

COLLISION OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON LIFE SATISFACTION OF ITES WORKING PROFESSIONALS.

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Abstract:

Work-life balance is a serious issue for working professionals struggling to juggle their lives and career. In today's world, where every individual has to balance conflicting responsibilities and commitments, work-life balance has emerged as a predominant issue in the workplace. But increasing work pressure, globalization, and technological advancement have made it an issue with both the genders, all professionals working across all levels and all industries throughout the world. Working professionals with high work-life balance have been found to be more satisfied with their jobs and overall life. The objectives of the present research were to study the relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction of ITES working professionals, and differences among ITES working professionals at varied levels of life satisfaction on work-life balance and its dimensions and also to examine the impact of work-life balance on life satisfaction. The Convenience sampling technique has been chosen, and the sample size comprised of 494 working professionals were selected from ten ITES sector in Bangalore city. The result showed that there were significant positive correlations between life satisfaction and work-life balance and its dimensions. The working professionals with high life satisfaction showed lesser interference of work with personal life, lesser personal life interference with work and higher work personal life enhancement and higher overall work-life balance than the professionals with low life satisfaction. This study also found that work-life balance and its dimensions of ITES working professionals will have an impact on life satisfaction.

Keywords: ITES sector, Work-life balance, life satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, where every individual has to balance conflicting responsibilities and commitments, work-life balance has emerged as a predominant issue in the workplace. But increasing work pressure, globalization, and technological advancement have made it an issue with both the genders, all professionals working across all levels and all industries throughout the world. Achieving "work-life balance" is not as simple as it sounds. Due to the tremendous progress in the fields of information technology and communication system employees have to face strict deadlines, tighter schedules and ever escalating corporate targets, thus creating a need for work-life balance. During the period 1995-2000 India saw the information technology enabled services (ITES) 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 x 365 days of the year.

Work life and personal life are inter-connected and interdependent. Spending more time in office, dealing with clients and the pressures of job can interfere and affect the personal life, sometimes making it impossible to even complete the household chores. On the other hand, personal life can also be demanding if you have a kid or aging parents, financial problems or even problems in the life of a dear relative. It can lead to absenteeism from work, creating stress and lack of concentration at work.

Naithani and Jha (2009) have grouped factors influencing work and family life spheres into family and personal life related factors, work related factors and other factors. Family and personal life related factors include increasing participation of women in workforce, increasing participation of child bearing women in workforce, increasing participation of dual career couples in workforce, increase in single/parent single person households, increase in child-care/ elder care burden on employees and health and well being considerations. Work related factors include long working hour culture and unpaid overtime, time squeeze, demand for shorter working hours, increase in part-time workers, work intensification and stress and changing work time. Other factors include ageing population, rise of service sector industries, technological complexity of work, skill shortages, loss of social support network, globalisation, and demographic shift of workforce.

Managing the integration of work and life demands is a critical challenge facing organizations and an issue of growing importance for business. Extensive changes have taken place in the structure of the economy, the labour market and the labour force, and in the structure of government and business organizations, employment and work. The factors giving rise to these changes are many, such as, identifying the changing role of women in the labour market, the changing structure of families, demographic changes, the effects of technological change on paid work, home production and leisure, changes in the structure of work, various labour market and workplace changes, such as increased workforce diversity, and the limited response of firms to workers increased demands for work-life balance. The changes at the workplace and family are affecting the work-life balance of the professionals working in various ITES organizations, thus ITES organizations are focusing on this issue.

Last few years have noticed a number of new career opportunities opening up for Indians especially in the service sectors. However better opportunities along with good pay package, growth prospects, brings in a long work schedule leaving individuals with very little time to balance their work and life. Demanding careers have dominated the lives of many young Indians for some time now and it takes a toll on their family life.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG INDIAN ITES WORKING PROFESSIONALS

The Indian ITES are striving hard to balance the work-life of its employees and how an employee balances the professional life and personal life in a hectic work environment. They have to make tough choices even when their work and personal life is nowhere close to equilibrium. Most of the Indian professionals find it difficult to cope with the stress levels as many of them are required to work in night shifts, more over the entry of a large percentage of women into the workforce is adding to the complexities in Indian Corporations. Demographic, societal changes, globalization and advances in technology are forcing businesses to transform the way they operate. Work-life balance strategies if adopted will be valuable tool in this transformation.

ITES-CONCEPT AND DEVELOPMENT

To remain globally competitive, companies started outsourcing. Outsourcing has become the main stay of today's business reality. The term Information Technology enabled Services (ITES) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) are often used inter-changeably.

However, strictly speaking, ITES primarily involves outsourcing of business processes (domestic or offshore) that can only be packaged with IT. These services are delivered through a platform of telecommunication or data network or other electronic media. In 1980, the information system trade press first coined the term outsourcing to describe the growing dependence by firms on outside providers for on-going IT support. Today, the term is more widely defined as contracting for any of the company's recurring internal functions with outside vendors. The term outsourcing is used when firms contract manufacturing or services to third party vendors, either within the country borders or offshore, who offers specified service for a particular period of time at an agreed price. Also widely known as Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), which in essence means the delegation of ownership, administration and operation of a business process or processes to an external service provider. Call centres, which are an integral part of the ITES-BPO industry, has emerged as the India's new sunshine sector. These firms also handle a host of activities including responding to credit card enquiries, preparation of invoices, payrolls, cheques, reconciliation of daily accounts, medical transcriptions, processing applications, billing and collections.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sanghamitra Buddhapriya (2009) Work-life imbalance usually arises out of a lack of adequate time and support to manage the work commitments both personal and family responsibilities. Meeting competing demands of work and family is not tiring but can be stressful and can lead to sickness and absenteeism. It inevitably affects productivity. Balancing both career and family is an arduous task for working women especially when they have small children and there is no well-equipped day-care / crèche facilities where they can leave their kids without any tension while they are at work. Women often suffer from the guilt-complex of not spending enough time during the tender age of their children and being forced to leave their children in the hands of the maids on whom they have little faith. Women employees thus face a dual burden—work and family- which creates a lot of stress and strain and role conflict. **Namayandeh and Yaacob (2010)** studied the significance of gender role orientation as one of the most important individual factors on Work interference with family (WIF) and Family interference with work (FIW). They examined the effects of personal backgrounds such as age, job experience and duration of marriage on WIF and FIW. The sample for this study consists of 198 married women nurses in Shiraz-Iran. The findings revealed that married women nurses have higher WIF. This study also specified that women

nurses with older age, more years of job experience, and longer duration of marriage, perceived lower level of WIF and FIW.

Thriveni et al. (2012) determined the relationship between the demographic variables and work life balance among women employees in various professions like IT, BPO, Marketing, Insurance, Banking and Education at Bangalore. The sample comprised of 340 women employees. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between all demographic variables - age, experience, marital status, income, type of family, number of dependents and perception of work- life balance of women employees. **Masood and Mahlawat (2012)** identified the impact of various demographic factors on the critical factors of work-life balance. The sample of 300 employees included in the study was drawn from different places of Haryana (India). The sample size of the study consisted of from different levels in the organization. The result indicated the following: gender variable has significant impact on organization critical factors for maintaining the work-life balance, level of management variable has significant impact on organization critical factors for maintaining the work-life balance as nine out of ten factors have significant difference on it, experience variable has significant impact on organization critical factors for maintaining the work-life balance as all factors has significant difference on it, gender variable have significant impact on employer critical factors for maintaining the work-life balance as three out of fourteen factors have significant difference on it, level of management variable has significant impact on employer critical factors for maintaining the work-life balance as eight out of fourteen factors have significant difference on it, and experience variable has significant impact on employer critical factors for maintaining the work-life balance as all factors have significant difference on it.

Fisher McAuley et al. (2003) examined the relation between employees beliefs about having a balance between work and personal life, and the feeling of job stress, job satisfaction, and reasons why one might quit his/her job. The data were collected from two independent, heterogeneous samples of employees. The first sample comprised of 603 fitness professionals while the second consisted of 545 managers employed in a variety of organizations spanning many industries and functional departments. The findings indicated that having a lack of work-life balance was an occupational stressor that leads to strains, including feeling of overall work strain, job dissatisfaction, non-work related reasons for leaving and turnover intentions. **Thakur and Surampudi (2011)** studied how people at

organizations manage time at work which in turn affects their work-life conditions. The sample for the study consisted of 30 Information and Technology professional from the entry level executives to middle level managers. The duration of employment is between one to five years. The results showed that the people had poor understanding of time and lacked time management which had negative effect on their performance at work and home.

Adams et al. (1996) found that relationships between work and family can have an important effect on job and life satisfaction and the level of involvement the worker assigns to work and family roles is associated with this relationship. **Siedlecki et al. (2008)** studied the relations among the Satisfaction with Life Scale and a number of personality, affect, demographic, and cognitive variables was examined with a sample of 818 participants between the ages of 18 and 94. The results indicated that although many variables had significant zero-order correlations with the Satisfaction with Life Scale, only a few variables had unique utility in predicting life satisfaction. Invariance analyses indicated that while the qualitative nature of life satisfaction remains constant across adult age, the influence of fluid intelligence on judgments of life satisfaction declines with age. In contrast, negative affect is negatively associated with life satisfaction consistently across the adult age span. **Chitra Devi and Sheela Rani (2012)** examined the relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction and family satisfaction. Data were collected from 280 women employees working in BPOs at Chennai. The relationship between the variables was analysed using correlation. The result showed that there is a positive relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction and work-life balance and family satisfaction. **Kasimatis and Guastello (2012)** investigated the effects of Work role and parenting style on life satisfaction in midlife mothers. The data were collected from 432 mothers of college-aged children. Result indicated that Work role was found to be non-significant in relation to midlife mothers' life satisfaction, whereas an authoritative parenting style was significantly correlated to this same variable. Employed mothers did report being more stressed, especially when their children were younger, but again maternal work role was not predictive of these women's life satisfaction in midlife.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this research were:

- To study the relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction of ITES working professionals
- To study the differences among ITES working professionals at varied levels of life satisfaction on work-life balance and its dimensions and
- To examine the impact of work-life balance on life satisfaction.

SAMPLE:

The sample size comprised of 494 working professionals were conveniently selected from ten ITES sector in Bangalore city.

HYPOTHESES:

Hypothesis 1: There will be significant differences among the mean scores of ITES working professionals at varied levels of Life satisfaction on work-life balance and its dimensions WIPL, PLIW, and WPLE.

Hypothesis 2: Work-life balance and its dimensions of ITES working professionals will have an impact on Life satisfaction.

TOOLS USED:

Work-life balance was measured using a 15 item scale (Hayman, 2005), measuring three dimensions of work- life balance, namely, work interference with personal life (WIPL), personal life interference with work (PLIW), work/personal life enhancement (WPLE). Reliability for the scale, estimated using Cronbach alpha coefficient was .834 for WIPL, .749 for PLIW, .749 for WPLE and .851 for overall work-life balance (WLB) . The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they felt in a particular way during the past four months, using a seven point time related scale (e.g. 1=Not at all, 4=Sometimes and 7=All the time). Life satisfaction was measured using a 30 items, life satisfaction scale (Andrew Goliszek, 1993), The alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was .940.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Profile of the Respondents:

The demographic profile of the respondents was as follows:

64% of the respondents were men and 36% were women. Based on the age of ITES working professionals 27% are of 25 years or less than 25 years, 62% are of 26-35 years, 10% are of 36-45 years, and 1% are 46 years or more. Marital status of the ITES working professionals show that 56% are married and 44% are single.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for work-life balance and its dimensions and the life satisfaction.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for work-life balance and its dimensions and Life satisfaction

Statistics	Work-life balance and its dimensions				Life satisfaction(LS)
	WIPL (N=494)	PLIW (N=494)	WPLE (N=494)	WLB (N=494)	
Mean	25.54	14.99	16.03	56.56	18.31
Median	27.00	16.00	16.00	59.00	18.00
Std.Deviation	6.35	3.91	4.03	11.06	6.88
Minimum	7	4	4	23	1
Maximum	49	28	28	105	30

Table 2: Correlation of life satisfaction with work-life balance and its dimensions.

Work-life balance	Correlation with LS (N=494)
WIPL	.080
PLIW	.198**
WPLE	.123**
WLB	.071

** .Significant at the 0 .01 level

* .Significant at the 0.05 level

NS- Not significant

Life satisfaction (LS) was significantly positively correlated (Table 2) with the dimensions of personal life interference with work (PLIW; $r=.18$), work/personal life enhancement (WPLE; $r=.12$) at .01 level of significance. This result indicated that lesser the personal life interference with work and higher the work/personal life enhancement is the outcome of life satisfaction.

Work-life balance of ITES working professionals at varied levels of Life Satisfaction.

Table 3 showed that there were significant differences between ITES working professionals with low and average life satisfaction on the dimensions of WIPL ($M_L=23.68$, $M_A=26.59$, $t=4.143$, $p=.01$), PLIW ($M_L=13.31$, $M_A=15.72$, $t=5.650$, $p=.01$), and on WLB ($M_L=53.51$, $M_A=58.57$, $t=4.165$, $p=.01$)

Table 3: Significance of differences among mean scores on work-life balance of ITES working professionals at varied levels of life satisfaction.

Variables	Life satisfaction (LS)	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Group differences	't' Value	Sig.
WIPL	Low	12	23.68	6.183	Low-average	4.143	.000**
	Average	27	26.59	6.496	Low-high	1.492	.137NS
	High	99	24.88	5.541	Average-high	2.327	.021*
	Total	494	25.05	6.07			
PLIW	Low	12	13.31	4.093	Low-average	5.650	.000**
	Average	27	15.72	3.816	Low-high	3.365	.001**
	High	99	14.99	3.303	Average-high	1.689	.092NS

	Total	494	14.67	3.737			
WPLE	Low	12	16.52	4.571	Low-average	.515	.607NS
	Average	27	16.27	3.966	Low-high	3.276	.001**
	High	99	14.78	3.266	Average-high	3.354	.001**
	Total	494	15.856	3.934			
WLB	Low	12	53.51	9.699	Low-average	4.165	.000**
	Average	27	58.57	11.681	Low-high	.865	.388NS
	High	99	54.65	9.675	Average-high	2.996	.003**
	Total	494	55.576	10.351			

** .Significant at the 0 .01 level

* .Significant at the 0.05 level

NS- Not significant

M_L= Low mean score

M_A= Average mean score

M_H= High mean score

Significant differences were also observed between ITES working professionals with low and high life satisfaction on the dimension of PLIW ($t=3.365$, $p=.01$) and on WPLE ($t=3.276$, $p=.01$). The result showed that professionals with average life satisfaction had lesser personal life interference with work ($M_L=13.31$, $M_H=14.99$), higher work personal life enhancement ($(M_L=16.52$, $M_H=14.78)$) and higher overall work life balance ($M_L=53.51$, $M_H=54.65$) than the professionals with low life satisfaction.

No significant differences were however, found between professionals with low and average life satisfaction on the dimensions of WPLE ($M_L=16.52$, $M_A=16.27$). Similarly, no significant differences were found between professionals with low and high life satisfaction on the dimensions of WIPL ($M_L=23.68$, $M_H=24.88$) and WLB ($M_L=53.51$, $M_H=54.65$), And

also no significant differences were found between professionals with average and high life satisfaction on the dimensions of PLIW ($M_A=15.72$, $M_H=14.99$).

Significant differences were also observed between ITES working professionals with average and high life satisfaction on the dimension of WIPL ($M_A=26.59$, $M_H=24.88$, $t=2.327$, $p=0.05$), WPLE ($M_A=16.27$, $M_H=14.78$, $t=3.354$, $p=0.01$) and on WLB ($M_A=58.57$, $M_H=54.65$, $t=2.996$, $p=0.01$).

Hence, Hypothesis 1 stated that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of ITES working professionals at varied levels of life satisfaction on work-life balance and its dimensions” is accepted for the dimensions of work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement, and work-life balance.

Table 4: Work-life balance of ITES working professionals at varied levels of life Satisfaction.

Work-life balance	Sources of variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
WIPL	Between Groups	757.515	2	378.758	9.726**
	Within Groups	19121.254	491	38.943	
	Total	19878.769	493		
PLIW	Between Groups	485.906	2	242.953	16.916**
	Within Groups	7052.022	491	14.363	

	Total	7537.927	493		
WPLE	Between Groups	199.379	2	99.690	6.242**
	Within Groups	7841.165	491	15.970	
	Total	8040.545	493		
WLB	Between Groups	2596.073	2	1298.037	11.036**
	Within Groups	57751.840	491	117.621	
	Total	60347.913	493		

** .Significant at the 0 .01 level

* .Significant at the 0.05 level

NS- Not significant

Table 4 shows that F-values were found to be highly significant for the dimensions of work interference with personal life (WIPL;F=9.726 and personal life interference with work (PLIW;F=16.916) and work/personal life enhancement (WPLE;F=6.242) and work life balance (WLB;F=11.036). The result showed that there were significant differences among ITES working professionals with low, average and high life satisfaction on the dimension of WIPL, PLIW, WPLE and on WLB.

Table 5: Impact of work-life balance on Life satisfaction among ITES working professionals.

Details regarding contributed variables	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F
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PLIW	.198	.039	.037	6.7561	20.010**
WPLE	.264	.070	.066	6.65376	18.441**

Table 46a

Details regarding contributed variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t
PLIW	.424	.079	.241	5.377**
PLIW	.348	.078	.198	4.473**
WPLE	.300	.076	.181	4.031**

** .Significant at the 0 .01 level

*.Significant at the 0.05 level

NS- Not significant

Step-wise multiple regression was carried out to determine which of the work-life balance and its dimensions (WIPL, PLIW and WPLE) explain more about life satisfaction. From Table 5 it could be seen that R^2 value as 0.070, which means 7 percent of variance on life satisfaction is explained by personal life interference with work (PLIW) and work/personal life enhancement (WPLE). Beta value of most contributed variable (PLIW) is 0.241. The obtained 't' value 5.377 is significant at 0.01 level. Hence, the formulated Hypothesis 2 stating that there exist a "significant differences between work-life balance and outcome variable (life satisfaction) related variable among ITES working professionals" is accepted.

CONCLUSION

Managing both professional and personal life effectively and efficiently has become a major challenge for the ITES employees. Both men and women constitute an important section of the workforce. However, the present situation of a large number of well-qualified men and women who due to various circumstances have been left out of their jobs needs to be addressed. The problems faced are several but, significantly, most often the "break in their

careers" arises out of motherhood and family responsibilities. From the study it was found that if ITES working professionals have low work-life balance then they will have low level life satisfaction, if the professionals have moderate work-life balance then they will have moderate life satisfaction and if the professionals have high work-life balance and hence they will realize high level of life satisfaction. ITES organizations need to make efforts to develop effective work-life balance programmes and encourage their working professionals to make use of the available programmes. ITES leaders should focus on developing, formulating and implementing, better work-life balance policies and programmes in order to build a sustainable and enriching organization. Achieving a good balance between work and family commitments is a growing concern for contemporary employees and organizations. There is now mounting evidence-linking work-life imbalance to reduced health and wellbeing among individuals and families. It is not surprising then that there is increasing interest among organizational stakeholders namely CEOs and HR managers for introducing work-life balance policies and programmes in their organizations.

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