



Universidad
Politécnica
de Cartagena



FACULTAD DE
CIENCIAS DE LA
EMPRESA

U P C T

WORK-LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES IN CHINA: ANALYSIS OF A CHINESE COMPANY

Master Thesis

Master in Business Administration (MBA)

Author: Siyu Zhang

Supervisor: Isabel Olmedo-Cifuentes

2021

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.1. Work-Life Balance and Work-Life Balance Practices	7
2.1.1. The Importance of Work-Life Balance	11
2.1.2. Types of Work-Life Balance Practices	12
2.2. Problems in the Implementation of Work-Life Balance Practices	14
3. WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN CHINA.....	18
3.1 Structure of the Labor Market in China	18
3.2 Work-Life Balance Indicators in China	24
3.3 Comparison between China and other Countries	32
4. WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN A CHINESE COMPANY: Alibaba Group.....	38
4.1. Description of the company.....	38
4.2. Work-life balance practices implemented by Alibaba Group.....	45
4.3. Recommendations	49
5. CONCLUSIONS	51
6. REFERENCES	54
6. APPENDIX	59

ABSTRACT

Today, modern people are under the double weight of work pressure and family issues, which generate serious conflicts and imbalances between work and life. This question about how to balance work and life has gradually become important in the management of Chinese enterprises.

The objective of this master thesis is to study the general situation of work-life balance practices in China according to the availability and use of work-life balance practices and their importance at a social and business level. To complete this review, it is identified, described and analysed different work-life balance practices in a Chinese company like Alibaba Group, which is considered as a referent in China.

Conclusions are divided into three categories: theoretical, China's work-life balance situation and situation and recommendations for Alibaba Group (which are also comment at section 4). The contribution of this work is to understand the availability and use of work-life balance practices in Chinese companies and make some general recommendations not only to Alibaba Group, but also to all Chinese companies that look for improving employees' productivity. In particular, companies must clarify the importance of the work-life balance of employees and propose more new policies adapted to the real workers' needs.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current society, people are burdened with more tasks and responsibilities that come from professional and personal roles. As a result, employees face more pressure from work and life. With this conflict between roles, sometimes employees will have to give up their personal role for work or give up work for personal issues. Failure to achieve work-life balance will not only reduce employees' work and life satisfaction, as well as work performance, but will also have a negative impact on company development.

Therefore, availability and use of work-life balance practices has been a key research area for researchers in human resource management in recent years. Work-life balance has been studied in Western countries for more than 30 years. During the research process, Western countries have adopted many practical activities and policies to achieve balance and reduce work-life conflicts. For example, adopting flexible working systems to help employees who must take care of raising children. However, the research on work-life balance in China started relatively late, and there is still a lot of research space to analyze the availability and use of work-life balance practices in this country. Cross-cultural research based on China's national conditions is very necessary.

From a corporate view, the implementation of work-life balance practices is of great importance to companies because these practical policies can bring many positive effects and benefits to them. For example, it can improve the work efficiency of employees, bring more returns to the company and reduce the absenteeism and turnover rate of employees. This can help the company increase productivity, reduce management costs, increase the company's reputation, enhance customer satisfaction, and attract more talented employees (Yuan Ling and Lin Fei, 2008). Join and build the company into a workplace of harmonious coexistence, happiness and equality can improve the corporate results.

From an employee perspective, work-life balance practices can reduce employees' psychological stress, improve performance, prevent employee burnout, and reduce work-life conflict (Yuan Ling and Lin Fei, 2008). As well as this, they help employees relax physically and mentally, and will not give up life for work or work for life, obtaining a relative balance between work and life (Yuan Ling and Lin Fei, 2008).

This work has two aims. First, the availability and use of work-life balance practices in China and their importance are studied at a social and business level. Second, it is identified, described and analysed different work-life balance practices in a Chinese company and some recommendations are provided according to the literature.

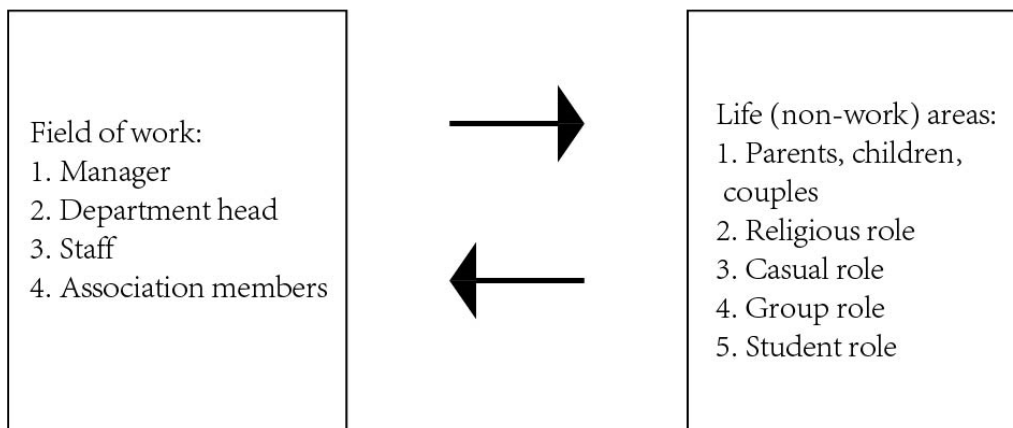
To do this, theoretical review is developed about work-life balance, its practices, common types of work-life balance practices, problems encountered in the practice of implementing work-life balance. In the past few decades, the research on work-life balance in China has been insufficient. By analyzing the structure of China's labor market and work-life balance indicators, and the specific case of a Chinese company can be shown the practical future research on work-life balance in China. As well as this, it is analyzed the implementation of work-life balance practices of a referent Chinese company, Alibaba Group, in order to understand the situation of the Alibaba Group and put forward suggestions for improvement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Work-Life Balance and Work-Life Balance Practices

The term of work-life balance first entered the scope of academic literature and research in 1986 (Ouyang Yanling, 2014). At first, the research on the term work-life balance was very limited, and generally only associated with work and family roles such as parents and children. Until the 1990s, researchers discovered and realized that employees' non-work areas (life areas) are not only simple family roles, and employees also have other roles in non-work areas, such as religious roles, team roles, friendship roles, sport roles, etc. (Figure 1). Finally, researchers have shifted the research direction work-family field to the broader work-life field.

FIGURE 1. Professional and personal roles.



Source: author

Work-life balance is often referred to how companies or organizations helps employees understand and correctly handle the relationship between their work and personal issues, balancing the needs and pressure of work and life roles, and adjusting work-life differences (Baidu, 2020). Nevertheless, this is not the only definition of work-life balance because there are many definitions of it in academic literature. All of them are interrelated and must be understand by employees because this can help them know how work-life balance is essential to balance their work and private life.

Definitions of work-life balance can be grouped into different categories according to the main idea they highlight, as shown below.

(1) Work-life balance as multiple roles.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) believe that a person's multiple roles (such as work roles and family roles) do not have a balance of needs, which will have a negative impact and conflict on the individual's life and work. The transfer of needs is two-way: from home to work, and from work to home. The limited resources of individual roles are consumed, and conflicts arise when the needs of different roles cannot be met, so there is an imbalance between work and life.

(2) Work and life as the relationship across multiple roles.

Greenhaus et al. (2003) offer a new definition of work and life. They study that work and life balance is a multiple life role that spans one person to feel satisfied. As the imbalance will cause conflicts of multiple roles, some things can be done according to these authors. First of all, we must pay attention to the time balance between multiple roles: work roles and life roles need to invest the same amount of time. Secondly, the same amount of psychological participation should be invested in work roles and life roles. And, finally, the relationship between multiple roles should be equal input and equal satisfaction.

(3) Work-life balance as the satisfaction between multiple roles.

The basis of the concept of work-life balance is based on the subjective feelings of individual roles. Clark (2000) believes that work-life balance is the smallest role conflict between work and private and family life and when it is minimized, it achieves the greatest satisfaction of work and life. It is necessary to reconcile the contradictions and satisfaction between work and family to better operate this relationship. Kirchmeyer (2000) considers that the definition of work-life balance is mainly focused on the significance of individual satisfaction with multiple roles, through individual areas such as time, energy, and commitment to maintain satisfactory work and life balance. Voydanoff (2005) believes that work-life balance is an individual's own resources that can satisfy the feelings of multiple roles, thereby obtaining individual satisfaction.

(4) Work-life balance as the role saliency among multiple roles.

Multiple roles are not static, and the importance or significance of each role will change with time or circumstances, such as job promotion, illness, parents, childbirth and other factors,

thereby changing the priority. The research of Eby et al. (2005) establishes that it is important to consider whether people have achieved the significant importance of their job roles and life roles. Perform the role of work and life with personal ability and realize the importance of multiple roles by paying attention to personal satisfaction is key.

(5) Work-life balance as the relationship between conflict and facilitation.

After academics focus on certain psychological factors that cleverly constitute a work-life balance, they found that there is no conflict between roles if there is facilitation among them. Therefore, employees must learn how to solve the conflicts and convenience brought by multiple roles to balance work and life. Psychology professor Michael R. Frone (2003) believes that work-life balance is a low level of conflict between roles and a high level of facilitation between them. The study puts forward four two-way conflict and facilitation structures to test the relationship between conflict and facilitation. Grzywacz and Bass (2003) believes that work-life balance is optimized when conflict between roles is reduced and family to work facilitation is provided. In particular, the effects of life role on work affect more to mental health than the effects of work issues on life role. Then, “work should be protected from family disruptions” offering family to work facilitation (Grzywacz and Bass, 2003).

(6) Work-life balance as the perceptual control between multiple roles.

This definition is rarely mentioned in the literature. Perceptual control between multiple roles mainly refers to the ability by covering multiple roles with autonomy. For example, when a person reduces her or his working time for their new child is making the decision to balance work and personal roles which means a change in the time spend in each role. Fleetwood (2007) believes that work-life balance is related to humans. Human perception can control the autonomy of multiple roles, when and where and how to work. Therefore, controlling the perception of multiple roles in the personal life and work field is also a fundamental factor in maintaining work-life balance.

By understanding and studying these six definitions of work-life balance, this work has found that researchers revolve around the word role. From my point of opinion, a role is a behavioral pattern in which individuals are expected under specific behaviors in certain situations, and each

person has different expectations when playing different roles. For example, when it comes to the role of manager, people will have different expectations for this role. Work-life balance cannot be achieved without the combination of the internal cognition and experience of the individual role and the external expectation of the role, so that the role in the field of work and the role in the field of life can be balanced. On the contrary, when the joint effect produces conflict, it will lead to role conflict and thus make the work-life imbalance.

There is no specific definition of work-life balance in the literature, and researchers are still groping and discovering. However, the definition of work-life balance can be considered from two perspectives: role conflict and role overflow.

Role conflict

When multiple role bearers lack and cannot balance each other due to the lack of resources (such as time, energy and ability, etc.), one role fails to fulfill its responsibilities and thus affects the fulfillment of the responsibilities of the other role, the impact between them is role conflict. For example, a professional woman chooses to take care of her family and children, but she may lose and sacrifice her leisure time and work time. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) studied about the source of role conflict, and they established mainly three categories: time conflict (the time dedicated to one role limit the time dedicated to others), pressure conflict (people have multiple roles, and the stress generated by one can affect other roles), and behavior conflict (each role may require a different behavior that creates a role conflict because it has different patterns). Therefore, when the limited resources of individuals are consumed, different roles will not be satisfied accordingly, resulting in the conflict between roles and the need for role balance.

Role overflow

When the abilities of other roles of the individual are increased or weakened, it is because the attitudes, emotions, skills, and behaviors obtained from the involvement of the individual roles exceeded into other roles, which is role overflow. Role overflow is to better analyze and prove that work and life require compatibility and balance. It is recorded in the literature that Staines and Connor (1980) actually analyzed the categories of role overflow, and they divided role overflow into positive overflow and negative overflow. Positive overflow believes that under the condition of multiple roles, each role has different resources, and these resources have a positive effect on the individual to achieve other roles. Conversely, negative overflow believes that the

negative feelings between multiple roles will affect each other. For example, it is possible that the negative emotions caused by family disharmony will directly affect the efficiency and quality of work.

2.1.1. The Importance of Work-Life Balance

Life is a balance scale. Work and life are the two fulcrums hanging at the two ends. If one side is too inclined and the other side leads to an unbalanced tilt, it will directly negatively affect our quality of life, personal emotions and work efficiency. Conversely, when work and life are balanced, it will have a positive and important impact on employees and the company.

Work-life balance is related to employees and the measures that help cover work and life needs. A balanced state can help employees:

- Reduce psychological pressure. The ever-increasing market competition under the economic globalization is making employees face unprecedented workplace pressure. The increasingly fierce competition in the workplace has led to the common behavior of employees working overtime. A Chinese survey conducted by CCTV (2006) showed that 64% of nearly 7,000 respondents worked overtime frequently and 27% occasionally worked overtime. They said they were under great pressure. The use of work-life balance practices can help reduce a large part employees' psychological pressure.
- Improve performance. Work-life balance can enable employees to have a higher work passion, a clearer and cleverer mind and a more focused mind to complete the work, without worrying about the troubles brought by life and affecting their work, so as to improve their performance.
- Prevent employee burnout. According to the "China Job Burnout Index" survey conducted by the China Human Resources Development Network (2007) among nearly 4,000 people, 70% of the participants had at least mild job burnout, 39% had moderate job burnout, even 13% of people meet high job burnout. Job burnout refers to the state of mental and physical fatigue caused by individual human beings under the pressure of work (Bin Hao, 2009). It was first proposed by Freudenberger in 1974 who believed that job burnout is a state of emotional exhaustion that is most easily manifested in the

helping industry (Bin Hao, 2009). It is caused by human beings due to long hours of work, excessive work pressure, and excessive workload, generating a state of exhaustion (Bin Hao, 2009). Job burnout comes from the inclination of one end of life and work, causing employee fatigue. Therefore, only to maintain work-life balance can reduce the possibility of employee burnout.

- Reduce the conflict between work and life. When work and life are balanced, employees can have more time to spend with their families and spend more good time together, such as caring for young children and visiting the elderly. In the balance between the two, employees can improve their life satisfaction and improve their quality of life, thereby reducing the conflict between work and life, and making the family life of employees harmonious.

According to the previous ideas, work-life balance is good for the company. As long as the company properly helps employees balance work and life and meet their needs, it will increase employees' loyalty and dedication to the company, reduce employee absenteeism and turnover, help the company increase productivity, improve corporate social responsibility, and make the company better (He Dongyi, 2009). The management also reduces labor cost such as firing and hiring new employees, look for new employees, selection, etc. Employees that feel supported by the company, improve work efficiency and, at the same time, increase the company's productivity and high-quality output, enhance customer satisfaction, and improve the company's reputation to help the company develop better in the market in the future. When companies establish equality, harmony and a pleasant atmosphere and workplace, more talented employees are attracted. According to research, the company helps and encourages work-life balance, and it will get more rewards for the company's benefits and development from the employees' subsequent performance.

2.1.2. Types of Work-Life Balance Practices

With the development of the economy, employees and companies have started to pay more attention to work-life balance. The availability and use of work-life balance practices are becoming more and more common, and the types of practices are also increasing. Usually, the

company's human resources are responsible for the benefits and policies that are adopted to balance work and life of employees. Some of these practices are included below.

1. *Flexible working system*

Flexible working system means that employees can flexibly arrange reasonable working hours, working methods and working locations within the tasks and time conditions stipulated by the company (Gariety and Shaffer, 2001). This practice can better reflect employees' autonomy. The main content of the flexible working system includes flexible working hours, flexible working location, remote office or teleworking, part-time work, etc. As long as the completion of the work can be guaranteed, there is no need to care about a lot of fixed frames. The function of the flexible working system is mainly to reduce the conflicts between multiple roles (working and non-working roles), to provide employees with free space and independent rights, to prevent the conflict between employees' work and life roles, and to maintain the work-life balance of employees.

2. *Job sharing*

Job sharing is the practice that allow those two or more employees share the work responsibilities for one working day or one working week, rearranging the original daily or weekly working hours of one or more jobs. Job sharing can help employees build more of their living space, reduce the troubles and pressures caused by work, increase employees' passion for work, and have a positive impact on the development of the company and employees (Ouyang Yanling, 2014). Losey's (2007) survey of American organizations found that 70% of surveyed employees from different organizations choose job sharing as a practice of work-life balance, which shows that it is a widely used practice.

3. *Compressed work week*

The company wants to compress employees' weekly work as much as possible. The standard time for employees' work is less than five days per week. Generally speaking, employees' working hours are 40 hours in 5 days, and then can be changed to 40 hours in 4 days and other ways to distribute the total hours of work per week between the working days (Brough et al., 2008).

4. *Unpaid leave*

Employees can deduct corresponding wages to achieve the purpose of taking leave on working days (Poelmans and Caligiuri, 2008). It may be an unpaid extra leave, an unpaid leave for live events, or family leave. The unpaid leave for live events allows employees to provide unpaid leave for urgent family needs, such as taking care of parents with serious illnesses or if you want to upgrade your degree. Family leave allows employees to take vacations for special family reasons, birthday parties for certain elderly parents, etc.

5. Childcare Services

Organizations provide on-site childcare facilities. If this is not possible, they can consider providing childcare service discounts to employees, so as to reduce the pressure on employees to take care of children during working days and reduce the amount of absenteeism (Paludi and Neidermeyer, 2007).

6. Provide healthy cash plans

In order to ensure that employees and their families are insured after illness (Paludi and Neidermeyer, 2007), the organization encourages them to take a more proactive approach to health examinations and vaccinations, thereby reducing expenses after illness and the chance of employees being absent from work.

7. Encourage holidays

One way for organizations to encourage employees to take vacations for their own benefit is to implement a “use it or lose it” vacation policy. According to this policy, if not used, the vacation time assigned by the employee will expire at the end of the year (Poelmans and Caligiuri, 2008).

2.2. Problems in the Implementation of Work-Life Balance Practices

In this highly competitive modern society, the importance of the company’s practice of implementing work-life balance is becoming more and more significant. By promulgating some policies on work-life balance, the company can not only relieve the pressure of employees, bring more returns to the company, but also improve the company’s performance and productivity. Despite this, the implementation of these policies will encounter a series of problems, which

increase the difficulty of implementing work-life balance practices. Some of them are explained below.

1. Gender stereotypes

Professional women, on the one hand, must face more and more competition in the workplace and the subsequent increasing work pressure; on the other hand, they must face pressure from life, such as to get married and have children (Steele, 1997). Especially for middle-aged women after 30 years old who already have certain experience in work and mastered certain resources but feel the pressure of motherhood. Coupled with being young, it is good for them to move towards a higher professional level during the rising period of their career. Timing, however, in terms of family life is another factor that influence women (Steele, 1997). They are also faced with a series of “life events” such as giving birth, raising children, supporting the elderly, and taking care of housework. Moreover, for married professional women, their husbands are also at this time. During the rising period of career, the wife can help her husband manage the family well and spend more time on housework, caring for the elderly and children, it will naturally be a great support for her husband’s career. Therefore, at this time, professional women (Steele, 1997) are faced with a choice, whether to be a good internal helper, or to seize the opportunity to work hard for their own career. Due to the traditional division of gender roles, most women put “home” first and “sacrifice” their careers. However, even if most professional women put “home” first, most of them did not withdraw from the labor market because of this but continued to “stick to” their positions.

There are still many people who have gender stereotypes. These impressions are a threat to professional women. Some companies will think that the implementation of work-life balance policies is mainly aimed at women, which will have a certain impact on the implementation of the policy (Steele, 1997; Gupta and Srivastava, 2021). But work-life balance practices area oriented to all employees and a change in the family role model is necessary.

2. Attendance

In an enterprise, all work is centered around management and production. In order to gain time, progress, and profit, many grassroots employees live on the construction site for a long time, unable to enjoy annual leave normally, take care of their families, or experience normal social life, which caused family crises, marriage difficulties, being difficult the feeling of a happy life.

Browne (2012) once said: “If you want to change something, you must first strengthen your awareness of it. Serving the enterprise, serving the employees, and being a harmonious bridge and bond are the work that the enterprise trade union should do well. For an enterprise to be effective, the hard work of the employees is indispensable. The development and growth of the enterprise is indispensable for employees to be paid. To make the two achieve the most effective cooperation, which is called the pursuit of the greatest balance between work and life, is a topic that urgently needs to be studied and resolved” (Browne, 2012).

3. Lack of top management support

Leadership style is an important factor affecting work-life balance. Researchers have conducted a lot of studies about the relationship between leadership style and employees’ work-life balance. These studies show that positive leadership styles promote employees’ work-life balance. On the contrary, negative leadership styles are not conducive to employees’ work-life balance (McCarthy et al., 2010; Carlson et al., 2013; Gillet et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2013; Kopp, 2013). McCarthy et al. (2010) based on the theoretical discussion of planned behavior, established that the work-life balance policy participation, policy awareness, perception of policy means and the use of individual policies of front-line managers influence their attitudes towards work-life balance, and the work-life balance of the supervisor. Attitudes, in turn, affect employees’ awareness, understanding and satisfaction with the work-life balance policy. Carlson et al. (2013) explored the impact of abusive management on work-family conflict (work on family and family on work) based on the theory of resource protection. As conclusion, these authors posit that the impact of emotional labor on burnout was regarded as the impact of abusive management on work-family conflict. Kara et al. (2013) conducted a survey of 443 employees in the Turkish hotel industry. Compared with transactional leadership styles, transformational leadership styles have a more effective impact on employee well-being, enhancing life and work quality, life satisfaction and organizational commitment, and decreasing employee burnout. Gillet et al. (2013) explored that transformational leadership styles can help improve nurses’ quality of work and life, thereby increasing their commitment to work. The study also found that transformational leaders influence the quality of work and life of employees through the intermediary mechanism of organizational justice (interaction justice and distribution justice). Kopp (2013) demonstrated the relationship between perceived leadership and peer support and employees’ work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational

citizenship behavior from the theory of social exchange. Research shows that perceived leadership and peer support is positively correlated with employees' work-life balance. The study further pointed out that, compared with perceived support from colleagues, perceived support from leadership has a more prominent impact on employees' work-life balance.

4. National Culture

National culture is also an important issue that affects the implementation of work-life balance practices because the global cultural diversity will lead to different understandings of work-life balance. For example, in China, corporate organizations have not paid enough attention to work-life balance. On the one hand, Chinese people have a high degree of "work first" influence as a result of thousands of years of traditional culture, especially influenced by Confucian culture. On the other hand, due to China's one-child policy and aging problems, Chinese employees may tolerate better the stress of life. In any case, the overall job satisfaction and overall perceived health of Chinese employees are low. 37% of Chinese people are not satisfied with their jobs, and 70% of professionals experience varying degrees of job burnout (Yuan Ling and Lin Fei, 2008). Among white-collar Chinese workers, work-family conflicts are widespread, and the overall "work-life balance" of Chinese employees is not optimistic.

3. WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN CHINA

Previously, it has been explained the general ideas about work-life balance practices. This section is focused on what happen in China. To do this, first is analyzed the structure of the labor market in China to offer a general idea about it. Secondly, it is included some information about the most available and use work-life balance practices in China. Finally, it is included some information about the situation of these practices in other countries to make comparisons with China.

3.1 Structure of the Labor Market in China

The structure of the labor market in China is going to be analyzed through the main indicators that are accessible. In particular, it is considered the total population and the one aged 16 and over, the labor force rate, the employment rate (considering the urban and rural areas in general), the population divided by gender, number of employed people in private enterprises and self-employed individuals by status of industrial and commercial registration, and urban registered unemployment. All this information comes from departmental administrative records and the statistics of labor wages (National Labor Statistics in China, 2019).

In 2006, China had 764 million industrial workers. In urban areas, 283 million people were employed through various forms of corporate ownership. The rest were employed by rural enterprises or self-employed, engaged in the secondary and tertiary industries, and developed and promoted related economic activities.

Table 1 includes information about some general characteristics of the labor market in China from the years 2017 to 2019. According to data, the number of employees in China's labor market was 77.640 million in 2017, 77.586 million in 2018, and 77.471 million in 2019. In 2017, the number of employed people accounted for 55.9% of the total population. In 2018, it accounted for 55.6%, and in 2019 it accounted for 55.3%. These figures show that the number of employed persons in China has decreased slightly year by year.

Table 1 also divides the number of employees in China’s labor market by geographic region. In 2017, the number of urban employees was 424.62 million, and in 2018 it was 434.19 million, an increase of 2.3% over 2017, and in 2019 it was 444.47 million. In 2017, the number of rural employees was 351.78 million. In 2018, the number of rural employees was 341.67 million, and in 2019, it was 332.24 million. This shows a movement of people from towns for finding a job because data describe a destruction of jobs in rural areas and a rise in urban areas.

Table 1. General labor statistics.

(10,000 people)	2017	2018	2019
Total Population	139,008	139,538	140,005
Population aged 16 and over	114,289	114,678	N/A
Labor Force	80,686	80,567	80,640
Employment	77,640	77,586	77,471
Percentage of total population	55.9	55.6	55.3
Urban area	42,462	43,419	44,247
Rural area	35,178	34,167	33,224

Source: <https://www.yearbookchina.com/navipage-n3020013266000110.html>

Table 2 includes information on the breakdown of the male and female population in China from 2017 to 2019. According to data, in 2017, the number of males in China was 711.3 million, and the number of females was 678.7 million. In 2018, the male population in China was 713.51 million, and the female population was 681.87 million. In 2019, the number of males in China was 715.27 million, and the number of females was 687.78 million. These data show that the number of men and women in China is relatively balanced.

Table 2. Gender composition in China in 2017 to 2019

Year	Total population (10,000 people)	Grouped by gender			
		Male		Female	
		Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
2017	139,008	71,137	51.2	67,871	48.8
2018	139,538	71,351	51.1	68,187	48.9
2019	140,005	71,527	51.1	68,478	48.9

Source: <https://www.yearbookchina.com/navipage-n3020013266000110.html>

Table 3 shows information about the kind of companies that employed people in urban areas. In China, it can be differentiated four categories of ownership: state-owned organizations (SOE), collective enterprises (COEs), private enterprises (POEs), and foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs). Since the 1980s, employment in state-owned enterprises has been declining, especially since the mid-1990s. In contrast, due to economic globalization, employment in POE and FIE has increased significantly and steadily. For example, in 1978, the number of people working in state-owned enterprises accounted for more than 99.8% of the urban labor force. By the end of 2006, they accounted for only 25.4% (CCTV, 2006).

According to China's labor market data, the number of urban employees is divided by registration status of enterprises (Table 3): 176,4438 million in 2017, 172,7738 million in 2018, and 171,618 million in 2019. These data show that China's employment trends and labor market are not optimistic, and the number of employed people is gradually decreasing every year. It also shows that China's unemployment rate has increased in 2018 and 2019.

The number of employees in state-owned enterprises was 60,638 million in 2017, 57,397 million in 2018 and 54,727 million in 2019; the number of employees in urban collective enterprises was 406 million in 2017, 347.4 million in 2018, and 295.6 million in 2019. In 2017, the number of employees in other enterprises was 111.74 million, in 2018 it was 11.867 million, and in 2019 it was 11.935 million. This means that from 2017 to 2019, the number of employees in China's state-owned enterprises has decreased, and the number of state-owned enterprises has also

decreased, encouraging the establishment of other enterprises and increasing employment. In 2017, the number of employed persons in private enterprises and the number of persons employed in business registration were 226.75 million respectively, in 2018 it was 243.92 million, and in 2019 it was 262.582 million. According to data, the Chinese government has been vigorously encouraging entrepreneurship since 2018. Private enterprises have made important contributions in absorbing jobs, prospering the market, and taxation, and have become a powerful force in promoting economic and social development. There is more information about this topic in Appendix.

Table 3. Type of companies that employs people in Chinese cities

(10,000 people)	2017	2018	2019
Number of Employed People in Urban Enterprises by Status of Registration	17,643.80	17,273.80	17,161.80
State-owned enterprises	6,063.80	5,739.70	5,472.70
Urban Collective-owned enterprises	406.0	347.4	295.6
Other Ownership enterprises	11,174.00	11,186.70	11,393.50
Number of Employed Person in Private Enterprises and Self-employed Individuals by Status of Industrial and Commercial Registration	22,675	24,392	26,258.2

Source: <https://www.yearbookchina.com/navipage-n3020013266000110.html>;

About the wages in China, Table 4 contains information about them. In particular, according to the analysis of the structure of China's labor market, the wages of Chinese employees are divided into three major aspects: Total Wages of the Urban Enterprises Employment, Average Wage of the Urban Enterprises Employment, and Average Wage of Staff and Workers.

According to data, the total employment wages of urban enterprises in 2017 were 1,288.91 billion yuan, in 2018 it was 1,488 billion yuan, and in 2019 it was 15,429.61 billion yuan. These data show that China's economic level has continued to improve from 2017 to 2018, and the wage level of employees has also continued to increase. This is a good trend.

The average salary of employment in urban enterprises was 74318 yuan (9710.17 euros/year) in 2017, 82413 yuan (10767.84 euros/year) in 2018, and 90501 yuan (118030.19 euros/year) in 2019. These data indicate that the continuous development of the Chinese economy has increased the consumption level of Chinese people, but it may also be the reason for the price increase.

The average salary of employees in 2017 was 77,812 yuan (10,171.50 euros/year), in 2018 it was 84,744 yuan (11077.65 euros/year), and in 2019 it was 90,501 yuan (11,830.20 euros/year). These data show that the average annual wages of Chinese employees have grown steadily and structurally in good condition, and wage increases can also drive consumption power.

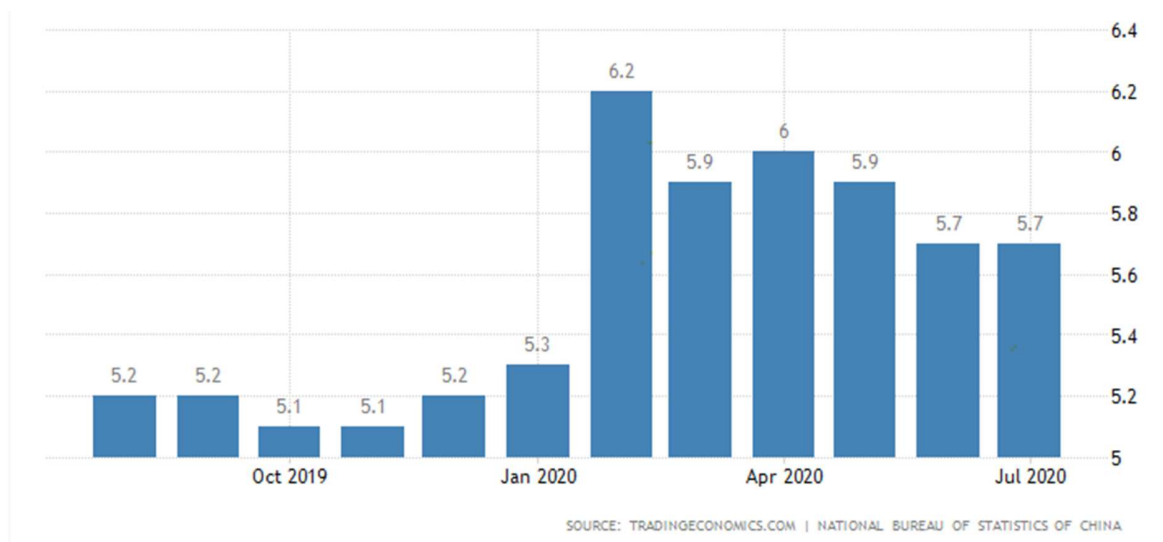
Table 4. Data on labor compensation and average labor compensation of employees in China from 2017 to 2019.

Item	2017	2018	2019
Total Wages of the Urban enterprises Employment (100 million yuan)	129,889.10	141,480.00	154,296.10
State-owned Units	48,884.10	51,126.60	53,743.70
Urban Collective-owned enterprises	2,215.60	2,082.30	1,841.50
Other Ownership enterprises	78,789.30	88,271.10	98,710.90
Average Wage of the Urban enterprises Employment (yuan)	74,318	82,413	90,501
State-owned enterprises	81,114	89,474	98,899
Urban Collective-owned enterprises	55,243	60,664	62,612
Other Ownership enterprises	71,304	79,453	87,195
Average wage of staff and workers	77,812	84,744	90,501
State-owned enterprises	85,845	92,988	98,899
Urban Collective-owned enterprises	57,409	62,501	N/A
Other Ownership enterprises	73,978	81,139	N/A

Source: <https://www.yearbookchina.com/navipage-n3020013266000118.html>

Finally, a bar chart of China's recent unemployment rate is presented in Figure 2. It shows that China's unemployment rate has remained stable in January 2020 and before without significant increase or decrease in the unemployment rate. However, since February 2020, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the unemployment rate has increased from 5.3% in January 2020 to 6.2% in February. Finally, the slight decrease of 5.7% in July shows that the Chinese government has taken good measures to maintain the economy and employment and it is reducing the unemployment rate peaked in February.

Figure 2. Recent unemployment rate.



In the structure of China's labor market, a different feature is the high rate of women's participation in China. Chinese women usually work full-time in both work and life, and rarely have longer rest periods. For example, they usually only take a short break during maternity leave, which is generally within 6 months (Xiao and Cooke, 2012; Stockman et al., 2015). Anyway, there are several reasons for the high number of Chinese women employed. The first is that the Chinese government believes that women's participation in employment can represent women's liberation and independence, and it corrects some previous ideas that discriminated against women. More than 38% of China's full-time labor force is women. The employment rate of women in China is among the highest in the world. The Chinese government has adopted

legislation, administrative policies, and equal rights action policies and plans for men and women to intervene in promoting gender equality in China and improving the protection of Chinese women's social status and economic income. The Chinese government has made a lot of investment in childcare facilities to help working mothers in state-owned enterprises to take care of their children while working, which reduces a lot of burdens for working mothers. The second reason is that, especially in the period of state-planned economy (1949-1978), the socialist government's economic policies were conducive to full employment with low wages and low inflation, so double wages were required to maintain the family. Expand the family support network and reduce the cost of childcare and childcare services for parents with young children were other measures. Through these policies, couples with young children are encouraged to work full-time. Since 1980, because of the rapid population growth in China, the government implemented a family planning policy. Therefore, the implementation of the policy not only controlled the population growth, but also reduced the burden of raising children for working couples. The urban family model in current China usually takes the form of dual occupation/dual income earners. Compared with industrial capitalist society, the differentiation of marriage roles is much smaller and gender equality may be greater (Xiao and Cooke, 2012; Stockman et al., 2015). The last reason for the high-rate participation of women in labor market is that most women in China are full-time employees, and there will be a certain income gap between women who work full-time and those who work part-time because the government has no policy to help mothers who work part-time (such as household cleaners). Part-time work will lead to a gap in income; for example, a part-time employee may need to do a few part-time jobs to have the same income as a full-time employee. What needs to be improved is that although the employment participation rate of Chinese women is very high, discrimination against them is still widespread, which is reflected in their low proportions in management and government positions in organizations (Xiao and Cooke, 2012).

3.2 Work-Life Balance Indicators in China

In the 21st century, work-life balance is a win-win strategy for companies and employees. Implementing the practice of work-life balance can help employees reduce conflicts between multiple roles, allow employees to enjoy more autonomy in their work and life issues, and reduce employees' pressure and burden. For companies, implementing work-life balance practices can

help companies reduce management costs, employee absenteeism and turnover rates, as well as increase productivity, among others, which will bring more benefits to the company. Ouyang Yanling (2014) indicated that 23 of the top five companies in the world regard work-life balance as an important strategy for employee relationship management. A survey conducted by Johnson & Johnson in the United States (Ouyang Yanling, 2014) also showed that employees who implement work-life balance plans have a lower company sick leave rate than employees who do not implement work-life plans.

Taking maternity leave as an example, an understanding of the present situation of work-life balance among Chinese women through comparison (Table 5).

According to Chinese law, Chinese female employees are paid during maternity leave. The following is the calculation method of salary:

- Chinese female workers' pregnancy leave and vacation need to be issued by the hospital and the company's salary will be paid in accordance with the sick leave salary standard.
- During the maternity leave of Chinese female employees, the company will pay 80% of the actual monthly salary.
- Regarding maternity leave, China has state subsidies. Female employees in China can receive government-issued maternity allowances, but maternity leave wages and maternity allowances are not equal. The amount of maternity allowance is related to the salary base declared by the company to the social security department. Salary and maternity allowance cannot be obtained at the same time, which means that if the salary you receive during maternity leave is lower than the maternity allowance, the company needs to make up the difference. If it is higher than the maternity allowance, the higher part will not be deducted.

At present, 29 provinces in China have clearly stipulated paternity leave; the shortest is 7 days, the longest is 1 month, and in most places, it is 15 days. During the leave, most regions have set salary bonuses as usual. Except for Tibet and Xinjiang, 29 other provinces have revised their family planning regulations and stipulated the duration of paternity leave (called nursing leave in some areas).

Table 5. Leaves in the different Chinese provinces.

Provinces	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Marriage leave
Xizang	One year	30 days	10 days
Jilin	158 days (can be extended to 1 year)	15 days	15 days
Chongqing	128 days (can rest until the child is 1 year old)	15 days	15 days
Beijing	128 days (can be increased by 1 to 3 months)	15 days	10 days
Henan	188 days	30 days	21 days
Hainan	188 days	15 days	13 days
Gansu	180 days	30 days	15 days
Heilongjiang	180 days	15 days	15 days
Fujian	150-180 days	15 days	15 days
Guangdong	178 days	15 days	3 days
Shanxi	158 days	15 days	3 days
Shanxi	158 days	15 days	30 days
Xinjiang	158 days	15 days	23 days
Yunnan	158 days	15 days	18 days
Neimenggu	158 days	15 days	18 days
Hebei	158 days	15 days	18 days
Qinghai	158 days	15 days	15 days
Guizhou	158 days	15 days	13 days
Liaoning	158 days	15 days	10 days
Shandong	158 days	7 days	3 days
Anhui	158 days	10 days	3 days
Ningxia	158 days	25 days	3 days
Sichuan	158 days	20 days	3 days
Jiangxi	158 days	15 days	3 days
Hunan	158 days	20 days	3 days
Guangxi	148 days	25 days	3 days
Jiangsu	128 days	15 days	13 days
Shanghai	128 days	10 days	10 days
Hubei	128 days	15 days	3 days
Tianjin	128 days	7 days	3 days

Source: Author based on 360doc.com (2018).

The Population and Family Planning Regulations of most provinces stipulate that paternity leave is 7 days, and late marriage and childbirth can be extended to 10 days. However, as in Henan Province, there is still up to 30 days of paternity leave. The salary system during paternity leave varies from unit to unit, and bonuses and benefits remain unchanged. In some areas, paternity leave for men can be converted to maternity leave for women, and women can replace men.

Data released by some international organizations indicate that China's female labor force participation rate is much higher than the global average. However, being Chinese professional woman, trying to give birth and work at the same time is a huge challenge. In recent years, the government has introduced a series of policies to protect working mothers, that are commented below.

(1) Extended maternity leave: You can take leave until the baby reaches one year old

Recently, there have been calls for insufficient maternity leave for working mothers. How to meet their urgent needs has become an important livelihood issue of national concern.

Since the implementation of the two-child policy, the population and family planning regulations have been revised in various places, and the calculation method of maternity leave has been adjusted to "98 days leave + maternity leave stipulated by the state". In some areas, maternity leave has been increased to 128 or 158 days.

On this basis, in some areas, women can take up to one year of leave after giving birth.

In addition, as early as 2016, Chongqing Municipality made it clear that female employees who comply with the maternity laws and regulations can continue to take leave after their children have taken a full year of maternity leave upon application and approval by their units. A cash pension equivalent to 75% of her basic salary was paid during this period, but not lower than the city's minimum wage standard.

(2) Extend the maternity allowance and extend the number of days of adjusted maternity medical treatment

Maternity allowance is also crucial for working mothers. Recently, some regions have adjusted the number of days of maternity allowance to benefit women. Maternity leave and maternity

allowance can be enjoyed at the same time in China, but the maternity leave is often different in each region.

According to the Chinese Labor Law, employees are entitled to 98 days of maternity leave during childbirth, including 15 days of pre-natal leave. For dystocia, an additional 15 days of maternity leave are offered, and for multiple births, an additional 15 days for each additional baby born. In case of miscarriage, female workers who have a miscarriage within 4 months of pregnancy are entitled to 15 days of maternity leave; and those who have a miscarriage after first 4 months of pregnancy are entitled to 42 days of maternity leave.

Maternity allowance is the salary of female workers during maternity leave. It is calculated by dividing the payment base of the female employee's childbirth month by 30 and multiplying by the number of days of maternity leave. If the maternity allowance is lower than the salary standard, the company will make up for the difference.

The "Fujian Province Female Workers Labor Protection Regulations" came into effect on May 1, 2020. The regulations expanded the number of days of maternity allowance, stipulating that the number of days of maternity allowance should not be less than 128 days, and converted it to 30 days per month according to the average wage of female employees of the employer of the previous year.

Since May 1, this city has also adjusted the payment standards for medical expenses related to maternity insurance. The main adjustments about reproductive medical expenses include aspects such as prenatal check-ups, hospital delivery and family planning operations. Among them, the standard for prenatal check-ups was increased from 1,400 yuan (183 euros) to 3,000 yuan (392.17 euros) per person. The payment standard for hospital delivery due to natural childbirth was raised from 3000 yuan (392.17 euros) to 5000 yuan (653.61 euros), and the payment standard for cesarean section was raised from 4400 yuan (575.18 euros) to 5800 yuan (758.19 euros). The payment standards for 25 medical expenses for family planning operations have been adjusted, for example, the abortion outpatient clinic expenses have been increased from 270 yuan (35.29 euros) to 770 yuan (100.66 euros).

However, this adjustment in Beijing did not increase the payment burden of units and individuals. The insurance undertaken by the unit continued to be consolidated at a rate of 0.8%

into the insurance premiums charged by the basic medical insurance for employees. Individuals still did not pay the insurance premiums they assumed.

(3) Establish parental leave to encourage employers to adopt flexible working hours

Many professional women work hard to raise children and work after giving birth. In response to this problem, many areas of “parental leave” have emerged.

For example, the “Regulations on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region” came into effect in November 2019. According to these regulations, employers are encouraged to provide 10 days of parental leave per year for couples with children between 0 and 3 ages in accordance with laws and regulations.

In Fujian, the policy also clearly stipulates that during the period when the child is less than three years old, the couple who gave birth to the child will receive 10 days of parental leave each year.

In addition, Guangdong Province issued the “Implementation Opinions on Promoting the Development of Infant Care Services” in March 2020. The guide pointed out that to strengthen support and guidance for home baby care, the first step is to fully implement the vacation policy. It fully implements policies such as spouses’ maternity leave and paternity leave, and actively explores ways to try parental leave and maternity leave compatible with infant and childcare services.

It is worth mentioning that the document also mentioned the issue of “flexible working hours”. The guide says that employers are encouraged to make flexible work arrangements, reduce working hours and commute to facilitate the care of babies and children at home. As well as this, it must be provided support and information services, employment guidance and vocational skills training for parents caring for babies and young children.

(4) Protect the fetus, and prepare for pregnancy can also enjoy these treatments

Among the laws and regulations issued by various localities, many places have made more detailed regulations on the protection of women workers in the “fourth phase”.

For example, the regulations of Jiangsu, Henan and other provinces have included maternity leave the months before the baby is born.

Jiangsu stipulates that if the pregnancy is less than 3 months and more than 7 months, and it is really difficult to go to work, it should be provided the maternity leave according to the rest certificate of the medical institution. The treatment during the rest period will not be less than 80% of the local minimum salary standard. In addition, for female employees in the pregnancy stage, the regulations require organizations to arrange for married and expectant female employees to engage in labor that is prohibited during pregnancy as stipulated by the state, and the female employees' consent shall be obtained.

Henan Province clarified that if the pregnancy is less than 3 months and the pregnancy reaction is serious, or the pregnancy is more than 7 months, it is not possible to extend the working hours or arrange for night shift work, and the rest time must not be less than 1 working time per day.

In addition to the two places mentioned above, some provinces have also proposed protecting pregnant workers measures. For example, Shaanxi stipulates that there are more than two miscarriages, and there are no children, and those female workers that are preparing to give birth, can apply for adjustments in their job according to a medical institution certification through consultation.

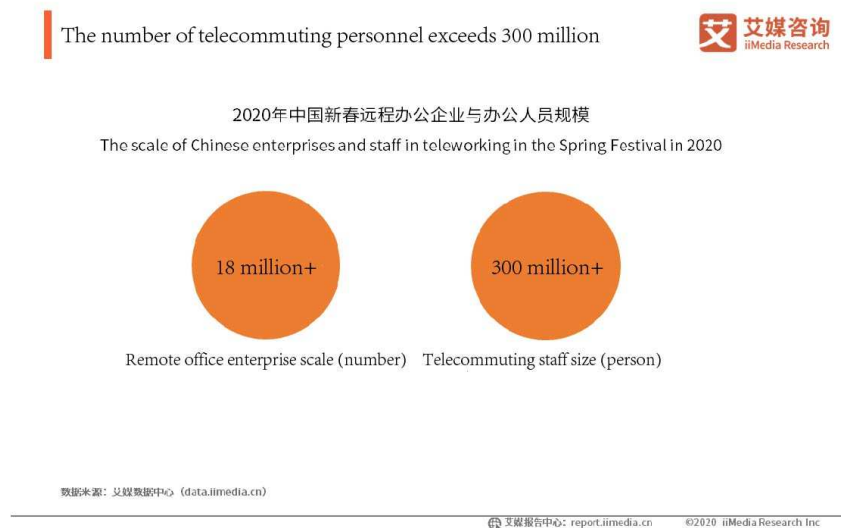
These are the indicators of work-life balance in China related to the situation of women in childbirth, child-rearing and post-childbirth, which in turn prove that China is now facing a work-life conflict and is actively resolving it.

In recent years, Chinese companies have also implemented other policies to balance work and life. Tencent, one of China's biggest Internet companies, has also begun to pay attention to work-life balance and the policies it can implement to solve it such as flexibility. In this company, employees don't have to worry about working overtime, because Tencent advocates the concept of flexible work. Most departments do not have fixed entry and exist time. The company only sets working hours and employees can choose how to organize them during day, guaranteeing time dedicating to work. In addition, Tencent's working atmosphere is very relaxed and pleasant, and colleagues can get along well with each other. According to Tencent internal staff, as long as you have any questions or want to communicate with others, you will get answers. Tencent will also hold many interesting activities such as some talent shows, which will attract many insiders to participate, and many people will watch. Within Tencent, there are also

various interest associations, such as the Badminton Association, Football Association, Dance Association, Film Association, Photography Association and other amateur entertainment associations, which provide employees with opportunities to communicate and learn, as well as exercise and relax.

Figure 3 also shows information about the use of teleworking, also called telecommuting, in 2020 in China.

Figure 3. The scale of telecommuting enterprises and office staff in China in 2020



Source: data.iimedia.cn

Affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, many companies in China also choose to work remotely online. According to the Hot Topic Report on the Telecommuting Industry in China in the New Year of 2020 (iiMedia Research website), from February 3 to 9, 2020, the first week of the end of the Chinese New Year holiday, the number of enterprises using telecommuting exceeded 18 million, and the number of remote office workers exceeds 300 million. It shows that China has made new progress and greater room for development in telecommuting, which provides a foundation for Chinese companies to implement work-life balance practices in the future.

The popularization rate of unpaid leave policy in China is still very low, compared to some countries with better welfare, such as the United States. At the end of the 1990s, some private

companies in coastal areas of China began to implement the vacation mode of unpaid leave, which was mostly used to deal with the dilemma of excess labor during the off-season of factory production.

3.3 Comparison between China and other Countries

United States

The work-life balance in the United States has always been a controversial issue for American employees because some companies often have longer working hours in order to achieve long-term operating plans. There is a certain gap compared with European countries. The United States ranks 28th in terms of work-life balance. The US government has promulgated some labor-related laws and policies in order to maintain work-life balance, such as the following:

- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA): signed by President Clinton in 1993, this is currently a law in the United States that guarantees employee leave. The main content is that within 12 months, due to the urgent needs of family members and medical reasons, any “qualified” employee is entitled to 12 weeks of leave, and the employee’s pregnancy leave, or childbirth leave is also FMLA. However, the law cannot guarantee paid leave, which can also be a factor affecting work-life balance.
- Small Necessities Leave Act: Massachusetts enacted this law in 1998, thus expanding the rights of FMLA leave. The main content is to allow employees to get 24 hours of unpaid leave in any twelve months.
- Massachusetts Maternity Leave Statute: Massachusetts enacted this law in 1972. The main content is that female employees who meet specific conditions can take 8 weeks of leave. The law applies to all employers with six or more employees, and the employer decides whether employees take paid leave.
- Wage and Hour Law and “Day of Rest” Statute: Massachusetts also enacted this law. The main content is to require employers to provide 30 minutes of mealtime for each employee who works more than six hours a day. Employees on “rest days” have the right to take a day off within seven days. If they want employees to work on statutory holidays, employers must pay wages which are one and a half times the normal salary.

- Short- and long-term disability: The content mainly includes companies providing employees with short-term or long-term disability insurance, which brings other benefits to some special employees.

European cities and work-life balance

According to reports, all cities in the world are ranked according to the performance of Global Work Life Balance in 2019. By observing the performance of countries, the best work life balance practices can be analyzed in detail.

KISI, a security company, surveyed 40 cities around the world to find the best balance between work and life. The company ranked cities based on employment factors such as average commuting time, working hours and holidays, as well as indicators of well-being and civil rights.

Table 6 includes the nine European cities with the best work-life balance based on the 2019 Work-life Balance ranking.

Table 6. The best European work-life balance cities in 2019.

Country	Work-life balance ranking
Helsinki, Finland	100
Munich, Germany	98.3
Oslo, Norway	95.3
Hamburg, Germany	93.6
Stockholm, Sweden	89.1
Berlin, Germany	88.8
Zurich, Switzerland	84.1
Barcelona, Spain	82.2
Paris, France	77.8

Source: Based on Global Work Life Balance Ranking (2019).

1. Helsinki, Finland

Helsinki ranks first in the world in terms of work-life balance. Employees working in Helsinki only need to work 40 hours a week and only take 26 minutes in average to travel from home to work. For residents there, they can have better autonomy and free space.

Take at least 30 days off a year, which is one of the countries with the most vacations in the world. Helsinki also provides 1,127 days of paid parental leave (around 3 years), far more than any country.

2. Munich, Germany

Among the ten largest cities in Germany, Munich has the least pressure. On average, they work one hour longer than Helsinki, and commute one minute more.

Helsinki and Munich are different in terms of holidays. In Munich, the capital of Bavaria, although most employees have an average of nearly 30 days off each year, they have at least 20 days off. Parents are entitled to 406 days of paid parental leave, which accounts for about one third of Helsinki's parental leave.

3. Oslo, Norway

According to a survey of Oslo residents, data show that the average working hours of employees per week is 38.9 hours, but some employees have an average working hours of 48 hours per week.

The city provides paid parental leave for parents. Among all cities surveyed, gender equality scores are highest, followed by Stockholm and Helsinki. Oslo is also a leader in mental health services.

4. Hamburg, Germany

Residents of Hamburg work 41 hours a week, living and working pressure is relatively small, but safety is low.

In this work-life balance ranking, three German cities were selected. The three cities all have something in common: the average weekly working hours are relatively short, and policies are provided to help maintain family happiness. For Germans, leisure is a very important way of life.

5. Stockholm, Sweden

People working in Stockholm can enjoy flexible work, so the city scores high on gender equality. The Swedish government has taken measures to help residents balance work and family life. Stockholm has a gender equality score of 76.9, ranking second among all cities surveyed. Part of the reason is the flexible working hours and the structure of parental leave. The degree of social equality in the entire city is also high, as well as the acceptance of the LGBT+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender), where the equality of group enjoyment has reached 100%.

6. Berlin, Germany

On average, workers in Berlin go to work around 10 in the morning, a bit later than the top ten German cities, but still earlier than other cities. The average commute time is a bit longer, but the pressure level in Berlin is twice that of Hamburg and twice that of Munich.

7. Zurich, Switzerland

Among the ten largest cities, Zurich residents work the longest and commute the longest. Although its level of psychological services ranks second, the pressure in the city is very low, second only to Munich.

Zurich is the most populous city in Switzerland, but its low air pollution has brought many benefits to residents' living environment and health.

8. Barcelona, Spain

Barcelona residents take an average of 30.5 days of vacation per year, a longer leave than other cities, because it is higher than the minimum annual leave of 22 days. Long lunches and lunch breaks are common in Spanish cities, and they face pressure to eliminate these traditions. In Barcelona, employees work nearly 41 hours a week, similar to other cities in the top ten cities.

9. Paris, France

It takes an average of 44 minutes to travel from home to work in Paris, which is the longest among the nine European selected cities. Both Paris and Helsinki have 30 days of vacation time. French law requires the active promotion of a healthy work-life balance. The weekly working hours are limited to 35 hours, and employees can choose not to send and receive emails after getting off work.

The practice of Chinese companies

Through surveys of some companies, it was found that the policy implementation plan made by these human resources departments did not fundamentally solve the conflicts between work and life in Chinese companies. The distribution of financial rewards to employees has become the main solution to conflicts. After interviews with some managers, they believe that the implementation of these policies has a general effect on the work-life balance of most employees. However, some policies will actually increase the problem of work-life imbalance. For example, managers will get more difficult jobs, and employees who want to get promoted through this task will work harder and the pressure will be greater. But few managers care about and understand employees and support them. In fact, emotional intelligence has not received much attention in leadership training in China, although facts have proved that the workplace and high-quality support can effectively reduce workers' work-life conflict (Allen et al., 2000; Casper et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 2004; Kelly et al., 2008).

In accordance with the analysis developed by Chandra (2012), many managers have a very indifferent attitude towards work-life balance issues. Most managers think that if they want a better job, they will sacrifice their family and life. If the employee disagrees with this approach, you can choose to resign, but more people will fight for the job, and your departure will not have a significant impact on the company. For example, the CEO of a private accounting firm believes that women cannot have both work and life roles. If you choose to join the workplace, you will not be able to be a housewife because it is difficult to balance work and life. Therefore, female employees in China rarely have other special holidays except maternity leave. Although company managers know that employees will face many work-life conflicts, financial rewards and salaries can help the company retain employees. The CEO's strategy is to set a low base salary, which is determined by performance bonuses. Their employees must keep themselves busy in order to get more income. The conflict between work and life is inevitable and employees must learn to manage and distribute the relationship between work and life. Chinese company rarely implements work-life balance policies, but in order to help employees relieve stress, they often organize events.

After analyzing the employees' opinions of some companies in China, they hope that the companies can implement more policies and support for work-life balance, but it is difficult.

Chen (2006) found that 37% of sampled knowledge employees believed that flexibility in working hours could effectively reduce work-life conflict. Chen's (2006) research also shows that 31% of knowledge employees expect their organizations to provide childcare and/or elderly care services when they have work-life conflict. They would rather deal with employee requests informally based on specific circumstances than institutionalize certain arrangements that employees might use. The managers did give some examples of their families' commitment to exercise discretion to take care of the individual.

It should be note that, although young and single workers may have fewer work-life conflict, long hours of work and occupational anxiety have a negative influence in their non-working lives. They may experience a vicious circle of not having a partner, and then spend more time working, thereby reducing the chance of finding a partner and therefore staying single. As well as this, some married women must postpone childbirth to save their careers.

4. WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN A CHINESE COMPANY: Alibaba Group

4.1. Description of the Company

Alibaba Group Holding Co., Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as Alibaba Group) was founded at the end of 1998 by 18 people headed by Ma Yun, also known as Jack Ma. The company is headquartered in Hongkong, and overseas branches in Silicon Valley and London, although it is also established in Hangzhou, Zhejiang and Chinese mainland. The current number of employees is 103,699.

Alibaba founder Jack Ma was named “future leader” by the well-known “World Economic Forum” in 2001 and “business leader” by the American Asian Business Association in 2000. Ma Yun is also the first Chinese entrepreneur to appear on the cover of Forbes in 50 years. He has been invited many times to give lectures at world-famous universities, such as Harvard University, MIT and Wharton Business School.

Alibaba group is currently the world’s largest trading market, as well as the world’s largest online trading market and business communication community. It has become the world’s first e-commerce website with 2.1 million merchants. Therefore, Alibaba Group has become a well-known e-commerce brand of global business (B2B). It has become the preferred website for global merchants’ online promotion because Alibaba’s success comes from its good positioning, stable structure, and high-quality service.

The Alibaba Group’s mission is to make nothing difficult in the world. The founder created Alibaba to allow small enterprises to expand their business through innovation and technology in order to be in a more favorable position when participating in domestic or global market competition, help small enterprises safeguard their own interests, and provide a fair Internet competition environment. Alibaba Group reformed the traditional marketing, sales, and operations methods, provided the power of new technology, built a fair Internet marketing platform, helped enterprises improve efficiency, interacted with customer groups, and made the enterprise’s operations more efficient.

The development of Alibaba Group’s business segment mainly includes business services, big data cloud computing services, financial services, advertising services, Internet services, cross-border trade services and rookie logistics services.

Alibaba Group operates a number of businesses to support the successful operation of Alibaba ecosystem. There are also services and businesses provided by subsidiaries. There are 13 main businesses in the ecosystem, including Alibaba international station, 1688.COM, Taobao, TMALL, FRESHIPPO, AliExpress, Lazada, ele.me, YOUKU, Ding Ding, Alibaba, Alibaba cloud and CAINIAO. Below, there is an introduction to the main business of Alibaba Group ecosystem following the chronological order of their creation.

➤ Alibaba International Station



Alibaba International Station is a leading online wholesale trading platform for foreign trade and the first business established by Alibaba Group. Its purpose is to provide suppliers from China and the world with inquiries and online orders with overseas wholesale buyers. Services such as trading, digital marketing, digital supply chain performance and finance. Overseas wholesale buyers are generally trade agents, manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and small and medium-sized companies engaged in import and export business.

➤ 1688.COM



Founded in 1999, 1688.COM is China's leading integrated domestic trade wholesale market business created by Alibaba. Through the provision of online transaction services, it will match up the cooperation between factories and wholesalers and buyers in China's clothing, shoes, bags, accessories, home improvement building materials and packaging materials.

➤ TaoBao



Founded in 2003, Taobao is an enterprise under Alibaba group, China's leading mobile commerce platform, with a growing customer base and a huge user group. Through technology optimization and big data analysis, Taobao provides consumers from big cities and underdeveloped areas with a highly personalized and interactive shopping experience. On Taobao, consumers can obtain interesting content and the latest information provided by businesses in real time, so as to understand product information and new trends. They can also communicate with each other, as well as their favorite enterprises and KOL (Key Opinion Leader). KOL is regarded as a relatively new marketing tool, which takes advantage of social media's coverage and influence. The merchants on the platform are mainly individuals and small businesses.

➤ Alimama



Alimama was founded in 2007 and is the monetization platform of Alibaba Group. Alimama uses data technology to match the promotion needs of merchants, brands and retailers with Alibaba's and third-party media resources to realize the value provided by Alibaba's core business, digital media and entertainment, and other businesses. Through Alimama's marketing services, dealers can also choose to perform marketing displays on third-party customers and websites to reach users and resources outside of Alibaba's platforms.

➤ TMALL

TMALL 天猫

TMALL was founded in 2008 and is the world's leading third-party online and mobile business platform for brands and retailers. Alibaba Group created TMALL to serve customers who are gradually more pursuing higher-quality products and the greatest shopping experience. Many international and Chinese brands and retailers have settled on Tmall, supplying Chinese and overseas customers with branded products at home and abroad and products that traditional retail stores cannot provide.

What is the key difference between Taobao and Tmall? While Tmall is a B2C platform (like Amazon), Taobao is C2C (like Ebay). Then, Tmall has all the premium brands, while Taobao is much more focused on local brands and sellers.

➤ Ali Cloud



Founded in 2009, Alibaba Cloud is the digital technology and intelligent support business of Alibaba Group, which provides a full range of cloud services to consumers around the world, including database, storage, security, large-scale computing, elastic computing, network virtualization services, management and applications services, Internet of Things services, big data analysis, and machine learning platforms, among others.

➤ AliExpress



AliExpress was founded in 2010, a global trading market created by Alibaba Group. It facilitates global consumers to buy products directly from manufacturers and distributors in China and even the world. Its main consumer markets include the United States, Russia, Brazil, Spain and France. Although the global version of the website is in English, other 17 other languages, including Russian, Portuguese, Spanish and French, are also available in the platform.

➤ Lazada



Founded in 2012, Lazada is one of the prominent and fast-growing e-commerce platforms in Southeast Asia. It operates in six countries including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, and provides services for small and medium-sized enterprises, local and international brands in Southeast Asia.

➤ CAINIAO



CAINIAO was founded in 2013 and is an intelligent logistics network business under Alibaba Group that incorporates the vision of the group in terms of logistics: 24 hours in the country, 72 hours in the world. In order to realize this idea, Cainiao Networks and logistics partners continue to establish and operate a global logistics fulfillment network, providing domestic and international one-stop logistics services and supply chain management solutions to satisfy the majority of merchants and consumers in a large-scale manner.

➤ YOUKU



Alibaba Group acquired a controlling stake in YOUKU in 2016. According to QuestMobile's user data in March 2020, YOUKU is the third largest online video platform in the Chinese market and the most well-known online video brand in China's Internet sector. One user can quickly and conveniently search, watch and share high-quality video content on multiple terminals.

➤ FRESHIPPO



FRESHIPPO was founded in 2016. Through online and offline consumption, Alibaba Group creates its own fresh food and daily necessities retail chain brand. If consumers consume online, they use physical stores as warehouses for online orders, and then deliver them to door-to-door and can also achieve the effect of consumers' free shopping experience. As on March 31, 2020, Alibaba has 207 self-operated stores, mainly located in first- and second-tier cities in China.

➤ ele.me



In 2018, Alibaba Group acquired ele.me, striving to become one of China's leading even distribution and local life service platforms. Consumers can order snacks, meals, fresh food, beverages, and daily necessities online through ele.me, Alipay, Taobao and Word of Mouth.

➤ Ding Ding



Ding Ding is a digital collaborative office platform that provides new ways of sharing, collaborating and working for contemporary organizations including schools and educational institutions. Millions of companies and users use DingTalk to keep in touch and work remotely.

Table 7 include some information from the financial performance of Alibaba Group.

Table 7: 2017-2019 financial performance of Alibaba Group

Alibaba Group Financial Performance (100 million yuan)								
Year	First quarter		Second quarter		Third quarter		Fourth quarter	
	Total revenue	Net profit	Total revenue	Net profit	Total revenue	Net profit	Total revenue	Net profit
2019	934.98	258.3	1149.23	212.52	1190.17	725.4	1614.56	523.09
2018	619.32	66.41	809.2	76.5	851.48	182.41	1172.78	330.52
2017	385.79	98.52	501.84	140.3	551.22	174	830.28	233.3

Source: <https://www.alibabagroup.com/cn/ir/reports>

It can be analyzed from Table 7 that the total revenue and net profit of Alibaba Group have increased year by year from 2017 to 2019, indicating that the financial performance of Alibaba Group is in a stage of steady growth.

4.2. Work-life Balance Practices implemented by Alibaba Group

China has been accelerating its development in recent years, and the problem of work-life balance among Chinese companies has become increasingly prominent. Problems such as the loss of corporate talents, the work efficiency of employees and the impact on company development have emerged. Companies have begun to pay attention to the problem of work-life balance, and they have gradually realized the importance of it to company development.

Alibaba Group is a leader in China's domestic e-commerce and a large-scale global trade market. As a referent, it strives to balance the work and life of employees by improving employee welfare. Below, there are describe the practices of Alibaba Group for employees to reach work-life balance.

1. Economic security

A) Provide interest-free housing loans.

In 2011, Alibaba Group used 3 billion yuan to provide employees with interest-free housing loan benefits, which was called "ihome". The condition for receiving it is that the employee must be a regular employee who has worked in Alibaba Group China for at least 2 years. If the employee needs to buy the first set of residence (in the family unit) at the workplace, the employee can apply to the company, and the company can provide a maximum of 300,000 yuan (39,224.68 euros) with an interest-free home purchase loan in RMB. The company helps employees ease the burden on their families.

B) Employees' children's education and price subsidies.

Alibaba Group provides regular employees in China with a one-time child education and price subsidy (it reduces the consumer price of a good or service below what it would be in the absence of the subsidy) of 2,000 to 3,000 yuan (261.50 to 392.24 euros).

C) Alibaba Education Fund.

Alibaba Group has set up an education fund with a total amount of 500 million yuan (65,373,772.30 euros). The company uses this fund to invest in the construction of the school's hardware facilities to achieve joint education with educational institutions. It also cooperates

with related schools in Hangzhou (China) where the headquarters of the Alibaba Group is located, to provide some enrollment places for employees' children.

D) Provide assistance for major diseases.

Alibaba Group has specially set up the "iHelp Dandelion Program" for employees and their families suffering from major diseases and can apply for 50,000-100,000 yuan (6,537.38-13,074.75 euros) in assistance.

2. Life improvement

A) Food and meal supplements.

Alibaba Group headquarters has employees from all over the country and the company provides employees with food from all over the country to have the opportunity to choose. The prices are cheap and only charge the cost price. The company will also provide meals for employees.

B) Pregnant women's lounge.

Alibaba Group will set up a maternity lounge on each floor, which is mainly provided for employees who are preparing to be mothers and breastfeeding. There will be refrigerated cabinets and special lounge chairs.

C) Children's education.

Alibaba Group has specially set up the "iBaby" project for the education and care of employees' children. The project content includes policy consultation and education information on the education of employees' children, helping families with difficulties with their children, and the company will regularly carry out parent-child activities as well as other employee activities.

D) Free gym.

Alibaba Group provides employees with a 1,000-square-meter free gym at the headquarters of Alibaba Group, including running, yoga, table tennis and other sports, allowing employees to work hard while having their own time to relax and maintain work-life balance.

3. Health Protection

A) Physical health check.

Alibaba Group is very concerned about the physical health of its employees. It provides a comprehensive physical health check every year and will also invite experts to interpret the employees' health, so that employees can prevent their health risks as early as possible.

B) Mental and health consultation.

Alibaba Group covers this issue by inviting industry experts to the company to provide employees and their families with answers to work and life stress and disease prevention issues.

C) Supplementary medical insurance.

Alibaba Group has purchased supplementary medical insurance for all workers, including outpatient expenses and hospitalization expenses after the employees fell ill, and reimbursed them a part of the expenses based on the types of medicines, which reduces the medical burden of employees.

D) Maternity Insurance.

The company provides 100% reasonable childbirth reimbursement for female employees when they give birth.

E) Caring for Employees' Parents Plan.

Alibaba Group also provides 2 free health checks for employees' parents every year.

4. Leave benefits

A) Maternity leave.

The company allows male employees to have paternity leave and female employees have extra-long paid maternity leave and pregnancy leave. Female employees who work during breastfeeding can also leave work half an hour earlier each day.

B) Annual leave.

Employees can use annual leave during the probation period. The annual leave calculation method is that the first year and the second year are 7 days a year, increasing by 2 days each year, and they can take up to 15 days of leave.

C) Visiting relatives.

Alibaba Group provides employees with a three-day family visit every year. Employees can go home to visit their parents or relatives in order they can feel the warmth of the family while working hard.

Figure 4 offer some information about the ratings and trends of work-life balance in Alibaba Group according to the punctuations given by employees in the international human resources web page Glassdoor.

Figure 4: Alibaba Group's ratings and trends on work-life balance, welfare, etc.



Source: <http://www.tengways.com/view.aspx?ContentID=206>

According to the Figure 4, it can be seen from the scores in five aspects that Alibaba Group employees are still somewhat dissatisfied with work-life balance (3 points out to 5). Although the company has made a lot of practices and benefits for work-life balance, it cannot completely solve the work-life balance under the high-intensity work pressure of employees.

4.3. Recommendations

Through analyzing the work-life balance practice of Alibaba Group from the aspects of employees' economy, vacation, life and health, the company still attaches great importance to the work-life balance of employees, but there are also some deficiencies. The following are the measures I think Alibaba Group needs to improve the work-life balance of employees and achieve a real work-life balance.

1) **Flexible working system.**

Alibaba Group's practice of work-life balance does not involve any aspect of the flexible working system. The company should try to allow employees to choose their own working hours, working methods, and working locations on the premise of ensuring the completion of the tasks within the specified tasks and time. The flexible working system allows employees to reduce the conflicts between multiple roles. For example, if employees choose to work remotely from home, they can not only play the role of family but also the role of employees, so that the work and life roles are not delayed. The conflict between work and family roles is reduced and the work-life balance of employees is maintained.

The pandemic provoked by COVID-19 has accelerated the use of teleworking. The Chinese government, in order to control the spread of the epidemic, pushed enterprises across the country to implement remote work from home, and Alibaba Group also allowed all employees to work remotely from home. After COVID-19 is effectively controlled in China, Alibaba Group agreed that employees can choose to work in the company or work remotely from home.

2) **Job sharing.**

Alibaba Group can try to allow two or more employees to share work with each other in one working day or one working week, so as to reduce the work pressure of employees, increase their enthusiasm for work, and make the company develop positively. Work sharing helps employees

provide more living space, so that employees not only have time to spend at work, but also have more time to return to the family, so as to maintain the satisfaction between multiple roles and achieve work-life balance (Clark, 2000).

3) Clear task assignment.

Alibaba Group can try to assign work to employees clearly, including the concept, content, deadlines and other instructions of work tasks. Employees can complete tasks more efficiently, which may save time for their personal space and time and maintain their work life balance.

4) Flexible benefits.

The benefits provided by Alibaba Group to achieve work-life balance are not required by all employees, and employees should be allowed to choose the benefits they need. The implementation of flexible benefits can increase employees' sense of happiness in life, thereby reducing work pressure and achieving a work-life balance.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this master thesis is to study the general situation of work-life balance practices in China. To do this, it is identified, described, and analyzed the available practices in China, and the offered practices of a Chinese company that is considered a referent, Alibaba Group. The contribution of this work is to understand the availability and use of work-life balance practices in Chinese companies and propose new work-life balance practices for Alibaba Group, in particular, that can be also applied by other companies. Below, the main conclusions are grouped and explained.

a. First of all, this work theoretically discusses the definition, importance, types and implementation issues of work-life balance practice.

This master thesis discusses the main definitions of work-life balance practice into six categories: multiple roles, relationship between multiple roles, satisfaction between multiple roles, role salience between multiple roles, relationship between conflict and promotion, perception between multiple roles control. According to these ideas, from this work, work-life balance can be defined as the recognition of the possible problems between work and life roles and the need to balance them to deal with conflicts and overflows between roles.

The importance of work-life balance practices is mainly analyzed from the positive and important impact on the company and employees. For employees, the benefits are to reduce psychological pressure, improve performance, prevent employee burnout, and reduce work-life conflicts. For companies, some of the benefits that can be obtained are increase productivity, increase corporate social responsibility, reduce management costs, improve company reputation, and attract talents.

The main types of work-life balance practices are flexible working systems, job sharing, compressed work week, childcare services, unpaid leave, healthy cash plans, and encouragement of vacations.

This work also studies various problems that companies or organizations will encounter in implementing work-life balance practices from four aspects: gender stereotypes, attendance rates, lack of senior management support, and national culture, in order to better implement policies and foreshadowing.

b. Secondly, this master thesis also analyzes China's work-life balance based on China's national conditions, mainly from three aspects: China's labor market structure, China's work-life balance indicators, and a comparison of China's work-life balance with other countries.

In the context of the structure of China's labor market, the Chinese government is doing its utmost to implement welfare policies such as extending maternity leave, granting maternity allowances, increasing parental leave, and encouraging companies to implement flexible working hours in the process of implementing work-life balance policies in China. Under the promotion of the government, the intervention measures that Chinese companies can take in human resources have also increased, such as economic incentives (increasing employee income and benefits, companies can invite family members to participate in travel, etc.), flexible working systems (remote work or teleworking, part-time jobs, etc.), the most common is that the company organizes social activities.

Through this article, we compare the work-life balance policies among China, the United States, and some cities of Europe, such as Spain, Germany, and France. Research on factors such as working hours, holidays, and civil rights shows that there is still a big gap between the practice of work-life balance in China and that in foreign countries, which may be related to cultural differences and market structure.

The practice of work-life balance in China requires the active cooperation of the government, companies and employees to achieve improvement. The government must first implement more policies, and secondly make Chinese companies or organizations aware of the importance of work-life balance. Let the company realize that it is not only to relieve pressure for employees, but also to improve productivity and performance for the company, which will have more positive impacts on the company and attract more talents from all over the world.

c. Finally, this work mainly studies the practice of work-life balance in the Chinese company Alibaba Group and analyzes it from three aspects: the situation of Alibaba Group, the practice of work-life balance and the recommendations for the company.

Alibaba Group is currently the world's largest online trading market and trade market founded in 1998 in Hangzhou, China. The company is committed to expanding its business through innovation and technology, reforming traditional marketing, sales and business methods, and

helping small and medium-sized enterprises to get better efficient operation. Alibaba Group has 13 main businesses, involving various countries around the world, including Taobao, TMALL, FRESHIPPO, AliExpress, Lazada, Alibaba International Station, 1688, ele.me, YOUKU, DingTalk, Alibaba, Alibaba Cloud, and CAINIAO.

This work starts from the four aspects of Alibaba Group's practice of work-life balance: economy, life, health and leave. Alibaba Group maintains employees' work-life balance by providing employees with interest-free housing loans, employee child education subsidies, meal supplements, free gyms, free health check-ups, medical insurance, maternity leave, and family visits. It can be seen that the company has spent a lot of thoughts on this, but the data at Figure 4 shows that Alibaba's employees are not very satisfied with work-life balance measures. The imbalance between the work and life of employees will lead to the employees' job burnout and role conflicts.

Therefore, I put forward four suggestions to Alibaba Group's practice of work-life balance. Companies can choose to implement flexible work systems, job sharing, clear assignment of tasks, and flexible welfare options. The company must clarify the importance of the work-life balance of employees, and propose more new policies, which are the important factors for the company's continued development.

This master thesis also has some limitations. First, certain data about 2020 cannot be obtained from the Chinese government, such as the number of employees, the gender composition of Chinese population, the number of employees by company type, and the data on labor compensation and average labor compensation of Chinese employees. Second, there may be more ways to balance work and life but, according to China's economic development and competition, I think that some work-life balance methods are not applicable. This work has included some of the most relevant work-life balance methods. Finally, In the analysis of Alibaba Group, I cannot get access to all information of the company and the opinions of Alibaba Group's employees about work-life balance. All of them were obtained from its public reports.

However, this work provides a general review about work-life balance practices in China and its application in a big Chinese company established there. Some recommendations to improve the situation are also provided.

6. REFERENCES

- Allen, T. D., Herst, D. E., Bruck, C. S., and Sutton, M. (2000). Consequences associated with work-to-family conflict: a review and agenda for future research. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 5(2), 278-308.
- Bin Hao. Hypnosis and psychological stress release. Hefei: Anhui People's Publishing House, 2009: 152-155.
- Browne, P. (2012) "An Investigation of Nurse's Work-Life Balance in Public Sector Hospitals in Ireland". The 11th World Congress of the International Federation of Scholarly Associations of Management.
- Brough, P., Holt, J., Bauld, R., Biggs, A., and Ryan, C. (2008). The ability of work—life balance policies to influence key social/organisational issues. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 46(3), 261-274.
- Clark, S.C. (2000) Work /family border theory: a new theory of work /family balance. *Human Relations*, (53): 747—770.
- Carlson, D. S., Grzywacz, J. G., and Zivnuska, S. (2009). Is work—family balance more than conflict and enrichment?. *Human Relations*, 62(10), 1459-1486.
- Casper, W. J., Martin, J. A., Buffardi, L. C., and Erdwins, C. J. (2002). Work--family conflict, perceived organizational support, and organizational commitment among employed mothers. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 7(2), 99-108.
- Chandra, V. (2012). Work–life balance: eastern and western perspectives. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23(5), 1040-1056.
- Eby LT, Casper WJ, Lockwood A, Bordeaux C and Brinley A (2005). Work and family research in IO/OB: Content analysis and review of the literature (1980–2002). *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 66: 124–97.

- Fleetwood, S. (2007). Why work–life balance now? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 18: 387–400.
- Frone MR (2003) Work–Family balance. In JC Quick and LE Tetrick (Eds), *Handbook of Occupational Health Psychology*, pp. 143–162. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Gariety, B. S. and Shaffer, S. (2001). Wage differentials associated with flextime. *Monthly Labor Review*, 124, 68-75.
- Gillet, N., Fouquereau, E., Bonnaud-Antignac, A., Mokoukolo, R., and Colombat, P. (2013). The mediating role of organizational justice in the relationship between transformational leadership and nurses' quality of work life: A cross-sectional questionnaire survey. *International journal of nursing studies*, 50(10), 1359-1367.
- Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10: 76–88.
- Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003). The relation between work-family balance and quality of life. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 63: 510–531.
- Grzywacz JG and Bass BL (2003). Work, family and mental health: Testing different models of work-family fit. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 65: 248–261.
- He Dongyi (2000). *Shopping Mall Modernization*, Issue 04.
- Kalliath, T., and Brough, P. (2008). Work–life balance: A review of the meaning of the balance construct. *Journal of management and organization*, 14(3), 323-327.
- Kara, D., Uysal, M., Sirgy, M. J., and Lee, G. (2013). The effects of leadership style on employee well-being in hospitality. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 34, 9-18.

- Kelly, E. L., Kossek, E. E., Hammer, L. B., Durham, M., Bray, J., Chermack, K., ... and Kaskubar, D. (2008). Getting there from here: Research on the effects of work-family initiatives on work-family conflict and business outcomes. *The Academy of Management Annuals*.
- Kirchmeyer C (2000). Work–life initiatives: Greed or benevolence regarding workers’ time. In CL Cooper and DM Rousseau (Eds) *Trends in Organisational Behavior*, 7:79–93. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.
- Kopp, L. R. (2013). The effects of perceived supervisor work-life support on employee work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin--Stout).
- Gupta, P. and Srivastava, S. (2021). Work–life conflict and burnout among working women: a mediated moderated model of support and resilience, *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 29(3), 629-655.
- Liu Yongqiang, *Research on Strategies of Enterprises to Balance Work-Family Conflicts among Employees*, 2006
- McCarthy, A., Darcy, C., and Grady, G. (2010). Work-life balance policy and practice: Understanding line manager attitudes and behaviors. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20(2), 158-167.
- Ouyang Yanling (2014). *Review of Research on Work Life Balance*
- Poelmans, S. and Caligiuri, P. (2008). *Harmonizing work, family, and personal life*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Paludi, M. and Neidermeyer, P. (2007). *Work, life, and family imbalance*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.
- Steele, C. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist*, 52(6), 613-629.

- Stockman, N., Bonney, N., and Sheng, X. (2015). *Women's Work in East and West: The Dual Burden of Employment and Family Life: The Dual Burden of Employment and Family Life*. Routledge.
- Thompson, C. A., Jahn, E. W., Kopelman, R. E., and Prottas, D. J. (2004). Perceived organizational family support: A longitudinal and multilevel analysis. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 545-565.
- Xiao, Y., and Cooke, F. L. (2012). Work–life balance in China? Social policy, employer strategy and individual coping mechanisms. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 50(1), 6-22.
- Ye Yun (2019). A preliminary study on the work-life balance of enterprise employees. *Gongyou*, (05):46-47.
- Yuan Ling and Lin Fei (2008). the composition of the work-life balance plan and its implementation strategy
- Zhang Xinjing (2020). It is difficult to balance life and work. *Human Resources*, (15): 100-101.
- Zeng Pinhong (2019). Work-life balance problems and coping strategies of employees. *Management Observation*, (29):93-94.

Webs with the statistical information of China:

360doc.com (2018): http://www.360doc.com/content/18/0303/13/943329_733915969.shtml

Baidu (2020): <https://baike.baidu.com/item/无薪休假/15567738?fr=aladdin> ;
<https://baike.baidu.com/item/工作生活平衡/1316892?fr=aladdin>

CCTV (2006): <http://www.cctv.com/financial/20060615/103511.shtml>

<http://www.64365.com/tuwen/qinqf/>

<https://zh.tradingeconomics.com/china/unemployment-rate>

http://www.hztbc.com/news/news_8712.html

National Labor Statistics in China (2019): <http://www.stats.gov.cn/ztjc/zdtjgz/cydc/>

https://www.sohu.com/a/394247824_644380

https://www.sohu.com/a/346424178_396568

iiMedia Research website: <https://www.iimedia.cn/c1020/69997.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Work%E2%80%93life_balance_in_the_United_States#cite_ref-4
[9-1](#)

[https://baike.baidu.com/item/职业倦怠/8254445?fr=aladdin#reference-\[1\]-1193307-wrap](https://baike.baidu.com/item/职业倦怠/8254445?fr=aladdin#reference-[1]-1193307-wrap)

<https://zhidao.baidu.com/question/718894617305135085.html>

<https://www.alibabagroup.com/cn/about/overview>

<https://www.yearbookchina.com/navibooklist-n3020013266-1.html>

<https://www.ncovchina.com/data.html>

6. APPENDIX

URBAN EMPLOYMENT AND COMPOSITION AT THE YEAR-END BY REGISTRATION STATUS AND REGION (2018) in China (10,000 people)							
	Composition (Total=100)						
	Total	Other enterprises	Urban collective enterprise	Other enterprises	State-owned enterprise	Urban collective enterprise	Other enterprises
The National total	17258.2	5739.7	347.4	11171.1	33.3	2.0	64.7
REGION							
Beijing	819.3	177.8	13.1	628.4	21.7	1.6	76.7
Tianjin	260.0	62.1	2.6	195.2	23.9	1.0	75.1
Hebei	550.3	274.0	11.3	265.0	49.8	2.1	48.2
Shanxi	425.8	176.6	13.2	236.0	41.5	3.1	55.4
Inner Mongolia	272.4	158.3	4.1	110.0	58.1	1.5	40.4
Liaoning	501.6	209.9	14.6	277.1	41.8	2.9	55.2
Jilin	279.3	136.9	3.7	138.7	49.0	1.3	49.7
Heilongjiang	392.7	246.4	9.5	136.7	62.8	2.4	34.8
Shanghai	640.7	91.7	11.3	537.7	14.3	1.8	83.9
Jiangsu	1472.6	259.5	25.0	1188.1	17.6	1.7	80.7
Zhejiang	1013.5	212.8	14.9	785.9	21.0	1.5	77.5
Anhui	592.3	181.2	12.5	398.6	30.6	2.1	67.3
Fujian	705.4	155.8	10.0	539.6	22.1	1.4	76.5
Jiangxi	435.7	171.1	10.9	253.7	39.3	2.5	58.2
Shandong	1129.0	359.9	29.0	740.1	31.9	2.6	65.6
Henan	967.3	354.4	21.5	591.5	36.6	2.2	61.1

Hubei	653.3	246.9	11.2	395.3	37.8	1.7	60.5
Hunan	546.3	232.1	13.3	300.9	42.5	2.4	55.1
Guangdong	1994.1	375.1	42.6	1576.4	18.8	2.1	79.1
Guangxi	386.8	199.1	10.9	176.8	51.5	2.8	45.7
Hainan	99.6	41.1	1.4	57.1	41.3	1.4	57.3
Chongqing	391.2	112.6	5.6	273.0	28.8	1.4	69.8
Sichuan	780.6	327.6	20.2	432.8	42.0	2.6	55.4
Guizhou	308.5	167.4	4.0	137.1	54.3	1.3	44.4
Yunnan	427.0	181.1	7.4	238.6	42.4	1.7	55.9
Tibet	36.9	30.4	0.2	6.4	82.3	0.5	17.2
Shaanxi	493.2	207.8	13.6	271.8	42.1	2.8	55.1
Gansu	246.7	141.9	6.2	98.6	57.5	2.5	40.0
Qinghai	62.7	36.6	1.0	25.1	58.4	1.5	40.1
Ningxia	68.0	35.9	0.5	31.6	52.8	0.7	46.5
Xinjiang	305.2	175.9	2.1	127.2	57.6	0.7	41.7