



A Study on Work-Life Balance of The Employees in IT Industry in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India

KEYWORDS

Work-Life Balance (WLB) , Concern, IT (Information Technology), WLB initiatives

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ABSTRACT *Work-Life balance of the employees in IT industry has become one of the hottest issues when comparing with other industries work and living style in today's trend. These articles enlighten "A study on the Work Life Balance" focuses on the level of satisfaction of the employees by analyzing their abilities and how they are balancing their work and family life. Work life balance is the important phenomenon in any kind of industry. Since Work life balance is a deeply personal issue, there is no right answer, only the right answer for each individual hence it has to be handled by the individual very carefully in the plan, prioritize and schedule as efficiently as possible. Descriptive research design was adopted in this study. Judgment sampling technique used to choose samples. A sample size of 120 was selected through systematic random sampling method. The survey is based entirely on primary data obtained through a structured questionnaire. The analysis was done with the help of statistical tools like chi-square, percentage analysis, weighted average method and correlation. This study is a restricted only to the IT employees who are working in OMR, Chennai. Finally, the research hints by providing the suggestions to improve the present Work life balance of the IT Employees.*

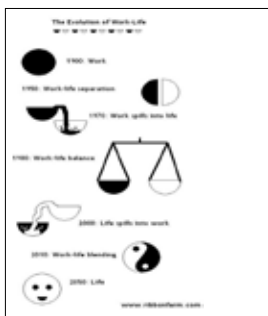
Introduction

The term was first coined in 1986. It does not mean equal balance but it is of trying to schedule an equal number of hours for each of your various work and personal activities. The right balance of you today will probably be different for you tomorrow. Thus the core of effective work life balance definition is of two key concepts they are daily achievement and enjoyment.

Work Life Balance consists of the implementation of working arrangements and policies which assist workers in combining employment with other aspects of their lives. Employers can benefit from these policies too as they can help to develop a more committed and productive workforce.

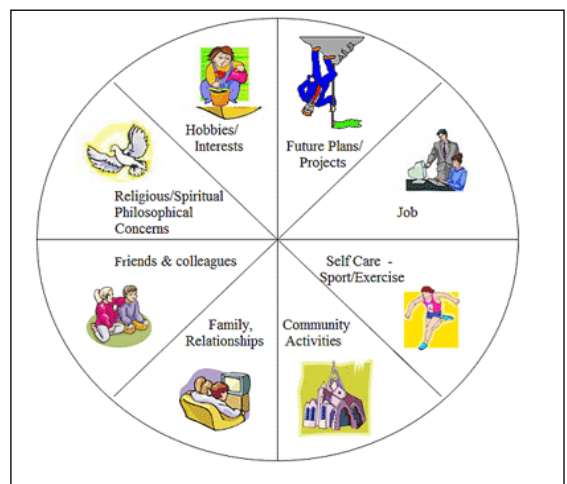
"Working practices that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of staff in achieving a balance between their homes and working lives" Work/life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as "a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life". Although definitions and explanations vary, work/life balance is generally associated with equilibrium, or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life. The study of work/life balance involves the examination of people's ability to manage simultaneously the multi-faceted demands of life.

Diagram 1:



Four categories associated with work life balance are role overload, work to family interference, family-to-work interference, care giver strain. Thereby to create a best work-life balance solutions are get back in control of your career and your home life, reduce your stress level, find time for you, re-discover the interests that made you uniquely you before you had children. Some of the skills needed to create a satisfactory work-life balance are communication negotiation, knowing yourself, Problem solving and resolving conflict. WLB benefit to the individual by creating more value, understanding the best WLF practices, increase in productivity, maintain better relationship both off & on the job and reduces stress level. Some of the 6 way in which WLB initiatives can be found by stop being the boss, get your priority straight, know your opinion, Plan and protect downtime, audit your weekly schedule and don't spare a week take an hour for scheduling.

Diagram 2:



Framework for successful Work-Life Balance in organizations

- Identify the key need or reason for introducing Work-Life Balance policies
- Build the commitment to Work-Life Balance Policies into the organization's vision or value statement.
- Set up a Work-Life Balance Task Force Examine current practices in the organization
- Hold joint discussions with employees to evolve policies, while also identifying possible barriers
- Communicate policies through handbooks, newsletters, Intranet and other forms of communication
- Hold workshops to help Managers implement and manage policies
- Begin with a few "quick win" policies.

Review of Literature Work-Life Balance

Work life balance is, "The right balance of work and personal activities through proper schedule an equal number of hours for each of your activities by plan and priority". Work life balance provides the bonds that hold an individual with their work and personal life. To be balanced with work and life, individual should know himself or herself. Here some of the researchers state their study report about work life balance.

According to the Julie Hurst & Amanda Edwards shows the types of issues that causes major headaches in workplaces all over the world. While attention is being paid to issues like childcare, flexible working, home working and similar initiatives, much less support is being offered for these, "everyday" difficulties. Ye not only do issues like these cause so many problems, those who battle with them often find themselves feeling too drained to take time out to look at new ways of handling them.

Having been made aware of this situation, we have spent time researching and developing useful tools and techniques that we feel will make a huge positive impact, including looking at how this can be achieved as quickly as possible. Our answers to the problem has been to develop a suite of rapid learning capsule each dedicated to a different aspect of the problem, but also capsule of being put together to form a cohesive program of change for organizations facing particular issues such as re-organization, increases in workload, or high levels of work place stress. Thus, the learning capsules are termed Red Button sessions as they are a rapid response to an immediate need. They were build around the model of learn, practice, understand, take-away and use with each one lasting between 90 and 120 minutes and containing the essential essence of each topic. The goal is for participants to leave with 'new behaviors' and skills they can use that day.

Business week, Special report on March 27, 2009

The increasing call for WLB is now the second most important driver of employee attraction and commitment, says CEB research.

By the staff of the corporate executive board: The economic down turn has placed tremendous pressure on employees over their long-term job security. In the current economic environment, WLB now ranks as one of the most important work place attributes second only to compensation, according to research conducted by the CEB among more than 50,000 global workers. And employees who feel they have a better work life balance tend to work 21% harder than those that don't. In 2006, 53% of employees felt they had a good WLB; that number fell to 30% in the quarter of 2009. Instead, the best organizations recognize that the most appreciated service they can provide their employees is the "gift of time". In fact, more than 60% of the employees polled in the CEB study identified flexible schedules as the most important work life practice their employer could provide.

According to Nick Halpin PhD, The counseling service, the

University of Dundee: A balance d life is one where we spread our energy and effort – emotional, intellectual, imaginative, spiritual, and physical – between key areas of importance. The neglect of one or more areas, or anchor points, may threaten the vitality of the whole. The term work -life balance was first coined in 1986 in reaction to the unhealthy choices that many Americans were making in favor of the work place, as they opted to neglect family, friends, and leisure activities in the pursuit of corporate goals.

Much of the following derives from the newspaper articles, internet items and from Madeleine Bunting excellent review of this topic in her recent book 'Willing Slaves'- How the overwork culture in ruling our lives' (Harpes Collins,2004). The facts are easy to come by and they make startling reading: American in full-time employment increased their weekly average hours of work between 1977 and 1997 by 3.5 hours, taking it to 47.1 hours. In a study of UK work place managers by Wheatley (2000), 65% said work was damaging their health and 77% admitted that it affected their relationship with their children. The office of National statistics (ONS) found that most couples spend more times apart than together, with most of the times that they do share spent watching televisions. Based on 21, 0000 diaries. The ONS discovered that the average British couple spends just 15 minutes a day enjoying a social life with each other (Independent, 16 July 2004).

According to the Article published by WFC resources, February 2006,

Suggestions for work/life professionals: Resolutions for 2006 New Year are: spend less energy on making the business case for your efforts and more on clarifying how work-life meets the needs of the people in your organization. Take a step back instead of pushing programs on your organization because you can produce numbers that prove they would enhance productivity or cut turn over, listen to employees and managers to learn what kind of work/life help they need, view managers as a primary customer of work/life services, not as barriers to their adoption, Make work load your organizations No.1 work/life issues. Let managers know that one-third of all employees feel overworked, and that overwork causes stress, burnout and turnover. Then do something about it. Help managers identify and rid their staffs of low-value work so employees can spend less time on unimportant tasks& to develop one unlikely partnership. It has become common for work/life advocates to work with human resource and diversity experts towards shared goals. In 2006, make a point of teaming up with people elsewhere in your organization: line management, compensation, training or marketing, for example. The more you expose others to the problem solving power of work/life benefits, the broader your organization's understanding and acceptance of those benefits will become.

Need For the Study

Many organization are successful at managing the materials and machinery of the organization, they fail short in managing human side of their business. This research is needed for IT employees who are looking for better initiative to balance their work and life. In this study the different IT Company employees have been assesses the importance of work life balance initiatives and its effectiveness. The study believes that people perform better when they are allowed to participate in managing their work & make decisions. This approach motivates people by satisfying not only their economic needs but also their social & psychological aspects.

There by to satisfy the new generation workforce, organizations need to concentrate on job designs and organization of work. Further today's workforce is realizing the importance of relationships and is trying to strike a balance between career & personal lives.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to OMR area, Chennai, and aims at the

limited segment of IT Employees to study their level of satisfaction on WLB.

Objectives

1. To study the work life balance of the employees in IT Industry
2. To study the factors responsible for work life balance.
3. To find the importance of work life balance on performance of the employees.
4. To study the initiatives taken by the employees to balance their work at office and at home.
5. To study the impact of the work environment towards the work life balance.
6. To study the employer contribution to balance the work life of their executives
6. To find the association between marital status and balancing ability of the employees.
7. To find the association between factors and determinant of Work-Life Balance.

Limitation and Constraints

1. The sample populations considered were mainly employees residing in the OMR areas of Chennai. The IT Concern employees were not included.
2. However the data collected and interpreted with utmost reliability and consistency But due to subjectivity and prejudice of a few respondents, certain limitation like answers of the questionnaire depend upon the thought of the employee, which they may differ from the reliability
3. The survey conducted considering the time & space constraint: Chance of wrong answer cannot be ruled out; indirect measures relied upon the employee attitude etc

Hypothesis Formulation (HO)

H₀: There is no independent relationship between the Balance their work and family life to Marital Status

H₀: There is no significant relationship between factors and determinants of work life balance.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between level of satisfaction in meeting family commitments and the Working hours of the organization

Research Methodology

Research Design: Descriptive research design was undertaken in this research.

Sampling Technique: Judgment sampling technique was utilized from probability sampling method to select the sample from Chennai.

Method of Data Collection: Survey method of primary data collection using combined interview and questionnaire adopted for collection of primary data through field survey in Chennai from various employees. Secondary data's collected from books, journal, newspaper and websites.

Statistical Tools: This research was analyzed through 3 tools. They are Chi square, Correlation and weighted average.

Tool 1: Chi Square1

Chi square test is a non-parameter test that establishes the independence between variables. It is measured by comparing the observed with those of expected frequencies based on the hypothesis. It is given by

$$\Psi = \sum (O-E)^2 / E$$

O=Observed Frequencies
E=Expected Frequencies

Table 1: ANALYSE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN

THE MARITAL STATUS AND THEIR WORK AND FAMILY LIFE BALANCE

Marital status and their work and family life balance	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
Single	13	12	16	8	0	49
Married	25	25	14	4	0	68
Widowed	0	0	2	0	0	2
Divorced	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	38	38	32	12	0	120

H₀: There is no independent relationship between the Balance of their work and family life to Marital Status

H₁: There is independent relationship between the Balance of their work and family life to Marital Status

O	E	O - E	(O - E)^2	(O - E)^2/E
13	15.52	-2.52	6.3504	0.4092
12	15.52	-3.52	12.3904	0.7983
16	13.06	2.94	8.6436	0.6618
8	4.9	3.1	9.61	1.9612
25	21.53	3.47	12.0409	0.5593
25	21.53	3.47	12.0409	0.5593
14	18.13	-4.13	17.0569	0.9408
7	9.791	-2.791	7.789681	0.7956
				6.6855

AT 5% LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

$$\text{Degrees of Freedom} = (R - 1) (C - 1)$$

$$= (4 - 1) (5 - 1) = 12$$

Tabulated Value = 21.03

Calculated Value = 6.6855

Calculated value < Tabulated value

WE ACCEPT NULL HYPOTHESIS (H₀)

Decision:

From the above calculation it is inferred that there is no independent relationship between the Balance of their work and family life to Marital Status.

Chi Square2

Table 2: ANALYSE THE RELATION BETWEEN FACTORS AND DETERMINES IN THE WORK LIFE BALANCE

		Determinants of work life balance					TOTAL
		Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	
Factors	Recreation	15	35	45	16	9	120
	Working time	18	42	34	22	4	120
	Psychological factors	14	35	46	22	3	120
	The job itself	27	39	37	16	1	120
	TOTAL	74	151	162	76	17	480

H₀: There is no significant relationship between factors and determinants of work life balance.

H₁: There is significant relationship between factors and determinants of work life balance.

O	E	O-E	(O-E)^2	(O-E)^2/E
15	3.75	11.25	126.5625	33.75
35	8.75	26.25	689.0625	78.75
45	11.25	37.75	1425.0625	126.6722222
16	4	12	144	36
9	2.25	6.75	45.5625	20.25
18	4.5	13.5	182.25	40.5
42	10.5	31.5	992.25	94.5
34	8.5	25.5	650.25	76.5
22	5.5	16.5	272.25	49.5
4	1	3	9	9
14	3.5	10.5	110.25	31.5
35	8.75	26.25	689.0625	78.75
46	11.5	34.75	1207.5625	105.0054348
22	5.5	16.5	272.25	49.5
3	0.75	2.25	5.0625	6.75
27	6.75	20.25	410.0625	60.75
39	9.75	29.25	855.5625	87.75
37	9.25	27.75	770.0625	83.25
16	4	12.75	162.5625	38.25
1	0.25			
				1106.9277
				5.77

AT 5% LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Degrees of Freedom = (R - 1) (C - 1) = (4- 1) (5 - 1) = 12
 Tabulated Value = 21.03 Calculated Value = 5.77
 Calculated value < Tabulated value WE ACCEPT NULL HYPOTHESIS (H₀)

Decision:

From the above calculation it is inferred that there is no significant relationship between factors and determinants of work life balance.

Tool 2: CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Table 3: Relationship between Level of Satisfaction in Meeting Family Commitments and the Working Hours of the Organization

N= no. of respondents	ΣX= level of satisfaction in meeting family commitments	ΣY=working hours in the organization	(ΣX) ²	(ΣY) ²	ΣXY
120	462	460	1854	1870	1803

(H0): There is no significant relationship between level of satisfaction in meeting family commitments and the working hours of the organization.

(H1): There is significant relationship between level of satisfaction in meeting family commitments and the working hours of the organization.

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2}}$$

Correlation coefficient

$$= \frac{120(1803) - (462)(460)}{\sqrt{120(1854) - (462)^2} \sqrt{120(1870) - (460)^2}}$$

$$= \frac{3840}{(95.06)(113.14)}$$

$$= 0.35704$$

Decision:

X and Y have a strong positive linear correlation; r is close to +1 which is 0.35. An r value of exactly +1 indicates a perfect positive fit. Positive values indicate a relationship between x and y variables such that as values for x increase, values for y also increase.

Tool3: WEIGHTED AVERAGE METHOD

Table 4 : Weighted Average Method for Open to the Idea of Flexible Timing

Factors	Weight (W)	No. of respondents (X)	(XW)
Strongly agree	5	49	245
Agree	4	42	168
Neither agree nor disagree	3	17	51
Disagree	2	8	16
Strongly disagree	1	4	4
	ΣW=15	ΣX=120	Σ(WX)=484

WEIGHTED AVERAGE = $\frac{\sum (wixi)}{\sum (xi)}$

$$= \frac{484}{120}$$

$$= 4.033 \text{ (Approx-4)}$$

Decision:

As per the weighted average the employees say that they agree that the individual should be open to the idea of flexible timing.

WEIGHTED AVERAGE METHOD 2: Weighted Average Method to See the

Table 5: Level of Satisfaction with the Medical Allowance Package Given by the Organization

Factors	Weight (W)	No. Of Respondents (X)	Σ(XW)
Highly satisfied	5	14	70
Satisfied	4	58	232
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	29	87
Dissatisfied	2	15	30
Highly dissatisfied	1	4	4
total	ΣW=15	ΣX=120	Σ(WX)=423

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{WEIGHTED AVERAGE} &= \frac{\sum (wixi)}{\sum (xi)} \\
 &= \frac{423}{120} \\
 &= 3.6 \text{ (Approx-4)}
 \end{aligned}$$

Decision:

As per the weighted average the respondents say that they are satisfied (approx=4) with the medical allowance package given by the organization.

Findings

Majority of the respondent in which 42.7% are between the age group of 26 – 35 most of the employees are young and hence they are more dedicative towards their work life. In which 77.5% are Male employees are higher in number compared with female employees. Then 45.83% of the respondents are with the qualification of PG almost all the employees are well qualified so that they are able to manage their work professionally. 30% of the respondents are of <5 yrs of experience though they have lesser experience the organization has a better future plan and it need not replace the retiring executive. 60% of the employees are married are settled as IT concern good place for earning more income. The working environment is satisfied by the employees as they are provided with all the facilities that are as per eco friendly norms. 70% of the respondents have told that sometimes or rarely they feel tired or depressed because of their work. This is a good sign where it is a real mix of the employees who are sometimes able to tackle and rarely some are unable to balance the work. This is excellent as about 64% of the employees are able to balance their work and family life as the organization provides proper facilities to maintain it. Only few employees are not spending time with their family where as the maximum people (73%) are able to contribute their part to the family. Sometimes the companies is flexible and sometimes it is not. Still not many people (25%) miss out their quality time with family and friends. It depends based on the situations. 40% of the respondents agree that Work Life Balance should be customized to individual need. This cannot be customized to individual needs as it does not benefit to the organization. It is suitable only for non production activities. It is proven that IT is the best organization where the interrelationship with superiors is maintained on an average is very good (42%). More than 70% of the employees are satisfied which shows that they are well balanced in their life with their commitments. Relationship with the peers is very good (40%) as for the employees are concerned. This shows the friendly atmosphere that is prevailing in the companies. Relationship with the peers is very good (60%) as for the employees are concerned. This shows the friendly atmosphere that is prevailing in the company. As the company is having flexible timings the employees are satisfied (50%) with the working hours the main this is productivity and not the working hours. 43% of the respondents have strongly agreed that if executive strikes a good work life balance the organization will be much more successful and effective. This is a bit stressful for the employees in corporate office as about 88% of the respondents work for more than 5 days week at times this can be reduced to five days as common of normal work with 8 hours per day. The official working hours for an individual in his man-day is 9 hours. And the employees are maintaining their working hour. Usually in IT sectors this idea to flexible timings prevails but working hours per day extends depend upon the projects. The pressures are expected to be more when they are reaching the target. This happens especially in month ends and year ends for (50%) This is because sometimes (35%) they lack in proper guidelines so counselling can be given to make them well established. 15% says flexible finishing time, 30% says flexible Hours in general, 18.33% says flexible finishing Holidays/paid offs, 14.17% says Job sharing, 5% of them says Career Break/Sabbaticals, 17.5% says Time-off family engagements / events. 60% of the respondents say that organization encourages the involvement of their family members in work achievement reward function

the management is creating the feel of pride and makes the family members as the part of their concern. The company takes care about the health of the employees and their family members also. Some of them are unaware about these medical health checkups and hence an awareness campaign can be made to educate them on this part. These health checkups are common for all carders of employees working in IT Concern under covered area. The medical allowances are provided as the part of the fringe benefit and given to all the executives. These allowance facilities may differ with respect to their cadres and hence about 15% of them are dissatisfied. From the above, 30 % says working from home, 40.83 % says technology like cell phones ,Laptops, 1.67 % says being able to bring children to work on occasion, 17.5% says Support from colleagues, 10% says support from family members. From the above, 22.5% says technology like cell phones & Laptops, 25% says frequently travelling away from home, 21.67% says negative attitude of peers & colleagues at work place, 10.83% says negative attitude of supervisors, 2.5% says negative attitude of family members, 17.5% says Others hinder in balancing their work and family commitments. In chi-Square analysis The calculated value (6.6855) is lesser than the tabulated value (21.03), the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted. Therefore balance between work and family life is independent to marital status. The calculated value (5.77) is lesser than the tabulated value (21.03), the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted. Therefore there no relationship between the factors and the determinants of work life is independent. Correlation analysis indicates X and Y have a strong positive linear correlation; r is close to +1 which is 0.35. An r value of exactly +1 indicates a perfect positive fit. Positive values indicate a relationship between x and y variables such that as values for x increase, values for y also increase. As per the weighted average the respondents say that they agree that the individual should be open to the idea of flexible timing. As per the weighted average the respondents say that they are satisfied with the medical allowance package given by the organization.

Suggestions

1. The organizations has to take some more measures like facilitating the employees from tiring.
2. Considerations have to be made for the employees to spend their time equally for the family apart from their work.
3. The awareness about the importance and the balance of the work life and family life must be given by the higher authorities to their subordinates.
4. The organization needs to provide more interactive and communicative sessions which aids the employee in the organization to reduce the tension and work healthily
5. Providing laptops to the employees may help them to segregate their work easily.
6. The company while implementing work life balance initiatives must consider the evaluation and feedback system as a part of that process.
7. The normal working hours in a week can be reduced to 8 hrs per day as other industry does for work.
8. The awareness about the medical packages that are provided can be given to the employees as per there carders separately.
9. The targets should be scheduled well before to reduce the month end /year end pressures

Conclusion

The overall employee satisfaction towards Work-Life balance initiatives is good. Its focus on analyzing the importance of work life balance. The organization allows utilizing the WLB benefits but some innovations has to be done for further improvement. The companies have paid less attention towards WLB awareness.

From the article it is well identified that the work life is balanced effectively among the employees in IT, OMR, Chennai. Hence, the management can take additional steps to

improve the work life balance among the employees who are suffering from the imbalance.

Based on the information collected from the employees, they are satisfied with the activities of work life balance.

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