

Management of Work Life Balance with Special Reference to Its Professionals in Metro Cities

Sangeeta Bhatnagar¹, P K Jain²

¹Research Scholar, Dept of Management Studies, Mewar University, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan, India

²Director, Faculty of Management studies, MLSU, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

Abstract: *A metamorphic change is occurring all over the world with the advent of Information Technology. IT organizations provide employment opportunities to immense talent pool and hence the role of work-life balance is coming into play. Work and family life have always been interdependent, but the increased employment of mothers, rising family hours of work and the trend toward long work hours for some and inadequate family income for others have rendered this interdependence both more visible and more problematic. More than 60% of the respondent professionals surveyed said that they were not able to find a balance between their personal and professional lives. This study is aimed at examining the impact of the demographic variables on the work-life balance of software professionals in metro cities and how they have to make tough choices even when their work and personal life is nowhere close to equilibrium. The empirical data of this thesis was collected by convenience sampling, using quantitative research methodology. Percentage analysis has been used to test the demographic profile of the respondents. The level of satisfaction with respect to the demographic profile of employees was tested through adequate hypothesis; chi-square test was performed to test its relationship.*

Keywords: IT industry, Work-Family life, Balance, personal and professional life

1. Introduction

Information technology has revolutionized the world as never before. The global scenario has undergone phenomenal transformation thanks to this revolution. A metamorphic change is occurring all over the world with the advent of Information Technology. The Indian women, who were mostly found in a socially acceptable employment like teaching, nursing, banking, etc. in the last decade, are diverted now and actively participate in the Information Technology revolution. It has become a common phenomenon that majority of the employees, especially the software workers, are working harder and longer ever before. As a consequence, they find it difficult to achieve work life balance. This new information technology profession with a good pay, night shifts, cultural and social change has brought work life imbalance among the employees in Information Technology sector.

India is one of the most preferred outsourcing destinations. Indian IT industry has been increasingly contributing to the domestic economy over the years. It is also providing valuable contribution to the service sector (NASSCOM, 2011). Though cost reduction and availability of skilled English-speaking employees have been the key growth drivers in the industry, many other factors such as access to talent, service quality, and productivity have kept the Indian IT industry competitive in the global market. Some of the Human Resource related issues receiving considerable attention in the IT sector are work conditions, organizational environment, management-labor relationships, work force empowerment and work-life balance.

The forces of globalization, new technologies and business restructuring are challenging long established patterns of paid

work while imposing new burdens on families, individuals and households. Work and family life have always been interdependent, but the increased employment of mothers, rising family hours of work and the trend toward long work hours for some and inadequate family income for others have rendered this interdependence both more visible and more problematic. The new corporate environment is characterized by willful, from ambiguous persuasions to increasing productivity. As a result of this, the boundaries between work and home tend to get blurred. It is easy for work to invade the personal life making both the work life balance in today's fast-paced world present a major challenge to both the employer and employee. Inability to say 'thus far and no more' 'poor time mgt, and delegating skills and die hard attitude towards work are cited as the reason for employees getting into stressful condition leading to rise in attrition rate, strained domestic relations leading to divorce and worst of all exposure to life threatening diseases. As the twenty-four hour, seven-day persistent change, wide ranging job responsibilities & uncertainties with increasing pressures working week gains ascendancy, the possibility of achieving a satisfactory work-life balance is proving an elusive goal for more and more people.

The pay and perks are encouraging. But the work life is highly complicated and highly demanding. There are many pulls and pressures, commitments and deadlines, unpredictable peaks and troughs during the course of the working time. All these things make the work as a hectic activity and a strenuous one. Sitting in front of the computer systems is leading to developing stiff neck problems, dry eyes, irritation, lack of interest towards other activities, back pains etc., and it looks

like having everything but losing so many things related to health and recreation.

1.2 Importance of the Study

Work-life balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between career and ambition on one hand, compared with pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development on the other. Striking a balance is the real fulfillment to life. There is a lot of pressure built up on individuals leading to a number of problems. Work-life balance has come out to be such an important area that requires a lot of research which has just begun and the findings of the research will be useful to the individual, the organization, and the society at large. Recruiting the best, keeping trained staff and maintaining productivity means ensuring terms and conditions which attract and motivate people. Properly planned flexible employment practices that enable employees to achieve a better work-life balance can lead to significant business improvements. These benefits can be valued and monitored. This study is conducted to find the factors affecting work-life balance of software professionals and what kind of impact it has on their work-life balance and if so what could be done to have a perfect balance to attain success and happiness.

2. Literature Review

The present research study presents an overview of the literature within which the study of Management of Work life balance, factors affecting WLB, Work conflict, Work life imbalances and its effect on Software employees and policies is studied. Morgan (2003) outlined that the IT employers mindlessly exploit the software engineers without any limit. Though they seem to operationalize the work life balance policies, they do not allow the employees to attend to their family, thereby enhancing the quality of family life. In the name of flexi time, part time, work home, job sharing, etc. they continue to invade the private life of the techies in their greed to maximize the profit. Guest (2002), amongst others, takes the term work-life balance separately and analyses each of the concepts - balance, work and life – thus highlighting the complexities and dangers in the loose use of allegory. He refers to the term work-life balance as a misnomer and one that serves simply as convenient shorthand for work and the rest of life. This culture is partly perceived to be the result of downsizing and the more demanding workloads with which those who remain in employment must contend (McGovern et al, 1998). Work-life balance is an ordinary challenge throughout the industrialized world. Employees all over the world are facing challenges how to balance work and personal life (Ramachandra & Suman, 2007). Most cited work-family policies in work-family literature are on-site day care; help with day care costs, elder care assistance, information on community day care, paid parental leave, unpaid parental leave, maternity or paternity leave with reemployment, and

flexible scheduling (Perry et al.,2000). Workplace flexibility is the ability of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and for how long they would engage in work-related tasks (Hill et al., 2008). Scholarios and Marks (2004) explored the factors facilitating work life balance. The study focused on the software engineers in selected IT firms and found that sacrifice of non-work commitments in favor of work commitment enabled them to progress faster in the career ladder but their families suffered to the extent they progressed in the career path. The study also reported that some of the respondents could achieve success on domestic as well as on professional front, thanks to leveraging some factors to benefit both the fronts. The analysis identified certain factors like time flexibility, organizational support for non-work commitments and low work-life spill over, organizational commitment and extrinsic satisfaction which enabled them to strike work life harmony.

3. Research objectives

- To identify the demographic profile of employees working in IT sector.
- To find out the factors affecting work life balance of IT professionals.
- To understand the consequences of work/life imbalance on efficiency, health and personal as well as professional life of employees of IT sector
- Understanding the challenges associated with managing professional life and personal life.

4. Hypothesis

1. H^0 There is significant indifference of age, gender and marital status with work load of IT professionals.
2. H^A There is significant difference of age, gender and marital status with work load of IT professionals.
3. H^0 There is significant indifference of age, marital status and gender with stress factors
4. H^A There is significant difference of age, marital status and gender with stress factors.

5. Materials and Methods

Data were collected from five IT companies of Delhi/NCR, using quantitative method .The 100 respondents were chosen through convenience sampling. A mail based survey method was used, as the employees were not free to fill the Questionnaire while at work. The Questions were divided into three parts. The first contained Demographic profile of the respondents second consisted of various factors affecting Work Life Balance and the third encompassed of problems faced and dimensions affecting work family life balance of the software professionals. An appropriate statistical technique was used for analyzing the data. Percentage, graph, charts were prepared; Chi square was used for hypothesis testing.

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 6.1: Demographic Profile

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Male	64	64.0
	Female	36	36.0
Age	< 25yrs	10	10.0
	25-35yrs	54	54.0
	36-45 yrs	10	10.0
	> 46	26	26.0
Marital Status	Married	68	68.0
	Unmarried	22	22.0
	Separated/Div	10	10.0
Education	UG	22	22.0
	PG	78	78.0
	Diploma	0	0.0
Experience	0-5yrs	12	12.0
	6-10yrs	62	62.0
	> 11yrs	26	26.0
Salary	<10,000	2	2.0
	11,000-25,000	10	10.0
	26,000-40,000	28	28.0
	> 41,000	60	60.0
Dependents (adults and children included)	0	7	7.0
	1	49	49.0
	2	29	29.0
	3	13	13.0
	4	2	2.0

It is evident from Table-6.1 the sample consists of 64% of male respondents and 36% of female respondents, 10% of respondents are less than the age group of 25 years, fitting into a profile called "Gen y", 26% of respondents are falling in the age group from 46 years and above, and 54% and 10% each are between 26 to 35 and 36 to 45 yrs of age respectively. Marital status of the respondents shows that 68% are married and 22% are single and 10% belong to divorced and separated category. The sample consisting of 78% respondents are graduate degree holders, followed by 22% under graduate

degree holders. The experience of nearly 62% of respondents ranges between 6 to 10 yrs and 26% between 10yrs and above 12% respondents have less than 5 yrs experience respectively. 28% of the respondents are drawing salary in the range of 25,000 to 40,000 per month whereas 60% draw 40000 & above per month, whereas 2% and 10% range between less than 10,000 and 10,000 to 25,000 respectively. Number of dependents shows that 49% of respondents have one dependent and just 29% have 2 dependents in their family. During the study it was noticed that 2 or more than 2 dependents were of mature age ranging from 10-16 yrs.

Table 6.2: Perception towards Work Life Balance

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Somewhat agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
It's important to achieve balance between work & personal life	86.0	14.0	-		
People have different needs at different stages of their life	52.0	40.0	8.0	-	
Work-life balance enables people to produce better results	34.0	44.0	18.0	4.0	-
WLB is entirely an employer's responsibility	22.0	40.0	14.0	22.0	2.0
WLB is entirely an individual's responsibility	4.0	28.0	30.0	30.0	8.0
Organizational policies that promote work-life balance can be unfair to some people	4.0	6.0	28.0	44.0	18.0

It is evident from the Table 6.2 that 86% IT professionals believe in importance of balancing work and family life,

followed by 26% who somewhat agree. 52% and 34% believe that work life balance enables people to produce better and

each individual has a different need. 44% totally disagreed that WLB is unfair for the organization who promote the policies.

6.3 Work hours

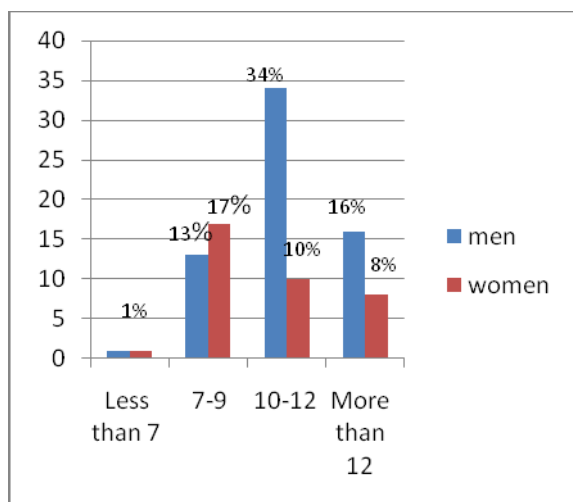


Figure 1

It is evident from Fig 1 that the sample consists of data for software professional's work hours per week. 44% of the respondents work for 10-12 hours daily and 24% spend more than 12 hours every day at the work place. 30% of the respondent work for 7-9 hrs and only 2% for 7 hrs. The long working hours and work overload is typical of the IT industry, though most IT firms have a five-day week, the workload is going up. Excessively long work hours leads to the deterioration of their work efficiency, morale and physical and psychological condition. In our study we found that 27% women staying at work place for more than 7 to 12 long working hours feel tired and stressed. This entails absence from home for long hours and for a working mother this has significance as it overlaps with her domestic role.

6.4 Classification on Basis of Health Complications

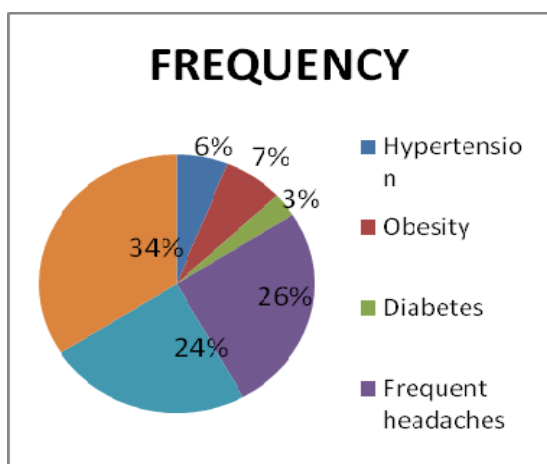


Figure 2

26% of the employees of the IT sectors are suffering from frequent headaches in comparison to 24% employees who avoided the question by saying that they do not suffer from any of the diseases. 16% of the respondents suffer from obesity, headaches, diabetes. Maximum professionals that is 34% respondents preferred to tick answer where no specific disease was asked. When further probed about it, they confessed that they suffered from heart ailments, Thrombosis and even depression Problems at work are more strongly associated with health complaints than are any other life stressor-more so than even financial problems or family problems.

7. Hypothesis Testing

H0: There is significant indifference of age, gender and marital status with work load of IT professionals.

HA: There is significant difference of age, gender and marital status with work load of IT professionals.

Table 7.1

	Df	Value		Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Outcome
		Table Critical Value	Calculated Value		
Age and work load	9	16.92	13.249	.152	Null hypotheses Accepted
Gender and work load	3	7.81	9.876	.020	Null hypotheses Rejected
Marital status and work load	6	12.59	6.781	.342	Null hypotheses Accepted

It is evident from table 7.1 that the calculated chi-square value is more than the table value for Gender, null hypothesis stands rejected and calculated chi-square value is less than table value for age and marital status at 5% significant level, null hypothesis stands accepted. Hence it is concluded that there is significant in difference between age, marital status and work load, but there is significant difference between gender and work load of IT professionals

H0: There is significant indifference of age, marital status and gender with stress factors

HA: There is significant difference of age, marital status and gender with stress factors.

	Df	Value		Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Outcome
		Table Critical Value	Calculated Value		
Age and losing temper	15	25.00	33.877	.004	Null hypotheses rejected
Gender	5	11.07	3.549	.616	Null

and losing temper					hypotheses Accepted
Marital status and losing temper	10	18.31	13.370	.204	Null hypotheses Accepted

It is evident from Table 7.2 that the calculated chi-square value is more than the table value for age, so null hypothesis stands rejected and calculated chi-square value is less than table value for gender and marital status at 5% significant level, null hypothesis stands accepted. Hence it is concluded that there is significant indifference between gender, marital status and losing of temper, but there is significant difference between age and losing of temper of IT professionals.

8. Findings

Majority of respondents are in age group of 25-35 years and 68% of them are married. Majority of the respondents have PG education and 62.% have 6-10 years work experience. IT sector professionals are paid handsomely, and salary of 60% respondent is above 40,000. The data shows that 44% work more than 12 hours daily, that comes to 60 hrs per week. 86% believe in work life balance and 46% believe it to be employers responsibility. 26% of the respondent suffer from headache and others from diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. 70% said that it is so often that they lose temper that it is not remembered by them anymore.

It is evident from chi square test that there is significant in difference between age, marital status and work load, but there is significant difference between gender and work load of IT professionals and there is significant indifference between gender, marital status and losing of temper, but there is significant difference between age and losing of temper of IT professionals.

9. Suggestions

The company should take care of employee's work load to balance the work life. Organization should consider every individual unique and precious and should give time for their own personal needs. Increment should be given to the employees for balancing their work life. The organization should increase work life balance programs to reduce family work conflict. Further research should be carried out for all states in India, which are considered to be the Information Technology hub. Although the software industry and IT profession have become universal still there are culture difference and struggle to settle down in a new place and adapt to new environment in India.

10. Conclusion

It can be assumed that even if larger sample of employees had taken part in this survey it is likely that final results would not have been very dissimilar to those currently available. From the information gathered it can be drawn that there is a strong perception among the respondents that it is important to achieve balance b/w work & personal life. Work life balance is important and it should be improved in all the organizations. If it is not improved it leads to poor performance, absenteeism and sick leave. To conclude, this study has provided some clear indication of employees general views on WLB, their experience & their needs for flexible working. It has helped in identifying the areas where improvement could be made & policies should be further developed.

Reference

- [1] Greenhaus, J. H., Parasuraman, S., Granrose, C. S., Rabinowitz, S. & Beutell, N.J. (1989) Sources of Work-Family Conflict among Two-Career Couples. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 34,133-153
- [2] Guest, D.E. (2002). Perspectives on the study of work-life balance, *Social Science Information*, 41(2), 255-279
- [3] Hill, E.J., Hawkins, A.J., Ferris, M., & Weitzman, M. (2001), Finding an extra day a week: The positive influence of perceived job flexibility on work and family life balance, *Family Relations*, 50[1], 49-65.
- [4] McGovern, P, Hope-Hailey, V. and Stiles, P. (1998), "The managerial career after downsizing: Case studies from the - Leading Edge", *Work, Employment & Society*, Vol.12,[.3], pp. 457-477.
- [5] Morgan, A. J., Quesenberry, J. L., & Trauth, E. M. (2004), Exploring the importance of Bullen (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 10th Americas Conference on Information Systems*, New
- [6] Perry-Smith, J. E. & Blum, T. C. (2000), "Research Notes - Work-Family Human Resource Bundles and Perceived Organizational Performance", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol.43 [.6], pp.11-24
- [7] Ramachandra Aryasri, A., & Suman Babu, S. (2007). "Work-Life Balance - A holistic Approach", *Siddhant - A Journal of Decision Making*, Vol.7 [1], pp.1-11.
- [8] Scholarios, D & Marks, A 2004, Work-life balance and the software worker, *Human Resource Management Journal*, vol. 14, [2], pp. 54-74.

Author Profile

Sangeeta Bhatnagar received MBA (HRM) degree from Symbiosis Pune, in 2006. Through out her career she has been a meritorious student and received many awards and certificates and worked as HOD, Examination coordinator, counselor and activity in charge. She has presented and published many research papers in International and national conferences and seminars' journals. She gave Training in

soft skills to Executives, Principals and students under programme sponsored and aided by Govt of Rajasthan.

Prof. PK Jain holds the position of the Director of the Faculty of management at M L Sukhadia University, Udaipur .Started his career in academics in the year 1978 from University of Rajasthan, then moved to Vikram University and in 1990 joined MLSU as Associate Professor. Later on in 2001 was selected as Professor in the same Faculty. He has been recipient of Young Social Scientist Award from UGC for his Post Doctoral work. Training assignments: He has trained hundreds of senior and middle level executives of the reputed organizations across the country and abroad in the field of Behavior, motivation, goal setting and personality. He is widely acclaimed as an excellent orator. He has been trainer for the executives of many reputed Business houses including Bajaj, Doordarshan, BSF, CRPF, ITBP, KRIBHCO, ONGC, Adarsh cooperative society, Coal India, LIC etc. He has been a member of advisory board to the LIC of India for 4 years. He has trained the civil servants of Sri Lanka during 2000-2001. Prof. PK Jin has been Visiting Professor to Texas University, USA, Institute of Technological Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka, King Faisal University Saudi Arabia and Duke University.