

The Effects of Long Working Hours on the Bahraini Woman's Work-Life Balance

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Introduction

With the increasing demands of the world market, a 24/7 customer service facility has been constructed, making the average eight hours work seem no longer adequate, hence the rise of the long working hours (LWH) culture in response to these demands. On the other hand an escalating entrance rate of women into the labour force has lead to the demand for changing the working patterns and conditions in order to provide equal employment opportunities for both male and female employees.

In many organizations, particularly the banking and service sectors, the LWH culture has become attached to a belief that it would bring success and assure a faster raise up the organisation ladder for the employee. This however has left “no space” for ‘personal goals or needs’ (Senge 1990, p.307). Consequently during the last decade, a growing interest in the effects of long working hours has become evident. Standing out amongst these is the conflict LWH causes with work-life balance (WLB).

For the last decade, the topic of WLB has been largely studied in Europe and North America, but has not been covered much in Bahrain or the Gulf region. This presentation focuses on the effects of long working hours culture on the employee's work-life balance through an illustration of the results of an empirical study of the topic.