IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN THE ORGANISATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The need of the hour is to devise proper balance between work and life. Curriculum activities can be a part of job and proper working conditions further help establishing work-life balance. The concept of work-life balance is based on the notion that paid work and personal life should be seen less as competing priorities than as complementary elements of a full life. This paper is aimed towards understanding the meaning of work-life balance in the context of employment relations and knowing the importance of work-life balance for employers and employees. The target population comprises of two hundred regular employees of the different branches of HDFC Bank, Bajaj Alliance, and Punjab National Bank situated in Jammu City of the J & K State. The findings indicate that work-life balance approach is positively associated with employees’ performance in the organisation and is applicable through joint efforts of the employees and employers.

Key Words: Work-Life Balance, Employment Relations, Performance, Working Arrangements and Flexitime.

INTRODUCTION

The hectic life of present times in search of job and then in retention and excelling in the job has put tremendous pressure on an individual’s life. The equilibrium between life and work has tilted to the negative side. Therefore, once an individual enters a job, the employer as well as employees needs to put all the positive efforts to turn this equilibrium back to its position. The system itself can give relief to the employed person to feel that they are taken care of. There must be proper balance of work among them. Curriculum activities can be a part of job and proper working conditions further help establishing work-life balance. The system should be such that it encourages the efficiency and sincerity among the employees to feel that they are

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part and parcel of the organisation and not the neglected lot. The concept of work-life balance is based on the notion that paid work and personal life should be seen less as competing priorities than as complementary elements of a full life. The way to achieve this is to adopt an approach that provides a two way process considering the needs of employees as well as those of employers (Lewis, 2000: 105). However, work-life balance does not always mean that employees have to divide their time equally into work life and family life. A work-life balance actually means to divide one’s time for work and for one’s own life. From this perspective, life includes family, self-reflection, recreation, spirituality and social interaction.

Work-life Balance Approach in Indian Perspective

The concept of work-life balance has been essentially stemmed from Western management theories. While the same may not have been present in traditional Indian businesses and corporate, increased focus on work-life balance in India is being seen. Companies like Infosys, Wipro, Yahoo India, Google India Dell India, Microsoft India, Accenture and HCL Technologies amongst many others have already begun taking steps in this direction. The steps taken by the Indian companies to maintain a good work-life balance at their workplaces are:

1) Working from home: Nearly 50,000 employees at IBM India and about 15,000 tech workers at HP India are taking advantage of their companies’ work-life balance option. They virtually have no cubicle in their offices and are allowed to work from home. Microsoft India too reimburses telephone and broadband usage to their employees for working from home and offers them a variety of flexible working options.

2) Plan work in a way that you can take the weekend off: Unlike western countries, a majority of the Indian workforce still functions on a 6-day week routine. However with certain MNCs taking the lead with 5 day work weeks, big corporate houses may very well be seen giving weekend offs to some of their employees.

3) Opting for split shifts: For the uninitiated, a split shift is one of the latest work-life initiatives that India Inc has taken to. In split shifts, employees can work for a few hours in the morning, attend to their personal work during afternoons when business tend to be typically slack and return in the evening to close the day. Companies like Aegis, BPO Outsourcing Solutions Company and Apollo Hospitals in Bangalore have also followed suit. This strategy allows them to induct more women into the workforce and retain talent who would otherwise leave due to inflexible work hours.

4) Making full use of the company’s facilities: Surprisingly many employees who work in corporate houses with sprawling campuses and innumerable facilities do not actually use it. Many big companies in India offer gym facilities, sport courts, crèches, grocery stores, banking facilities and cafes within their campus. Employees should try to use these facilities within work hours for a quick rejuvenation.

5) Optimisation of time at work: Employees should look at maximizing all available resources, including time, to get work done. A great way to optimise time is to work on a schedule and follow a timetable. The Indian workplace is slowly moving away from
the notion that longer hours spent in the office are directly related to higher productivity levels. For employees looking forward to a better work-life balance, this is a clear hint at gunning for an early exit from the office by boosting productivity levels during the day (Kaushambi, 2012)

Review of Literature

Often organisation culture and workplace practices dominate an individual’s working life, and put organisation’s requirements before the individual’s needs. Issues such as work flexibility are approached from the employers’ perspective, and offer the employee minimal choice in managing their working life (Strachan & Burgess 1998). Pocock (2003) describes the lack of equilibrium between the changing nature of families and workplace cultures as a ‘collision between work and families’. Institutions have failed to recognise the spillover effect in workplaces, and neglected to manage the balance with employees’ expectations that extend beyond their working life (Bond et al 1997; Bardoel et al 2000; Pocock 2003). Research indicates that organisations that identify, plan and implement work-life balance policies that are receptive to the changing nature of the workforce reap positive results in the guise of high levels of staff retention and increased productivity (Bardoel et al 2000).

Objectives of the Study

• To understand the meaning of work-life balance in the context of employment relations.
• To know the importance of work-life balance for employers and employees.
• To know the level of dissatisfaction regarding work-life balance among employees.
• To know the obstacles in the path of providing better work-life balance.
• To recommend areas for improving work-life balance satisfaction among employees.

Hypotheses

• Work-life balance approach is positively associated with employees’ performance in the organisation.
• Work-life balance approach is applicable through joint efforts of the employees and employers.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Population

Two hundred regular employees of the different branches of HDFC Bank, Bajaj Alliance, and Punjab National Bank situated in Jammu City of the Jammu and Kashmir State represent the target population of this study. Out of the two hundred questionnaires administered, 175 responded questionnaires were found useful for this study (87.5%). The remaining 12.5% were those that were not refunded by the respondents for various reasons, which could not be, count for. Thus, the sample size comprise of 175 respondents.
Data Collection and Generation of Scale Items

Data has been generated from the employees through self-developed and pre-tested questionnaire, which comprises of twenty statements on 5 point Likert scale concerning the Work-Life balance Approach.

Data Purification

Data was purified through the multivariate data reduction technique of factor analysis. Univariate descriptive analysis has been used to analyse mean and standard deviation of each variable (Field 2000: 445). The principal component analysis with a varimax rotation stands used, as the number of respondents was greater than the number of variables and the technique of varimax rotation is the best rotation procedure in minimising the number of items with high loading on one factor (Malhotra 2002: 595). Eigen value remained the basis for describing the factor structure with reasonable number of components extracted for further analysis (Stewart 1981, Sharma, Kaur and Gupta, 2001). The test of appropriateness of factor design has been verified through KMO measure of sample adequacy (Malhotra 2002: 455). Further, Bartlett test of sphericity, also known as zero identity matrix, has been used to determine correlation among variables (Hair et.al. 1995: 374, Field 2000: 457).

Statistical Tools and Tests

Besides factor analysis, the information collected for the study has been processed and analysed with the help of appropriate statistical tools like mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution (Tull and Hawkins 1993: 613-616). ANOVA has been used to test the difference among group means (Field 2000: 244-286). Further, Regression Analysis has been used to study the impact of work-life balance approach on the performance of the employees (Field 2000: 103-118).

Overall Validity and Reliability

To check the internal consistency, the reliability tests viz., split half and Cronbach’s Alpha values have been worked out. The reliability of the responses has been examined by dividing the data into two halves. The mean value in the first group and the second group is same (3.5). Further, Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.985 reflected internal consistency of the data.

Major Findings of the Study

• The findings indicate that flexible working arrangements and the provision of services to help employees to balance their work and life are an effective recruitment and retention tool.

• 78.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and 19.3% agreed with the statement that it is important to them to achieve a balance between paid work and personal life.
59.3% indicated that they strongly agree and 33.3% that they agree with the statement that work-life balance enables people to work better.

84.2% of the respondents agree that bringing balance is a joint responsibility of employer and employee.

The majority of staff feel that their managers style supports work-life balance at least some of the time (89.5%) and that they can discuss issues with them, again at least some of the time (83.4%).

Flexible working is preferable to the employees and the most common reason given for that is to suit overall needs (32%), followed by reducing amount of travelling (21%) and childcare responsibilities (19.1%).

The working arrangements most often cited as being of interest to those who would like more flexibility are flexitime (48.2%), working from home occasionally (40.4%) and compressed working hours (39.3%).

The most common reasons given for wanting more flexible working are: ‘to suit overall needs’ (29.9%), ‘to reduce the amount of travel’ (24.2%), ‘to pursue a course of study or training’ (18.5%), ‘childcare responsibilities’ (17.5%), and ‘to pursue major interest outside work’ (14.2%).

In terms of special leave only maternity leave (10%) and compassionate leave (11.8%) have been taken by more than 10% of respondents.

The staff expects that an employer should be sympathetic towards employees’ needs by providing work-life balance policies and flexible working arrangements.

Improving communication by making information on existing work-life balance policies and practices more easily available would help staff to make a better use of special leave arrangements as well as other policies.

Most administrative and support staff expressed the wish for greater access to flexible working arrangements such as flexi-time, compressed hours and working from home.

Impact of Work-life Balance Approach on the Performance of Employees

The impact of work-life balance approach on the performance of employees has been studied using regression analysis. The results revealed $R$ at 0.66, which represents positive correlation between work-life balance approach and performance and Adjusted $R$ Square at 0.43, which implies that work-life balance approach accounts for about forty three percent of the variation in the overall performance of the employees (Table 1). Thus, the regression model results in significant prediction of the performance, which is further strengthened by Regression ANOVA ($F$ 165.000, Sig. < 0.001) (Table 1). The $t$-value (12.845 Sig. <0.001) further confirms that work-life balance approach is associated with the improved performance of the employees and thus leads to the acceptance of the first hypothesis i.e. Work-life balance approach is positively associated with employees’ performance in the organisation. (Table 1).
Table 1: Regression Analysis for Finding Impact of Work-life Balance Approach on the Performance of the Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>Std. Error of Estimate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.658(a)</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>.430</td>
<td>.54202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), WLB

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>48.474</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48.474</td>
<td>165.000</td>
<td>.000(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>63.457</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111.931</td>
<td>217</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), WLB
b Dependent Variable: P

COEFFICIENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$B$</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-.821</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>-3.362</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>.900</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>12.845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Dependent Variable: P
b Abbreviations used: WLB: Work Life Balance, P: Performance

Consequences of Imbalance in the Work-Life

The personal consequences are mainly related to the stress felt by individuals when they perceive some degree of imbalance between their work and life. The demands of work, relationships with management, colleagues and peers, and levels of control are the major components of stress in the workplace. The organisational consequences associated with high levels of work-related stress are negative impacts on outcomes and productivity. Research shows that workplace practices and culture can adversely override the needs of individual employees and adversely effect their health and overall well-being (Pocock 2003; Bond et al 1997). The negative effects of work-life imbalance that manifested in high levels of absenteeism, low productivity, low morale, team dysfunction, depression and mental illness, and the associated organisational costs. Staff retention, down time and losses of productivity can be cited as the most obvious impacts resulting from an organisation not effectively managing work-life balance issues.
Barriers to Achieve a Work-life Balance

- **Unsupportive work culture and work environment:** Employees using flexible working options feel they are being placed under the close observations by their colleagues and required to justify their use of the options.

- **Career decisions:** Some employees feel they are placing their career in jeopardy. They believe they could be or are overlooked for promotion, or that they might miss the challenging and interesting work.

- **Mismatch between policies and life stages:** Research tells us that younger people want choice and the freedom to exit and enter the paid workforce without fear of damaging career or promotional prospects (Corporate Leadership Council 2003b). Middle-aged sought to undertake pursuits outside the workplace in a manner that would not negatively impact on career and job opportunities. Similarly, people in the later phase of their working lives expressed the desire to be able to exit the workforce in a manner that matched their financial status and personal circumstances.

- **Job and work design:** Job and work design influence employees’ ability to take up the flexible working options that may contribute to a better work-life balance. Often employees feel specialised work or the type of work a work unit/team undertakes is indicative of a person’s ability to utilise work-life balance options. It was generally felt senior management believed flexible working arrangements were not compatible with ‘core business’.

- **Role of the manager:** Supportive manager is the key to achieving work-life balance. If managers did not understand the available flexible working options and how to successfully implement them, then flexible working options tended to be unavailable for access by staff. The role of managers was implicit in employee’s perception of their empowerment and autonomy.

- **Self-perceptions:** There is a distinct delineation between senior executives’ views on their staff utilising the policies and their own practices. The focus group of senior executives stated that while they did not believe they could use current policies due to levels of workload, time management and other constraints, it was important for less senior staff to access policies and initiatives.

- **Communication:** Effective communication by line managers, supervisors, and senior staff is a major driver of employees’ level of satisfaction with work-life balance; absence of this also becomes a barrier.

- **Empowerment:** Empowerment is the key to attaining a work-life balance. Empowerment is embedded in an individual’s knowledge, awareness and ability to effectively communicate and negotiate with managers and work teams. The participants identified that knowledge of the available options was critical to their ability to access and utilise the policies and initiatives that facilitate work-life balance.

- **Measuring effectiveness:** Shifting the focus from time in the office to the outputs/outcomes achieved was seen as a way of encouraging work-life balance and avoiding...
some of the costs mentioned earlier. Facilitating flexibility within a workgroup was seen to be an added burden on the manager but, ultimately, a worthwhile exercise due to the benefits it provided.

- **Role models**: A dominant topic among participants was the senior managers’ role in actively demonstrating their commitment to attaining and managing a satisfactory work-life balance. Participants stated that the influence of senior management in supporting and actively using the policies was very important in setting the culture and practices of the organisation as a whole.

**Recommendations**

- Appropriate policies and initiatives need to be promoted widely and regularly by departments and agencies to encourage awareness and knowledge of available options for accessing work-life balance strategies.
- The management training should include the value for the organisation in implementing work-life balance policies and initiatives, how to manage and implement work-life balance policies and initiatives and the impacts for the organisation and staff of not recognising and implementing work-life balance policies and initiatives.
- The policies and initiatives must be reviewed keeping in consideration the varying work-life balance requirements an individual may have relative to their individual life stage and circumstances.
- The work-life balance is seen to include ‘quality of work life’, or provision of quality jobs without undue stress, and that this is reflected in job design and work organisation.
- The organisations promote and publicise positive case studies and role models that exemplify the benefits of utilising work-life balance policies and initiatives.
- The organisation on the whole and senior management should promote positive work-life balance.
- The managers can encourage team dialogue on how to align work-life balance needs and team workload requirements.

**CONCLUSION**

To conclude, this paper has provided some clear indications of staff general views on work-life balance. It has also identified a number of areas where improvements could be made and policies supporting flexible working arrangements could be further developed. Employees expect that organization should be empathetic towards employees’ needs by providing Work life balance approach. It can influence employees’ choice in terms of employment. From organization point of view, it makes good business sense to support Work life balance approach not just to recruit & retain employees but also because employees’ feel that Work life balance approach enables them to work better.
Impact of Work-Life Balance on Performance of Employees in the Organisations

REFERENCES


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