A STUDY OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS EFFECTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Work-Life Balance is an omnipresent issue concerning all sections of the organizations and society including research scholars and business leaders for obvious reasons. Maintaining a high quality of work-life is imperative to achieve the goals of the organization as well as for individual satisfaction. The quality of work-life hinges mainly on support both from society and organization, work-life balance policies and programs, and various other dimensions such as job satisfaction, rewards and benefits, recognition, individual commitment, proper grievances handling, participative management, welfare facilities, work environment, and safety. Maintaining a flexible work-life balance, given its already complex nature, is a more arduous task in case of women employees, especially in the manufacturing sector, where such challenges exist that are beyond one's imagination. Literature has revealed the extent of tokenism dealt with by the women employees and the words of disapproval they hear from within the organization and the society. However, there has been little research aimed at conceptualizing, designing, developing, implementing and maintaining feasible work-life balance models, programs and procedures to help deal with these challenges and strike a balance between work and life. This review paper focuses on and analyzes the literature review on work-life balance, its dimensions, effects on organizational performance and attempts that have been made to strike a balance between work and life.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Dimensions, Quality of Work-Life, Organizational Performance, Women

INTRODUCTION

A "good" work-life balance is defined as a situation in which workers feel that they are capable of balancing their work and non-work commitments, and, for the most part, do so (Moore, 2007). The degree to which employees of a work organization are able to satisfy important personnel needs is defined by the favorableness of the job environment. Work-life balance encompasses many components, dimensions and concepts. The most important asset for the organization is undoubtedly high quality manpower, which is earned through an optimum work-life balance.

A high quality of work life is essential for organizations to sustain competition in market through attracting and retaining employees. Quality of Work Life is a philosophical concept which hangs on the principle that 'people resource' is the most important resource in the organization. This balance is

a concern not only to improve life at work, but also life outside work. In other words, both the internal and external environments have an equally important role to play. The ultimate aim is to balance the two most important domains of a person's life – work and life. Consequently, it is believed and has been proved that integrating family needs and career requirements provides the much needed psychological boost to excel in both these domains, with the end result being a win-win situation for both the organization and the individual; and this interface has only strengthened in the past two decades. Moreover, in a transitioning society like India where the roles of women as homemakers and caretakers are deeply entrenched, work-life balance becomes an intriguing challenge for women and their employers.

Thus, it is imperative for employers and organizations to design, develop, implement and maintain feasible work-life balance models in order to address these challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results are taken from the research papers that have explored and contemplated on the aforementioned topics. A few such important research papers have been discussed below in brief:

1. **Ujvala Rajadhyaksha (2012)** in her paper titled "Work-life balance in South East Asia: the Indian experience", has provided an in-depth country perspective on work-life balance issues in India. The findings of the study are that the commonly offered work-life interventions by Indian companies address issues of gender equality, flexibility, stress reduction, health awareness and childcare. The social implications of the study are that the organizational work-life interventions in India are varied and disparate and have focused mainly on the formal sector. There is no overarching government policy addressing work and family issues across different sectors. Research limitations/implications are that the sample of organizations in the study is purposive in nature and HR policies of smaller companies in the informal sector are not included. Future research needs to consider how India's unequal economic development across the organized and unorganized sectors may affect effectiveness of work-life interventions.

2. **Reddy N K et al (2010)** in their paper titled "Work–Life Balance among Married Women Employees" have studied the various factors which could lead to work–family conflict WFC and Family–work conflict (FWC) among married women employees. Their findings emphasized the need to formulate guidelines for the management of WFCs at organizational level as it is related to job satisfaction and performance of the employees. Their research has the limitation in respect of sample size. The sample size (being 90 married working women) in their study was quite small and hence the generalization of the findings is limited. Additional research is needed in different employment settings to explore the relationship between WFC and quality of life among married women employees.

3. **Madhurima Das and K B Akhilesh (2012)** have developed a multi-construct conceptual model to determine the work-life balance of Indian women, both in research and managerial careers. Their study strongly advocates building sectoral occupational specific models rather than generic gender centric models. Their study looked at the input-output framework and considered variables on a Likert scale.

They have felt that there is a need to extend the study to include other variables, such as age, caretaking responsibilities, and so on for a better understanding of how the multiconstruct factor model of work-life balance will help to diagnose issues of work-life conflict.

4. **Baral and Bhargava (2010)** in their paper titled "Work-family enrichment as a mediator between organizational interventions for work-life balance and job outcomes" have examined the role of work-family enrichment in the relationships between organizational interventions for work-life

balance (job characteristics, work-life benefits and policies, supervisor support and work-family culture) and job outcomes (job satisfaction, affective commitment and organizational citizenship behavior). They found that job characteristics were positively related to all the measures of job outcomes. Supervisor support and work-family culture were positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment. No significant association was found between work-life benefits and policies (WLBPs) and any of the job outcome measures. Job characteristics and supervisor support were positively related to work-to-family enrichment. Work-to-family enrichment mediated the relationships between job characteristics and all job outcomes and between supervisor support and affective commitment. Their research had the limitations that the correlational design prevented them from making conclusions about causality.

5. **Baral and Bhargava (2011)** have also made an effort to understand the current status of work-life balance benefits and programmes (WLBPs) in Indian organizations and to identify its future prospects. The authors suggest that organizations need to incorporate WLBPs and encourage a culture that support utilizing them to ensure employee commitment and productivity. The authors conclude that future research agenda could be to understand if WLBPs will be able to reduce work-family conflict and if they really add to company bottom line.

6. **Reimara Valk and Vasanthi Srinivasan (2011)** in their study have attempted to understand how work and family related factors influence the work-family balance of Indian women IT professionals. The study is based on an exploratory qualitative study of 13 women IT professionals in the software sector in Bangalore, India. The narrative has revealed six major themes: familial influences on life choices; multi-role responsibilities and attempts to negotiate them; self and professional identity; work-life challenges and coping strategies; organizational policies and practices; and social support. They have concluded that Indian women IT professionals can achieve the work-family balance by setting priorities in their work and personal lives and by having support systems both at work, formally through HR policies and programmes, and informally through supervisor and co-worker support and at home. The authors have mentioned that, data has raised issues that need to be addressed both from an academic and practice point of view. The identified dimensions could serve as a platform for further research on women IT professionals and the work-life balance which will serve as a guide for organizations to address the work-family balance issues of working women by designing and implementing HR policies and practices for facilitating the work-family balance. This, in turn, would go a long way in enabling women to perform better at work, be more committed to the organization, and ultimately contribute to the growth of the economy and positively impact society as whole.

7. **Lalita Kumari (2012)** in her paper titled "Employees' perception on Work Life Balance and its relation with job satisfaction in Indian public sector banks" has made an attempt to find out about the employee's perception of their work life balance policies and practices in the public sector banks.

The findings of her study emphasized that each of the WLB factors on its own is a salient predictor of job satisfaction and there is a significant gap among the female and male respondents with job satisfaction with respect to various factors of WLB. The positive correlation indicates that job satisfaction is an important indicator of WLB. The result of study may have practical significance for human resource managers of especially banks to improve staff commitment and productivity along with designing their recruitment and retention policies. The author's study revealed that there is a need to conduct an in-depth study covering larger sample size and broader areas of investigation. Further research should be conducted in order to identify factors other than flexi time, job sharing, crèche facilities, and necessary breaks that could contribute to bank employee's WLB.

8. **Rincy Mathew and Panchanatham (2011)** conducted an exploratory study on the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs in South India. They developed and validated an appropriate tool to illustrate the work-life balance (WLB) issues faced by women entrepreneurs. They first sought an

understanding of the important factors influencing the WLB of these women entrepreneurs through the collection of appropriate data. Then these data were subjected to statistical analysis, using various tools such as factor analysis, regression analysis, Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) and student's t-test. This study revealed that role overload, dependent care issues, quality of health, problems in time management and lack of proper social support are the major factors influencing the WLB of women entrepreneurs in India. Finally, the study provided recommendations for human resource professionals, management consultants, academicians and women entrepreneurs themselves to deal with the major WLB issues faced by Indian women entrepreneurs.

9. K. Santhana Lakshmi et al (2012) analyzed the WLB of female nurses in hospitals by conducting a comparative study of Government and Private hospitals in Chennai, India. It was found out that 53% of the women were struggling to achieve WLB. The objectives of the study were to identify the influence of work place environment and stress related issues on the emotional status of female nurses, to analyze the features of motivation initiatives adopted by the hospitals, and to examine the factors which determine the satisfaction of female nurses. The objectives set for the study required collection of primary data from the female nurses in Government and Private Hospital. Therefore a questionnaire was drafted, field tested and then finalized. The response was collected from the female nurses through a survey and this data was subjected to statistical analysis, using tools like Multiple Regression and t-test. However, the study considered women nurses working in two or three specific fields. Moreover, the study was conducted on a small scale, surveying only 400 employees from a Government and a Private Hospital. It was concluded that the WLB of both the Government and private nurses was a challenging one. There was a need for both hospitals to address the WLB related issues and support the female nurses to manage their WLB.

10. Yuchun Xiao and Fang Lee Cooke (2012) investigated the major sources of work–life conflicts encountered by workers in China against a context of marketization of the economy, the rapid growth of the private sector and a trend of work intensification across occupational groups. The study showed that Chinese organizational leaders and workers tend to accept work–life conflicts as a fact of life while individuals adopt various coping strategies on their own. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 122 informants including 13CEOs, 28 senior managers, 46 mid-ranking managers and 35 professional employees. .This qualitative data was then analyzed and sorted into a database manually. Only 26 informants reported that there was no WLC issue in their organization, suggesting a good level of work–life balance for their employees. These were mainly firms that do not face strong competition in the market due to the type of business they are in.

For those who reported the existence of WLC, work intensity/pressure and family commitment were the two main sources. Work-related issues were overwhelmingly the main causes of WLC. The findings revealed tensions between work and personal life in various ways. It was concluded that while organizations are more likely to introduce HR initiatives to cushion the negative effects of long working hours on their employees and their family, managers are far less sympathetic towards women's(and men's) childcare needs and are unwilling to introduce policy to accommodate family commitments.

11. Sandeep Aggarwal (2012) investigated the relationship between using work-life balance initiatives and employee's attitudes toward work-life conflict and the workplace. The study was conducted at Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. The non probability random sampling was adopted with a sample size of 125. The survey was conducted at different departments of Gujarat Refinery. A questionnaire was designed which included 27 questions on the basis of which the WLB of employees in the organization was found. The results of the study showed that overall the effectiveness of the Work Life Balance policies provided was satisfactory on almost all parameters. There was a strong perception among the employees that it is important to achieve balance between work & personal life as it enables people to work better and this should be a joint responsibility of employer & employee. To improve the organizational performance, WLB should be properly

communicated to the employees & awareness regarding policies should be generated among the employees. The author finally suggests a few measures and policies the management can frame to tackle the work-life conflict and achieve WLB.

12. Yutaka Ueda (2012) conducted a study to examine whether the comprehensiveness of work-life balance (WLB) programs influences employee satisfaction and whether this relationship is moderated by employee income. The respondents (2972 Japnese employees) were presented with 16 kinds of WLB programs and asked whether their organizations offered these. The study reveals a significant positive effect of WLB programs offered on satisfaction with job, employer, and WLB among male employees. However, there was a significant effect of WLB programs only on satisfaction with employer among female employees. Further, some of these relationships are found to be moderated by annual employee income, such that the effects of WLB program comprehensiveness are greater for higher-income employees than for lower-income employees. The limitations of the study are that some measures were simple can be improved. Moreover this article does not address the effects of organizational social support on how employees recognize the WLB programs with which they are provided.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this review paper was to analyze the literature review on work-life balance, its dimensions, effects on organizational performance, and consolidate attempts that have been made to strike a balance between work and life. After the study of literature on the various themes of Work-Life Balance, its implications and impact on the organization as a whole, it is clear that an organization cannot work up to its maximum potential unless there is total participation and commitment from all the employees, which comes from a sound balance between work and life. An excellent quality of Work-Life of its employees is necessary for an organization to achieve constant growth and profitability in the market. Many dimensions or factors (both internal and external) positively and negatively related to job satisfaction have been identified. Organizations have tried various tools, techniques, programmes and procedures to ensure job satisfaction of its employees. However, it is also equally important to take care of their latent needs, demands and concerns. There are also other benefits of a good Work-Life balance, such as, increase in productivity, retention of deserving employees for longer time period, efficient meld of people resources and work, a positive working atmosphere, and finally the fulfillment of management objectives.

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