

A Study: Perception of IT Sector Women Employees' Work Life Balance

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Abstract: *The focus of this paper is to study the work life balance of the women employees of IT sector. The aim of the study is to determine the existence of work life balance in IT industries as per the view of employees. A study has been conducted among 723 women employees in the field in Chennai. As the work life balance is very essential for industries to continue to attract and retain employees, work life balance is important for job performance, job satisfaction, labour turnover, labour management relations and such other factors which play an important part in determining the overall well being of any industrial organization. The presence of work life balance in the industrial unit is beneficial to both employees and industries.*

Keyword: Women Employees, IT Industries, Work life balance (WLB), Working Environment.

Introduction

It is generally agreed that work-life balance is important for an individual's psychological well-being, and that high self-esteem, satisfaction, and overall sense of harmony in life can be regarded as indicators of a successful balance between work and family roles (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; Marks and MacDermid, 1996). However, there is lack of consensus on how work-life balance should be defined, measured, and researched, and thus, the theorizing of what constitutes work-life balance, how it develops, and what factors enable or hinder it, is still in progress (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007; Jones et al., 2006; Voydanoff, 2005). Greenhaus et al. (2003) have also questioned the self-evident assumption that work-family balance always leads to favourable outcomes since according to them this is an empirical question which has not yet been firmly answered due to miscellaneous definitions of work-family balance.

Meaning and definition of work life balance

Work life balance is a concept that supports the efforts of employees to split their time and energy between work and the other important aspects of their lives. Work-life balance is a daily effort to make time for family, friends, community participation, spirituality, personal growth, self care, and other personal activities, in addition to the demands of the workplace.

Work life balance is assisted by employers who institute policies, procedures, actions, and expectations that enable employees to easily pursue more balanced lives. WLB reduces the stress of the employees. When they spend the majority of their days on work related activities and feel as if they are neglecting the other important components of their lives, stress and unhappiness result in. Work life balance enables employees to feel as if they are paying attention to all the important aspects of their lives.

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“Work-life balance means turning off my phone, iPad, and computer the minute I step foot into my house to ensure I can spend quality time with my family, which in turn leaves me motivated to be productive the next day”

- Josh Otten, CEO and managing partner of Screen push international “Work-life balance is a state of peace where who you are and your enjoyment of your life is equal or exceeds what you do for your business. It’s a daily practice of self-observation and choice”
- Kim Castle, creator of KimTV Work life balance involves three things: Role Overload, work to family interference and family to work interference. Role Overload is having too much to do in the amount of time one has to do it. Thus, it leads to the feeling of stress, fatigue and time crunch. Work to family interference occurs when work demands and responsibilities make it more difficult for an employee to fulfil family role responsibilities. Family to work interference occurs when family demands and responsibilities make it more difficult for an employee to fulfil work role responsibilities.
- Duxbury

Related Reviews

Balaji. R (2014) examined factors which could lead to an in depth knowledge about work life balance and stress undergone by women employees. The study revealed that married women employees experienced conflict between their various roles. There was a need to consider working environment, job satisfaction, family support and number of working hours. Thus, organizations need to formulate guidelines for the management of WFCs since they were related to job satisfaction and performance of the employees. Nidhi Aggarwal (2015) the focus of the study was on working women in banks with the special reference to state bank of India Patiala. The data was collected from 100 respondents of SBI in Patiala city, Punjab. WLB was a major concern. There were so many factors affecting WLB such as social, psychological, working environment type of job etc. Some suggestions were given. If employees were given freedom to choose their work schedule quality of work and productivity would increase. Non financial rewards had more impact than financial rewards in attaining job satisfaction and managing life. Poonam Sharma, Dr. Purshottam Dayal (2015) examined the various factors influencing the women employees of Banks. The sample for this study consisted of 300 employees from private and public, Co-operative sector banks of Kota city. The study revealed that as high as 85 % of the employees in the public sector and 86 % of private sector and 84% in Co-operative sector found it difficult to maintain work life balance after child birth. The employees around 66 % from public sector and 60% in Co-operative sector and 62 % of from private sector had agreement on that their organization exercised parenting-family as well as child care programmes to help balance the their work-life. Purushottam Arvind Petare (2013) found the perception of female faculty members working in teaching profession at Kolhapur with respect to work Life balance. A sample consisted of 150 women working from various colleges and institutes in Kolhapur. The study stated that some 54% of the respondents accounted heavy work load and extended working hours to be responsible for work life imbalance. This was in contrast to the several conceptions that teaching profession was suitable for women. 38% of the respondents pointed that inability to prioritize and manage time were the causes for work life imbalance. Efficient management at college and home was the key to achieve work life balance. Flexitime, reduced working hours, other facilities at the work place could help achieve WLB. Help and cooperation from spouse and family members were also required to achieve WLB.

Importance of WLB Women employees

The women have lot of responsibilities like looking after the family members and doing household duties. In Indian conditions women are pillars in building up of a family. This area of their work also demands equal energy and time as that of the IT work. The dual responsibility calls for multiple roles. Women have to juggle between family and work. The organizations need to adopt WLB measures of various kinds so that they can retain employee force as there are tremendous challenges in meeting the employment marketing demand. In this context the role and responsibilities of the organizations come first. They can introduce flexi working hours policy and permit them to work at home. Providing facilities such as canteen, conveyance, resting hours, refreshments, child care centres may be thought of. Apart from this enhancing periodical increments, incentives, enhancing over time and night work allowances may be allowed.

The factors that influence and decide the work life balance are:

- Working hours for each day.
- Flexibility of work schedule.
- Location of work.
- Amount paid for vacation time / Sick leave offered.
- Job satisfaction
- Top management support
- Personal growth opportunities.
- Employers' control.
- General happiness
- Job sharing.
- Overtime pay given by the organization.
- Relationship with co-workers.
- Opportunity for independence associated with work roles.
- Transfer facilities given by the organization.
- Recognition for work accomplished.

Objective of the study

- To study the impact of organizational policies, leave policies, welfare facilities, and safety measures on WLB.
- To study the relationship between demographic variables and WLB.

The study is an attempt to identify the existence of WLB in IT industries with regard to employees and to find out important WLB factors. The details about the various concepts and terms used in questionnaire were identified with the help of reviews of respondents.

Sampling

The primary research through a survey of 723 respondents was conducted to collect response from IT women employees of Chennai. The relevant information was collected through personal interview, on structured questionnaire from selected IT women employees. Random sampling method was applied for collecting primary data from sampling units, which encounters with important factors directly related to work life balance.

Questionnaire scaling Techniques

The questionnaire used comprises both optional type and statements in likerts 5 point scale. The responses are obtained in the 5 point scale , which ranges as follows 5- strongly disagree, 4- disagree,3 neither agree nor disagree, 2- agree,1- strongly agree.

Data collection

The primary data is obtained from IT women employees in Chennai and nearby areas. The researcher adopted convenient random sampling method to collect respondents from women employees. The researcher collected 723 samples from different employees working in IT companies.

The collected data are tabulated as follows

Table 1: Relationship between work life balance and Policies

	Work life balance
Job stress	r= - 0.204** P <.001
Quality of work life	r=0.412** P<.001
Organizational policies	r=0.170** P<.001
Leave policies	r=-0.347** P<.001
Welfare facilities	r=0.311** P<.001
Compensation policies	r=0.247** P<.001
Growth and development	r=0.299** p<.001
Safety measures with in the office premises	r=0.399** p<.001
Safety measures outside the office premises	r=0.473** p<.001
Cooperation of family members	r=0.385** p<.001
Interpersonal relationship	r=0.473** p<.001

** Significant at 1% level

The job stress (r=0.204) and leave policies (r=-0.347) have negative relationship with work life balance, the relationship differences significant at 1% level. Welfare facilities (r=0.311), Compensation policies(r=0.247), Interpersonal relationship (r=0.473) and Cooperation of family members (r=0.385) have positive relationship, the relationship differences at 1% level. That might be because they might feel free to work in a congenial work atmosphere which might have enhanced WLB. The respondents had negative relationships with the leave policies adopted by the organizations and that was one of the major causes for reduction in WLB.

Table 2: Influence of personal variables on Work life balance

Variables	Classification	N	Mean	S D	t/ F values
Age	Less than 25 years	281	29.13	4.623	F=102.362** (p<.001)
	25-30years	249	28.18	4.295	
	25-35 years	133	22.48	5.272	
	Above 35 years	60	20.50	5.592	
Education	Under graduate	326	28.56	4.286	F=81.996** (p<.001)
	Post graduate	293	23.96	6.358	
	Professional	104	29.71	2.968	
Marital status	Married	350	24.64	5.903	t=11.091** (p<.001)
	Single	373	28.94	4.470	
Work experience	< 2 years	148	30.52	4.576	t=41.392** (p<.001)
	2 – 4 years	274	27.20	5.123	
	4 – 6 years	198	24.56	6.272	
	Above 6 years	103	25.11	3.921	
Monthly income	Rs.20000	81	34.28	1.614	F=95.460** (p<.001)
	Rs.20000 - 40000	342	27.34	4.738	
	Rs.40000 - 60000	187	24.60	6.270	
	Above Rs.60000	113	23.82	3.311	
Family size	Upto 3	292	25.71	6.276	F=20.323** (p<.001)
	4	229	26.56	5.693	
	Above 4	202	28.87	3.773	
Family type	Nuclear	520	26.49	5.411	t=2.836** (p=.005)
	Joint	203	27.81	6.089	

**Significant at 1% level

Significant influences of age, educations, marital status, work experience, monthly income, family size, and family type on work life balance is observed. The respondents in the age group of less than 25 years and the respondents in the age group of above 35 years lacked in balancing their work and life. Regarding educational qualification, women employees with PG degree (23.96) had less WLB than undergraduate employees (28.56). Women with professional qualification (29.71) had more WLB than other two categories. Regarding marital status married women (24.64) had less WLB than single (28.94). The study also revealed that women with six years of experience had less WLB. Other groups had almost the same level of WLB.

Findings and suggestions

- Organizational and leave policies had a say on the stress. If these policies were helpful to the employees, they naturally reduce stress and increase the level of WLB. If the organizations tried to fellow employee friendly policies and lenient leave policies they would enhance WLB.
- The organizations should come forward to frame and implement such policies and measures that would benefit the employees. This step would go a long way in enhancing the WLB of the women employees.
- Safety is considered important as it is connected with the life of the employees. Nobody would endanger their lives however much they are paid. It is up to organizations to adopt cent percent safety measures. This step might enhance the WLB of the employees.

Conclusion

All organizations would like to have cordial relations with their employees who are the back bone of any organization. Unless they are satisfied, they cannot work freely and that might be also instrumental in boosting production which is the ultimate aim of any organization to gain profit. So organizations should come forward to implement such policies which would enhance their WLB. Leave polices may be liberal taking in mind the satisfaction of their employees. Employees should feel satisfied and assured that they are granted leave whenever necessary.

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