

# Impact of health and recreation on work-life balance: A case study of expatriates

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## Abstract

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*Factors influencing work-life balance are evolving at a very fast pace, thus creating a fecund ground for innovative work-life balance tools and techniques. The increasing significance of expatriates in the global workforce necessitates a targeted set of work-life balance initiatives to help expatriate workers contribute more effectively in the competitive work environment. Health and recreation are the two important life spheres which play a very important role in success or failure of an expatriate assignment. While work-life balance researches are being conducted globally in plenty, yet research on expatriate adjustment and expatriate work-life balance is still in its nascent stage especially in an expatriate dominated work environment in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. This research paper investigates the health and recreation spheres of expatriate academicians working in private higher education institutes in Bahrain, Oman and the UAE. The research paper illustrates and evaluates the health and recreation spheres in relation to the demographic factors of the respondents and suggests ways to improve work-life balance of expatriate employees.*

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**Keywords:** Work-life balance, work-life conflict, expatriate adjustment, college teacher, middle-east.

## 1. Introduction

It was standard practice for all members of a family to be collectively engaged in work for survival in the early years of communal living (Carlson et al. 2005). Industrialization in the mid-1800s significantly influenced the gender roles, with men taking over the role of breadwinner and women taking over the role of caregiver (Voydanoff 2006). A seven-phase analysis of changes in work and family life spheres by Naithani (2010a) explored the pre and post-industrialized world, during which separation of work and family strengthened due to the division of labor. The analysis further highlighted the changes witnessed 1950 onwards, with particular reference to the gender role reversal and increasing number of women and working mothers in the workforce (Figure 1).

Phase	Time period	Changes in work and family life spheres
		↓
Phase 1	Early years of communal living.	Entire family engaged in work for subsistence.
		↓
Phase 2	Pre-industrialisation period.	Partial segregation of workplace and family life.
		↓
Phase 3	Industrialisation in the mid-1800s.	Strengthening of segregation of workplace and family life. Men started to dominate the
		↓
Phase 4	Between late 18 <sup>th</sup> and early 19 <sup>th</sup>	Separation of work and family strengthened due to the division of labour.
		↓
Phase 5	Between early 19 <sup>th</sup> century and 1950.	Human strength dependent technology-abetted male domination at the workplace.
		↓
Phase 6	Between the 1950s and early 1980s.	Gender division reversed due to technology. The introduction of work-life balance
		↓
Phase 7	1980s onwards.	More women and mothers in the workforce. Growth in work-life balance facilities.

*Source: Naithani (2010a)*

**Figure 1: Changing composition of work and family life spheres.**

Changing composition of work and family life spheres spearheaded research on work-life conflict, work-life balance, and work-life adjustment issues. The second half of the twentieth century onwards wide array of socioeconomic factors began to influence work and family life spheres of the workforce. The majority of these factors originated from the advanced nations (Australia, Canada, European Union, UK and the USA). Family and personal life factors started to get more and more influenced by the increasing number of women and working mothers in the workforce, dual career couples, single parent and child care issues (Abhayaratna and Lattimore 2006; Evans and Kelley 2004; Todd 2004).

Work-related factors started to get influenced more and more by longer working hours, unpaid overtime, work intensification, increasing work-related stress and working in shifts. Other factors which came into the forefront were ageing population, service sector orientation towards 24x7 availability, technological complexities of the work, loss of social support network due to move towards the big cities, skill shortages and increasing movement of the expatriate population (Towers Perrin 2005; Yeandle et al. 2005). A meta-analysis of the major factors which significantly influence work and family life spheres is presented in figure 2 (Naithani and Jha, 2009a).

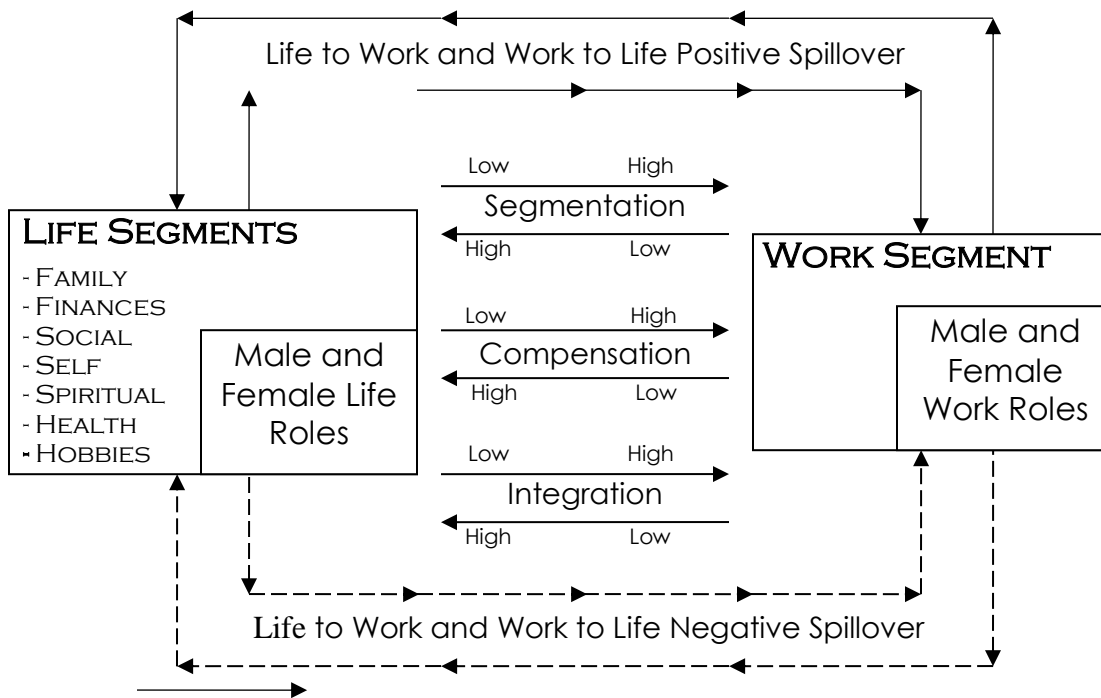
<p><b>Family and personal life influenced by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ increasing participation of women in the workforce</li> <li>▪ increasing participation of childbearing women in the workforce</li> <li>▪ increasing participation of dual career couples in the workforce</li> <li>▪ increase in single-parent/ single person households</li> <li>▪ increase in childcare/ elder care burden on employees</li> <li>▪ health and well-being considerations</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Work influenced by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ long working hours / unpaid overtime</li> <li>▪ time Squeeze</li> <li>▪ demand for shorter working hours</li> <li>▪ increase in part-time workers</li> <li>▪ work intensification and stress</li> <li>▪ changing work time</li> </ul>	<p><b>Others:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ageing population</li> <li>▪ rise of service sector industries</li> <li>▪ technological complexity of work</li> <li>▪ skill shortage</li> <li>▪ loss of social support network</li> <li>▪ globalization and demographic shift of the workforce</li> </ul>

*Source: Naithani and Jha (2009a)*

**Figure 2: Factors influencing work and family life spheres: 1950 onwards.**

**2. Work-life balance theories.**

Research on work-life balance issues gathered momentum 1960s onwards with emphasis on working mothers and dual-earner families (Lewis et al. 2007). In the early stage of work-life balance research, work-family life segmentation research explored work and family life as two separate segments and did not include the other aspects of personal life. Later in the late 1970s, work and family interdependence research explored the effect of family life on work and vice-versa, once again not exploring the other aspects of life. The spill-over theory analysed how women in general suffered from spill-over from the family role into work role, whereas men, in general, suffered from spill-over from work role into the family role (Naithani and Jha, 2009a; Warhurst et al., 2008). In the 1980s, compensation theory assessed how an individual compensates deficit in one aspect of life (such as work) by increasing involvement in some other aspect of life (such as family). Later years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed growing research on the work-life conflict theory. The research focused on different roles an individual plays at work, with family and other aspects of life and how these elements compete for the time, consideration and commitment (Skinner and Pocock, 2008; Roberts, 2007; Pickering, 2006). The research further identified eight relevant sections of life, including work, family, health, finances, spiritual/religious, hobbies, self and social, (Naithani and Jha, 2009a).



Source: Naithani (2010a)

**Figure 3: Work-life Balance - Macro level model**

Naithani and Jha (2009a) presented a work-life balance model based on the collective knowledge of the different work-life balance theories in an attempt to arrive at a comprehensive approach. They treated different approaches as merging entities rather than separately (Figure 3). Increasing research on work-life balance issues, increasing demand of employees for work-life balance benefits and involvement of governments positively influenced work-life balance initiatives by the employers globally. By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century, organizations made available to up to 90 percent employees work-life balance facilities such as flexible working hours in Canada and New Zealand. Whereas over 50 percent workers in Australia and the US and the European Union (European Foundation 2006; Fursman 2006; Riedmann et al. 2006).

**3. Benefits of work-life balance for employers and employees.**

<b>Qualitative benefits for employers</b>	<b>Qualitative benefits for employees</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retaining valued employees</li> <li>- Motivated, productive workforce</li> <li>- Attracting a wider range of candidates</li> <li>- Reputation of employer of choice</li> <li>- Reduced absenteeism</li> <li>- Reduced recruitment costs</li> <li>- Maximized available labour</li> <li>- Improved customer experience</li> <li>- Decreased Health Care Costs</li> <li>- Improved quality of applicants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Happier life at work and home</li> <li>- Better workplace relations</li> <li>- Improved self-esteem and concentration</li> <li>- More time for life outside work</li> <li>- Active control of working life</li> <li>- Efficient management of multiple responsibilities at home and work.</li> <li>- Being part of a supportive workplace that values and trusts staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Quantitative benefits</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cost of absenteeism</li> <li>- Cost of diminished productivity</li> <li>- Cost of staff turnover</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cost of health insurance premiums</li> <li>- Cost of direct medical claims</li> <li>- Cost of customer satisfaction</li> </ul>

Source: Naithani (2010a)

**Figure 4: Benefits of Work-life balance initiatives**

According to Naithani (2010a), MWLBI (2006); Yeandle et al. (2006), Duxbury and Higgins (2003), work-life balance initiatives benefit not only the employees but also the employers. These benefits can also be quantified, and their impact on the financial performance of an organization can be easily calculated. Duxbury and Higgins (2003) studies absenteeism due to the work-life conflict in Canada and arrived at a range of \$4.5 to \$10 billion as a loss due to the direct and indirect costs of work-life conflict based absenteeism. Naithani (2010a) conducted a meta-analysis of work-life benefits literature and segmented the benefits as per following three essential segments (Figure 4).

#### **4. Recessiary factors and increasing need of work-life balance benefits**

Globally, many economies are currently facing recessionary conditions. Under such circumstances work-life balance issues become more important. Employees with better work-life balance positively contributed towards the productivity and financial performance of the employing organization. Following are the major recessionary factors which directly and significantly influence the work-life balance of employees (Naithani 2010b; Hay Group 2009; Brough et. al. 2008; Hansen 2008; Lippmann 2008)

- Reduced salary and incentives
- Reduced health and retirement benefits
- Reduced training opportunities
- Increase in job uncertainty
- Obstacles to career growth and forced career change
- Forced premature retirement and unpaid overtime
- Increase in work stress due to work overload and work intensification
- Increase in work life balance challenges

A global employee survey of 50,000 respondents identified work-life balance as the second most demanded benefit by the employees. Though 60 percent of the human resource managers of the researched organizations expressed their satisfaction with the work-life balance benefits offered by their organisations, yet only 16 percent of employees agreed with them (Corporate Executive Board 2009). The finding signifies the small preference given to the work-life balance benefits by the employers and human resource managers, whereas a large number of employees are increasingly demanding these benefits. Closing the gap between the management policy and employee expectations is the call of the day (McDonald and Bradley, 2005)

#### **5. Expatriate adjustment and work-life balance benefits in the middle- east**

Expatriates are temporary workers who usually work in the foreign country for at least one year and above. The geographic movement of the expatriate workforce generates a broad range of issues and challenges related to expatriate adjustment in the foreign environment (Naithani and Jha, 2009b; Permits Foundation, 2008; Mesmer-Magnus and Visvesvaran, 2007). Perceived organizational support is one key factor which facilitates expatriate adjustment and supports the success of the expatriate assignment (Koteswari and Bhattacharya, 2007). Support of the subordinates, colleagues, managers and positive interaction with them helps an expatriate adjust in the workplace (Koteswari and Bhattacharya, 2007). Vague job roles, the need of new job knowledge, skills and abilities, incompatible job profile, job uncertainty, longer office hours, shortened weekends, un-availed annual vacations, social and cultural encounters, and family's adjustment also significantly influence the success of the expatriate assignment (ORC, 2014; Haslberger, 2008; Haslberger and Brewster, 2008; Minter, 2008; Mol et al. 2005).

In many middle-east countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the public sector workforce is dominated by the nationals whereas the private sector workforce is dominated by the expatriates (IMF, 2014; Forstenlechner, 2008; Sturm et al., 2008; Malecki & Ewers, 2007). Expatriates dominate the technical and professional job roles in the private sector. They need shorter training period, accept longer working hours and report lower rates of absenteeism (Naithani and Jha, 2010; Kapiszewski, 2006). Female expatriate workers in the middle-east constitute less than 30 percent of the expatriate workforce, which is the lowest participation rate globally (Dito, 2008). The majority of female expatriates is engaged in non-professional and semi-skilled jobs (Keane and McGeehan, 2008; Malecki & Ewers 2007).

## 6. Work-life balance of college teachers in the middle-east

College teachers have distinctive work-life balance needs (Hunt, 2006). Many countries in the middle-east, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have established dedicated zones on the lines of free trade zones to broaden the higher education infrastructure in the region through the participation of foreign higher education institutes (Tripathi and Mukerji, 2008; Mukerji and Jammel 2008; Coffman 2005). The majority of private colleges in such countries, employs expatriate college teachers as they are unable to meet the demand from the local workforce (Naithani, 2012; Naithani, 2011; Kirk and Napier, 2008; Mukerji and Jammel 2008). These college teachers work in an environment in which education sector suffers from slow growth in salary increment in comparison to that of other employment sectors such as banking and hospitality (Bayt 2014; Gulf Talent, 2011). The first part of a multinational research in the middle-east (Naithani, 2013a) established that freedom to choose the courses a college teacher wants and is comfortable to teach, workload and work stress significantly influence the work-life balance of college teachers in the region. The second part of the multinational research (Naithani, 2013b) established that college teachers in the middle-east are concerned about the limited time they devote to their career planning at the workplace and lack of perceived organizational support towards their career growth.

## 7. Defining the scope of research and research methodology

### 7.1. The research aim

The study was conducted with the research aim of describing and analyzing the perspectives on the health and recreation dimensions of teachers of private higher education institutes in the middle-east and to further understand the effect of selected demographic factors.

### 7.2. Research hypothesis and research questions

Ho: Individual demographic factors do not significantly influence the health and recreation dimensions of college teachers in the middle-east.

The null hypothesis was tested on following demographic factors:

- gender,
- age,
- years of the expatriate experience,
- marital status, and
- employment status of spouse (working or non-working)

Following four questions were employed in the survey:

- Your work allows you enough recreation time with family (recreation).
- You get enough time to pursue your personal interests/hobbies (recreation).
- You regularly eat a balanced diet (health).
- You regularly exercise and/or play sports (health).

This is the third part of a multinational study conducted in the middle-east. A web questionnaire hosted online was employed to collect responses from expatriate college teachers working in three countries in the middle-east (Bahrain, Oman, and UAE). The Likert scale based questionnaire was validated through Cronbach's alpha test. A total of 141 responses answering at least 3 out of 4 questions were considered in the data analysis.

## 8. Findings and discussion

This section presents the data analysis, findings, and discussion on the perspectives on health and recreation dimensions of college teachers' work-life balance. As already stated above two questions were asked in the recreation, and significant others segment and two questions were asked in the health and fitness segment.

### 8.1.1. Recreation dimension

*Question one: Your work allows you enough recreation time with family.*

Gender, years of expatriate experience and working spouse significantly influenced responses about the availability of ample time for recreation with family (Table 1).

Factor	Significance	Hypothesis Test Result
Gender	p = 0.0004, p< 0.05	Reject H <sub>o</sub> in favour of H <sub>1</sub>
Age	p = 0.493, p>0.05	Do not reject H <sub>o</sub>
Expat experience	p = 0.004, p<0.05	Reject H <sub>o</sub> in favour of H <sub>1</sub>
Marital Status	p = 0.447, p>0.05	Do not reject H <sub>o</sub>
Working spouse	p = 0.0430, p<0.05	Reject H <sub>o</sub> in favour of H <sub>1</sub>

**Table 1: Significant difference in responses to ‘recreation time with family’, according to the demographic factors.**

Response to the question from male and female respondents had significant difference with p (2 tailed) = 0.0004 (p< 0.05).

	S. Agree	M. Agree	Neutral	M. Disagree	S. Disagree	N	n*
Total	10 (7%)	43 (31%)	9 (7%)	54 (39%)	22 (16%)	138	3
Male	9 (13%)	29 (41%)	4 (6%)	20 (28%)	9 (13%)	71	3
Female	1 (1%)	14 (21%)	5 (7%)	34 (51%)	13 (19%)	67	Nil

n: the total number of responses; n\*: no response

**Table 2: Response frequency details for ‘recreation time with family’.**

Fifty-five percent of the respondents either moderately (39 percent) or strongly (16 percent) disagreed with the question (Table 2). The percentage of men reporting disagreement was significantly lower than that reported by female respondents. Forty-one percent male respondents either moderately (28 percent) or strongly (13 percent) disagreed. In comparison, 70 percent female respondents either moderately (51 percent) or strongly (19 percent) disagreed. A relatively lower percent of respondents (7 percent) opted for the neutral option.

A significant difference in responses was observed according to the number of years of expatriate experience (p=0.004, p<0.05). Respondents with less than one-year expatriate experience reported strong disagreement with the question (n=10, median=1.5), with one to two years’ experience, reported moderate disagreement (n=21, median=2) and with over two years’ experience reported a collectively neutral view (n=101, median=3). A significant difference was observed in responses from married male respondents with working/ non-working spouse (p=0.0430, p<0.05). Respondents with a homemaker wife reported moderate disagreement (n=14, median=2). Whereas, respondents with a working wife reported moderate agreement (n=51, median=4). The majority of the respondents of different age groups reported moderate disagreement with the question (n=131, median=2) except for the 55 years and older age group which reported moderate agreement (n=6, median=3.5). The majority of the respondents (married respondents living with or without spouse) reported moderate disagreement (n= 130, median=2). A small number of single respondents reported a neutral view (n=6, median=3) and a smaller number of separated respondents reported moderate agreement (n=2, median=4).

Following is the final status of demographic factors which influenced responses to the question enquiring ‘time for recreation’:

- The majority of the respondents reported disagreement with the statement that their work allowed them enough recreation time with their friends.
- Females reported higher levels of disagreement
- With an increase in years of the expatriate experience, disagreement decreased.
- Male respondents with a homemaker wife reported a greater degree of disagreement when compared to that of male respondents with working wife.
- With increasing age, the degree of disagreement decreased.
- Single respondents reported relatively a lower degree of disagreement.

*Question two: You get enough time to pursue your personal interests/hobbies.*

Gender, years of the expatriate experience, working spouse and lecture hours significantly influenced responses to the question which inquired about the availability of enough time for pursuing personal interests and hobbies (Table 3).

Factor	Significance	Appendix	Hypothesis Test Result
Gender	p = 0.001, p<0.05	5.3	Reject H <sub>o</sub> in favour of H <sub>1</sub>
Age	p = 0.121, p>0.05	5.4	Do not reject H <sub>o</sub>
Expat experience	p = 0.006, p<0.05	5.5	Reject H <sub>o</sub> in favour of H <sub>1</sub>
Marital Status	p = 0.897, p>0.05	5.6	Do not reject H <sub>o</sub>
Working spouse	p = 0.0463, p<0.05	5.7	Reject H <sub>o</sub> in favour of H <sub>1</sub>

**Table 3: Significant difference in responses to ‘pursue personal interests/hobbies’, according to the demographic factors.**

Response to question twenty-five from male and female respondents had the considerable difference with p (2 tailed) = 0.001 (p<0.05).

	S. Agree	M. Agree	Neutral	M. Disagree	S. Disagree	N	n*
Total	7 (5%)	20 (14%)	10 (7%)	60 (43%)	41 (30%)	138	3
Male	6 (8%)	15 (21%)	7 (10%)	31 (44%)	12 (17%)	71	3
Female	1 (1%)	5 (7%)	3 (4%)	29 (43%)	29 (43%)	67	Nil

n: the total number of responses; n\*: no response

**Table 4: Response frequency details for ‘pursue personal interests/hobbies’.**

Seventy-three percent of the respondents either moderately (43 percent) or strongly (30 percent) disagreed with the question. Sixty-one percent of male respondents either moderately (44 percent) or strongly (17 percent) disagreed with the question. In comparison, 86 percent of the female respondents either moderately (43 percent) or strongly (43 percent) disagreed with the question (Table 4).

A significant difference in responses was observed according to the number of years of expatriate experience (p=0.006, p<0.05). Respondents with less than two years of expatriate experience reported strong disagreement with the question (n=31, median=1 and 1.5) and with over two years of experience reported moderate disagreement (n=101, median=2). A significant difference was observed in responses from married male respondents with working/ non-working spouse (p=0.0463, p<0.05). Both the respondent categories, though reported similar moderate disagreement (median=2). A significant difference was observed in responses based on lecture hours conducted in a week (p=0.029, p<0.05). Respondents working more than 21 hours reported strong disagreement (n=13, median=1), respondents working between 15 to 21 hours reported moderate disagreement (n=106, median=2) and respondents working less than 15 hours reported neutral view (n=12, median=3). Following is the final status of demographic factors which significantly influenced responses to the question inquiring about getting enough time to pursue personal interests/hobbies:

- The majority of the respondents disagreed with the question.
- Females reported a higher degree of disagreement
- With increasing expatriate experience the degree of disagreement decreased.

**8.1.2. Conclusion of the analysis of recreation dimension.**

Gender, years of expatriate experience and marital status significantly influenced responses in the recreation and significant others category of the questionnaire (Table 5).

Segment ►	Recreation dimension	
Demography ▼	Recreation time with friends	Time to pursue personal interests/hobbies
Gender	Yes*	Yes*
Age	No <sup>+</sup>	No <sup>+</sup>
Expat experience	Yes*	Yes*
Marital Status	No <sup>+</sup>	No <sup>+</sup>
Working spouse	Yes*	Yes*

\* Reject H<sub>o</sub> in favour of H<sub>1</sub>; <sup>+</sup> do not reject H<sub>o</sub>

**Table 5: Compilation of tests for significant differences in responses (recreation dimension) by five demographic factors.**



### 8.2.1. Health dimension

*Question three: You regularly eat a balanced diet.*

Gender, years of the expatriate experience, marital status, and working spouse significantly influenced the responses about the balanced diet of the respondents (Table 6).

Factor	Significance	Appendix	Hypothesis Test Result
Gender	$p = 0.0255, p < 0.05$	5.3	Reject $H_0$ in favour of $H_1$
Age	$p = 0.059, p > 0.05$	5.4	Do not reject $H_0$
Expat experience	$p = 0.013, p < 0.05$	5.5	Reject $H_0$ in favour of $H_1$
Marital Status	$p = 0.005, p < 0.05$	5.6	Reject $H_0$ in favour of $H_1$
Working spouse	$p = 0.001, p < 0.05$	5.7	Reject $H_0$ in favour of $H_1$

**Table 6: Significant difference in responses to ‘balanced diet’, according to the demographics.**

Responses from male and female had significant difference with  $p$  (2 tailed) = 0.0255 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Sixty-one percent of the respondents either moderately (41 percent) or strongly (20 percent) disagreed with the question (Table 7). Fifty-four percent of the male respondents either moderately (40 percent) or strongly (14 percent) disagreed. In comparison, a higher (70 percent) percentage of female respondents either moderately (42 percent) or strongly (28 percent) disagreed with the question.

	S. Agree	M. Agree	Neutral	M. Disagree	S. Disagree	N	n*
Total	5 (4%)	33(24%)	16(12%)	56 (41%)	28 (20%)	138	3
Male	3 (4%)	21(29%)	10(14%)	29 (40%)	10 (14%)	73	1
Female	2 (3%)	12(18%)	6 (9%)	27 (42%)	18 (28%)	65	2

n: the total number of responses; n\*: no response

**Table 7: Response frequency details for ‘balanced diet’.**

A significant difference in responses was observed according to years of expatriate experience ( $p = 0.013, p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, a significant difference was observed in responses based on marital status ( $p = 0.005, p < 0.05$ ). Respondents living without spouse reported highest degree of disagreement ( $n = 14$ , median=1.5), respondents living with a spouse and separated respondents reported moderate disagreement ( $n = 116$ , median=2). However, single respondents reported a lower degree of disagreement ( $n = 8$ , median=2.5). A significant difference was observed in responses from married male respondents with working/ non-working spouse ( $p = 0.001, p < 0.05$ ). Respondents with a homemaker wife reported strong disagreement ( $n = 14$ , median=1.5). Whereas, respondents with a working wife communicated a neutral view ( $n = 51$ , median=3)

Following is the final status of demographic factors which significantly influenced responses to the question enquiring about regularly eating balanced diet:

- The majority of the respondents disagreed with the question.
- Female respondents reported a higher degree of disagreement.
- Unmarried respondents had a lower degree of disagreement.
- Respondents living with spouse reported a higher degree of disagreement.

*Question four: You regularly exercise and/or play sports.*

Gender, years of the expatriate experience, working spouse, significantly influenced responses to the question which inquired whether the respondent regularly exercised or played sports (Table 8).

Factor	Significance	Appendix	Hypothesis Test Result
Gender	$p = 0.0001, p < 0.05$	5.3	Reject $H_0$ in favour of $H_1$
Age	$p = 0.079, p > 0.05$	5.4	Do not reject $H_0$
Expat experience	$p = 0.003, p < 0.05$	5.5	Reject $H_0$ in favour of $H_1$
Marital Status	$p = 0.119, p > 0.05$	5.6	Do not reject $H_0$
Working spouse	$p = 0.0002, p < 0.05$	5.7	Reject $H_0$ in favour of $H_1$

**Table 8: Significant difference in responses to ‘exercise/play sports’, according to demographics**

Three out of every five respondents, moderately (38 percent) or strongly (24 percent) disagreed with the question (Table 9). Response to question twenty-seven from male and female respondents had a significant difference with  $p(2\text{ tailed}) = 0.0001 (p < 0.05)$ . Four out of every five female respondents moderately (49 percent) or strongly (35 percent) disagreed with the question (Table 9). In comparison, two out of five male respondents moderately (29 percent) or strongly (16 percent) disagreed. While none of the female respondents strongly agreed with the question, one in every ten male respondents strongly agreed.

	S. Agree	M. Agree	Neutral	M. Disagree	S. Disagree	N	n*
Total	6 (5%)	20 (16%)	21(17%)	47 (38%)	30 (24%)	124	17
Male	6 (9%)	17 (25%)	15(22%)	20 (29%)	11(16%)	69	5
Female	-----	3 (5%)	6 (11%)	27 (49%)	19 (35%)	55	12

n: the total number of responses; n\*: no response

**Table 9: Response frequency details for ‘exercise and/or play sports’.**

A significant difference in responses was observed according to the number of years of expatriate experience ( $p=0.003, p < 0.05$ ). Respondents with one to two years of experience reported strong disagreement ( $n=17$ , median=1), with less than one year of expatriate experience, five to ten years of experience and over ten years of experience reported moderate disagreement with the question ( $n=75$ , median=2) and with two to five years of experience reported neutral view ( $n=28$ , median=3). A significant difference was observed in responses from married male respondents with working/ non-working spouse ( $p=0.0002, p < 0.05$ ). Respondents with a homemaker wife reported moderate disagreement ( $n=13$ , median=2). Whereas, respondents with a working wife reported a neutral view ( $n=48$ , median=3). The majority of the respondents (Married respondents living with or without a spouse, separated) reported moderate disagreement ( $n= 126$ , median=2). However, single respondents reported relatively a lower degree of disagreement ( $n=8$ , median=2.5). As per above discussion following is the final status of demographic factors, which significantly influenced responses to the question inquiring about regular exercise and playing sports:

- The majority of the respondents disagreed with the question
- Female respondents reported a higher degree of disagreement
- With increasing expatriate experience the degree of disagreement decreased.
- Male respondents with a homemaker wife reported moderate disagreement when compared to that reported by male respondents with working wife.
- Single (unmarried) respondents reported a lower degree of disagreement when compared to that reported by married respondents.

Above findings are in contrast to the findings of a regional survey of expatriate professionals conducted in GCC (Saudi Arabia) which reported that 83 percent respondents engaged in regular physical exercise (Matthews and Nelson, 2004)

**8.2.2. Conclusion for the health and fitness segment**

Gender, the number of years of the expatriate experience, marital status, and working spouse and lecture hours significantly influenced the responses to health and fitness segment (Table 10).

Segment ►	Recreation and significant others	
Demography ▼	Eat balanced diet	Regularly exercise/ play sports
Gender	Yes*	Yes*
Age	No <sup>+</sup>	No <sup>+</sup>
Expat experience	Yes*	Yes*
Marital Status	Yes*	No <sup>+</sup>
Working spouse	Yes*	No <sup>+</sup>

\* Reject  $H_0$  in favour of  $H_1$ ; <sup>+</sup> Do not reject  $H_0$

**Table 10: Compilation of tests for significant differences in responses (health and fitness) based on five demographic factors**

## 9. Recommendations

Work-life balance is an individual issue. Each has his/her perception of work-life balance and needs customised solutions for achieving higher balance in work and other life segments. Demographic factors play a vital role in influencing an individual's work-life balance. Under such circumstances, a customised and need specific work-life balance programme at the organisational level is needed to cater to the wide array of work-life balance issues of an individual as well as the work groups. Health and recreation dimensions contribute towards the overall work-life balance of an individual and also contribute towards the success of an expatriate assignment as an important psychographic factor of expatriate adjustment. In view of the findings and discussion, to positively leverage health and recreation dimensions for better work-life balance of expatriate college teachers in the middle-east, organizations can refer to adopting following initiatives (Naithani, 2010a; Naithani 2010b; Thompson, 2002)

- a) Sport/fitness centre affiliations, sports activities for the faculty and their family, sport clubs
- b) Healthy lifestyle awareness programs on a regular basis for the faculty and their family
- c) Health screening, de-addiction programs, and healthy food available with consistency
- e) On-site nutrition counselling and short term, medium term nutrition programs
- f) Outdoor recreational areas featuring a walking path with exercise stations
- g) Promotion of cycling (weather permitting) for commuting inside the college campuses
- h) Employee assistance programs, stress and bereavement counselling
- i) Community involvement/charity activities and regular off campus and on campus employee get-together and recreation.

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