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WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF MIDDLE LEVEL MANAGERS IN AGRO-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA

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Work-life balance (WLB) is achieving a balance between work life and family life. It is one of the emerging issues in the present day organizations. Increased demand for work and family responsibilities is attributed to high work-life imbalance. According to the literature, high work-life imbalance is associated with occupational stress, low productivity, high absenteeism and turnover of employees. This research was conducted to determine the economic, psychological, physical and spiritual factors affecting the WLB of middle level managers in agro-based organizations.

The study was a cross-sectional sample survey conducted with 82 middle level managers from 10 large scale agro-based private companies in Sri Lanka. The respondents were selected using the simple random sampling technique. Primary data were collected mainly using a self-administered questionnaire. Regression analysis was performed to identify the factors affecting WLB of middle level managers.

The majority of managers in the sample were males (75%) and most of them were married (85%). The majority of the managers had tertiary-level educational qualifications (diploma – 13%, graduate – 26%, postgraduate – 24%, professional – 21%), while 16% had only GCE (A/L) qualifications. Regression analysis revealed that occupational stress, participation in religious activities, work involvement and level of education affect the WLB of middle managers in the selected agro-based organizations ($R^2=0.510$). Managers with low WLB had high occupational stress and high work involvement. A high WLB could be observed among managers having better education and high religious propensity. The results also revealed that WLB is not associated with age, gender and civil status of the middle managers. The relationship between WLB and non-communicable health disorders (e.g. blood pressure, diabetes, and depression), which are assumed to be associated with work stress, was not significant.

Based on the findings, it is concluded that WLB of middle managers could be achieved by managing work related stress and work involvement, while spending time on religious activities. Paying a balanced attention for both family responsibilities and job duties, introducing flexible work schedules, and conducting educational programmes on WLB in agro-based organizations will improve the WLB of the middle level managers.