



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

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Contributions to books

- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

Journal and other articles

- Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

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IMPACT OF FLEXI-TIME (A WORK-LIFE BALANCE PRACTICE) ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN INDIAN IT SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the impact of flexi-time on employee performance as part of a work-life balance practice based on empirical evidence drawn from IT Sector in Hyderabad, India. A total of 300 samples with 30 samples (Asst. Managers, Managers, and Sr. Managers) from each company had been included from the Ten IT companies based on simple random sampling. Managerial personnel from HR, Marketing, Finance, Operations and Technical functions are included in the study. The study shows that when the average flexi-time score increases, the average employee performance score also increases proportionately. The study reveals positive correlation and significant association between employee performance and flexi-time. The findings of the study shows that majority of the managerial personnel are able to increase their performance levels with the help of flexi-time as one the important work-life balance practice. The study concludes with a conceptual framework which explains how spillover theory helps in improving employee performance and also how management and co-worker support helps in smooth implementation of flexi-time in improving employee performance as a part in achieving work-life balance.

KEYWORDS

Life, Performance, IT, flexi-time.

INTRODUCTION

Balancing work and family issues have become increasingly important for both employees and employers, and are a universal worldwide phenomenon (Jarrod M. Haar, 2007). Work-life balance is one of the most difficult issues facing families in the twenty-first century (Elizabeth W., Calvin W., & Janice R., 2008).

In the pursuit of reducing stress, improving performance, increasing productivity, reducing costs and enhancing profitability in the workplace, organizations have been evolving new ways and means to build psychological relationships with employees. Work-life balance (WLB) is a common challenge throughout the industrialized world. Employees all over the world are facing challenges how to balance work and personal life (Ramachandra Aaryasri A. & Suman Babu S., 2007).

In the era of globalization, the boundaries of world are disappearing especially with respect to work. The present global organization is working 24*7, 365 days a year and the growth of the economy is the present priority amidst global recession, which the world over is facing today. Everyone's focus is more on the work than the personal life which is creating an imbalance in the professional work and personal life. (Sindhu & S.Suman Babu, 2008).

The term "work-life balance" was first coined over 20 years ago in reaction to the trend of the 1970s and 1980s when men and women began prioritizing work and career goals over family, friends, community affairs, and leisure activities. Today, this is the priority for all promising organizations (Farid A. Muna & Ned Mansour, 2009).

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-Smith et al., 2000). Workplace flexibility is the ability of workers to make choices influencing when, where, and for how long they engage in work-related tasks" (Hill, et al., 2008).

WORK-LIFE RESEARCH IN IT SECTOR IN INDIA

During the period 1995-2000 India saw the information technology enables services (ITES) e.g., call centre and software sector boom. Many organizations in this sector adopted work styles and organizational practices from developed countries in the west. Workers were expected to work 24/7 × 365 days of the year. To prevent such a work style from affecting worker health and productivity, workplaces offered services traditionally associated with the family and non-work domain within their premises such as gymnasiums, day-care facilities, laundry facilities, canteen facilities, even futons to sleep on if you felt like a nap (Uma Devi, 2002). The IT sector was meant to have emancipatory potential for workingwomen on account of the possibility of telecommuting and working flexible hours. However in reality IT workplaces turned out to give very little room for family time and therefore did not live up to this promise. Also, since family friendly measures were offered more as an imitation of western organizational practices rather than from a genuine concern to enable (women) workers handle work and family responsibilities, they have suffered casualties during the recent recession in the IT sector (Winifred 2003).

The need to avoid stress and absenteeism associated with work and family demands among a newly downsized, highly pressurized core workforce as a result of massive downsizing and restructuring of organizations during 1990s has been recognized by some organizations as a compelling argument for continuing or developing family-oriented policies for this group particularly public sector (Lewis et al., 1996).

There is more innovation conceiving work-life balance policies and practices in IT and IT enabled services-be they multinational or Indian companies-because of the preponderance of gender balance and resultant increased awareness and concern about family responsibilities. Interestingly, as Wipro's website puts it, the emphasis is on "Work balance towards life" rather than "life balance towards work". (V.Chandra and C.S.Venkata Ratnam, 2009). In view of longer working hours and around the clock support, IT workers suffer more from work-life conflict than in most other cases. (C.S.Venkata Ratnam and V.Chandra, 2009)

OUTCOMES OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES

Organizations have offered work-family benefits as a means to ameliorate the negative effects of stress and to increase work-family balance for employees. Work-family benefits are often referred to as organization interventions because they are designed to intervene and relieve the stress caused by work-family conflict.

Research on work and family has found that when work-family conflict has been reduced, positive attitudes and behaviors such as improved recruitment; increased retention, morale, and commitment; improved job performance and production; as well as lowered training costs, absenteeism, and tardiness result (Raabe, 1990). These outcomes are of interest to human resource managers and have a positive effect on organization's bottom line. This study evaluates employee perceptions of three important organizational concerns employee stress, employee retention, employee performance and organizational productivity.

FLEXITIME, AN EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IMPROVER AND IT IS IMPORTANCE

Nowadays employers are in the habit of cutting costs. Flexi time is one such work-life balance practice that does not add any cost to the employers but moreover it adds many benefits to the bottom line like improved retention, increased performance apart from reduction of employee stress.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

- The literature review reveals that there are very few studies in India which explore the impact of flexi-time on employee performance.
- After having extensive discussions with the research guide, academicians, key HRD people in IT industry, and colleagues, the research problem has been formulated keeping following questions in perspective:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Whether flexi-time as a work-life balance practice is being adopted by IT organizations in India and what are its possible outcomes?
- How Flexi-time help organizations in improving employee performance?
- How Management and Coworker Support helps in smooth implementation of Flexi-time in IT companies.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study existing work-life balance practices in select IT organizations in Hyderabad.
- To study and analyze the influence of flexi time on employee performance.
- To study how management and co-worker support helps in smooth implementation of flexi-time to improve employee performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

RELATIONSHIP OF WLB PRACTICES TO EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Dex and Smith (2002) explored the relationship between the adoption of family-friendly arrangements and improved organizational performance.

They found evidence of positive links between improved employee performance, cost effectiveness and the use of family-friendly policies in the workplace.

Issues associated with the contribution that work-life initiatives make to employee performance and organizational productivity have attracted the attention of employers as an increasing number of studies have found that organizations with progressive work-life programs have higher returns on assets and a positive impact on shareholder returns (Arthur & Cook, 2004; Watson Wyatt Worldwide, 2002).

RESEARCH STUDIES ON MANAGEMENT & CO-WORKER SUPPORT

The literature has suggested that the adoption of formal family-responsive policies may not have the desired effects if there is no supportive organizational culture (Kossek & Nichol, 1992). Therefore, if lack of supervisor and organizational support is shown from the research findings, then companies considering family-responsive policies should take steps to promote a corporate culture that values or at least accepts the necessity and potential long-term benefits of the policies.

Organizational culture is often cited as the key facilitator or barrier to work-life policies (Thompson et al., 1999) with cultural norms often overriding formal policy intentions. According to the business case, a supportive culture (management and coworker support) can improve morale and motivation and reduce stress and absences.

A) Management support

Based on a study of managers' and professionals' use of work-family policies specifically, Blair-Loy and Wharton (2002) also argue that employees were more likely to use these policies if they worked with powerful supervisors and colleagues who could buffer them from perceived negative effects on their careers.

B) Co-worker Support

Another factor which may contribute to an understanding of why many employees are reluctant to take up work-family provisions is lack of co-worker support. Also referred to as the "backlash" movement (Haar and Spell, 2003), there is some evidence, based on theories of organizational justice (Hegtvedt et al., 2002) that resentment by some employees may contribute to a work environment where the utilization of work-life policies is not encouraged.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

The theoretical underpinning for this present research study was also built on the concept of spillover theory (FIGURE A--Conceptual Model on Flexitime as a WLB practice and employee stress reduction outcome); Spillover theory can help explain the reciprocal relationship between work and family by accounting for both the positive and negative influence of multiple roles (Leiter & Durup, 1996). Spillover refers to the experiences (attitude, behavior, environment, demands, emotions, responsibilities, resources) of one role "spilling over" or affecting the other role. Spillover can simultaneously involve the experience of both stress and support. When an individual's experienced stress accumulates in one domain and cannot be contained within that domain due to lack of resources, the stress spills over into the other domain and is expressed there as well. For example, spillover from work to family occurs when an employee experiences a difficult, stressful day at the office and comes home to the family, yelling at one's spouse and children. Stress experienced at the office is then experienced at the home.

HYPOTHESIS

After conducting an extensive review of literature, the following hypothesis predominantly in the alternate form is developed in line with the research problem and objectives.

H₃: There is significant impact of flexitime on employee performance.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING DESIGN

The primary data was collected from April'2010 to Sept'2010. The study is based on both the primary data and secondary data. Secondary data was collected from various research journals, books, magazines, websites related to the field of the study. Primary data was collected by administering a structured questionnaire to the junior level & middle level managers of the sample companies. A 1-5 point Likert Scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree has been used to measure the statements in the questionnaire. The measures were adapted and Cronbach's coefficient of reliability was computed for all dimensions to verify the internal consistency of the items (Flexitime and employee performance) that constitute the dimensions. For flexi time and employee performance scale, the number of items is 8 and the Cronbach alpha value is 0.947

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND SAMPLE SIZE DESCRIPTION

Firm size affects the type and extent of work-life balance policies that are offered. In their study of US firms, Galinsky and Bond (1998) found that company size was the next best predictor of the presence of work-life balance policies, after industry type. Larger companies (more than 1,000 employees) were more likely to provide flexible work options and longer and paid parental leave.

Ten IT companies are selected on the basis of non-probability sampling which is non-random in nature. A total of 300 samples with 30 samples (Asst.Managers, Managers, and Sr. Managers) from each company had been included from the 10 companies based on simple random sampling. The sizes of each of the junior level and middle level management depends on the population of respective cadre of managers. Managerial personnel from HR, Marketing, Finance, Operations and Technical functions are included in the study. All these companies have more than 1000 employees each.

Males constitute 218 members (72.7%) and Females constitute 82 members (27.3%). They belong to age group between 25 yrs to above 45 yrs. The highest percentage of participants is between 35yrs-45yrs (45.7%). 280 participants i.e., (93.3%) are married and 20 participants (6.7%) are unmarried. Truly this is a representative of the work-life problems faced by married managerial personnel. 280 participants i.e., (93.3%) said they have children and 290 participants (96.7%) said they have elderly persons in their families whom they need to look after. 210 participants (73.3%) said they work more than 8 hrs and nearly 100 participants (33.3%) said they work night shifts (8pm-4am) and another important observation is that 244 participants (81.3%) said they have working spouses. All these combinations will help to further study and evaluate work-life balance practices on organizational outcomes. The following tables will explain the demographic characteristics of the respondents

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data is analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for services and solutions) 17.0 version

When asked how important you think the following work-life balance practices?

For flexi time :The data collected out of 300 Managerial personnel 25.3%-34.7% felt extremely important to important.11.7% respondents felt neutral and 14.3%-14.0% felt somewhat important to not at all important.

When asked "I would be motivated to higher levels of work performance if flexi-time were offered". 91 (41.7%) male managerial personnel had responded "agree or strongly agree" whereas 42 (51.2%) female managerial personnel had responded "agree or strongly agree" and from the overall sample 133 (44.3%) male and female managerial personnel together had responded "agree or strongly agree". This implies that females' perception towards impact of flexitime on employee performance is more when compared to males.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of 'Overall Sample'

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Employee Performance	3.11	1.414	300
Flexitime	3.47	1.357	300

Table 1 gives the mean and standard deviation scores for the overall sample of 300 managerial personnel (which includes Assistant Managers, Managers and Senior Managers). It is interesting to observe that the averages of these domains are almost the same with lesser variation on Employee Performance. For Flexitime, the corresponding range is 1 to 5.

In order to measure the extent of linear relationship between the average Flexitime scores and the average Employee Performance scores, Karl Pearson coefficient of correlation is computed; and is tested for significance. **Table 2** reveals that there is a positive correlation between Employee Performance and Flexitime ($r=0.589$, $p=0.000$), and is found to be statistically highly significant. For future research, it may be suggested that Flexitime can be used to estimate Employee Performance. Since managerial personnel from all cadres for the purpose of work-life balance practices study are included, it reflects the importance of Flexitime to measure Employee Performance.

Table 2: Correlation between Employee Performance and Flexitime

Correlations

		Employee Performance	Flexitime
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.589**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Flexitime	Pearson Correlation	.589**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

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

The coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.347$, $p=0.000$ highlights that Flexitime contributes on Employee Performance to a moderate extent (**Table 3**). Thus, Employee Performance can be estimated from Flexitime scores.

Table 3: Coefficient of determination between Employee Performance and Flexitime of 'Overall Sample'

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.589 ^a	.347	.345	1.145	.347	158.439	1	298	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Flexitime

The analysis of variance table (ANOVA) given in **Table 4** reveals that the regression model fits well for the data ($F=158.439$, $p=0.000$).

Table 4: ANOVA for 'Overall Sample'

ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	207.629	1	207.629	158.439	.000 ^a
Residual	390.518	298	1.310		
Total	598.147	299			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Flexitime

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The regression coefficient and its associated test of significance are given in **Table 5**. The fitted regression model is as follows:

$$\text{Employee Performance} = 0.614 \text{ Flexitime} + 0.985$$

From the above regression line, the average score on Employee Performance can be estimated for a given average score on Flexitime. Further, the population regression coefficient is different from zero as $t=12.587$, $p=0.000$. It explains that when the average Flexitime score increases, the average Employee Performance score also increases proportionately.

Table 5: Regression Coefficient and its Associated Test of Significance for 'Overall Sample' Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.985	.182		5.423	.000
Flexitime	.614	.049	.589	12.587	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Hence, the study hypothesis "There is significant impact of flexi-time on employee performance" is accepted

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study reveals that work-life balance is becoming a burning issue in IT sector in India. To facilitate employees, organizations are practicing work-life balance strategies like flexi time to their employees so that they can balance their work and life domains. Most of the western organizations are providing work-life balance practices like flexi time to its employees and are competing with the global organizations. Indian organizations should match with global approach in providing work-life balance practices to its employees.

The literature review revealed that there are only few studies in India in evaluating flexi time as a work-life balance practices based on employee performance. Either the study has been conducted by taking one practice or in single country.

Hence the researcher found that the existing literature was short of empirical studies in the area of evaluating flexi time as a work-life balance practice based on employee performance in India, thereby providing the impetus for this study. This research work, which is conceptual and empirical in nature, has taken a step, and a significant one in the Indian context to fill the void.

This study has been a modest attempt to evaluate flexi time as a work-life balance practice based on employee performance. The results of this study conclude that there is significant impact of flexi time on employee performance

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

a) The study has been conducted in Hyderabad region, so the restricted geographical region is a limitation for this study.

b) Only ten IT organizations from the IT sector are covered under this study and the results of the study cannot be generalized.

c) Inclusion of very few female managerial personnel in the study.

d) Only one work-life balance practice (flexi time) is evaluated based on employee performance.

This research work has been undertaken in Hyderabad region of Andhra Pradesh in India in ten organizations from the IT sector. The future research can be in areas of evaluation of work-life balance practices such as flexi time based on employee performance in other regions of India and in other sectors to compare the results to arrive at more generalized conclusions. Future research can also focus on the impact of other work-life balance practices on organizational outcomes. This research work has been carried out by taking managerial personnel as a sample, whereas future research can be focused by taking different samples like employees belonging to different levels and comparing between the levels.

CONCLUSION

To conclude how provision of work-life balance practices like flexi time may benefit organizations by improving employee performance rate where employees can perform to the best of their potential and also help policy makers to frame welfare measures to employees. Organizations should integrate flexi time as a work-life balance practice in core business objectives and also should use as a strategic tool for improving employee performance.

For effective implementation of flexi time as a work-life balance practice there should be both management and co-worker support and also organizations should observe the moods, attitudes, behavior and environment of its employees because spillover of these will have both positive and negative outcomes with reference to employee performance. Organizations should also consider other practices which will increase employee performance

During this economic downturn or global recession organizations should adopt flexi time as a employee performance improver tool because it does not add any cost to the organizations and moreover it adds many organizational benefits to the bottom line like increased satisfaction and productivity, retention of valuable employees ,reduced stress and decreased absenteeism apart from improving employee performance.

The above article can be summed up in **Fig. A** (Conceptual Framework of Flexitime as a Work-Life Balance Practice and reduced employee performance outcome).

FIG. A: Conceptual Framework of Flexi-time as a Work-Life Balance Practice and improved employee performance outcome

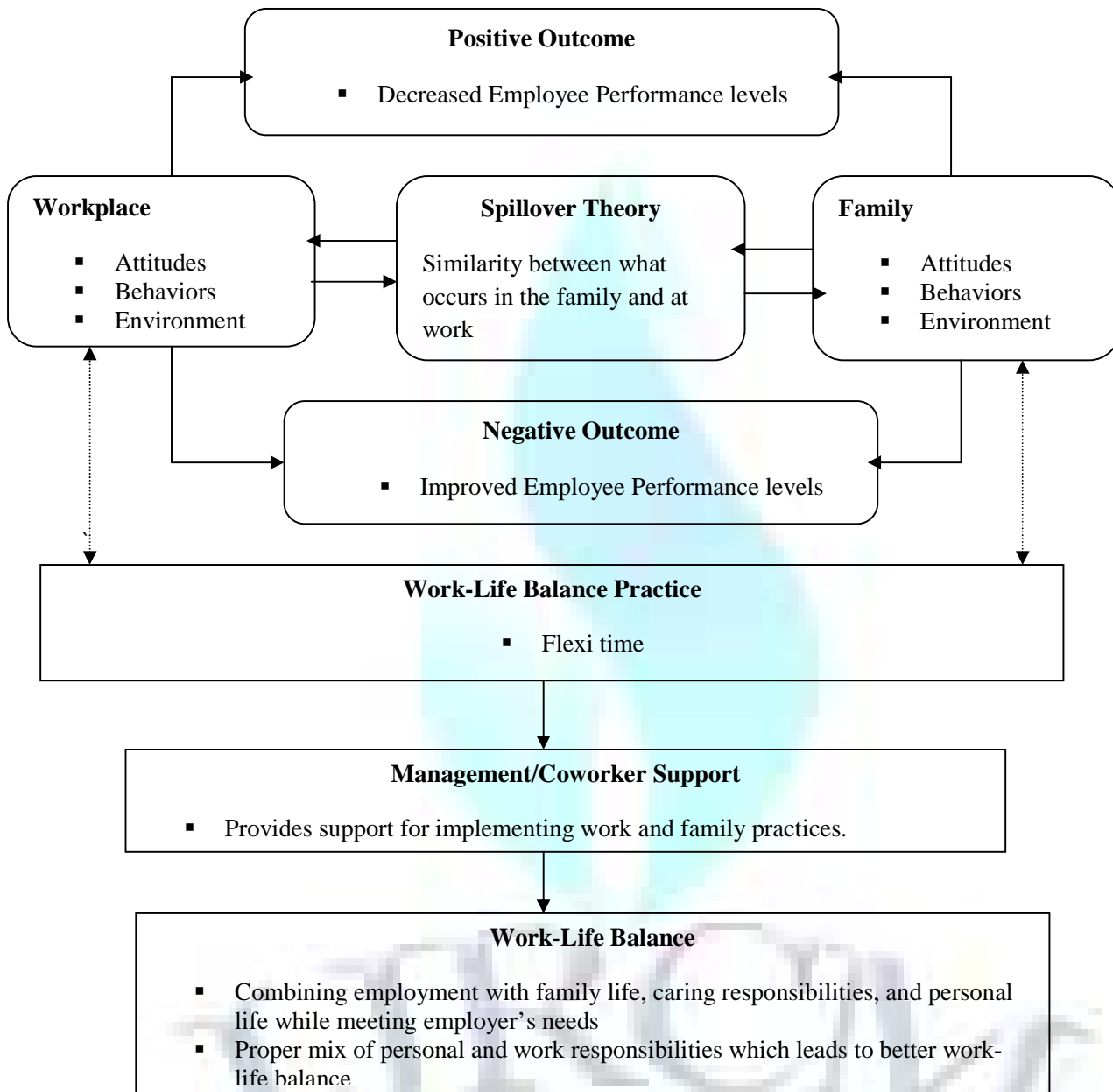


Fig A Conceptual Model of Work-Life Balance Practices and improved employee performance outcome

Note: —————> Direct Linkages

←-----> Interactional Impacts

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