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# EXPLORING THE RULE OF LUNCH BREAK LENGTH (LBL) AND ITS EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES: A CAUSE STUDY OF BANKS EMPLOYEES IN PAKISTAN

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# **ABSTRACT**

Long hours work (LHW) and short lunch break length (SLBL) is a big issue in private banks of Pakistan. This study investigated the effect of lunch break length on employees among private banks in the Sindh province of Pakistan. The study was a cross-sectional descriptive design. The research covered a total of 212 employees' respondents from 20 different banks. The study result revealed positive significance, employees physical health (r=0.887, and P<0.01), employees psychological health (r=0.876, and P<0.01), employees performance (r=0.865, and P<0.01), stress on work (r=0.847, and P<0.01) Table 3. The study suggested in the private bank of Pakistan, employee's one-hour lunch break length positively impacts to health, performance and it cut the stress of work. Furthermore, the study suggested job satisfaction and better attendance can result through the employee's one-hour break length in the private sector of Pakistan. **251346-281172.800005** 

**Keywords:** Employee lunchtime; Physical health; Performance; Stress at work.



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# **INTRODUCTION**

The prior study reported weekly long hours of work made health symptoms (Sparks, Cooper, Fried, & Shirom, 1997). Also, poor work-life balance is caused by long hours working (White & Beswick, 2003). Lunch is most often the greatest and therefore the most remarkable break during the day in terms of recovery (Krajewski, Wieland, & Sauerland, 2010). the lunch break activities beneficial in terms of recovery (Krajewski et al., 2010). The break is given as an opportunity to employees for taking a rest (Fritz, Lam, & Spreitzer, 2011). Increasing work hours is to reduce employee welfare (Green, 2001), employee job satisfaction is decreased due to works pressures increased (Green, 2004). Although about 43% of 'long-hour' work employees want a job elsewhere (Peetz et al., 2003). As well as (Willert, Thulstrup, Hertz, & Bonde, 2010) in the occupational settings, fatness and sleepiness made poorer motivation, mood, job satisfaction, and poor health outcomes.

# Flexible working hours

According to (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014) State that organizations trying trustful culture through flexibility in the organization. Also (Thomson, 2008) the flexible working practices facilitating work-life balance among men and women in terms of shifting family patterns. Also, (Anderson & Kelliher, 2009) states that employee's loyalty and engagement, organizational commitment, higher job satisfaction, and help to recruit and retain talented employees resulting in flexible working. Similarly, (Direction, 2008) stopping employees turnover, absenteeism, and incensement in productivity resulted in flexible working.

# Benefits for Employees

According to (Hofäcker & König, 2013) study that "Despite apparent advantages of flexible working practices (employee personal control over work scheduling), some employees, mostly men, think that such practices result in lower-income and higher employment insecurity". Moreover, (Lewis & Humbert, 2010) women fit more than men in flexible working practices in philosophy. As well (Skinner & Pocock, 2011) women requesting more than men flexible working hours. Similarly, (Shapiro, Ingols, O'Neill, & Blake-Beard, 2009) literature suggested that there is a helpful relationship between flexible working practices and employee's mental health including its decrees stress issue.

# Work-Life Balance

Nowadays, work-life balance opinion is getting high attention because of its importance to entirely workers in terms of relationship concept as family size. (Lingard & Francis, 2009) Reports the researchers opinioned the effect of conflict between work and life responsibilities are due to poor work-life balance. The (Abendroth & Den Dulk, 2011) study on work-life resulted in emotional and instrumental support about employees during work helped to the positive relationship in work-life balance satisfaction. Also (Lyness & Judiesch, 2008) progressive relationship linked with work-life balance including work performance. And it has been finding that (Rego, 2009) balance in life and work responsibilities consequence life satisfaction.



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# Stress and Work-Life Balance

Many authors argued that stress is associated with several factors. According to (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014) states that stress happens when people have not mechanism ended when, where, and how people dose the work. Moreover, (Looker, 2011) reports that more stress may be linked with mental and physical health problems for example headaches, depression, heart attack, and cancer. In the same opinion (Lowe, 2006) the workers are more stressed who have difficulties in work-life balance. Therefore current study investigates the impact of lunch break length on stress. Figure 1 shows lunch break length impacts the employee's physical health, psychological health, performance, and stress at work.

# Theory and Hypothesis

According to (Meier-Ewert et al., 2004), reports that "Sleep deprivation can lead to an inflammatory response that may cause the development of cardiovascular disease processes". And (White & Beswick, 2003) the long hours working created poor work-life balance. And, the mental-physical condition affects productivity (Rees, 1997) effectiveness, personal health, and quality of work. the stress is due to long hours of work (Blaug, Kenyon, & Lekhi, 2007). Stress work made disadvantages, such as decreasing productivity, waste of time on the work, and health care costs (Levin-Epstein, 2002).

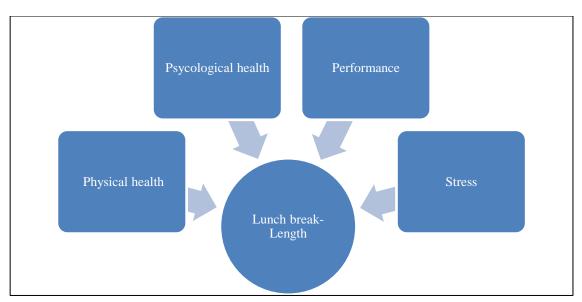


Figure 1. Model of the study

**H1-A**: There is a connection between lunch break length and an employee's physical health at work.

**H1-B**: There is a link between lunch break length and an employee's psychological health at work.

According to (Lack, 1986) reports that intra-individual variability in sleep duration and timing is linked to worse cognitive function and academic performance. moreover (Levandovski et al., 2011)



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increased the incidence and severity of affective disorders such as depression. Also (Gillberg, Kecklund, Axelsson, & Åkerstedt, 1996), a brief nap enhances subsequent alertness and performance during day times. The break made an opportunity for employees to take a rest (Fritz et al., 2011). Hence in the current study investigated the link between lunch break length and employee's health.

**H1-C**: *There is a relationship between lunch break length and an employee's performance at work.* **H1-D**: *There is a relationship between lunch break length and an employee's stress at work* 

# **Materials and Methods**

The research design was cross-sectional data analysis. A total of 212 questioners were successfully filled from different banks in the Sindh province of Pakistan. The questionnaire was designed with five Likert Scale (01 = strongly disagree, 02 = disagree, 03 = neutral, 04=agree and 05= strongly agree). The questionnaire was divided into 2 sections (01= personal information, and 02=questions section). The questionnaires were given to their banks' employees to rate their performance. The data were analyzed in Microsoft Excel and Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0) Software.

# Data Analysis

The study has been divided into 2 sections: the first section described the personal information and the second section simple descriptive.

# Section 1 personal information

Table 1 Personal information

	e 1. Personal information			
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	197	92.9	92.9	92.9
Female	15	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	
Qualification				
Intermediate	9	4.2	4.2	4.2
Bachelor	76	35.8	35.8	40.1
Master and above	127	59.9	59.9	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	
Age				
18-25 years	9	4.2	4.2	4.2
26-35	148	69.8	69.8	74.1
36-45 years	50	23.6	23.6	97.6
Beyond 45 years	5	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	



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Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	197	92.9	92.9	92.9
Female	15	7.1	7.1	100.0
Experience				
1-5 years	117	55.2	55.2	55.2
6-10 years	60	28.3	28.3	83.5
11-15 years	18	8.5	8.5	92.0
16-20 years	12	5.7	5.7	97.6
21-25 years	3	1.4	1.4	99.1
26-30 years	1	.5	.5	99.5
Beyond 31 years	1	.5	.5	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	
Lunch break length				
Between 1-20 minutes	154	72.6	72.6	72.6
Between 21-40 minutes	52	24.5	24.5	97.2
Between 41-60 minutes	6	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	
Work hours long before the lunch break				
Between 4-5	31	14.6	14.6	14.6
Between 5-6 hours	177	83.5	83.5	98.1
Between 6 hours	4	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	
Organization names				
Allied Bank	67	31.6	31.6	31.6
Bank Al Habib	63	29.7	29.7	61.3
Meezan Bank	6	2.8	2.8	64.2
Askari Bank	5	2.4	2.4	66.5
Habib bank	1	0.5	.5	67.0
Bank Islami	6	2.8	2.8	69.8
Silk Bank	1	.5	.5	70.3
Sindh Bank	14	6.6	6.6	76.9
Summit Bank	8	3.8	3.8	80.7
Habib metro politant bank	3	1.4	1.4	82.1
Muslim commercial bank	6	2.8	2.8	84.9



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Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	197	92.9	92.9	92.9
Female	15	7.1	7.1	100.0
United bank	4	1.9	1.9	86.8
Bank al Falah	3	1.4	1.4	88.2
Faysal Bank	7	3.3	3.3	91.5
Samba bank	4	1.9	1.9	93.4
Soneri bank	5	2.4	2.4	95.8
Dubai Islamic bank	1	.5	.5	96.2
NIB Bank	2	.9	.9	97.2
Bank Al Baraka	1	.5	.5	97.6
Meezan Bank	5	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	
Cities names				
Karachi	155	73.1	73.1	73.1
Hyderabad	29	13.7	13.7	86.8
Sukkur	13	6.1	6.1	92.9
Larkana	7	3.3	3.3	96.9
Kamber	5	2.4	2.4	98.6
Nawab shah	3	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 Shows employee's respondents were 197=male and 15=female with a percentage of 92.9% and 7.1%. These respondent's education levels were (09=Intermediate, 76=Bachelors, and 127=Master and above). The percentages of Intermediates 4.2%, Bachelors 35.8% and Master and above 59.9%. These respondents were with five different age groups; the 1st age group was between 18 to 25 years, the 2nd age group was between 26 to 35 years, the 3rd age group was between 36 to 45 years and the 4th age group was beyond 45 years. Among them (9 employees respondents were between 18 to 25 years age, 148 employees were between 26 to 35 years age, 50 employees were between 36 to 45 years age and 5 employees were beyond 45 years of age. These employees professional experience were (117 employees between 1 to 5 years' experience, 60 employees experience between 6 to 10 years, 18 employees between 11to15 years' experience, 12 employees between 16 to 20 years' experience, and 03 employees between 21 to 25 years' experience while the only 01 employees were between 26 to 30 years' experience, and 1= beyond 31 years' experience.



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These employees' lunch break lengths were different; 154 employees' lunch break lengths were between 1-20 minutes, 52 employees break lengths were between 21-40 minutes, and 06 employees break length between 40-60 minutes. These employees' work hour's length before lunchtime was different; 31 employees' work hour's length before lunch break time was between 4-5 hours, 177 employees between 5-6 work hours length, and 4 employee's work hour's length before lunch break was beyond 6 hours. These all respondents were from different banks and different cities in the Sindh province of Pakistan: Allied Bank, Al Habib Bank, Meezan Bank, Askari Bank, Habib Bank, Bank Islami, Silk Bank, Sindh Bank, Summit Bank, Habib Metropolitan Bank, Muslim Commercial Bank, United Bank, Bank Al Falah, Faysal Bank, Samba Bank, Soneri Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank, NIB Bank, Al Karaka Bank, and Meezan Bank. The respondents were from different Cities: Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Kamber, and Nawabshah.

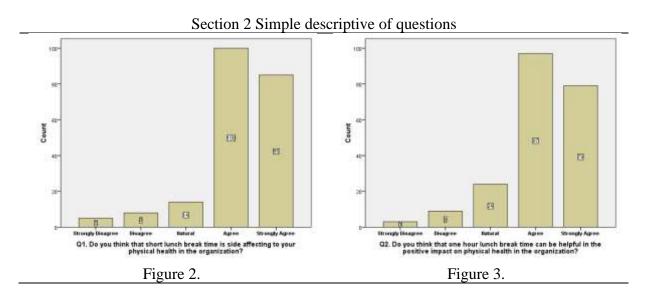


Figure 2 showed 5 employees strongly disagree, 8 agree, 14 natural, 100 employees agreed and 85 employees strongly agreed that less than one-hour lunch breaks length time side effects on physical health.

Figure 3 showed 3 employees responded strongly disagree, 9 employees disagree, 24 natural, 97 agree and 79 strongly agree that in Pakistan banks the positive impact on employee's physical health can be resulted by the employee's one-hour lunch break length practiced. Figure 4 shows the 5 employees respondent strongly disagree, 3 disagree, 18 natural, 102 agree and 84 strongly agree that less than one-lunch break length increased fatigue, depression, and made a negative impact on employees' mental health.



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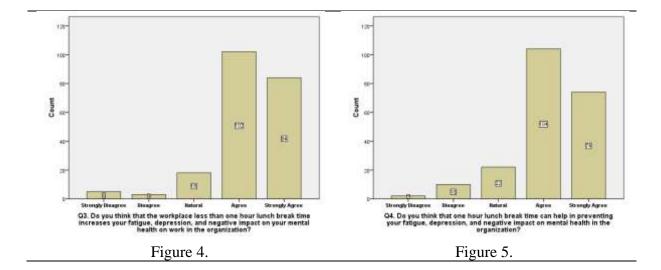


Figure 5 shows the only 2 employees respond strongly disagree, 10 disagree, 22 naturals, 104 agree and 74 strongly agree that employees fatigue, depression, and negative impact on mental health can be controlled if the organization manages employee's one-hour lunch break length.

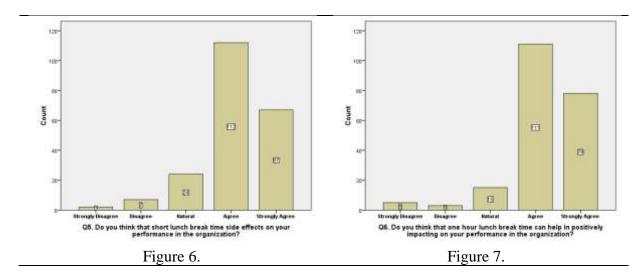


Figure 6 shows the 2 employees respondent strongly disagree, 7 disagree, 24 natural, 112 agree and 67 strongly agree that employees performance were affected due to less lunch break length. Figure 7 showed the 5 employees, respondents, strongly disagree, 3 disagree, 15 natural, 111 agree, and while 78 strongly agree that a positive impact on employee's performance can result if the banking sector manages the employee's one-hour lunch break length.

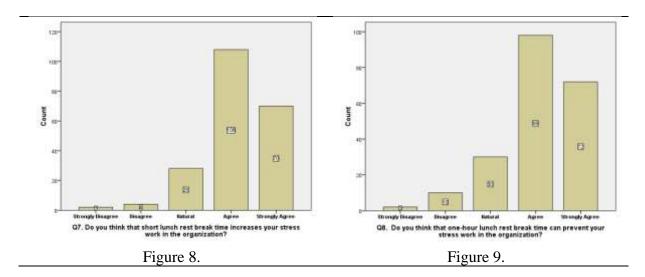
Figure 8 shows the 2 employees' respondents strongly disagree, 4 disagree, 28 natural, 108 agree and 70 employees strongly agree that stress work is connected with short lunch break length.



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Figure 9 showed the 2 employees' respondents strongly disagree, 10 disagree, 30 naturals, 98 agree and 72 strongly agree that employee's one-hour lunch break length prevented employee's stress at work in the banks of Pakistan.



# **Results**

The study result revealed the high sample mean and standard division, as (Q1-Sample mean 4.19 and S.D.894), (Q2-Sample mean 4.13 and S.D.877), (Q3-Sample mean 4.21 and S.D.842), (Q4-Sample mean 4.12 and S.D.845), (Q5-Sample mean 4.11 and S.D.798), (Q6-Sample mean 4.20 and S.D.819), (Q7-Sample mean 4.13 and S.D.780), (Q8-Sample mean 4.08 and S.D.868), (Q9-Sample mean 4.16 and S.D.785), and (Q10-Sample mean 4.17 and S.D.874) Table 2

Table 2: Mean and Std. Deviation					
Questions	Total	Minimum	Maximum	Sample mean	S. Division
Q1.	212	1	5	4.19	.894
Q2. Q3.	212	1	5	4.13	.877
Q3.	212	1	5	4.21	.842
Q4. Q5.	212	1	5	4.12	.845
Q5.	212	1	5	4.11	.798
Q6.	212	1	5	4.20	.819
Q7.	212	1	5	4.13	.780
Q8.	212	1	5	4.08	.868
Q9.	212	1	5	4.16	.785
Q10.	212	1	5	4.17	.874
Valid N (listwise)	212				



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Table 3 showed positive correlations the employees physical health (r=0.887, and P<0.01), employees psychological health (r=0.876, and P<0.01), employees performance (r=0.865, and P<0.01), stress on work (r=0.847, and P<0.01).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	R	P
Physical health	.887**	
Psychological health	.876**	.000
Performance	.865**	.000
Stress work	.847**	.000
Job satisfaction	.771**	.000

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

# **DISCUSSION**

In this study, the majority of bank employee's respondents were agreed and strongly agreed that less than one-hour lunch break length affected them and one-hour break length positively impacted them. These respondents were highly educated and experienced. The employees were working between 8-9-10 hours with between 1 30 minutes of lunch break length. However, was this break length? This lunch break length considering a stress break length. The prior study suggested a side effect of long-hour working. Also, long working weeks made health symptoms (Sparks et al., 1997). The lengthy hours working made fatigue and poor work-life balance (White & Beswick, 2003). Similarly, Mental-physical conditions affected productivity, effectiveness, personal health, and quality of work (Rees, 1997). Also "Daytime sleepiness made nodding at approximately 14:00–16:00 hours" (Dinges & Broughton, 1989). At this time, often accidents and fatigue occur (Mitler et al., 1988).

These authors indicated that employees nodding at the above times indicated that should be comfortable break time length whereas working staff could get a nap to lead the fatigues.

The employees working 8-9 hours with less lunch break length are involving in long-hours of continued work. In the one-hour break length, office staff could take a meal, walk, and nape to the positive impact on employee's health, performance including job satisfaction. Such a short nap, especially during the post-noon nap zone has been shown to restore alertness and promote performance (van Leeuwen et al., 2009). The poor work-life balance is from long hours of work (White & Beswick, 2003). While the brief nap improves performance during the day (Gillberg et al., 1996).

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The prior large number documentary reported the long hour's work negatively affected individually. Our study resolved the one-hour lunch break length made physically-psychologically active employees and positively impacted the health, performance, job satisfaction in the banks of Pakistan. The employees were strongly agreed and agree that lees lunch break length affected



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health, performance, job satisfaction, and stress work. A large number of employees' respondent agrees and strongly agreed that a one-hour lunch break length positively impacted. Moreover, the study concluded that employee's physical health, psychological health, performance, stress work, and job dissatisfaction issue are due to less lunch break length among the private banks of Pakistan. Further study suggested that a one-hour lunch break length may decrease employee absenteeism towards the workplace.

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**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests in the current study.

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# **PONTE**

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