

Impact of work life balance on working women: a comparative analysis

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Key Words

Work life Balance, Working Women, Work and life, Work life Imbalance.

Abstract

*The present world might be characterized by revolutionary innovations and accelerated growth and development in every possible field but the other side of the coin relates to the extended working hours. Compounded to that are gadgets like the web enabled mobile technology which make one accessible to the work environment 24*7. As a result, the one area of life which most individual's neglect is maintaining a balance between work and family. Work life balance is seen more as women issue due to the traditional mindset, where the woman is considered primarily responsible for the smooth running of the day to day affairs of the family irrespective of her job profile and official responsibilities that is why managing work and family responsibilities can be very difficult for women. Such imbalance has a negative effect on personal life of working women which in turn have taken form of social hazards such as increasing number of divorces, infertility due to high stress levels. Organization, which successfully addresses these issues, (providing various work life balance facilities) leads to a healthy synergy in the working atmosphere of the company and its employee.*

This paper examines the difference in employees perception about the impact of work life balance facilities on employees overall performance among three sectors of Indian corporate sector (Manufacturing, service, IT sector). It is a descriptive study and data has been collected from 400 women employees working under these three sectors on the basis of various statement related to impact of work life balance facilities on employees work performance, stress, absenteeism, health.

Data has been collected through questionnaire from 20 companies. The study found that there is significant difference in the employees perception about the impact of work life balance facilities on overall performance of employees with respect to some facilities and wellness program is the only facility for which all the employees has same perception. This paper is original and not published anywhere national or international journal or any other source.

Introduction

The roles and expectation of women and men have changed significantly over the past 50 years. One consequence has been a shift in the importance of work relative to family and leisure. Information revolution and 24 × 7 work in the wake of global competition and global production networks are increasingly blurring the distinction between home and work. The unprecedented increase in number of dual earner households, which has increased the likelihood of those both male and female workers, will have domestic responsibilities in addition to work responsibilities. Work pressures have intensified in the past decade. Evidence suggests that the average time spent on job has increased drastically. As a result work dominates the personal life. For every individual there is a life at work and at home and also a life in which he has a space for leisure and maintaining a balance between all these is crucial. If balance is not maintained between all these elements of life, than there would be a conflict. As a result there would be an adverse effect on the

professional life as well as personal life. If an individual is trying to avoid such imbalance then he would have to avoid such imbalance in the first place. Although modern technologies reduced the physical strain of brawn work and facilitated women to join the workforce in large proportion. As more and more women are joining the work force now days and this change has increased the importance of work-life balance as an area of concern for everyone who believe in quality of work-life.

Work-life balance is seen more as women issue due to the traditional mindset, where the woman is considered primarily responsible for the smooth running of the day to day affairs of the family irrespective of her job profile and official responsibilities that is why managing work and family responsibilities can be very difficult for women. So organizations should consider work-life balance as an extension of the fringe benefits offered to employee. In the current slow down an organization which neglects issues, related to employee work-life balance will end up with lower employee productivity and in turn will find it more difficult to overcome the recessionary challenges. And it is equally important for organization to see that how employees' perceive the work-life balance facility given by organizations and impact of these facilities on their performance.

2. A Brief Survey of Literature

For the purpose of systematic analysis and examination of the problem at hand, the studies by the several researchers have been reviewed and through their studies, highlighted that there is a strong correlation between work life balance and working women, if facilities are provided by the organisation. Lavanya and Thangavel (2014) identified the impact of demographic factors in the usage of work-life balance practices in the organization. The study found that level of management and annual income influence the take up of flexible work practice and age, number of dependents and level of management influence the use of work-life balance practice related to career development practices. Another famous author Sinha (2013) revealed the level of work-life balance practices at CCIL (Carbon Continental India Ltd, Noida) and the level of satisfaction among employees with work-life balance practice in the organization. He found that work-life balance practices in CCIL are between moderate to good. Employees are also satisfied with organizational practices and intend to spend many years of their life working for CCIL.

There have been varying opinion about work life imbalance Madipelli, Sarma and chinnappaiah (2013) identified the problems caused by work-life imbalance in life of the working women. They examined that most of the teachers feel stress with too many work demands, working conditions and long working hours. The multiple roles played by women at work place and home with frustration and stress lead to work-life imbalance. Martial relationship, attitude, cooperation of husband and family members were highly influencing factors which creates imbalance for working women. One of the authors Pandu, Balu and Poorani (2013) suggested that the most significant factor to influence work-life balance was feeling about work. Thus increase in commitment, turnover intention and satisfaction help in achieving better work-life balance. Positive relationships were found between absence from work and work-life balance and family dependent and work-life balance.

No significant relationship has been obtained between work environment and work-life balance and work load, responsibility and work-life balance. Another important aspect was given by Reddy and Vranda (2011) that various factors related to work-family and family-work conflict among married women employees. The study found that work-family and family-work conflict was higher among the women having the eldest child between 7-10

years. Various variables which affect the work-family conflict and family-work conflict are number of children, age of the children, and education of women and nature of work. These are some of the findings which suggests that work life balance is not a single way approach as it includes some of the different aspects also like responsibilities, cooperation from family, working hours, work demands, flexibility in working hours etc. these are some of the points which is considered by every working woman for evaluating work life balance.

3. Data and Methodology

The data for the research paper was collected from primary and secondary source. This paper seeks to compare the employees' perception regarding impact of work life balance facilities on their performance among three sector of Indian corporate. The Sample size of the research consists of 400 women working under these three sectors of Indian corporate. These three sectors are IT sector; manufacturing sector and service sector. Number of respondents are 20 from each organization and 20 organization has been covered. Non probability convenient sampling has been used.. The sample included in the study was drawn from Delhi and near capital region (NCR). These 400 women are working either on middle and lower level of the organization. Surveyed data has been collected from 194 employees of junior level and 206 from middle level. Primary data has been collected through questionnaire.

Objectives of the study are:

1. To compare the employees' perception regarding impact of work-life balance facilities on their performance.
2. To suggest some measures to improve the of work life balance.

4. Analysis and Findings

To Compare the Employees' Perception regarding impact of Work-Life Balance Facilities on their Performance The respondents were asked the various statements relating to impact of these facilities on their performance on 5 point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Impact on performance has been measured in terms of impact of facilities on their work performance, stress level, health, and absenteeism. Various statements covering this performance measure has been asked from the respondents. High mean score indicate more effective. The various statements were subjected to one way ANOVA. When there are more than two categories to compare we can apply One way ANOVA (Malhotra 2009).

One of the assumptions for one way ANOVA is that there must be equality of variance among the various categories under consideration. Levene's test is a measure for the homogeneity of variance among the various categories. Sig values less than 0.05 indicates that the variance among the various categories is not the same. In this case an adjustment to F-test is used which was given by Welch. So in the following tables when Sig value of Levene's test is less than 0.05, Welch's Sig values are considered else the usual ANOVA Sig values are taken. Wherever the significant difference were found, the mean scores were compared to see the responses of the various categories. Further Post hoc analyses were performed wherever independent variable contained more than 2 categories. When there is equal variance among the categories, Tucky's method is the best method else Games-Howell method is preferred (Field, 2009). For comparing the employees perception regarding the impact of WLB facilities on employees' work performance among three sectors results is provided in Table-1.

	Sector	
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	Manufacturing	service	IT	Levene Sig Value	ANOVA Sig Value	Welch Sig Value
Q1 a) Child care facility at work place has improved my work performance	3.86	3.40	4.00	0.001		0.005**
Q1 b) Wellness program at work place has improved my work performance	3.67	3.75	3.76	0.14	0.731	
Q1 c) Flexible working arrangement has improved my work performance	3.75	3.85	4.00	0.057	0.032**	
Q1 d) Study Leave has improved my work performance	3.62	3.73	3.48	0.004		0.030**
Q1 e) Help desk for routine tasks has improved my work performance	3.68	3.72	3.86	0.118	0.387	
Q1 f) Work place Transportation has improved my work performance	3.73	3.70	3.79	0.244	0.705	
Q1 g) Canteen facility at work place has improved my work performance	3.36	3.65	3.67	0.004		0.050**

(**) Represents the significant difference among sectors

Table-1 Descriptive Mean scores of various statements among three sectors with Levene / ANOVA/Welch results

1(b),1(e) and 1(f) were not significantly different from each other on the basis of sectors. Analysis of table 1 revealed that service sector employees' differed significantly from IT and manufacturing sector employees for the statement 'Child care facility at work place has improved work my performance'. Childcare facility is perceived to be more effective in improving the work performance of IT sector employees (M=4.00) and manufacturing sector employees (M=3.86) in comparison of service sector employees (M=3.40) it may be because In both these sectors women has to work 8-10 hours and various kind of child assistance facilities are provided in IT and manufacturing sector e.g. companies are arranging picnic for employee family or summer camp for children, these facilities help them to keep their children happy and they can concentrate on their task in better way. IT sector employees differed significantly from manufacturing sector employees for the statement 'Flexible working arrangement has improved my work performance.'

	Sector			Levene Sig Value	ANOVA Sig Value	Welch Sig Value
	Manufacturing	service	IT			
Q2 a) Child care facility at work place has reduced my stress level	3.74	3.46	4.03	0.180	0.03**	
Q2 b) Wellness program at work place has reduced my stress level	3.73	3.86	4.01	0.689	0.068	
Q2 c) Flexible working arrangement has reduced my stress level	3.63	3.95	4.1	0.319	0.001**	
Q2 d) Study Leave has reduced my stress level	3.48	3.71	3.65	0.007		0.278

Q2 e) Help desk for routine tasks has reduced my stress level	3.32	3.72	3.96	0.107	0.001**	
Q2 f) Work place Transportation has reduced my stress level	3.57	3.70	3.87	0.229	0.090	
Q2 g) Canteen facility at work place has reduced my stress level	3.42	3.67	3.66	0.028		0.138

(**) Represents the significant difference among sectors

Table-2 Descriptive Mean scores of various statements among three sectors with Levene / ANOVA/Welch results

2(b), 2(d), 2(f) and 2(g) were not significantly different from each other on the basis of sectors. Above analysis revealed that IT sector employees' differed significantly from Service sector employees for the statement 'Child care facility at work place has reduced my stress level'. Childcare facility is perceived to be more effective in helping employees of IT sector (M=4.03) to reduce their stress in comparison with service sector employees (M=3.46) it may be because of this facility they can keep children with themselves on or near work place and maximum no of child care facilities are available to maximum no of employees in this sector. Manufacturing sector employees' differed significantly from IT and Service sector employees for the statement 'Flexible working arrangement has reduced my stress level. Flexible working arrangement facility is perceived to be more effective in helping employees to reduce their stress in IT sector (M=4.14) and service sector (M=3.95) in comparison of manufacturing sector (M=3.63) it may be because of this facility, women are able to manage multiple responsibility in better way and availability of this facility is more in these two sectors. Manufacturing sector employees differed significantly from IT sector employees for the statement ' Help desk for routine task has reduced my stress level. Help desk for routine task is perceived to be more effective for employees of IT sector (M=3.96) in reducing their stress in comparison with manufacturing sector employees (M=3.32) because some task of the employees has been done by the co and this will reduce their tension up to some extent. This facility is available to 59% women in this sector only.

	Sector			Levene Sig Value	ANOVA Sig Value	Welch Sig Value
	Manufacturing	service	IT			
Q3 a) Child care facility at work place has helped in maintaining my health well.	3.66	3.42	3.95	0.062	0.036**	
Q3 b) Wellness program at work place has helped in maintaining my health well.	3.85	3.83	4.10	0.32	0.051	
Q3 c) Flexible working arrangement has helped in maintaining my health well.	3.38	3.77	3.93	0.002		0.001**
Q3 d) Study Leave has helped in maintaining my health well.	3.33	3.62	3.43	0.776	0.052	
Q3 e) Help desk for routine tasks has helped in maintaining my health well.	2.76	3.66	3.68	0.354	0.001**	
Q3 f) Work place Transportation has helped in maintaining my health well.	3.1	3.51	3.63	0.004		0.012**

Q3 g) Canteen facility at work place has helped in maintaining my health well.	3.07	3.49	3.63	0.053	0.001**	
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(**) Represents the significant difference among sectors

Table-3 Descriptive Mean scores of various statements among three sectors with Levene / ANOVA/Welch results

3(b), 3(d), was not significantly different from each other on the basis of sectors. Above table revealed that IT sector employees' differed significantly from service sector employees for the statement 'Child care facility at work place has helped in maintaining my health well.' Childcare facility is perceived to be more effective in helping employees of IT sector employees (M=3.95) to keep their health intact in comparison of service sector (M=3.42) it may be because availability of these facilities make employee feel reassured about well being of children and allow some time for personal care and these facilities are more available in IT sectors. Manufacturing sector employees' differed significantly from IT and service sector employees for the statement 'Flexible working arrangement has helped in maintaining my health well.' Flexible working arrangement facility is perceived to be more effective in helping employees to keep their health intact in IT (M=3.93) and service sector (M=3.77) employees in comparison with manufacturing sector employees (M=3.38) it may be because this facility help them to work acc to own convenience and can spare some time to spend on their fitness and this facility is more available to IT sector employees and service sector employees. Manufacturing sector employees' differed significantly from IT and service sector employees for the statement 'Help desk for routine task has helped in maintaining my health well.' Help desk for routine task facility is perceived to be more effective in helping employees to keep their health intact in IT (M=3.68) and service sector employees (M=3.66) in comparison of manufacturing sector employees (M=2.76) it may be because this facility save some time of employee. Some of the employee task is done by the co on his behalf and that saved time can be used by employees to keep themselves fit and this facility is more available to these two sector employees in comparison of manufacturing sector.

	Sector			Levene Sig Value	ANOVA Value	Sig Welch Value
	Manufacturing	service	IT			
Q4 a) Child care facility at work place has reduced my absenteeism	3.57	3.38	3.97	0.030		0.018**
Q4 b) Wellness program at work place has reduced my absenteeism.	3.57	3.76	3.89	0.789	0.052	
Q4 c) Flexible working arrangement has reduced my absenteeism.	3.60	3.83	4.26	0.299	0.001**	
Q4 d) Study Leave has reduced my stress level	3.25	3.72	3.78	0.073	0.002**	
Q4 e) Help desk for routine tasks has reduced my absenteeism.	3.53	3.85	4.11	0.201	0.004**	
Q4 f) Work place Transportation has reduced my absenteeism.	3.20	3.51	3.81	0.270	0.001**	
Q4 g) Canteen facility at work place has reduced my absenteeism.	3.07	3.54	3.60	0.254	0.001**	

(**) Represents the significant difference among sectors

Table-4 Descriptive Mean scores of various statements among three sectors with Levene / ANOVA/Welch results

4(b) was not significantly different from each other on the basis of sectors. Analysis of table 4 revealed that IT sector employees' differed significantly from service sector employees for the statement 'Child care facility at work place has reduced my absenteeism'. 'Childcare facility is perceived to be more effective in reducing absenteeism of IT sector employees (M=3.97) in comparison of service sector employees (M=3.38) it may be because availability of child care facility on work place reduces absent rate and this is more available in IT sector. IT sector employees' differed significantly from Manufacturing and service sector employees for the statement 'Flexible working arrangement has reduced my absenteeism'. Flexible working arrangement facility is perceived to be more important in reducing absenteeism of IT sector employees (M=4.26) in comparison of service sector (M=3.83) and manufacturing sector employees (M=3.60) it may be because 75% of the employees have access to this facility in this sector only and this facility provide them flexible to work acc to their own work requirement without taking holidays for each big or small task. Manufacturing sector employees' differed significantly from IT and service sector employees for the statement 'Study leave has reduced my absenteeism'. Study leave facility is perceived to be more effective in reducing absenteeism of IT sector employees (M=3.78) and service sector employees (M=3.72) in comparison of manufacturing sector employees it may be because there is no need to take leave for study if this facility is available and this facility is more available in these two sectors.

From the above discussion it is clear that there is the significant difference in the employees' perception regarding impact of child care facility, flexible working arrangement facility on every aspect of performance of employees among various sectors and wellness program is the only facility which is perceived to be equally important among all the sectors. For rest of the WLB facilities there is significant difference found but not for every aspect of performance but for some aspects or other.

Recommendations

Maternity leave: it is proposed to increase the duration of leave from the 13 weeks to which working mothers are currently entitled to 13 months each. Another suggestion is to pay beneficiaries maternity leave benefits equal to unemployment benefits, since at present maternity leave is granted without pay and this acts as a disincentive to those entitled to such arrangements.

Childcare Centers at workplaces: A further recommendation is to establish nurseries and child activity centers at workplaces, which would offer timetables adapted to workers' needs, along with high-quality services and competitive prices. It is envisaged that such services would offer an important source of assistance to working parents. When they keep their child near to them they will feel more secure and it will help them to concentrate on job better

Part time working during early stage of Child Care: An innovative arrangement in employees' working hours is proposed allowing for the better organization of working time. It is recommended that male and female employees working full time should be entitled to work part time for a period of between six and 12 months in the child's first three years. When this period of part-time employment ends, they should be allowed to return to their previous full-time status. As an incentive to exercise this right, it is proposed that the

employees would be granted unemployment benefit during the period of part-time employment.

Organize picnic and summer camp: For keeping employees happy, Company should organize picnic and summer camp for the children. This helps female employees to feel freer and less guilty of not taking time to their children on picnic because of their job.

Offer Flexibility: Work Life Balance initiatives can assist employers and employees to be productive and healthy in their work and community lives. Organizations can give employees greater flexibility in how they work. This will offer employers the competitive business edge in attracting and retaining employees.

Avoid as far possible the long hours of work for employees Companies need to understand that long hours may lead to lower motivation, morale, turnover and productivity of employees and reputation in the labour market. There has long been recognition that happy employees are more productive and less likely to leave.

Endorse working from home one day per week One day work from home facility should be provided to the women, it should help them to manage their domestic chores in better manner.

Limitations

1. The fact that this study of 400 respondents out of a vast universe raises problem related to generalization & prediction. This study at hand may not be able to produce exact state of level of work life balance & factor causing imbalance in work & life.
2. The adoption of questionnaire method might have led to the reporting of false information by the respondent.
3. Due to time & cost constraints it was not possible to visit all the organization there by produce an exhaustive work.
4. Since the type of studies at hand are based on primary survey method where the possibilities of personal bias cannot be ruled out in the responses.
5. The researcher had a very tough time while collecting the data where a good number of the respondents were hesitant in lending the desired information and every time researcher had to convince them about the purpose of study. In spite of the researcher's repeated requests some of the respondents straight forwardly refused to fill the questionnaire on one pretext or the other.
6. The respondents covered are only from two levels junior and middle level.

Scope for Further Research

The researcher endeavored to explore all possible critical factors, however, like any other study, it study too has several limitations. For the future work, the following point may be considered:

- The present study was made only on IT, Service and manufacturing sectors. The scope of the work could be enlarged to many other sectors.
- The topic of Work-Life Balance is highly dynamic in present context. The data for the present study was collected in 2011- 2012. The Indian corporate sector has undergone numerous changes since then. It necessitates another study in present context.
- Various sectors covered in study are growing in leaps and bounds. The Results of the same study conducted in other part of India may present altogether different results.
- Effect of work life imbalance on health status of women can be analyzed.
- Effect of work and life demands on job satisfaction and career developments of women can be another research area.

- Future research must focus on a wider sample in order to get more generalized results.

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