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IMPACT OF STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION TOWARDS WORK LIFE BALANCE OF IT PROFESSIONALS AND PRIVATE SECTOR EXECUTIVES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In the current scenario of stiff competition, organizational productivity depends to a very great extent on the performance of employees which ultimately leads to job satisfaction. Organisations today strive to augment job satisfaction in their workforce to be more productive and to keep in pace with the competition that prevails in an era of globalisation. Stress at work place is related to the various tasks performed by the employee in the workplace which is considered to be an important determinants of performance of an employee. Employees today are therefore expected to have a proper balance between their personal and professional life which eventually leads to job satisfaction and stress reduction. Work-life balance is a matter of concern for both the employees and the employers. It concerns the employees in terms of their stress level and its resultant outcomes in terms of ill-health (both physical and mental), and it concerns the employers, as the ill-health of their employees translates into reduced productivity. The present study examines the impact of work life balance and stress on job satisfaction among employees in the IT sector and employees in the executive cadre in the private sector. A sample of 313 respondents were taken for the study, out of which 191 belong to the IT sector and 122 executives belong to the private sector. Convenience sampling method is used in this study. The findings reveal that while work-life balance and job satisfaction were positively related to each other, elements of stress dimension like de-motivation, work pressure and meaninglessness were negatively related to job satisfaction. The study also conveys the fact that work life balance is found to more among the executives in the private sector when compared to that IT professionals. Further, findings show that job satisfaction was higher among the male respondents in comparison to the female respondents. Interestingly, the IT group had lower work-life balance and job satisfaction, while it had higher meaninglessness, de-motivation and work pressure compared to that of executives in the private sector.

KEYWORDS

Job Satisfaction, Meaninglessness, Work–Life Balance, Stress.

INTRODUCTION

The globalization scenario that persists today has made change as a necessity and it has become a common phenomena in this universe. The effectiveness of any organization depends upon its competitive and talented work force. Economic liberalization in 1990s has led to the emergence of knowledge based organizations. The successful outcome of any organization depends on the performance of its employees, which in turn depends on numerous factors. These factors can be related to work or family or both. In today's competitive and changing organizations, stress has become an important and influential factor. The relationship between personal and professional life can better be accomplished through emotional intelligence and better management of stress which in turn will help to accomplish Work Life Balance. Work Life Balance attempts at striking a balance between work and non-work schedules. Work Life Balance warrants for achievement as well as enjoyment (i.e) achievement through work and enjoyment through life. Work Life Balance of employees have a significant role to play towards organizational effectiveness. In the current scenario, work-life balance is now regarded as one of the most important workplace qualities.

Work Life Balance is found to have a significant impact towards employee morale and satisfaction, reduced family and work life stress. Strategic moves are taken, guidelines prescribed for employees and organizations need to have a compliance checklist to chalk out in order to ensure that the WLB practices are not only fortified but they are implemented too as they offer apparent benefits to the organizations. Knowledge workers need to have effective management of stress in order to strike a balance between private and professional life. It is the key to achieve the desired balance between work and life which ultimately leads to success in the professional as well as personal life. Work-life balance is a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal.

Knowledge based organizations in the current scenario seeks for employees with high innovative skills, intelligent and independence and these employees are incredibly valuable. IT Professionals, Executives, engineers, stock analysts and community planners, Professors, etc fall under the category of knowledge workers. Information Technology (IT) is the fastest growing business sector contributing to an unprecedented economic growth in India since the 1990s. The increasing prevalence of work-life conflicts and increasing concern about work-life issues in the corporate arena present both a challenge and opportunity for Information Technology (IT) professionals. Managers in organizations are pressurized to upgrade their competitive skills to survive, manage and adapt themselves to changing environments not only efficiently but also effectively. Studies suggest that stress levels amongst IT professionals and private sector executives are relatively high because of long working hours and forgone holidays, leading to imbalances in work and personal life. Work-life balance is a matter of concern for both the employees and the employers. It concerns the employees in terms of their stress level and its resultant outcomes in terms of ill-health (both physical and mental), and it concerns the employers, as the ill-health of their employees translates into reduced productivity.

Work-life conflicts affect employee well-being in a myriad ways. Work-life balance initiatives designed to help employees balance their work and personal lives are not only an option, but also a necessity for many employers today. There is a need for organizations to adopt strategies and policies that accommodate the work-life needs of a diverse workforce in the current business environment. Maintaining a balance between one's personal and professional life has become a predominant and vital topic in the society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Niraj Kishore and Virendra (2013) in their study attempted to find out the benefits of Work-Life Balance (WLB) from the perspective of organizations and employees. A multiple regression analysis was conducted. While the organization perceived that effective WLB policies reduce absenteeism, the employees perceive that effective WLB policies result in job satisfaction and autonomy. The one sample t-test was conducted to find the significance of the benefit variables. The organizational perspective revealed that reducing absenteeism and turnover, improving productivity and image, and ensuring loyalty and retention are the benefits of WLB, whereas the employees' perspective highlighted that job satisfaction, job security, autonomy, stress reduction and improving health are the benefits of WLB.

Mihir Dash & Vivek Anand (2012) in their study on “Perceptions of Work-Life Balance Among IT Professionals” identified that stress levels amongst IT professionals are high because of long working hours and forgone holidays, leading to imbalances in work and personal life. The findings indicate that the perception of work-life balance does not vary significantly across different demographic profiles.

Lazār et al. (2010) in their study have highlighted the quality relationship between paid work responsibilities and unpaid responsibilities and show how WLB initiatives and practices affect the performance of the employees of an organization by extending these policies not only to the employees but also to their families. The concept of work-life conflict is associated with lack of engagement, absenteeism, turnover rates, low productivity and poor retention levels which may compromise the availability and use of these practices.

Amita Singh (2010) in her study attempted to find out the extent of awareness of WLB policies among the software professionals and identified that they were on the moderate or lower side. It is also suggested that the management should create awareness for those policies. A formal strategy for communicating these policies is essential which can be achieved by the means of a variety of channels, namely, staff meetings, e-mail, newsletters, fact sheets, brochures, posters, articles in in-house magazines (if existent) and information packages. Discussions between the management and the staff will go a long way in increasing the understanding of mutual expectations and develop solutions to WLB policy issues.

Vikshal, Lokesh and Ashwitha (2010) in their study attempted to identify the occupational stress among the employees in the banking sector and found out that the level of occupational stress among the employees in banks are found to be relatively high. The study also highlights the fact that work life balance and impact of occupational stress on employee job satisfaction in the banking sector showed no significant differences.

Karatepe, Osman, and Mehmet (2006) found that work-family conflict increased emotional exhaustion and decreased job satisfaction among the frontline bank employees; this finding is consonance with past research (Boles et al., 1997; Boles and Babin, 1996; Hyman and Summers, 2004; Babakus et al., 1999; Low et al., 2001). Work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion are among the two critical variables that have adverse effects on job outcomes of front-line employees (Babakus et al., 1999; Boles et al., 1997; Netemeyer et al., 2004).

Indradevi and Kamalpriya (2006) in their study found out that women working in call centers are personally affected in the family and social life. This is because they face stress due to various reasons like night shifts, and less autonomy at work. Finally, the authors have identified that poor work environment also adds to stress.

Greenhaus et al. (2003) have delved into the multiple roles definition of WLB with a focus on equality of time or satisfaction across an individual’s multiple life roles. WLB was therefore defined as “the extent to which an individual is engaged in—and equally satisfied with—his or her work role and family role consisting three components of work family-balance, time balance, involvement balance and satisfaction balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003).”

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Research work over the past 20 years or more has shown that the experience of stress among managers in the workplace has undesirable consequences towards their health and safety as well it is detrimental and for the well-being of their organizations. Work stress incurred cost not only to the organization, but the nation as well. It is in this scenario, the research has been carried out to identify the various dimensions and impact of Work Life Balance and impact of stress on IT Professionals and Executives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of Work Life Balance on job performance of employees in the IT sector and Executives in the Private Sector
2. To identify the influence of Stress on Job performance of knowledge workers
3. To find out the impact of Stress, Work Life Balance and job performance on male and female executives and IT professionals
4. To know the job satisfaction of employees based on the effective Work Life Balance in organizations.

HYPOTHESES

H1: Work-life balance increases job satisfaction and performance.

H2: Stress at work hinders job satisfaction.

H3: Male employees will have greater job satisfaction and stress and lesser work life balance compared to the female group.

H4: IT employees have greater work-life balance and job satisfaction compared to the Private sector executives

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of research used for this study is descriptive in nature and the research attempts to identify the impact of stress on IT professionals and private sector executives and to identify their work life balance. A sample of 313 professionals including 218 male and 95 female respondents was taken for the study in Chennai. The number of respondents in the IT group was 191, including 153 male and 38 female respondents. The total number of executives taken from the private sector was 122, including 65 male and 57 female respondents. The sampling technique that is adopted for this study is convenience sampling which is a non-probability sampling. The research instrument that is used for this study is a structured questionnaire. The respondents were asked to rate different items using a 6-point Likert type scale where 6 indicated Strongly Agree while 1 represent Strongly Disagree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1: CRONBACH ALPHAS FOR DIFFERENT SCALES (N=313)

Scale	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
Job satisfaction	0.71	6
Work life balance	0.76	3
Work Pressure	0.89	12
Exhaustion	0.91	9
De-motivation	0.77	7

Cronbach Alpha value for different scales taken for the study clearly indicate that the reliability of the research instrument is found to be relatively high and therefore all the above mentioned factors are taken for further analysis and discussion.

CORRELATION RESULTS

TABLE 2: INTER-VARIABLE CORRELATIONS AMONG THE DIFFERENT VARIABLES FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE (N=313)

Variables	Work-life balance	Meaninglessness	work Pressure	Demotivation
Work-life balance	-			
Meaninglessness	-0.46**	-		
work Pressure	-0.43**	0.89**	-	
De-motivation	-0.39**	0.87**	0.84**	-
Job satisfaction	0.46**	-0.35**	-0.31**	-0.30**

**p<.01.

The Table above clearly shows that the relationship between job satisfaction and stress dimensions, i.e., meaninglessness, work pressure, and de-motivation was negative, indicating that the greater stress the lesser job satisfaction. Also the higher work life balance, the higher job satisfaction. The pattern of relationships

was similar in the cases of the IT Professionals and private sector executives which is clearly implied from the tables given below. (Tables 3 and 4). Thus, the hypotheses 1 and 2 are accepted.

TABLE 3: INTER-VARIABLE CORRELATIONS AMONG DIFFERENT VARIABLES FOR THE IT SECTOR (N=191)

Variables	Work-life balance	Meaninglessness	Work Pressure	Demotivation
Work-life balance	-			
Meaninglessness	-0.28**	-		
Work Pressure	-0.33**	0.87**	-	
De-motivation	-0.26**	0.84**	0.78**	-
Job satisfaction	0.32**	-0.22**	-0.18*	-0.15*
*p<.05, **p<.01.				

TABLE 4: INTER-VARIABLE CORRELATIONS AMONG DIFFERENT VARIABLES AMONG THE PRIVATE SECTOR EXECUTIVES (N=122)

Variables	Work-life balance	Meaninglessness	Work Pressure	Demotivation
Work-life balance	-			
Meaninglessness	-0.59**	-		
Work Pressure	-0.46**	0.91**	-	
De-motivation	-0.48**	0.88**	0.87**	-
Job satisfaction	0.56**	-0.41**	-0.36**	-0.39**
**p<.01.				

REGRESSION RESULTS

Stepwise regression was performed to establish the relationship of work-life balance and burnout with job satisfaction. In case of the total sample (N=313), Table 5 shows that out of 4 predictors, only two variables work life balance and meaninglessness entered the equation for job satisfaction, explaining 22.8 percent of variance. The pattern was similar in case of the IT sector (N=191) as Table 6 shows that work-life balance and meaninglessness entered the equation for job satisfaction and explained 11.2 percent of variance. In case of private sector executives it is found that as Table 7 shows, only work life balance entered the equation and explained a variance of 30.3 percent in job satisfaction.

TABLE 5: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND MEANINGLESSNESS AS PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE (N=313)

Model	Variables	Adjusted R Square	Beta Value Standardised	t- value	F-value
1	Work-life balance	0.21	0.46	9.17	82.18
2	Work-life balance	0.23	0.38	6.75	47.13
	Meaninglessness		-0.18	-3.13	

**p<.01.

TABLE 6: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND MEANINGLESSNESS AS PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION FOR THE IT SECTOR (N=191)

Model	Variables	Adjusted R Square	Beta Value Standardised	t- value	F- value
1	Work-life balance	0.10	0.32	4.65	21.62
2	Work-life balance	0.11	0.28	3.94	13.00
	Meaninglessness		-0.14	2.01	

**p<.01.

TABLE 7: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AS PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR EXECUTIVES (N=122)

Model	Variables	Adjusted R Square	Beta Value Standardised	t- value	F- value
1	Work-life balance	.30	.56	7.33**	53.66**

**p<.01.

T-test Results

Table 8 reveals that the male and female groups differed only on job satisfaction, with the male group displaying greater job satisfaction than the female group. Table 9 shows that work-life balance and job satisfaction were significantly higher among the executives of the private sector compared to the IT group. On the other hand, all stress dimensions, i.e., meaninglessness, work pressure and de-motivation were higher in the IT group compared to the private sector executives. Thus, the hypothesis 4 is rejected.

TABLE 8: COMPARISON OF MALE AND FEMALE GROUPS ON DIFFERENT VARIABLES

Variables	Sex				t-value
	Male (N=218)		Female (N=95)		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Work-life balance	12.67	3.30	12.43	4.07	0.54
Meaninglessness	30.95	11.62	33.61	16.58	-1.62
Work Pressure	23.04	9.38	23.09	11.66	-0.05
De-motivation	19.42	6.40	20.27	8.18	-0.99
Job satisfaction	23.64	4.81	22.30	5.27	2.2*

*p<0.05, **p<0.01.

TABLE 9: COMPARISON OF THE IT PROFESSIONALS AND EXECUTIVES ON DIFFERENT VARIABLES

Variables	Sector				t-value
	IT (N=191)		Executives (N=122)		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Work-life balance	11.86	3.28	13.75	3.64	4.75**
Meaninglessness	33.38	10.65	29.22	16.46	2.72**
Work Pressure	24.73	8.42	20.43	11.87	3.75**
Demotivation	20.47	5.82	18.45	8.37	2.52*
Job satisfaction	22.55	4.28	24.31	5.78	3.09**

*p<0.05; **p<0.01.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study show that work-life balance is positively associated with job satisfaction. It implies that when employees are able to pay equal attention to both personal and professional lives, they like their jobs and feel satisfied. The nature of job in the IT sector and the managerial jobs in the private sector is such that it is difficult to strike a balance between work and life. IT industry are prone to the high employee turnover and commitment. In line with the prediction, stress dimensions, i.e., meaninglessness, work pressure, and de-motivation are negatively related to job satisfaction, indicating that greater the level of stress, the lower will be the job satisfaction. When jobs are stressful, employees lose their interest in jobs and they feel dissatisfied. As a result, employees become less committed and develop an intention to leave the job. At the same time, organisations give attractive rewards to better performance; consequently, employees overstretch and stress themselves.

The results further show that, job satisfaction is higher in the male group compared to the female group. The main reason behind such finding is that men attach more importance to their work and it is central to their life. Sometimes, they even ignore their family to achieve more in their career. Men feel more satisfied when they are achieving more on the job, even at the cost of ignoring family needs. Conversely, women stress on both work and family as source of their satisfaction. For them, family is equally important to work and at times they perceive that family is more important than work. When work does not permit women to take care of their family, they feel frustrated. They draw tighter boundaries between work and family. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported. The plausible reason behind the lack of difference between men and women may be that women have the same kind of work expectations and demands that men have. In addition, they have to also work at home. They have major responsibility for household work and child rearing. They may face greater conflict between work and family, conducive to stress and strain.

Results from the study also clearly indicate that the private sector executives have greater work-life balance and job satisfaction when compared to the IT Professionals. Conversely, the executives in the private sector are found to be lower on meaninglessness, work pressure and de-motivation. This may be because of clearly defined fixed schedules, job profile, and routine, and less demanding work among the executives in the private sector. Their expectations are met by their organisations, sometimes even exceeded. Therefore, they might be more satisfied. On the other hand, the IT respondents have tight timelines and highly demanding work.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that work-life balance and stress dimensions definitely have their impact on job satisfaction among the IT Professionals and the executives of the private sector. Poor job satisfaction results in lower morale and productivity. Employees today expect their organisations to help in managing work-life balance and in reducing stress and burnout. Work-life balance is a situational variable, while stress is a personality variable. Both together determine job satisfaction that, in turn, affects employee engagement and productivity. Work-life balance also negatively affects stress. It implies that if the organisation and individual make concerted efforts, stress can be reduced to a very great extent and employees may therefore be in a better position to strike a proper balance between their professional and personal life. It is primarily the responsibility of an individual to balance work and life and initiate steps to reduce stress and burnout. Individual have to explore their values, aspirations, and goals to understand what they expect from work and life and then develop suitable ways of balancing work and life. Stress in due course may result in burn out when an individual is unable to manage stress in the context of human service. It also occurs when there is high level of conflict between work and life. The organisation, on the other hand, can initiate cutting edge work-life balance practices to help the employees manage their affairs more effectively. It can also train employees to understand the issues of work-life and burnout management and commence employee assistance programmes. When there is proper cooperation and coordination among both the organisation and the employees in this regard, accomplishing work-life balance will no more be a complicated and difficult task. Moreover, proper work-life balance of employees is expected to contribute towards greater job satisfaction which in turn will lead to enhanced organizational productivity.

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