The respondents were

asked the question: What do you know about work-life balance? Although the respondents' years of working experience varied from 0 to 30 years, it was clear from the answers that the years of working experience had no influence on their understanding of work-life balance. This was illustrated in the response given by Cherry despite having many years of working experience (21–30 years), which was not very different from that of Mango, Kiwi, Pear, and Orange, whose working experience ranged between 0–10 years. Pineapple on the other hand who had 6–10 years working experience, elaborated a bit more regarding the understanding of work-life balance: Pineapple: “It is the way a person is able to balance his or her time and energy between work and free time. How a person is managing his personal life activities such as sports, family life, spiritual and work activities”(Probe) Are you mindful when this happens? Pineapple: Trully speaking, it is difficult to realise that. There are times where one is very busy trying to meet deadlines with work and forget even to eat. You are very concerned with the results that you have to present and you leave your office late and arrive home just to sleep. This can go on for weeks until you realise that you have not spend time with your family for some time.

Mango: “About how to manage time spent at and outside of work”. (Probe) Can you be more explicit in the way you manage that. Mango: We have 24 hours in a day: 8 hours to work, 8 hours to sleep and 8 hours for other duties. There are times where we take unfinished work at home and we continue to work or wake up at night to finish it. Sometimes the children demand your attention and you are not able to be there for them. So for me work-life balance involves managing all of these parameters of life. Kiwi on the other

hand stated that work-life balance is about the management of your personal life in relation to your work life. Literally it is a tradeoff between the two. Pear: I presume it relates to how we manage our private life in relation to work/career. Cherry: “The way my family life, my own life is being influenced by my work”. Orange: It is a situation where attention has to be paid to both private life and official activities.

The common understanding of the work-life balance as expressed by the respondents shows that people know that neither private life nor official activities have to be neglected. Regardless of any situation, some form of attention needs to be paid to both whether equally or unequally as long as both activities are carried out. There is however a gap which necessitates another study to assess the extent of work-life balance so that it can be determined which one receives more attention than the other in certain circumstances.

THEME 2: What are your experiences on working from home during covid-19?

Working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic has been an exercise in patience for many, but the transition to home-based work could also have implications for workplace design once it's safe to return to an office. Despite apparent similarities between the perceptions of workers while working from home, their attitudes or approaches towards challenges and advantages are diverse. For example, if for some workers it is exciting to work from home giving them more time as they avoid the morning and evening routine of commuting in taxis and waiting for the next taxi, it is not

the case for others who find it very difficult as they are unable to shift from official work to house chores. Some of the participants are having challenges in terms of the use of technology but once they get the required materials they are able to work. This is illustrated from the following responses from the respondents: Avocado: “Teaching online is sometimes a challenge, due to connectivity issues. Live sessions are interrupted, students loose focus and lessons have to be repeated. This situation will not allow us to finish the syllabus. But it also comes with opportunities such as: Utilization of technology which is improving day by day. Especially, when it comes to using Moodle.” It also appears that there is always a clash between priorities and caring for children as corroborated by the response below: Orange: “Although all the activities are now taking place in one place, it has actually become more strenuous for me because both are competing for priority and quality time. There is also no time limit to my work activities when I am working from home. However, to some extent, I am able to hit two birds with one stone.” For some lecturers who are used to projecting lessons, it actually did not change anything because the set up is almost similar: Mango: “It really did not change anything for us in academic because our work is not office bound. We have big classes and we often use projectors and microphones in big halls. We always encourage the students to be acquainted to different softwares while they are doing the practical work and assignments.

(Maria, Christine, Carlo, & Evie, 2018), opined that work from home is the result of modern technology, which increased credibility i.e. increase usage

of internet for web conferencing, voice mail, fax which makes work easier and simpler. The other challenge that some of the respondents have raised is unannounced visitors. There is no protocol to follow as people can just come to visit anytime especially some relatives as long as they know that you are at home. This is illustrated in the following responses from the respondents: Kiwi: “The family environment is one of them, as members of the family tend to disturb, infrastructure is not always available. They have only provided us with laptops but without any other support, other organizations bought wifi-for their staffs at home, moreover, the dongle they provided needs to be paid for and not all of us can afford. The good side was that you decide when to do your lesson plans which is a very good initiative. (Probe) Can you tell me more about family disturbance? “ Eish, when you are working from home, you cannot stop people from visiting you. Especially for the elderly people. The aunties know that you are at home and they come from the village and you cannot tell them that you are busy. They will not understand you. It is the same as the children who are not going to the crèche, for them mummy is at home and must give them attention”. This was also the view portrayed by Pear: “It is a challenge to work from home given that our primary school going children attend school in alternate days. This makes it difficult to work from home because one cannot concentrate and children need attention All these negatively affected the quality of work and the productivity. It is difficult to monitor a worker's effort at home, especially when occasionally being interrupted by private responsibilities and family members (Gajendra & Harrison ,2007 as cited by Shareena & Mahammad, 2020) Some of the respondents were of the view that working from home

weighs a lot on people's budgets as they are permanently working from home and use bathrooms, water and electricity. Cherry: "It is not easy to adapt to the new set up. It comes with advantages and also with difficulties. We need to have all the softwares that are required to do the work. Expenses also increase because everyone is at home and we are consuming more water, electricity and we need to have internet for online teachings. It becomes difficult to do all activities from the same place. And it is also tiring and sometimes we are lazy to wake up as there is no one who monitors on your time. In short there are positive outcomes and at the same time shortfalls." Pineapple: It is challenging when everything is done from home. The groceries are finishing faster, using more electricity and water. You need a fast and reliable internet provider. You cannot stop people from visiting you. Interruptions and noise from the children in the area.

THEME 3: Effects of the COVID -19 on work-life balance

The data revealed that there is a work life fusion of the effects of the COVID-19 on the work-life balance. The employees face different challenges especially those to do with technology. The answers given below are an illustration to the findings: Mango: "Covid-19 has reduced my outside work time as I spent most of my time at work." Probe: How come? "The online thing has increased our work load". The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affect the work-life balance that we could not already control well. To meet the deadlines and ensure that we provide good quality work, we had to stay at work to learn the new softwares. Lemon:"The coming of COVID-19 has definitely changed completely my daily routine." In normal

times, I already have to deal with long queues of students and endless phone calls. (Probe) would you please elaborate more on that? Eish! You know that students registration process is already a headache. Sometimes we have to work until we deal with every individual who is in the queue. Now that we have to work from home, the office phone number is linked to our cellphones. Imagine you have to deal with calls almost every single minute for different matters, not naming the students, parents and even colleagues' frustrations. Everyone wants to be served and satisfied. We were told to attend to every single call that we receive. This situation has ruined my life as my home has changed into a calling center. I sleep late and I do not have time to attend to other activities beside work. I pray for this situation to end so that things go back to normal. This has not been easy because of the pressure on us. Kiwi: "Obviously, the effect of COVID-19 Pandemic means we have to move from face to face to virtual learning, and that has costed immensely as we have to acquire both hardware and software at our own expenses. It has made all of us to be very proactive because challenges are immense and the majority of us are outside the technology era age. The quality of teaching I am giving now is way much less compared to face to face. (Probe) can you be more explicit? Kiwi: The interaction with student is not effective, some students think they are on holidays. They do not revise their notes and they do not ask questions as you teach them. We need to prepare the lessons, upload them on the system, upload the assignments that is time consuming. Avocado: "It has changed the routine of doing things, especially at work because we now have to incorporate blended learning." It has tremendously changed my way of working because, one has to become

creative to make the online lessons interesting for students. (Probe) what do you mean by blended learning? Avocado: We have the advantage of combining the traditional learnig and the online learning in a way that they compliment each other. Cherry: It is not easy to adapt to the new set up. Probe: Why do you think so? “It comes with advantages and also with difficulties. We need to have all the software that are required to do the work”. Expenses also increase because everyone is at home and we are consuming more water, electricity and we need to have internet for online teachings. It becomes difficult to do all activities from the same place. It is also tiring and sometimes we are lazy to wake up as there is no one who monitors on your time. In short there are positive outcomes and at the same time shortfalls. Although ICT enables employees to take home paid work, thereby meeting demands, but, in a negative sense, it means that work invades the family domain (Diane, 2003 as cited by Koekemoer & de Wet, 2016) . Pear: The effect is minimal on my private life but work is now more intense and demanding. There are protocols to be observed on a daily basis, which has made working almost regimental. Strawberry: “I have been a victim of prioritizing my work over my private life for more than 20 years at the UNAM, as a result I have not enjoyed my private life.” It has changed my way of working from a collective set up which I have been used to a remote teaching. It has also challenged my intellectual thinking capacity in meeting the new demands, even if I teach a practical subject.” Orange: COVID has actually put more pressure on me because I have to carry out both work and life activities in one place and that is at home. This has put more stress on me because there is now no time limit in my performance of

any of the activities since they overlap. The environment of performing my work activities has suddenly changed as my home has now become the classroom environment for the first time and as a result many times the quality of my work activities is compromised.” Hence, successfully work and family life is one of the changes facing current individual workers (Halpern, 2005). Pineapple: I was totally lost. I could not have my lesson done on time. I had to prepare and then try to connect and teach on line. I spent more time trying to familiarize with the software that are used to teach on line. This has completely changed my schedules and there are some events that I could not attend. Sometimes I even forget to check children work as they are all time at home. We are used to take them for extra classes and only meet them after work. Working from home pushed me to do different things at the same time. The difficulty was now to divide the time between work and house chores. It happened sometimes that I totally focused on house chores as if it was a holyday. There are days where I will start early on the laptop and only remember that I need to prepare this or that for children and husband. What was once, considered impossible (working from home), is now possible and easily becomes expected of employees. Furthermore, this also pressurizes us to work during the weekends. This was the view of Hoonakker (2014) who found that Information Communication Technology (ICT) has actually obscured the borders between work and family life because it has made it increasingly easier to work in other areas other than the workplace. The responses from the staff members exhibit that there is a conflict or rather a mismatch between private work and work-life balance. For example taking office work to home which gives them less leverage to

have to spend some quality time with the family. Additionally, ICT is somewhat a challenge to those who are not well vested in using the particular software. Whereby pressure is put on them to complete tasks required.

Theme 4 Organizational support during COVID-19

The organization one works for demands on his time, efforts and mental capacity. In order to increase the organizational efficiency managers should focus on improving the working conditions of the staffs. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, most employees at the University of Namibia, Rundu Campus, found themselves performing their official work from their homes. This was unprecedented and just like any other organization, the University had to transition employees to the work from home environment. With regard to the kind of support UNAM offers to its employees, a dichotomy of responses was obtained. Mango: “I think it is doing a little probably because of lack of resources”. Kiwi: “They have only provided us with laptops but without any other support”. Pear: “None”. Orange: “Not much because four of us are sharing one small office which makes it almost impossible to teach online while the other colleagues also want to fulfill their official tasks from there. Therefore, I was forced to put up a WIFI to be able to work from home which is a bit better”. From the answers above it is important for all employers to consider aspects of job redesign and restructuring to control and minimize exposure to risk, stress, and other negative health outcomes. Although transition to telework or other alternate work arrangements has been beneficial to some, allowing for continued productivity, however, it has also caused additional stress to employees; and, in some ways, resulted in limited quantity and quality of organizational

support (Bentley, T. Teo, S. McLeod, L. Tan, F. Bosua, R. & Gloet, M. 2016).

In contrast to the previous responses Cherry and Pineapple had a different view. Cherry: “The institution has been supportive with awareness programmes. Emails reminding us of the precautions to take. Workshopping and trainings have been devised to help us familiarize with the online systems used to communicate and to work from home. We have been given modems to be able to use the internet and communicate. Our office numbers have been linked to our phones”. Pineapple: “We have been timeously informed about the protective measures that we have to take during the lockdown and curfew. A new time table has been done to allow us to work from home and to be in office when others are not around. A task team on COVID 19 has been put in place. They have put signs on doors and corridors reminding us of the gestures and attitudes that we must have during this period. Workshops and training have been set up to help us adapt to the new working system. The organization has provided for us the necessary materials we can use to adapt to the new working environment”. The workers responses mentioned above are in line with organizational support theory (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011), which has been found to be related to worker health and safety outcomes, it is especially critical that organizations value and show support to workers during difficult times.

Summary of the Findings

The findings of this study reveal that the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic in the world has disturbed the normal functioning of countries and institutions. Many employers had embraced the policy of creating conducive environments for working from home. However the implementation of this policy shows that, employees, who have a pivotal role to play in this implementation process, are faced with various challenges which are affecting their work-life balance. Furthermore, the findings reveal that these employees share positive and negative experiences when working from home. The summary of the findings focuses on the following:

1. What do you understand by work-life balance?
2. Elaborate on your experiences on work-life balance as you work from home during COVID -19.
3. What is the effect of COVID-19 on work life balance?
4. What do you think about the organizational support?

1.Staffs' understanding of work-life balance

The findings of this study reveal that the employees of the University of Namibia, Rundu campus have an understanding of what work-life balance is, however every one defines it according to the way they are affected by work and personal life. All the respondents indicated that the concept of work-life balance has to do with the allocation of time for both official work and private life. This is also the view of Lockwood (2003) , who states that work/life balance is the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities. Furthermore, the study proved that work

experience had no significant influence in the understanding of what work-life balance is. The answers provided show that many things in life are the determinants of work life balance. Some of these determinants are: individuals, family, work and organization and social environment.

2. Experiences and challenges

When asked about their experiences about working from home, the findings revealed that workers have various views. Their views were related to their personal knowledge, daily experiences and different circumstances arising from the area where they live. It appeared that working from home has challenges and advantages.

Some prefer to work from home because it helps them to gain time. They do not have to wake up very early to drive to work. The hours that they always spend in commuting to and from work can be used to complete their tasks and take care of their family responsibilities. For this group working from home allows them to increase their productivity. Similarly, Amabile & Kramer (2013), found that work from home is helping the employees to balance and differentiate their office work with their routine work. The study also added that work from home saves time, increases the productivity, finishes the targets on time and also helps the employees to give time for their personal life.

On contrary, others were of the view that working from home was not easy as they had to shift between the two responsibilities. It was also found that

they had challenges in terms of the use of technology as the COVID-19 pandemic came as a surprise and the lockdown had to be implemented. It was hard for them to be motivated and set boundaries as working from home leads to *overworking* from home. They rarely take breaks, and they're unable to turn off their job responsibilities at the end of the day. There were so many disruptions thus affecting the quality of service. Depending on the interactions between work and private life, working from home could be more or less favorable to overall life satisfaction (Bai, Gopalan, Beutell, & Ren, 2021). Another aspect that came from the respondents is that work from home need high speed internet connectivity and classes will be effective only if there is uninterrupted internet connectivity. Few respondents were of the opinion that teaching can be effective only if there is a face to face interaction between the teachers and the students. Majority of the respondents opined that in order to work from home, one should have a quiet environment, comfortable space, and all the other facilities which are very much required to work from home.

3. Effects of the COVID -19 on work-life balance

The findings revealed that the trying times of COVID-19 gravely affected the staff work-life balance. The crisis caused alterations in working routines, working hours and working places and the employees well being. Those who were never used to technology found it difficult to adapt with working on line. They had to spend more time then usual as they had first to learn different softwares. In order to comply with instructions from management

and meet deadlines, they spent more time on work than their own activities. Having to work from home blurred the line between professional and personal life and made it harder for many employees to maintain a work-life balance. Another factor that has exacerbated the situation is the closing of schools and daycare centers. The parents with children at home, especially the younger were really affected as they had to play double roles. Qian and Fuller (2020) also stated that having younger children at home (in their workspaces) and in need of extra care and attention to education that institutions could no longer provide likely created new role burdens for many workers during the pandemic.

4. Organisational support

In this study, there were two distinct views on the organizational support offered to staff. The first one expressed that the employees have received support from the University according to the available resources since the pandemic came by surprise. The first thing that was done through the human resources was to draft a rotational schedule for the use of office space, following the COVID-19 protocols. The support received from the human resources management plans helped the workers to adapt to the new working conditions and to continue to be proactive during the transition. This view is in line with Oludoya & Omonijo (2020) who stated that work/life programs require support from senior management as the quality of an employee's personal and family life impacts work quality. Well organized work/life initiatives promote employee commitment and improve productivity and decrease the likelihood of unethical business practices. The second view was the perception that the institution offered either too little or no support at all

as the pandemic came as a surprise and there was no adequate strategic plan concerning a crisis of this type.

Conclusion

This study has investigated the implications of COVID -19 on UNAM Rundu campus employees' work-life balance. The overall findings show that the employees have an understanding of what work-life balance is, and despite the prevailing situation, they strive to carry out their official duties, as well as attend to their private life. The findings also revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic has actually added more pressure to the already strained situation of the employees and has somehow compromised on the work quality. Additionally, it came out that the home environment is not a suitable place for official work. Finally, the study showed that more effort must be done to increase the Organisational support for the employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Brooks, Wedster, Smith, Woodlands, Wesly, & Greenberg (2020), say government officials need to begin adjusting the thinking from one size fits all as early as 14 days into a global crisis, and assess the relative risk on the basis of various factors that may link to variability in risk perception and psychological distress. The work pressure of UNAM Rundu campus employees is a concern which needs to be taken care of because the COVID-19 pandemic is not the only one which will add more pressure to the already emotionally strained staff. Definitely more situations like this will arise in future. Therefore, there is need for employees at UNAM Rundu campus to be regularly taken through emotional intelligence sessions to

relieve the strain for them to be able to continue functioning during any other future crisis. Moreover, it is also necessary to strengthen the campus wellness programme in order to identify individuals who are at risk for psychological distress and who may need early mental health support.

Additionally, there is need to create a campus emergency preparedness committee, which will meet regularly to assess relative risks that may lead to risk attacks and psychologically distress of employees. This committee can also be proactive in discussing the early warning systems and to put in place an emergency preparedness plan. Although the COVID-19 pandemic affected all employees, the impact did not affect all of them in the same way and cannot be generalized. The means to cope during this pandemic varied among the employees. While some had enough resources to cope with the situation, others were more affected due to insufficient resources and therefore felt the impact more. The researchers suggest that managers need to have open discussions with individual employees to understand what working arrangements would be the best to allow them to effectively balance work and home commitments, including being clear about key aim and goal that need to be met and what support the organisation can offer. The management have to improve the wages of employees in order to help them to have spacious homes in areas where they can easily work without interferences.

Recommendations

UNAM should encourage more studies or research on ways of ensuring that good quality services continue during difficult circumstances like pandemics. This University needs to have an emergency plan to be used in times of crisis such as pandemics, earthquakes, floods or other natural disasters that prevent people from moving and interacting directly.

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