

A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS ON WORK LIFE BALANCE

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ABSTRACT

"A time for everything: A time to relax and a time to be busy, a time to frolic and a time to labor, a time to receive and a time to give, a time to begin and a time to finish."- Jonathan Lockwood Huie

The expression work-life balance (WLB) was first used in the middle of 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. The essentiality of embracing Work-Life Balance (WLB) strategies is indispensable for every class of employees. The increasing number of Dual Income Single Kid (DISK) couples and members from nuclear families at organizations has made WLB practices all the more necessary. There has been an increasing interest in WLB in the recent past for all professions and its significance is now focused by many organizations. The days are gone where WLB was restricted only to certain fields but now the situation has completely changed. People of all strata irrespective of their professions (employers, employees, professionals, home makers...) struggle hard to manage a good WLB. This study has analyzed various reviews on WLB for diverse professions (IT, Hotel, Hospital, Finance, Academics ...) and given suggestions for a balanced life.

Key words: Quality of Work Life, Stress, WLB.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Employees are always dynamic in nature and hence frequent changes are required from time to time, to restore the balance on both work life and personal life. Work-life balance is the ability to experience a sense of control and to stay productive and competitive at work while

maintaining a happy, healthy home life with sufficient leisure. It is attaining focus and awareness, despite seemingly endless tasks and activities competing for your time and attention. WLB is nothing but the relationship between work and family life and the same has become an important topic of discussion for current government, practitioners and academics. (Warhurst, Eikhof, & Haunschild, 2008). Issue of managing workplace needs with personal life needs is gaining importance among workers all over the world and academics of higher education institutions are not out of it. (Stanton, Noor, & Young, 2009). Frone & Rice, 1987, "A state where an individual manages real or potential conflict between different demands on his or her time and energy in a way that satisfies his or her needs for well being and self fulfillment is referred as work life balance"

2. WORK LIFE BALANCE

Kvande, Elin (2009) Work-life balance is the term used to describe the balance that an individual needs between work and other aspects of life. Areas of life other than work-life can be, but not limited to personal interests, family and social or leisure activities The term 'Work-Life Balance' is recent in origin as it was first used in UK and US in the late 1970s and 1980s respectively. The use of smart phones, email, video-chat, and other technological innovations has made it possible to work without having a typical "9 to 5 work day".

The concept of work-life balance comprises of three words i.e. work, life and balance, and broadly include proper prioritizing between work (career and ambition) on the one hand and life (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other hand, and the balance is satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict. It can mean different to different people however work-life balance is the degree to which an individual can simultaneously balance the emotional, behavioral and time demands of paid work, family and personal duties (Clark, 2000 and Hill, et al., 2001). It is a situation in which employees are capable in giving right amount of time and efforts to their work as well as their personal life outside the work. Work-life balance normally is said to be achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside the paid work is accepted and respected. Some people may refer it to the flexible working arrangements that allow both parents and non-parents to avail of working arrangements that provide a balance between work responsibilities and personal responsibilities. It leads to the harmonious and holistic integration of work, family, social life and personal life and is the extent to which individuals are equally involved in, and equally satisfied with their professional role and their family role.

Work-life balance, in its broadest sense, can be termed as an individual's level of satisfaction, involvement or compatibility among the multiple roles in life. One's best individual work-life balance will vary over time, often on a daily basis. The right balance, for an individual today will probably be different for tomorrow. In other words, the best work-life balance is different for all because all have different priorities and different values. For majority, work-life balance means meeting one's real and perceived personal and work obligations, and thereby satisfying the key needs of both oneself and those one is committed to support, however, for few, it does not mean an equal balance but to achieve satisfaction in one's role.

3. REVIEWS

S Pattu Meenakshi et.al, (2012) conducted a study on WLB for Women teacher in Self financing Engineering Institutions in Madurai district with 150 samples. The parameters were age-WLB, marital status –WLB & experience – WLB. Women play a vital role for the well being of the family and when they come for work the balance get missed. Women teachers

need to have a strong WLB which helps for their improvement. The study suggested recommendations for the employer and the employee to analyze and maintain a good WLB.

Ronald Burke (2010) had done a study to examine the relationship of managerial and professional men's perception of organizational values supporting WLB and indicators of work and life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. His findings showed that the managerial men supporting organizational values are able to balance work and personal life balance with less job stress, greater joy in work, lower intentions to quit, greater job career and life satisfaction.

Jennifer Tomlinson & Susan Durbin (2010) conducted an extensive study on part-time managers where the majority was career focused, worked intensively and felt frustrated with their lack of mobility and career progression while working part-time. The majority worked in more than their contracted hours and could not able to have a proper balance when the working hour was reduced.

Milind A. Peshave et.al (2014) focused on WLB & employee productivity of employees in hotel industry with 200 samples. The study revealed that effective measures are not taken for improving WLB. Employment practices pertaining to WLB are rated as second most in the industry. Long strenuous working hours and manpower shortage are considered to the major factors responsible for poor WLB. The study suggested for additional leave, holidays, weekly offs fixed number of working hours etc which would help to improve employee productivity.

Margaret Deery, (2008), provided an overview of the key employee turnover literature within the hospitality and tourism industry with specific attention given to the role of WLB issues in the turnover decision-making process. The paper also provides a theoretical and practical framework for industry to develop strategies for reduced employee turnover, with a focus on the role that balancing work and family plays in these strategies.

Jeff and Juliette (2007), in their study, stated that employees do influence WLB issues in the financial services sector and WLB initiatives had greater breadth, codification and quality where independent unions were recognized. However, the extent of departure from minimal statutory levels of provision was not great.

4. OUTCOMES OF WLB

Adams et al. (1996) found that relationships between work and family can have an important effect on job and life satisfaction and the level of involvement the worker assigns to work and family roles is associated with this relationship. Employees who are overloaded or whose work interfered with family (vice-versa) were highly stressed, experienced burnout, expressed dissatisfaction with life, and were in poor mental/ physical health. Individuals adopt strategies such as accommodation, negotiation to enhance their work life balance or reduce work family conflict. Employees who are not able to balance their work & life are subject to depression and stress.

4.1. Programmes for WLB

A number of work life balance initiatives/ programmes have been undertaken by the organizations and various researchers on WLB and study the reasons, provisions and benefits accruing to employees and organizations and barriers in implementation of these programmes. These include: parental leave, paternity leave, maternity leave, adoption leave, sabbaticals, flexible work timings, job sharing, job splitting, flexi time, compressed working week, annual

hours system, banking of hours, telecommuting, supervisory training in work family sensitivity, on site day care, emergency child care, elder care arrangements.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The above study is an attempt to know WLB in various professions. There was a time where teaching was considered as a stress free job and teachers have a good WLB .But looking into the reviews teaching is also equally challenging at per with other industries and the situation is the same with service sector .The programmes for WLB changes according to industry specification as flexi time is not applicable for all jobs. Thus irrespective of all initiatives it is upto the individual who has to balance between work and life.

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