Original Research Article

WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG THE EMPLOYEES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR – A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Work-life balance is one of the most challenging issues being faced by the employees in the 21st century because of the type of roles they play at home and the spillover of personal life over work life. The concept of work-life balance has stemmed from the fact that an individual's work life and personal life may put forth conflicting demands on one another and the demands from both the domains are equally important. Work-life balance refers to maintaining the balance between responsibilities at work and at home. This paper aims at examining the work-life balance among the employees in Information Technology sector under the sociological perspective. This study adopts descriptive research design involving random sampling procedure. Primary data was collected using Questionnaire method utilizing 5-point Likert scale. The sample size was 100 comprising 50 married and 50 unmarried respondents and the variables examined were occupational stress and work-life imbalance practices. The statistical tools applied were Mean, Standard Deviation, ANOVA, and t-Test. The results indicated that there is a significant difference among the employees in terms of perception towards work-life balance.

Key Words: Work-Life Balance, Marital Status, Perception, Occupational Stress and Family-Related Stress Factors.

Introduction

In the recent times, the issue of work-life balance has gained more attention due to the reason that an individual's work life and personal life may present conflicting demands on one another while the demands from both the spheres are equally important. Work-life balance refers to maintaining the balance between performing roles and responsibilities at work and at home. Work-life balance is one of the most challenging issues being faced by the employees in the 21st century. In the cut-throat competitive environment, the organization's expectations from the employees are increasing. In order to meet the employer's demand, the employees have to stretch themselves and focus more on their work which is creating a work-life imbalance. In fact striking a balance between work- life and personal life is one of the most challenging issues being faced

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by the employees in the 21st century. It is said that many employees working in various sectors are having a disturbed work-life balance leading to increasing number of divorces, strained relationships among the family members, conflicts in the organizations and suicides.

The issue of work-life balance has become the hot topic in the current day scenario. Ines Hardoy, Pal Schone (2006)[1], emphasized that changes in technology, values, and demographic trends contributed to the emergent relevance of work-life balance in industrialized societies. It is supplemented by other factors which include increasing the complexity of work, change in nature of family and the extended number of entering the workforce. Work-life balance refers to the divergence between the workplace demands and the demands of personal life. When either side becomes unbalanced for extended periods of time, the effect is likely to be visible in unhealthy symptoms (fatigue, stress, depression, etc.). A lack of synchronization between domestic life and work life causes great personal and financial hardship, both to the individual and the company. In the competitive era, organizations are under competitive pressure to achieve high productivity and require employees with healthy work-life balance as an employee with good work-life balance will be in a position to contribute more towards the organizational growth and success (Naithani, 2010)[2]. Therefore it is a high time for employers to draw out strategies and help the employees to enjoy their work and live life to the fullest.

Review of Literature

Work-life balance term is defined as the time an employee spends on both at work as well as socializes with family, friends and attending to other personal interests (K. T. Smith, 2010)[3]. Individuals are now exposed to the idea of work-life balance in order to achieve the total satisfaction in life, apart from being happy or performing well at work. The work-life balance or family-friendly work policies are found to be as one of the basic needs for every working adult, especially in this era.

A case study by Mazerolle and Goodman, (2013)[4] on athletic trainers' view on work-life balance policies is found to be encouraging in terms of shared goals between professionalism as well as the personal.

Another policy which an organization is able to introduce is changing from full-time to part-time employment. A research conducted on the part-time work arrangement had shown that employees are volunteering to opt to this type of employment and also accepting lower compensation (M. D. Lee, S. M. MacDermid, and M. L. Buck, 2000)[5]. The result also noted that the outcome is generally positive in terms of productivity and company image, recruitment and retention program, as well as able to respond and adapt quickly to the current need in the labor market.

The introduction of flexible working time in Germany has found that it has allowed them a great opportunity to have and enjoy their private lives. Zulch, Stock, and Schmidt (2012)[6] have discovered on different types of employees with flexible working-time preferences according to individual need. The majority of respondents were female, thus they are able to cluster it into few groups such as a part-time employee with elderly care, a part-time employee who is still in school, and working mother with children. All in all, the introduction of this program is to encourage employees to decide on their work time arrangement in order to fit into their current need.

It is highlighted in Brough and O'Driscoll (2010)[7] article on the work-life balance intervention in the organization whereby compressed work week or flexible work hours has been implemented since in the early 1980s as it allows the Journal of Economics, Business, and Management, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 2017 19 individuals

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to spend more time for family and leisure as well as to make certain on their family needs and value is taken care of. Apart from the flexible working time, the leisure time program is also introduced by Tabarsa, Tehrani, Loftfi, Ahadian, Baniasadi, and Tabarsa (2013)[8] where an employee could spend a period of time other than his or her usual job scope for non-work related activities.

The other non-work related is the child and eldercare responsibility, where the demand especially in terms of time, could affect the work-life balance especially for those who are with young children and elderly parents (J. Hayman and E. Rasmussen, 2013)[9]. The research concluded that the importance of having childcare support (i.e. time) especially is needed for parents with young children in order to ensure they provide the necessary attention and care.

From the perspective of the organization, the work-life balance benefits (the consequences of work-life balance implementation) are reduce absenteeism and turnover, improve productivity and image, and ensuring retention and loyalty whereas in the eye of employees, the work-life balance benefits are inclusive of improving health, autonomy and stress reduction (N. K. Chimote, and V. N. Srivastava, 2013)[10]. The result of the relationship is negative which shows that the perspective of an organization and employees is a challenging to impose every single need for both sides. The organization needs to work hand in hand with its employees in order to fulfill the basic requirements from both as well as to

Analysis and Findings

ensure that the implementation would satisfy both parties.

Objectives

To analyze the significance of work-life balance in the Information Technology (IT) professional backdrop.

To compare the perceptions of married and unmarried employees of IT sector on Work-Life Balance (WLB).

To suggest certain measures for improving the Work-Life Balance among the employees in IT sector.

Hypothesis

H_{a1}: There is a significant difference in the perception of Work-Life Balance among the married and unmarried employees of IT sector.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts descriptive Research Design. Random Sampling method was applied to collect the data from the respondents. Questionnaire method was employed in order to collect the primary data and it possesses a 5-point Likert Scale method.

The sample consists of both unmarried and married employees from both managerial and executive cadres. The sample size is 100 and it contains 50 respondents from the married category and 50 respondents from the unmarried category. The variables examined were occupational stress and work-life imbalance practices containing 12 dimensions based on the marital status.

The statistical tools applied for the data analysis were Mean, Standard Deviation, ANOVA, and t-Test.

Table 1: Rating of Work-Life Balance Issues

Sl. No	Variables	Mean	S.D
1	My workload exceeds for more than 11 hours per day	2.80	0.842
2	My job involves multi-role play in a given period	3.14	1.514
3	My job often makes my family suffer	2.76	1.679
4	My job and family roles deter me to attend social activities	2.89	1.518
5	My family obligations makes me fatigued to look after my job activities	2.63	1.436
6	Sacrificing much of my family roles made me become a	2.72	1.892

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	successful person in my profession		
7	Heavy workload and lack of time are the reasons to me for not able to give proper attention to my job and family duties	2.86	1.767
8	I am not able to take care of my health due to lack of time and family and job roles	2.75	1.134
9	My Role conflicts in job and family put me to a lot of stress	2.93	1.727
10	It is difficult for me to balance job and family roles simultaneously	2.52	1.416
11	Imbalance in my job and family roles makes me feel irritated and angry with my colleagues and family members	2.86	1.782
12	Heavy workload in the job makes me avoid the spending of evenings and weekends with my family members	2.71	1.394

The above table shows the examination of variables like work-life imbalance factors (8) and occupational stress factors (4). It shows the rating of work-life balance issues by basing on the perceptional statements given by the sample respondents. The scaling technique applied was a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The variable with serial number 2 has the highest mean value of 3.14 with a standard deviation of 1.514 and the variable with serial number 10 has the lowest mean value of 2.52 with a standard deviation of 1.416.

Table 2 ANOVA (Single factor Analysis)

Summary

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Married	50	7864	157.28	4682.74
Unmarried	50	6318	126.36	5436.66

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F. Crit
Between Groups	14622	1	14622	3.54723	0.09246	4.2184
Within Groups	403963.84	98	4122.08			
Total	418585.84	99				

The above table shows the perceptions of the sample respondents regarding work-life balance based on their marital status. It shows that people belonging to different marital status had differed significantly in their perceptions with regard to work-life balance (F-marital status =3.54723, $p <0.001$).

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Verification of Hypothesis (H$_{a1}$)

Table 3: t-test (Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variance)

	Married	Unmarried
Mean	157.28	126.36
Variance	4682.74	5436.66
Observations	50	50
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	0
Df	98	
t- stat	1.749264	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.031586	
t critical one-tail	1.643292	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.072518	
t critical two-tail	2.061976	

The above t-test shows that married and unmarried category of respondents differed significantly in terms of their perceptions towards work-life balance issues. (p-value <0.001). Hence the above alternate hypothesis is accepted stating that there is the difference in the perception of married and unmarried respondents of IT sector towards work-life balance.

Conclusion

From the above data analysis and interpretation, it is clear those job stress and work-life imbalances are obvious in the present lifestyle. The above study states that work-life balance is affected by the marital status of the employees and if the intervening factors like job stress and other imbalance social factors are reduced, the positive status-quo of work-life balance can be maintained to a greater extent.

The employees in an organization are the main factors of organizational productivity and hence in order to increase the productivity, the organizations should focus on their employees and they should provide all the amenities to their workforce in order to maintain the physical and psychological vigor and vitality. They should promote employer-employee and employer-employee relations in their organizations and effective organizational climate shall prevail in order to combat day to day challenges in the business environment. Thus a sociological approach is the need of the hour promoting work-life balance among the employees in the IT sector.

Suggestions

In the light of the above findings and conclusion, the following suggestions were made in order to improve the work-life balance among the employees in IT sector. Effective orientation programmes to the employees should be given in order to handle job stress and family pressures.

The employees should adopt and adapt the habits of self-discipline, highly organized and meticulous planning and socially sensitive to their family obligations.

Effective counseling process at the organizational level is to be initiated in order to improve the work-life balance among the employees of IT sector.

The employees should inculcate good health practices and they should cultivate good habits which enhance the positive approach towards life and reduces the job and family-related stress.

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