A STUDY ON WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES USED IN IT INDUSTRIES IN PUNE CITY

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Abstract : Pune is now among India's top ten IT hubs. The information technology industry employs 2,81,000 people in Pune, but how many of them have a good work-life balance? Integrating work-life balance into corporate social responsibility is a crucial component. Companies are increasingly recognizing the negative effects on employee performance, satisfaction, and retention that a lack of work-life balance can have.

Work-life balance policies that is, policies that help people meet the needs of their work life and personal life can provide benefits for both employers and employees by assisting individuals and families in achieving a balance between their commitments to their families, their careers, and their personal lives.

Work-life balance is difficult to achieve. Still, it is possible to achieve work-life harmony. Start by looking at how employees are connected to their jobs. Then, as necessary, implement specific strategies to assist employees in achieving a better work-life balance.

Keywords: Work Life Balance, Corporate Social Responsibility in WLB, WLB Policies, family and lifestyle, employee's relationship.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the concept of Work-Life Balance has gained significant prominence due to factors such as increased global competition, evolving organizational structures, and economic uncertainties. These factors exert substantial pressure on organizations to effectively manage their workforce. In response to changing competitive landscapes and the demand for high performance and commitment from employees, it is crucial for organizations to implement Work-Life Balance policies that cater to individual needs.

Such policies can aid employees in achieving a satisfactory equilibrium between their professional responsibilities and personal commitments. Moreover, they play a pivotal role in fostering employee engagement, which is vital for organizational success as it encourages employees to go the extra mile in their work. Given the diverse composition of modern workforces, including different generations and genders, designing and implementing effective Work-Life Balance practices becomes strategically imperative, particularly amidst economic uncertainties.

These practices offer numerous benefits to both employees and employers. Employees experience enhanced job satisfaction, security, stress reduction, and improved health. Meanwhile, employers enjoy reduced absenteeism and turnover rates, enhanced productivity and reputation, and increased loyalty and retention rates.

The proposed research aims to explore the impact of Work-Life Balance practices on both employees and organizations. This will be achieved through a survey conducted within the large-scale IT industries located in Pune city.

2. Statement of Problem:

The aim of this research is to gain insights into the work-life balance experiences of employees within the IT sector in Pune, Maharashtra, India. This study seeks to delve into and comprehend the work-life experiences of employees within the organizational settings they operate in. The empirical section of this study delineates the areas in which employees are actively involved. The analytical segment endeavors to delve into their experiences and provide an understanding of the impact of organizational contexts. The central problem statement for this research is:

"There is presence of work life imbalance among the employees working in IT industries in Pune city"

3. Importance of the Study:

The study's findings offer valuable insights into identifying individual, family, and work-related variables associated with Work-Life Balance. From both the employer and employee perspectives, this research proves beneficial. For employers, the study provides guidance in designing organizational policies to maximize employee output. Employees, on the other hand, gain understanding regarding their roles and responsibilities within the organization and how to attain maximum satisfaction.

The study addresses several research questions, underscoring its significance:

1. Are employees experiencing work-life imbalance?

2. What employee-related factors influence work-life balance?

3. What are the dimensions of work and life according to employees?

4. How do employees perceive and navigate their work-life balance?

4. Objectives of Study:

Objective of the study is as follows:

1. To study relationship between employee related variables i.e. Performance, Efficiency, Absenteeism etc. and work life balance practices.

5. Hypothesis of Study:

The hypotheses serve as the crucial bridge between theory and investigation, facilitating the advancement of knowledge. The hypotheses proposed for this study are outlined below:

H1: - There is significant relationship between employee performance and work life balance.

6. Scope and Limitations of the study:

Scope of the study:

The researcher has focused on IT industries within the Pune city area, specifically targeting industrial units within this region. Solely IT industries have been included for the study's scope. Employee opinions from various IT industries have been collected for analysis, thus conclusions drawn are pertinent exclusively to the IT sector.

Limitations of the study:

Despite meticulous attention to detail throughout the research process, certain limitations have been identified and duly acknowledged. It should be noted that the findings of this study cannot be extrapolated to other industrial sectors or groups.

The research has relied on feedback obtained from both employers and employees within the IT sector in Pune city. The study specifically focuses on the Pune city region.

7. Review of Literature:

The researcher has gone through different literature related to the study as following:

1. Hammer et al. (1997) surveyed 399 dual-earner couples and observed a significant correlation between the levels of work-family conflict experienced by male and female workers and their partners.

2. Williams and Alliger (1994) discovered in their study of 41 full-time working parents (13 men and 28 women) that work tended to disrupt family life more than family obligations affected work.

3. Eagle et al. (1997) found asymmetrical permeability between work and family boundaries, with family-work conflict occurring more frequently than work-family conflict. Similarly, Hsieh et al. (2005) conducted research on Taiwanese managers, indicating that work often intruded upon personal life rather than vice versa.

4. Wesley and Muthuswamy (2005) investigated 230 teachers at an engineering college in Coimbatore, India, revealing that work-family conflict was more prevalent than family-work conflict, suggesting a greater permeability from work to family.

5. Kinnunen and Mauno (2007) collected data from 501 employees across various sectors, including municipal and social healthcare, manufacturing for exports, banking, and supermarkets. They found that interference from work to family was more common than interference from family to work among both genders. These studies collectively suggest that work-to-family conflict occurs more frequently than family-to-work conflict.

8. Research Methodology:

To achieve the outlined objectives, the researcher has employed a hybrid approach, combining elements of both descriptive and analytical research designs. The research methodology adopted for this study integrates both primary and secondary data sources.

8.1. Data Collection:

Data for the research has been gathered from various outlets, primarily relying on both primary and secondary sources.

8.1.1. Primary Data:

The primary sources utilized for the study predominantly include surveys. Surveys serve as a means to gather quantitative data, where a questionnaire is formulated, distributed to respondents, their responses are collected, analyzed, and conclusions are drawn based on the findings.

8.1.2. Secondary Data

➢ Authenticated Annual Reports

➢ Books and Journals

➢ Research papers and Articles

➢ Related websites etc.

8.2. Sample Design

8.2.1. Research Design

The research design serves as a roadmap for conducting research with the aim of addressing the research question. It guarantees that the study is pertinent to the problem at hand and efficient in its procedures by providing guidance to the researcher on key research aspects such as data collection techniques, sampling procedures, financial costs, time required for the study, and data analysis techniques. Researchers have categorized research design into several categories based on eight different descriptors.

8.3. Universe and Sample Size

Universe and Sample Size

In Pune city, there were a total of 242 IT industries. The researcher selected 5 industrial units for data collection using a selective random sampling method. However, there is a workforce of over 281,000 employees across the IT industrial units in Pune city. The researcher chose 50 employees for data collection through selective random sampling. Additionally, the researcher contacted 5 employers and 50 employees for the study.

8.4 Tools and Techniques of Analysis of Data

The researcher has used various statistical techniques and tools for the purpose of data analysis. They are as follows:

➢ Comparative Frequency Distribution Analysis

➢ Friedman Test

➢ Mann-Whitney Test

➢ MANOVA

8.5. Limitations of the Study:

This study focuses solely on Pune City and exclusively considers employees within the IT industries. The researcher has narrowed the scope to examine only one aspect: the correlation between employee performance and work-life balance.

9. Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis No. 01: There is significant relationship between employee performance and work life balance.

t-Test

Variable (Marital Status)	N	Mean	S.D.	Std.Err.	D.f.	t value	t critical	p
Married	40	1.21	0.404	0.028				
Unmarried	10	1.2	0.412	0.057	262	2.52	1.96	Significant

Hypothesis No.01 proposed a significant relationship between employee performance and work-life balance. A five-point scale questionnaire was distributed among customers for data collection. To determine the significance of the relationship between employee performance and work-life balance, the researcher employed the 't-test', 'Friedman Test', and 'Mann-Whitney Test'. Subsequently, research questions were formulated, and a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was established.

Hence, the hypothesis No. 01 'There is significant relationship between employee performance and work life balance' is fully accepted.

10. Findings

1. **Age of an employee / Life Stage of Employee**: Every person experiences three life stages: childhood, youth, and old age. Similarly, female employees also go through these stages. The age of an employee significantly impacts work-life balance issues. Younger employees, typically aged between 18 to 35 years, tend to find their lives relatively balanced. However, as employees age and take on more family responsibilities, they often struggle to allocate time for various activities they wish to pursue.

2. **Marital Status**: The marital status of an employee is a critical factor affecting work-life balance. Married women often struggle to juggle responsibilities both at home and in their jobs. The length of time since marriage is also pertinent to work-life issues. Newly married women tend to find a balance between their professional and personal lives. However, women who have been married for an extended period, especially those with young children, find it challenging to manage both fronts effectively.

3. **No of Members of family:** This factor has a perplexing impact. Female employees with fewer family members tend to experience better work-life balance compared to those with larger family sizes.

4. **Type of Family / Family Structure**: The rise of single-parent families and the increasing privatization of family life have significantly influenced work-life issues.

5. **No and Age of the KIDs:** Challenges emerge when individuals must balance caregiving responsibilities with employment, particularly in the absence of flexible working arrangements. This is especially true for those who experience a sudden or rapid increase in caregiving obligations, or who find themselves dedicating more time and effort to caring for a dependent individual. Surveys corroborate that women and individuals with dependent children often encounter greater difficulties in achieving work-life balance.

6. **No of Dependents:** Continuing to fulfill the parental role for those with a disabled child, even as the child transitions into adulthood, can create tension regarding employment. This is because managers or colleagues may mistakenly assume that parental responsibilities have diminished, when in fact, for this demographic, such responsibilities may require even greater time and energy. Within the family dynamic, demands may vary significantly depending on individual circumstances. For instance, the demands on someone who is young and single may be minimal, whereas those with dependent children or elderly parents may face substantially higher demands.

11. Suggestions:

The suggestions made in this chapter pertaining it WLB issues are divided in two parts:

a) **Suggestions to the Employees:**

As employees continue to work, managing the competing demands of their careers and personal lives is likely to remain a persistent challenge for everyone. Employ the following strategies to assist in finding the work-life balance that best suits you.

1. Time Management: Instead of focusing solely on the quantity of hours spent working, consider the effectiveness of your time spent at work. Many individuals spend extended periods in the workplace without accomplishing their most critical tasks. Monitor your activities and the time allocated to each to ensure productivity.

2. Drop activities that sap your time or energy: One common example of wasted time is spending excessive hours at work with a coworker who consistently engages in ranting and gossiping, activities that don't contribute value. Minimize the time allocated to activities or individuals that fail to enhance your career or personal life.

3. A little relaxation goes a long way: Avoid becoming overwhelmed by believing that significant changes are necessary to attain better balance in your life. Instead, establish attainable goals, such as striving to leave the office one evening earlier each week. Integrate more of the activities that hold value for you gradually into your schedule. For instance, consider dedicating one hour per week to your hobby or planning a family vacation annually as a starting point.

4. Be Honest: Honestly assess the amount of time you devote to work and the reasons behind it. Determine whether you stay late to complete tasks, to impress your boss, or simply due to poor time management during the day.

b) **Suggestions to the Organizations:**

1. Integration: Incorporating work-life balance concerns into the organization's management development program is not only advisable but often essential. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; the process of introducing, operating, and implementing work-life balance initiatives must be tailored to fit the organization's unique needs. A collaborative approach between management and trade unions can aid in the introduction of new initiatives. It's crucial to integrate the work-life balance agenda into the HR strategy.

2. Offer Flexibility: Initiatives promoting Work-Life Balance can enhance both employee productivity and overall well-being, benefiting both employers and employees in their professional and personal lives. By providing greater flexibility in work arrangements, organizations gain a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talent. In today's dynamic labor market, flexible work arrangements are essential for individuals at various life stages. These arrangements accommodate the needs of young individuals balancing work and study, parents seeking quality time with their children, individuals maintaining their health and community involvement, and older workers transitioning toward retirement with reduced working hours.

3. Part time working during early stage of Child Care: There is a suggestion to reorganize employees' working hours in a novel manner to optimize their time management. It is proposed that both male and female full-time workers be given the opportunity to work part-time for six to twelve months during the first three years of a child's life. Upon completion of this period of part-time employment, they should be allowed to return to their previous full-time position.

Conclusion:

Successfully mainstreaming work-life balance policies in organizations requires a clear understanding of their business rationale and a recognition of the importance of work-life balance for all employees. Regardless of the chosen approach, it is hoped that this research paper will serve as a starting point and stimulate reflection and discussion on work-life balance issues in the IT industry in Pune city. The survey has uncovered concerning working practices in Pune, with some employers allowing employees to work excessively long hours, which goes against legal conventions and good employment practices. Moreover, these practices are detrimental to the health of employees, which should be concerning to employers, particularly in light of recent litigation regarding work-induced health problems in other cities and countries.

Scope for Further Research:

There is always room for improvement in research, and this study is no exception. Given that this study relied on a sample of employees, its findings could be affected by sample size and composition. Future research could explore larger sample sizes to generalize the results more effectively. Additionally, further investigation could focus on initiatives that employees can undertake to improve work-life balance.

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