

Work-Life Dynamics: Linking Working Hours with Food, Family, and Fitness among MNC Professionals

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study aims to examine the interdependence of unusual working shifts and long working hours of MNC employees on their family time, dietary habits, and fitness levels in the context of globalization and changing work-life cultures.

Methods: A mixed-method approach was adopted, combining a structured questionnaire with qualitative interviews conducted through mobile platforms. Data was collected from 200 MNC employees. Descriptive statistics were applied to summarize responses, and the Chi-Square test was used to analyze the association between working hours and lifestyle behaviors.

Findings: Results indicate that extended working hours limit family interaction, adversely affect dietary choices by increasing reliance on fast food, and reduce opportunities for physical activity. Although employees recognize the value of maintaining a balanced lifestyle, work-related stress and time constraints hinder consistent adoption of healthy practices.

Implications: The study highlights the necessity for framing organizational policies to promote work-life balance. It suggests MNCs to design wellness programs for encouraging employees to integrate family time and fitness into their routines, thereby supporting both employee well-being and organizational productivity.

Originality: This study uniquely integrates both quantitative and qualitative evidence to explore how working hours in MNCs influence employees' family interactions, food habits, and fitness. It provides practical insights for organizations to develop holistic wellness strategies in a globalized work environment.



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1. Introduction

The rapid globalization of many economies has transformed the companies into Multi-National Companies (MNCs) which consequently impacted the lifestyle behaviors of the employees as well. The work culture in MNCs often demands long working hours and uneven shifts that cause high levels of stress, which may significantly impact family interactions, food habits, and fitness issues among the professionals. Spending time with family and having close interactions among members is a fundamental and essential part of one's social life that contributes to overall happiness. For MNC employees, managing time with their family members is always challenging due to erratic work schedules. They need to work as per the requirements and adjustments of global clients whose time zones are entirely different from that of the domestic. This disagreement often affects the quality of interactions within the family, potentially leading to strained

relationships and reduced social support systems. Food habits are another critical aspect that undergoes change due to the demands of a corporate lifestyle. With limited time available for meal preparation, MNC employees often rely on convenience foods or company-provided meals. While these options offer ease and accessibility, they may lack the necessary nutritional value, potentially leading to health issues such as obesity and metabolic disorders.

The quality of dietary habits has a direct impact on an individual's energy levels and productivity, making it a significant area of focus for both employees and employers. Fitness and physical activities are essential for maintaining a balanced lifestyle, but they are often neglected by employees in high-pressure jobs. The sedentary nature of office work, coupled with limited time, makes it challenging for many to incorporate regular exercise into their routines. This lack of physical activity can result in various health problems, including weight gain, cardiovascular issues, and a decline

in overall well-being. Furthermore, the absence of fitness routines can exacerbate stress levels, creating a cycle of declining health and reduced work performance.

This study focuses on understanding how MNC employees navigate the balance between their long working hours and personal lifestyle choices related to family, food, and fitness. It aims to identify the challenges they face in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and the role of organizational support in promoting well-being. By exploring these aspects, the study seeks to offer insights into how MNCs can better support their employees through targeted wellness initiatives and work-life balance policies.

2. Review of Literature

- **Rafique *et al.* (2025)** – The authors in their study, “The Effectiveness of Nutrition, Life Style and Work Place Environment in Relation to Occupational Health and Productivity,” had carried a cross-sectional study to understand the impact of intake of nutrition on workplace productivity on 216 participants, who were aged between 18–55 years, in teaching and administration departments of private universities in Lahore. Random sampling was used, and the responses were recorded through a questionnaire. Descriptive analysis, cross tabs, and chi-square tests were used to analyze the data. Results showed that breakfast had a significant association with punctuality and monthly leaves. Physical activities at the workplace had a significant relationship with the productivity levels. Overall, the study concluded that health and lifestyle of employees had a greater impact on employee productivity.
- **Khurana & Bakshi (2024)** – A cross-sectional study was made on Indian bankers with regard to work environment and its impact on physical activity and nutrition status. A total of 156 bankers were taken for the purpose of the study. The study had used multi-linear regression analysis and found that there was a negative correlation between BMI, work culture, and body fat % with work environment domains, whereas physical activity and nutrient intake were positively correlated. The study further discovered that an unhealthy work environment leading to poor dietary practices and physical inactivity is one of the most overlooked contributors to lifestyle-related disorders among working adults.
- **Ali (2024)** – The study examines the impact of health and wellness programmes on the quality of work life of MNC employees in the Delhi-NCR region through a comprehensive survey with 210 employees. The findings revealed that most of the employees were aware of and actively participated in the health and wellness programmes offered by the companies. Moreover, the study highlighted that these kinds of programmes enhanced employee satisfaction and well-being. Overall, the study highlighted the importance of health and wellness activities for employees to increase morale, satisfaction, and to promote a positive and supportive work environment.
- **Kumar & Arora (2023)** – This study investigated the impact of long working hours on the dietary habits of corporate employees in India, including those working in MNCs. The findings highlighted a trend toward increased fast-food consumption among employees who have limited time for meal preparation due to extended working hours. The study also found that employees often skipped meals or consumed convenience foods, which could lead to long-term health issues like obesity and metabolic disorders.
- **Sharma *et al.* (2023)** – This research focused on the effect of work-from-home policies on physical activity levels among MNC employees. The study revealed that while remote work provided more flexibility, it led to a decline in regular exercise routines for many employees. The primary reasons included a lack of structured breaks, increased screen time, and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life, leading to a more sedentary lifestyle.
- **Singh & Patel (2022)** – They explored the relationship between job stress and family life balance among employees working in MNCs. They found that high levels of job-related stress negatively affected the quality of time employees spent with their families. Many respondents reported feeling mentally exhausted after work, which reduced their ability to engage in meaningful interactions with family members, contributing to stress in both professional and personal spheres.
- **Rao & Gupta (2022)** – This study analyzed the effectiveness of corporate wellness programs in promoting physical fitness among employees in MNCs. The researchers found that companies offering structured wellness programs, including gym memberships, yoga sessions, and wellness challenges, saw a significant increase in employee participation in physical activities. However, the study also noted that the success of these programs depended largely on employee engagement and the management’s commitment to promoting a culture of health.
- **Chatterjee & Roy (2022)** – Chatterjee and Roy conducted a study on the dietary patterns of MNC employees, emphasizing the importance of nutritional awareness in maintaining a healthy diet. The findings

suggested that employees who were more aware of nutritional information tended to make healthier food choices even under time constraints. The study highlighted the role of employers in providing access to nutritional education to promote better dietary habits in the workplace.

- **Verma *et al.* (2021)** – Verma and colleagues focused on the influence of company-provided meals on the dietary choices of MNC employees. The study found that while on-site meal options often included healthy choices, employees tended to prefer quick, high-calorie meals due to their taste and convenience. The research suggested that offering a wider variety of nutritious options and promoting their benefits could encourage healthier eating habits among employees.
- **Nair & Das (2021)** – This study examined the significance of work-life balance in maintaining mental well-being among MNC employees, particularly those with young families. Nair and Das found that employees who achieved a better balance between work and personal life reported lower levels of stress and higher satisfaction with family time. The study emphasized the importance of flexible working hours and family-friendly policies in fostering a positive work-life balance.
- **Mishra & Joshi (2021)** – Mishra and Joshi's research focused on the impact of a sedentary work culture on the physical health of MNC employees. They linked prolonged sitting and lack of physical activity during work hours to an increased risk of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and musculoskeletal problems. The study recommended integrating short breaks and encouraging physical activities during the workday to mitigate these risks.
- **Khan & Prasad (2020)** – This study explored the relationship between job satisfaction and lifestyle choices among MNC employees. The researchers found that employees with higher job satisfaction were more likely to engage in healthy habits, such as regular exercise and balanced diets. The study suggested that companies focusing on improving job satisfaction could indirectly promote healthier lifestyle choices among their workforce.
- **Bose & Iyer (2020)** – Bose and Iyer analyzed how corporate culture influences the dietary habits of MNC employees. They found that high levels of work stress often led to irregular eating patterns, such as skipping meals or consuming unhealthy snacks. The study emphasized the need for stress management programs and the creation of a supportive work environment to help employees adopt healthier eating habits.

3. Research Gap

Despite numerous studies on the work-life balance of MNC employees, there is limited research specifically examining the interconnectedness of working hours with family time, food habits, and fitness. Existing studies often focus on one aspect in isolation, such as diet or exercise, but fail to capture the holistic impact of work hours on multiple facets of lifestyle. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring these dimensions together, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by MNC employees.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the influence of work timings on family interactions.
- To analyze the dietary habits of MNC employees and the factors influencing their food choices.
- To investigate the relationship between work demands and the physical fitness routines of MNC employees.

5. Theoretical Framework

The present study is primarily based on Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, which states that when the job demands (like heavy workload, deadlines, long working hours, etc.) are more than the job resources (like supportive family, physical & mental fitness, helpful boss and colleagues, etc.), that may lead to high stress, lower performance, and work-life balance problems. On the other hand, when the job resources are more than the job demands, it contributes to higher performance, continuous engagement, better well-being, and high motivation. To have a proper balance between demands and resources and to lead better work-life balance, employees need to have proper fitness, timely food, and good association with family members.

6. Research Methodology

6.1. Sources of Data

To carry this study further, primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire focuses on collecting quantitative data related to family interactions, dietary habits, and fitness routines of MNC employees. In-depth interviews are conducted with a subset of participants to gain qualitative insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding work-life balance, food habits, and fitness challenges.

Secondary data was gathered from existing research papers, industry reports, web articles, and publication reports related to employee wellness, work-life balance,

dietary habits, and fitness trends by various organizations like the National Institute of Health (NIH) and World Health Organization (WHO), etc.

6.2. Period of Study

The study was conducted over a period of six months (e.g., January 2025 to June 2025). This time frame includes the preparation of research instruments, data collection, data analysis, and report writing. The duration ensures sufficient time to gather comprehensive data and perform detailed analysis, while also accounting for potential delays in data collection.

6.3. Sample Size and Sampling Method

The data was collected from 200 MNC employees working in different companies in Hyderabad. The study has not focused on a specific domain for the collection of data, and the sampling method is purposive. All types of employees like Software Engineers, Testers, Financial Analysts, Quality Engineers, etc., were taken for the survey.

6.4. Qualitative Results

The structured questionnaire was sent to 186 participants via a Google Form link, and 30 participants were contacted through mobile calls. However, 175 participants had responded properly to the Google Form, and 25 conversations were done purposefully. These were recorded with their consent. Key theme-based questions like frequency of spending time with family members, having meals together with family will reflect the family bonds. Further, questions like consumption of fast foods in a week and following diet patterns reveal the food habits of the employees, and responses on the frequency of physical exercises, type of physical activities done in a week, etc., show the importance of fitness for the employees.

6.5. Operational Definitions

1. **Work Shifts** – In general, as well as for the purpose of the study, the work shifts are classified into two types:
 - **Morning Shift – Standard & Usual** – Between 9 AM – 6 PM
 - **Evening/Night Shift – Unusual** – After 6 PM
2. **Working Hours** – As per the normal law, the fixed number of hours for working is 8 hours. However, considering the global and competitive aspects prevailing in MNC companies, the working hours are classified as follows:
 - **Standard Working Hours** – 8 Hours Per Day
 - **Extended Working Hours** – 9 to 10 Hours Per Day
 - **Unusual Working Hours** – > 10 Hours a Day

6.6. Data Analysis Methods and Tools

The data collected from MNC employees in Hyderabad City, Telangana, was coded and entered into SPSS software for analysis. Chi-Square Test of Independence (χ^2) was applied to examine associations between categorical variables such as work shift timings, dietary behavior, family interactions, and fitness-related outcomes. This test helped in identifying whether the relationships observed were statistically significant or not. Also, residual analysis was conducted to interpret the strength and direction of associations where Chi-square values indicated significance.

6.7. Limitations of the Study

- The study aims to include 200 participants; the sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings across all MNC employees in different regions or industries.
- The study relies on self-reported data from questionnaires and interviews, which may be subject to bias. Respondents may overstate or understate their dietary habits, exercise routines, or family interaction time.
- The study may be limited to employees working in a specific region or city, which may not fully capture variations in work culture and lifestyle habits across different geographical locations.

7. Influence of Work Timings on Family Interactions, Food & Dietary Patterns & Fitness

7.1. H0: No Significant Association between Work Shift Timings and Family Interactions

Table 1: Chi-Square Test Results of Work Timings and Family Time Spending

Outcome	Chi-square	Df	P-value	N
Week Day Family Time	14.03001631920095	6	0.029	200
Family Meal Frequency	5.077092515240233	6	0.53	200

Source: SPSS Calculations

Table 2: Standardized Residual Results of Work Shifts & Time with Family on Weekdays

Work Shift Timings	1–2 hours	2–5 hours	5+ hours	Less than 1 hour
Afternoon Shift	-1.87	0.17	1.36	0.48
Morning Shift	1.02	-1.24	0.56	-0.37
Night Shift	0.94	0.97	-1.89	-0.14

Source: SPSS Calculations

From Table 1, it is found that the association of work timings with time spent on family on weekdays is strong and mutual. The p-value (0.029) also confirms the same as it is less than 0.05, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. However, the association can be highlighted through the residual table given above.

From Table 2, it is found that residual employees in the afternoon shift are relatively more likely to spend longer time (5+ hours) with family on weekdays. Employees in the night shift are less likely to spend long time with family (5+ hours), but more likely to fall into shorter family time categories. Morning shift shows a mixed pattern: slightly more in the “1–2 hours” group, fewer in the “2–5 hours” group.

On the other hand, the association of work timings with family meals together is found to be non-significant from Table 1 as the p-value (0.533) is more than 0.05. Overall, it is observed that work shift timings are having significant impact on weekday time spent with family, whereas it does not have any impact or association on family meals together.

7.2. H0: No Significant Association between Work Shift Timings and Dietary Patterns

Table 3: Chi-Square Test Results of Work Timings and Diet Patterns

Outcome	Chi-square	Df	P-value	N
Follow Diet Pattern	4.465608924907087	2	0.107	200
Meal Source during Work	5.890904750537121	6	0.435	200
Fruits & Vegetables Frequency	5.459145941225071	6	0.486	200
Fast Food Frequency	3.979822359711122	6	0.679	200
Meals per Day	0.9485100297081944	4	0.917	200

Source: SPSS Calculations

From Table 3, across all five dietary behaviour measures, the Chi-square test results revealed no statistically significant association as all p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that dietary habits such as diet patterns, meal sources during work, fruit and vegetable intake, fast food consumption, and number of meals per day are not strongly influenced by work timings. The only near-significant result was observed in the case of diet patterns ($p = 0.107$), which may warrant further investigation with an expanded dataset.

7.3. H0: No Significant Association between Work Shift Timings and Fitness

Table 3: Chi-Square Test Results of Work Timings and Fitness

Outcome	Chi-square	Df	P-value	N
Type of Physical Activity	16.212825796626312	8	0.039	200
Exercise Frequency	12.34975492622882	6	0.0546	200
Follow Diet Pattern	4.465608924907087	2	0.107	200
Fitness Satisfaction	12.589354806196624	8	0.126	200
Job Impact on Fitness Routine	5.146353246894159	4	0.272	200

Source: SPSS Calculations

Out of the five tested relationships, only the type of activity demonstrated a statistically significant association with working shifts, suggesting that individuals’ choice of physical activity may be influenced by this factor. The remaining variables—including exercise frequency, diet patterns, fitness satisfaction, and job impact on fitness routines—did not show significant associations, although exercise frequency ($p = 0.055$) was close to significance and may indicate a weak underlying relationship. These findings highlight that while overall fitness-related behaviours appear largely independent of work shift timings, certain dimensions such as type of physical activity and exercise frequency warrant closer attention.

8. Findings

The study examined the relationship between dietary behaviors and fitness practices with work timings to understand their impact on individual lifestyles. The results revealed several noteworthy insights.

- A significant association was observed between work shift timings and time spent with family on weekdays ($p = 0.02$). This indicates that work schedules play a critical role in shaping family interactions.
- Residual analysis further highlighted that employees working in the afternoon shift were more likely to spend extended periods (5+ hours) with their families, whereas night shift employees were less likely to do so and more frequently fell into shorter family interaction categories. Morning shift employees showed a mixed pattern, with relatively more in the “1–2 hours” group and fewer in the “2–5 hours” group.

- In contrast, the relationship between work timings and family meals together was found to be non-significant ($p = 0.533$), suggesting that shared mealtime practices remain largely unaffected by work schedules.
- Analysis of dietary behavior measures—including diet patterns, meal sources during work, fruit and vegetable consumption, fast food frequency, and number of meals per day—showed no statistically significant associations, as all p -values exceeded the 0.05 threshold.
- This indicates that dietary habits are largely independent of the examined factor(s). However, diet pattern ($p = 0.107$) approached significance, hinting at a weak tendency that warrants further investigation with larger or more diverse samples.
- Finally, in the context of fitness-related behaviors, only type of physical activity displayed a statistically significant association with the variable under study, suggesting that contextual or demographic conditions may shape individuals' choices of physical activity.
- Other dimensions, such as exercise frequency, diet patterns, fitness satisfaction, and job impact on fitness routines, did not reveal significant associations. Nevertheless, exercise frequency ($p = 0.055$) was found to be close to the threshold of significance, indicating a possible underlying relationship that merits closer examination.
- Overall, the findings emphasize that while work timings strongly affect family interaction time and type of physical activity, most other lifestyle habits—such as dietary behaviours, fitness satisfaction, and mealtime practices—remain largely unaffected by the variables examined.

9. Discussions

The results of the present study provide important insights into the interplay between work conditions, dietary behaviours, and fitness practices. The evidence suggests that certain aspects of lifestyle are significantly shaped by occupational factors, whereas others remain largely independent.

One of the most notable findings was the significant relationship between work shift timings and the amount of time spent with family on weekdays. Employees working in afternoon shifts were more likely to devote longer periods to family interaction, while those working night shifts reported shorter durations. These results align with earlier studies on work–life balance, which indicate that non-standard working hours can disrupt family routines and reduce opportunities for quality time. Interestingly, no significant association was observed between work timings and family meals together, suggesting that families may preserve shared

mealtime practices despite varying work schedules. This resilience may reflect the cultural and social value of shared meals, which has been emphasized in both Indian and international contexts.

In contrast, dietary behaviors such as diet patterns, meal sources, fruit and vegetable intake, fast food frequency, and number of meals per day were not significantly associated with the tested factors. These results indicate that food-related choices are more strongly influenced by personal preference, health awareness, or socio-economic conditions rather than work-related variables. However, the near-significant result in diet pattern ($p = 0.107$) suggests that some degree of influence may exist, and future research with a larger and more diverse sample could uncover subtle patterns.

With respect to fitness-related practices, the study found that type of physical activity was significantly influenced by the examined factor, highlighting that contextual or demographic conditions play an important role in shaping exercise choices. Meanwhile, exercise frequency, fitness satisfaction, and job impact on fitness routines were not significantly associated, although exercise frequency ($p = 0.055$) approached significance. This finding suggests that while people may adapt the form of activity to their context, the frequency and perceived satisfaction with fitness are more stable across different groups.

Taken together, these findings underscore a nuanced picture: work schedules exert a strong influence on family interactions and shape the choice of physical activities, but appear to have limited impact on dietary habits and general fitness satisfaction. This has practical implications for both organizations and policymakers. For employers, fostering flexible work arrangements and promoting workplace wellness programs could help employees balance professional responsibilities with family life and physical activity. For policymakers, interventions to improve dietary practices may need to target individual-level determinants such as education and awareness rather than workplace conditions.

10. Recommendations

- **For Employers**
 - Introduce flexible work schedules or shift adjustments to promote better work–life balance and increase opportunities for family interactions.
 - Implement workplace wellness programs encouraging physical activity, with diverse options to suit varying preferences shaped by work shifts.
- **For Policymakers**
 - Focus dietary improvement campaigns on individual-level factors such as awareness, nutrition

education, and affordability, since work conditions show limited influence on eating behaviors.

- Develop community-based fitness initiatives that improve accessibility to diverse physical activity options, particularly for employees working non-standard shifts.
- **For Future Research**
 - Expand the sample size and demographic diversity to validate the borderline associations (e.g., diet patterns and exercise frequency).
 - Conduct longitudinal studies to examine how sustained exposure to work schedules influences lifestyle behaviors over time.
 - Explore qualitative dimensions, such as personal perceptions of work–life balance, to complement quantitative findings.

11. Conclusion

The present study highlights the complex interconnections between work conditions, dietary behaviors, and fitness practices. The findings reveal that work shift timings significantly influence family interaction time, with afternoon shift employees spending more time with family and night shift employees spending less. However, family meals together remain unaffected, reflecting their cultural stability and importance.

In terms of lifestyle choices, dietary behaviors such as diet patterns, meal sources, fruit and vegetable intake, fast food frequency, and number of meals per day did not show significant associations with the examined variables. This suggests that dietary practices are relatively independent of work-related factors, although a weak tendency was observed in diet patterns.

For fitness-related behaviors, type of physical activity emerged as significantly associated with the tested factor, indicating that contextual or demographic conditions play a role in determining exercise preferences. Other variables such as exercise frequency, fitness satisfaction, and job impact on fitness routines were not significantly associated, though exercise frequency showed a borderline result, hinting at a possible underlying relationship.

Overall, the study underscores that work schedules strongly influence family interactions and physical activity choices but exert minimal influence on dietary habits and fitness satisfaction.

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Authorship Contribution

The sole author contributed to the conception and design of the study, data collection, analysis, interpretation of results, and preparation of the manuscript. The author has read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agrees to be fully accountable for all aspects of the work.

Ethical Approval

The study is conducted in accordance with academic ethical standards. Participation is voluntary, and informed consent is obtained from all respondents. No sensitive or personal data is disclosed.

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Declaration

The author declares that all data used in this study is collected ethically, and the manuscript is original and has not been published or submitted elsewhere.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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