



A STUDY OF WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES AND ITS EFFECTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Work Life Balance is used to describe those practices at work place that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of employees in achieving a balance between the demands of their family life and work lives. Successful businesses create an organizational society that encourages employees to feel dedication and commitment to the company. The purpose of this paper to analyze the literature review on work-life balance, its dimensions, effects on organizational performance and organizational culture and attempts that have been made to create a balance between work and life. The results of a number of studies reviewed in this paper show the outcomes and the benefits of implementing work life balance practices not only for employees themselves, but also for their families, society and Organizations. In spite of the fact that work-life conflict has significant business costs associated with lack of engagement, absenteeism, turnover rates, low productivity and creativity or poor retention levels, there are some factors of organizational work-life culture that may compromise availability and use of these practices. What are the challenges for research and practice in the future? In the end of the article we propose several suggestions (guidelines) in order to improve our understanding, choice, implementation and effectiveness of work-life practices.

KEYWORDS: Work Life Balance Practices, IBM, Organizational performance, Organizational Culture.

INTRODUCTION

This study explored the impact of work life balance on organizational performance and organizational culture among employees of IBM Company at Noida. This research focused to find out how balance of Work and life affects the organizational performance and Organizational Culture. A private sector software company was selected for research purpose. In a current era managing an individual employee is more difficult than ever before. Work life imbalance effect both personal and work life. A balanced life is one where we spread our energy and efforts between key areas of importance. Work life balance has become important for almost all categories of employees, including those employees in Software Company. A sample of 80 employees gathered via stratified random sampling which has been provided the basis for analysis. Data was collected through questionnaire and analyzed through SPSS. The correlation result shows that significant positive relationship exists between work life balance and organizational performance and culture. The Pearson correlation results also indicate that there is positive relationship which exists between work life balance and organizational culture and performance.

IBM India offers its employees options such as flexible workweek schedules, working from home, part time employment, family counseling, and leave of absence programmes under WLBP. Work-life balance programs in IBM have been established to help employees better manage their work and personal lives to cut down imbalances at work. IBM's manual policy says that the organization is serious about helping employees achieve career/life balance for Other provisions that include study reimbursements, global opportunities, recreational activities, clubs and helping employees deal with life events, from getting married to taking a career break. Work/Life balance is a strategic initiative that helps IBM to attract, motivate and retain the very best talent in the technology industry.

Statement of problem: The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of work life balance on organizational performance and organizational culture among software employees of IBM and also tests the relationship among these variables. So the problem statement for this research was as follows:

“What is the impact of work-life-balance on Organizational Culture and organizational performance”

Objective of the Study

- 1) To Study the WLB practices and its effects on Organizational performance and Culture.
- 2) To Study the various WLB Practices followed by IT Companies IBM.
- 3) To Study the impact of WLB practices on Organizational performance and culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Practices that are meant help employees better manage their work and network times are called in the literature as work-family policies, family-friendly or family-responsive policies. In recent years, the term “work-life balance” has replaced what used to be known as “work-family balance” (Hudson Resourcing, 2005).

Landauer (1997) has reported that in a survey conducted by IBM in 1992, employees in general rated work-balance practices as sixth out of 16 factors that encouraged retention compared to the highest performers who rated work-life balance practices as second. Lewis and Cooper (2005, p.10) observe, work-life balance policies are associated with offering employees the chance to work flexibly, and notions of flexible working were “originally considered within equal opportunities programmes”, with a particular focus on working mothers. Swan and Cooper (2005) and Worrall and Cooper (1999) observe that the best way of reducing sickness levels among working parents in managerial and professional roles would be to reduce working hours and to offer men and women more opportunities to work flexibly.

According to European Diversity Research and Consulting the most frequently implemented work-life balance programs in Europe are:

- 1) Part –time work (employees)-97.4%
- 2) Flexible start and finish time-94.8
- 3) Flexible break time-93.0%
- 4) Phase out/Phase in part time-88.7%
- 5) Health check-81.8
- 6) Part time work-(managers)-81.7%
- 7) Seminar (Stress, time)-80.9%
- 8) Telecommuting- 76.5%

(As cited in Parflrman, D. 2007). Europe's progress in promoting work-life and diversity in the workplace. Executive Action Series. Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada.)

Work-life balance policies in France are very well developed. Indeed Aybars (2007) suggests that along with Denmark, France is one of the 'pioneers' of family-friendly measures.(Ibid.) The combination of an ageing workforce and a falling birth rate led Japan to encourage the establishment of flexible work-life balance practices. Cole (2006).Family supportive organizational cultures have been associated with an increase in use of work-life balance practices. Moreover, employee perceptions that an organizational culture is family supportive are related to lower job stress and WFC and higher positive spill over between work and home, as well as to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment and lower turnover intentions. Indeed, in a study of organizations with more than 250 employees in Québec, Guérin et al. (1997) reported that the most important impact of work-life balance practices was an improvement in job satisfaction.

Work life balance Awards

Barclays, IBM and Marks and Spencer were awarded for their equality and inclusion policies at the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) Awards 2014.

The awards acknowledge and celebrate employers with a commitment to good practice above and beyond legal compliance, and innovative approaches that will inspire other employers.

IBM was awarded the 'Flexible/agile working award' for its focus on Flexible working for all employees.

The award winners included

IBM – Flexible/agile working award.

New York — The future is in the hands of the employees of IBM's T.J. Watson Research Center, the headquarters for the largest industrial research organization in the world. Every day, they research and develop technologies that will transform businesses in a wide range of industries. At the same time, employees are also shaping their individual paths of personal and professional growth by taking advantage of programs and opportunities fostered by IBM's corporate commitment to the "whole employee."

Work-Life Balance

To help employees effectively manage the competitive pressures of the technology industry, IBM looks for creative solutions that enable employees to achieve greater work-life balance. These tools include child care and elder care locators, issue-specific online resource rooms and consultants who are available by email or telephone to help employees with personal issues such as child care, financial planning, taxation issues and legal issues. IBM's flexible work arrangements include part-time work, job sharing, unpaid leave, compressed work week, individualized work schedules and work-at-home options.

Employee Growth and Development

The electronically connected world that IBM has helped create also enables employees to conveniently access a wealth of educational and training resources. IBM's Global Campus Web site features thousands of online training options on topics from nano science to business administration taught by experts at Harvard and MIT as well as by IBM colleagues from around the world. The training is available 24 hours a day to help IBM employees fit their professional development activities into their busy work schedules. IBM uses Individual Development Plans (IDPs) to shape the career paths of its employees. IDPs can be tailored to focus on developing a deep expertise or on gaining a broader set of skills and abilities. In addition to top-notch professional skills, IBM focuses on in-depth industry and technical training to keep employees up-to-date on emerging technologies and skills crucial to success in the evolving marketplace. Along with internal training opportunities, IBM provides assistance for employees to pursue relevant off-site education and, with approval, will reimburse 100 percent of each employee's tuition and other eligible fees for accredited education programs.

IBM supports flexible working options for a better work- life balance

IBM is committed to creating a supportive, flexible work environment that gives employees flexibility and control over their work as long as business objectives are achieved as established by their immediate manager. IBM offers a range of flexible work options – work-at-home, telecommuting, leave of absence, part time working, etc. – to enable employees to meet their personal needs. The use of these options requires the employee and their manager to balance the needs of the business and the employee. *Mr DP Singh, Vice President and HR Head- India/SA at IBM.*

Flexi time

In today's competitive business environment, employees seek jobs that not only offer financial security, but also have autonomy, meaning and the opportunity for development and advancement. Employees also want time to pursue personal interests and enjoy time outside of the workplace. In our internal employee surveys, our employees across generations, across business units report that “Flexibility in where and when work gets done is the most important work-life offering” is a true testimony that our efforts towards work-life is working and successful. Also, the ability for women returning from maternity to avail part time work option has received positive response from our women employees.

Work From home

IBM has robust flexible work option policy and an enabling ecosystem which can be leveraged as suitable for the job role and in approval with the manager. IBM has detailed guidelines for employees while considering flexible work options and guidelines for managers while approving flexible work option request from our employees. The Work-Life Toolkit is a comprehensive resource for managers and employees to learn about IBM's work-life principles, guidelines, programs, and education. Work-life is a shared responsibility between employees and managers requiring open communication and partnership. IBM has various flexibility education offerings to our managers to encourage them to support their employees on the Flexible Work Option requests which includes Work from Home as well.

Positive impact on IBM employees

Innovative flexible work options are enabling IBMers to create the lives they want by devising individual work schedules that integrate their professional and personal responsibilities. This kind of flexibility also enables IBM to better serve its clients, meeting their needs when and where they exist. This flexibility is fast becoming a reason why people are attracted to and stay at IBM. On any given day, worldwide, one-third of its employees are not at an IBM location - they are working onsite with customers, telecommuting, or are mobile.

Our work life program offers innovative solutions to address workload, dependent care, collaboration, and connecting with clients - both inside and outside of IBM. These policies have helped employees to reduce stress, enhance commitment, increase productivity and focus.

Workplace Culture

The workplace culture includes the employee's attitudes, belief systems, value systems, work ethics, behavior that characterize the functioning of a group or organization etc. (e). Workplace culture includes the beliefs, attitudes, practices, norms and customs ('how things are done around here') that characterize a workplace. They can be both obvious and implied.

Workplace culture is also known as organizational or corporate culture. It is defined as a shared belief system of values and processes within an organization. It's been described simply as "the way we do things around here." It is a powerful component to any organization and has both explicit and implicit characteristics.

Workplace culture sets the tone for employee performance

Organizations that create cultures that value balance, and assist employees to achieve life balance will be rewarded with highly engaged employees. By developing more unified and compassionate workplace cultures, organizations will be more attractive to people of all generations. Such studies provide valuable insight and information to HR professionals to assess HR policies and programs for the multigenerational workplace (see Figure 1).

HR Policies and Programs for the Multigenerational Workforce

HR Policies	Examples
Work life balance practices	Flexible hours, telecommuting, family leave, work/life balance policies, allowance For religious holidays, etc
Rewards and Recognition	Compensation, Reward Programme

IBM, one of Australia's largest IT companies, is one of the country's most female-friendly workplaces. Table under provides a summary of EOWA 'Employer of Choice for Women' initiatives undertaken by IBM. Such initiatives lead to the organization receiving an award in 2006 from the Federal Government's Agency for Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace for being the most "Female-Friendly" organization.

Summary of IBM Australia's Female-Friendly Workplace Strategies (Source: IBM lauded as most "female friendly" workplace. 08/11/2006. World Today, The ABC. (accessed from Australia/New Zealand Reference Centre database 22/1/2008).

IBM Australia – “Female Friendly” Workplace Strategies	
Initiatives	Achievements and Benefits
Flexible Hours – options to work from home	Technology enables women to work and care for children at home
Paid Maternity Leave	Financially stable whilst on maternity leave. 97% of women have returned from maternity leave over the last 10 years.
Conducts three camps for young women nationally. Duration: 1 week and is primarily about the IT industry and what it entails	36% of IBM Australia’s graduate recruits are female, compared to less than 15% studying IT at university.
Flexible leave – offers additional four weeks of annual leave, purchased through salary sacrifice	The additional four weeks gives employees the option to take more leave if required, and contributes to less stress and work overload within the organization.
Vacation care program for IBM children	Gives working mothers’ peace of mind that their children are being cared for during the school holidays

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Staff acceptance of IBM’s fair and flexible workplace options is strong. A recent survey of the company’s 10,000 employees found that 89% were aware of the flexible work life options available and 51% use or have used them. After maternity leave, 96% of women return to work and 78% of staff work in a team where it is considered acceptable to work from home at least one day a week. Overall, 16% of employees work from home. Over the past 10 years, IBM’s diversity programs have received wide recognition, including the 2001 Prime Minister’s Employer of the Year Award for people with a disability and the 2010 EOWA Employer of Choice for Women for the 10th consecutive year. Senior Software Engineer, Michael Powell, has opted to work part-time to spend more time with his family. “I have worked with and for a number of businesses throughout my career – both large and small. I can honestly say that in my opinion, the IBM work environment, work-force diversity policies and the career-life balance initiatives practiced by the organization are leading the way – not just in our industry but across the whole spectrum.

Employee Performance

Employee Performance in a firm is a very important area in the workplace. It can help the firm increase and utilize the capacity of the human resources it has. It translates into good service delivery and interaction in which affects every area of the organization. To achieve this organization need to make policies that will encourage employee performance. An employee's job performance depends on or is a consequence of some combination of ability, effort, and opportunity. But, the measurements can be done in terms of outcomes or results produced (Ferris et al., 1998). Performance is defined as the record of outcomes produced on a specified job function or activity during a specified time period. (Bernardin and Russel, 1998). According to this definition performance is set of outcomes produced during a certain time period. Hence the researchers have developed the working definition of employee performance for study purpose is that, "achievement of targets of the tasks assigned to employees within particular period of time". Performance is not only related to the action but also involves judgment and evaluation process (Ilgen and Schneider, 1991).

According to Campbell (1993) performance is related to that which the individual that is hired do in fulfilling his / her duties and the activities that can be examined and measurable are reflected. An organization needs high performance of its employees, so as to meet its goal and be able to achieve competitive advantage (Frese, 2002). According to business dictionary employee performance is the job related activities expected of a worker and how well those activities were executed. The organization success depends on the employee performance. Therefore, it is important for a manager to create a well –rounded approach to managing and coaching its workforce. The commercial banks are service industry and their main aim is to satisfy their customer. The service employee renders to the customer and employee performance is interrelated. When employees provide excellent customer service, they are exceeding job expectations. The popularity of an organization's service is based in part on the level of service received by the customer. For service industry the business is based almost solely on their employee's performance. That is why management must look for various ways in improving employee performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper seeks to analyze the organizational work-life balance practices and their impact towards the organizational Culture and Performance. The data for this study was collected from the primary and secondary source which includes the various research studies

which reflected the relationship between the work life balance practices and organization Culture and performance related to the top performing organizations in IT sector.

The impact of work life balance practices

'Positive Impact,	Agree\Agree strongly
Friendly policy is helpful to develop good Employees relations	80%
Friendly policy is helpful to lower labor turnover	72%
Friendly policy is helpful to attract more talented employees	65%
Flexible hours is helpful to retain more female employees	65%
Flexible hours is helpful to increase productivity	75 %
WFH is helpful to motivate employees	59%
WFH is helpful to reduce absenteeism	66%
My Organization give me leave to care and support my dependent	50%
Sick leave helps me to take care of my emotional helper	33%
Training leave allow me to take time for study or training to improve on my personal growth	78%
Annual leave helps me to reduce work related stress	55%

- 1) 80% of employees strongly agreed that friendly policy is helpful to develop good human relation.
- 2) 72% of employees agreed that friendly policy is helpful to lower labour turnover.
- 3) 65% of employees strongly agreed friendly policy is helpful to retain more female employees.
- 4) 75% of employees agree that flexible hours is helpful to increase productivity.
- 5) 59% of employees are strongly agreed that flexible hours is helpful to motivate employees.
- 6) 66% of employees are agreed that WLB is helpful to reduce absenteeism.
- 7) 50% of employees are agreed that leave policy is helpful to care and support my dependent.
- 8) 35% of employees are agreed that sick leave is helpful to take care to my emotional helper.
- 9) 78% of employees are strongly agreed that training leave allow me to take time for study or training to improve on my personal growth.
- 10) 55% of employees are agreed that annual leave helps me to reduce work related stress.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that work life balance philosophy is associated with real benefits for an organization. This is because the social and psychological life of every employee needs to be

rightly put in check for them to be an asset and not just an employee that is used to carry out day to day operations of the organization. Employees are happier when they are able to balance their work life demands. Management also experience improve relationship with employees. Management support for employees work life balance fosters a good relationship between the work force and management which improve effective communication in the organization. Cotter (2000) high employee performance lead an organization to have greater opportunities for employees than those who have low performance. Therefore it is important for employer to look for better ways in improving employee performance. This can be done by helping them prioritize their work and life activities. When this is achieved, employee is motivated to render their service efficiently and effectively.

Work life balance practices concentrate on balance between the work and life thus leading towards the attainment of employees of the organization. Employers make sure that the initiatives and programs launched should meet and balance the professional and personal life of the employees. Today most organizations have wide variety of setups to stay in touch. The above exploratory study conducted in the major IT companies and these are also the bulk hires in the IT community.

The study showcased the following initiatives taken and practiced at these places are: 1. Offering childcare assistance and on-site crèches 2. Maternity profit 3. Flexile working time 4. Allowing staff to work from home 5. Self managed and self tracking - employees manage their own work in a suitable pattern and timely to deliver best outputs 6.Social Activities and Employee Wellness

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