

Work-Life Balance: Research Outputs

Executive Summary:

- A good work-life balance means NOT giving all your free time to work and finding time to relax and have fun. Family and friends are important to people claiming to have struck a good work-life balance.
- Two in three people claim to have a good work-life balance.
- Those who do say they have a good work-life balance tend to be slightly older than those who do not (average age 43 years).
 - This indicates that the balance takes longer to establish.
- However, despite claiming to have a good work-life balance:
 - Eight in ten would like more exercise.
 - Three in four would like more holidays.
 - Seven in ten would like to participate in more leisure activities.
 - Six in ten would like to spend more time with friends and family.
- 50% said that they would like more pleasure from their work and the majority would like less stress from work.
- Of the 47% who choose to work for fulfillment rather than money, this reduces the stress from work slightly but not significantly.
- In assessing what is important in a career, those claiming to work for fulfillment rather than money are more likely to consider the following important:
 - Meticulousness
 - People management skills
 - Leadership
 - Adaptability
 - Risk-taking
 - They are less likely to consider being a team player important.
- Those at the top of the social strata and those at the bottom are most likely to give up their free time to work, while those in the middle tend not to.
- Among the top ten most important aspects of a career, toying the line at work is deemed more important than independence.
 - Men are more likely to value experience and meticulousness; women are more likely to value hard work, respect and team playing.
- In the work-life balance equation, being unable to say no and feeling guilty over fitness concerns the majority, while image or status at work doesn't worry people.
- Work does get in the way of fitness and tires people out.

Research outputs

Happiness in life:

People want more leisure, time with family/friends, holidays, sleep, exercise and to find more pleasure/less stress in their work.

- More than half of people would like more pleasure (51%) and less stress (56%) in their work.
- Three out of four people would like more leisure time, while eight in ten people would like to exercise more.
- Two out of three people want to spend more time with friends and family.
- For under 30s, more holidays (79%) and more exercise (81%) is desired than older groups. More than half of this age bracket would also like more pleasure (58%) and less stress in their work (57%).
- For 30 – 39 year olds, leisure time (80%) and sleep (74%) is increasingly important as young family life kicks in. Seven in ten people in this age bracket would like to spend more time with friends and family.
- Less stress at work is important to 40 – 49 year olds – 59% said they would like less stress in their work.
- Over 50s are generally happier with their work-life balance but would still like more exercise (77%), leisure (66%) and time with family and friends (59%).

Attitudes to work and life:

Financial security dominates (93%), though more enjoy spending than saving (58%). More worry about the future (64%) than don't. Less than half of people (47%) have a strict boundary between work (or studies) and personal life.

However, keeping work strictly separate from personal life doesn't affect the level of stress in work or the desire for more pleasure in work.

Of those that claim they have a strict boundary between work and personal life:

- More than half would like more pleasure in their work and less stress.
- Two thirds would like to spend more time with friends and family.
- Three out of four would like to exercise more.

Less than half of people (48%) claim they work for fulfillment rather than money.

- Those who work for fulfillment are less likely to look for more pleasure in their work but 42% are still seeking more pleasure in their work.

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- 51% would like less stress in their work.

Two thirds of people claim to have a good work life balance. Of these, however:

- 46% would like more pleasure in their work and 45% would like less stress.
- Six in ten would like to spend more time with friends and family.
- Eight in ten people would like more exercise.

Looking after you always!

On balance, most people are positive about their level of control when caring for themselves and others.

Those with a strict boundary between work and personal life have a more positive view than average.

For those claiming to have a good work-life balance, this means NOT giving all their free time to work and finding time to relax and have fun. Family and friends are important to this group with Seven in ten saying that they make time to see family and friends every week.

Most important aspects of a career:

Our research found that towing the line is more important than independence. The following were considered important aspects of a career:

- Flexibility – 79%
- Being hard working – 78%
- Being respectful – 78%
- Keeping a cool head – 77%
- Being efficient – 76%
- Being a team player – 75%
- Being adaptable – 71%
- People management skills – 70%
- Being experienced – 53%
- Meticulousness – 35%

Men value experience and meticulousness; women value hard work, respect and team playing.

Conflicts and pressures in the work-life balance:

- Eight in ten people find it hard to say no to people who ask for help or time.
- More than half say that they regularly feel tired of working too many long hours.
- Half of people say that they prioritise work over hobbies and passions.
- 58% say they prioritise work over exercise and staying fit.

- Three out of four people feel guilty that they should be exercising more to stay fit and healthy.
- More than half of people (53%) regularly feel guilty that they should be spending more time with loved ones.

What is important to people's happiness?

- Good health – 92%
- Strong/supportive family relationships – 80%
- Close personal relationships – 79%
- Financial security – 73%
- Feeling safe – 72%
- Having children – 59%
- Strong circle of friends – 59%
- A rewarding job/work – 56%

Those who have a good work-life balance:

Having a good work-life balance takes time to establish – older people more than younger claim to have it right. Dubliners are not as good as other regions.

- Of the total sample, two-thirds claim to have a good work-life balance (69% male; 67% female).
- 76% of 50+ claim to have a good work-life balance versus 61% of under 30s.
- Connacht has the best work-life balance at 71%; with Dublin having the lowest percentage at 66%.

Methodology:

- 1,000 nationally representative sample of adults, mean age 42.2 years.
- Quota controlled by age, sex and geographic spread
- Omnibus-style interview

Research:

Research carried out by Spongelt on behalf of laya healthcare in December 2013.

Insert Methodology section from page one as part of new research section.