Work Life Balance of Academic Sector Employees: A Study in Vadodara City

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ABSTRACT *Life is a set of pursuits. Man is a social animal so no one can achieve a fulfilling life without family, health, wealth, career, social obligations, intellectual satisfaction and spiritual enlightenment. It may be said that every professional encounters issues related to professional life and other things that matters to them most at some or other stage of their life. Even the roles being played by a person i.e., employee, boss, subordinate, spouse, parent, child, sibling, friend, and community member and many more. Work-life conflict occurs when the demands of work and non-work roles are incompatible. The main aim of this paperis to study the work life balance of employees in Vadodara city in academic institutions. A self-completion close ended structuredquestionnaire focusing on issues surrounding work-life balance were distributed to 180 employees of three management colleges in Vadodara city employingnon probability convenience sampling technique.The questionnaire was designed: to find out whether the employees were satisfied with their professional life and personal life i.e., whether they received appropriate amount of support from colleagues, peers and supervisors, satisfaction related to performance appraisal, availability of time to work upon career advancement, able to give time to family or personal commitments and factors which causes stress and their way of handling it.*

INTRODUCTION

The term Work-life balance describes those practices at work place that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of employees in achieving a balance between the personal life and professional life. Work-life balance aims at creating and maintaining supportive work environment which will enable the employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities and thus strengthen employee loyalty and productivity.

The work life issues have been dated back to 1960's but still they have received greater concern during the past two decades. A study conducted in 2003 reveals that employees are often preoccupied with work even when they are in the company of family or loved ones and cannot engage themselves meaningfully in non-work spheres.

Research has been increasing considerably in the field of work- life issues especially work-life balance as most of the organizations and employees seek ways to balance their work and family demands.Evidence suggests that imbalance of work-life relationships can lead to severe health problems and hamper job performance. In Asia, there has been a surge of work-life balance research in the fields such as medicine, nursing & IT. But there has been no evidence of teachers' stand in terms of work-life research. The present study addresses issues related to the work-life balance among management faculties across Vadodara City. Over the last decade, universities have gone through large-scale organizational change, such as privatization, restructuring, downsizing and government funding cuts, and thus, consequential job stress is negatively impacting employees' work and personal lives.

The increasing demands in universities globally over the last 20 years have been attributed to growth of student numbers, increased focus on quality research and teaching, international and domestic competition and technological developments Increasing accountability of academics, mounting pressure to publish research, rising workloads, frequent restructuring, use of short-term contracts and additional external scrutiny are also believed to contribute to rising job stress.

Unsurprisingly, a high level of conflict between work and home life was reported, and was the strongest predictor of psychological distress. Boundaries between work and home are blurring. Work demands tended to spill over into the home domain both physically and psychologically.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Jacobs et al. (2008) suggested that Work Life Balance becomes an issue when an employee wishes tospend time on leisure activities but cannot do so due to organizational commitment. Donaldand Linington (2007) explained reasons for causingwork life balance as in most of the cases; demands ofjob and personal lives are conflicting as well asmutually exclusive. This means that employees have to fulfil one of the demands on the cost of other.

DobleNiharika and M.V. Supriya in their study onGender Differences in the Perception of Work-Life Balance (Anna University, India) highlighted the issues related to work life balance in Indian Context. The study indicates that while most countries in the developed world have put in place family, friendly work practices, the same is yet to be seen in good measure in India. Flex working hours, home working, child care facilities and the option to work part time are facilities that need to be introduced in India. Building a supportive work environment is also a challenge for Indian corporate.

Byrne(2005) suggested that people who have attained WLBgives due priorities to their family members, personal-health, friends and cliques along with spiritual lives.

In the last few years, significant amount of researchhas been carried out on WLB. Organizations are nowtaking this issue more seriously and are devising variouspolicies to correct the imbalance (Burke, 2000). In an attempt to do so, organizations are identifying all thosefactors which are causing dissatisfaction to theemployees. Eradication of these factors will lead togood WLB and both employers and employees willbenefit from this.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To identify the factors that hinders the employees in balancing their professional & personal life.

METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

Descriptive research design was implicated and data was col-

lected from 180 respondents from three management institutes of Vadodara city in Gujarat State, India. Non probability convenience sampling technique was selected. We have used a close ended structured questionnaire for the sake of accuracy.

HYPOTHESIS

Ho:Numberof hours of travelling to work has an independent effect on work life balance.

$X_1(11,180) = 0.78$, $p > 0.05$. No. of hours employees spend travelling to work place is a hindrance factor in balancing the work and life of employees.

Ho: Level of job stress has an independent effect on work life balance.

$X_2(2, 180) = 4.34$, p value < 0.01. Job stress and work life balance are dependent on each other.

Ho: Employees are more likely to make employment trade –offs than family trade –offs.

$X_3 (18,180) = 0.01$, p value> 0.05 .It is not statistically significant. Professional job demands have forced employees to compromise personal responsibilities.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this study we have selected only 3 management colleges of Vadodara city which does not represent the whole population. Also the faculties were hesitating to give the responses as they feared that their data would be given to the management. 65% of population did not mention their designation due to which we could not find out the relation between the designation and the stress level of the employees.

FURTHER SCOPE OF STUDY

The comparative study of work life balance of married & unmarried employees and also of those employees whose partners are employed can be done. The comparative study of work life balance of the public and private academic institutions can be done.

CONCLUSION

We have investigated the relationships between job- related stress, work-life balance and work-life conflict among academics. Job stress in academician's life has been increasing over the last few decadesglobally and has important implications for academic staff performances and student outcomes.55% of employees spend around two hours-four hours commuting to workplace and going back home. 56 percent of survey respondents whofound it harder to balance work-life reported often or alwaysbeing under stress in their job, compared with 26 percent of those who found work-life balance easier to achieve. Employees who haveexperienced difficulties balancing work and personal life alsoare likely to report chronic job stress, compared with thoseexperiencing no change or a reduction in work-life balance.Higher-paying professional jobs are often the mostdemanding, requiring not only extra time at the workplace but also a commitmentfrom the employee to prioritize the job over family responsibilities. As the academicians impact the lives of many students and other faculty members, monitoring and managing job stress in universities and colleges is extremely important. Faculty members may choose to focus on improving one aspect of their situation at a time, or to increase the positive aspects of their job to increase their sense of satisfaction.Finally self-management is important people need to control their own behavior and expectations regarding work life balance.

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