

WORK LIFE BALANCE AND ORGANIZATIONS: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Economic scenarios in the present situations are forcing organizations to find avenues for achieving sustainable organizational effectiveness in order to carve a niche for themselves. work life balance and emotional intelligence are attracting lot of attention of the researchers as they are found to have an effect on organizational effectiveness. individual opinion of work life balance and presence of emotional intelligence can enable organizations to be viable for a longer period of time. this paper attempts to compile and compare the amount of notable research work done in wlb in both national and international context in last 15 years. this paper focuses on theoretical foundations and factors affecting work life balance.

Keywords: *work life balance, emotional intelligence, flexible work arrangement and work life policy.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Productivity, innovation, efficiency are strategic parameters for any organization to sustain as well as to succeed in the present economic environment. There is a shift in current mindset of the employees in terms of prioritizing family needs, whether due to spouse's career, location constraints or being with parents or children (Ashutosh Telang, 2013). As a result, organizations will have to provide opportunities to employees for engaging in interest areas beyond work. Organizations will also need to have bold, innovative talent and human resources strategies to compete for skills amongst a global economy recovery (Bersin, 2014). Also, with new generation employees, companies will need to re-design the jobs and make it more technology driven, and provide flexibility to work from anywhere. A more transparent work environment will lead to higher accountability, responsibility and responsiveness on organization's part as well as to instill confidence in the employees with respect to their organization.

2.0 ORGANIZATION OF LITERATURE

The study of work life balance in literature can be classified in to five areas namely, Definitions and Theories, Factors affecting Work Life Balance (WLB), Measurement scales of WLB and Outcomes of WLB and the sectors where the theories have been applied.

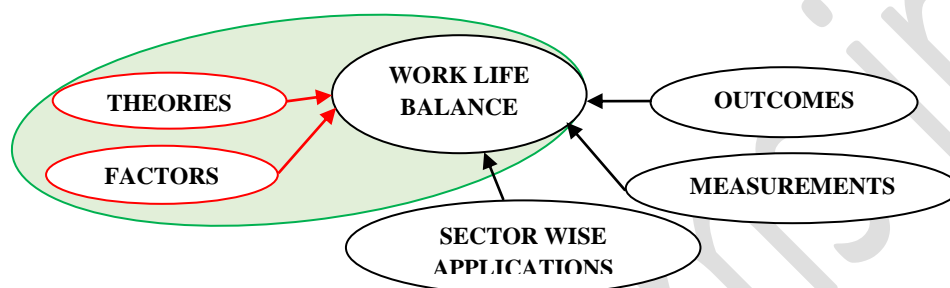


Figure 1. Organization Literature of WLB

This paper focuses on the theories and factors of work life Balance.

3.0 WORK LIFE BALANCE DEFINITIONS

Work Life Balance is a challenging issue for the organizations and has attracted the attention of many researchers. Work Life Balance (WLB) was first used in the middle of 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life (Newman & Matthews, 1999). Work-family conflict is characterized by the incongruence between responsibilities at home and workplace, which are found to be mutually incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Initially it was also referred to as work-life conflict. According to Kofodimos, work life balance refers to “a satisfying, healthy, & productive life that includes work, play and love” (Kofodimos, 1993) Job or work should provide favorable environment for an individual and his family. Thus, the work-life balance is about managing internal pressure from one’s own expectations and setting realistic

goals which do not inflict on family responsibilities (Parsons D, 2002). The absence of unacceptable level of conflicts between work and non-work demands may result in lower organizational performance (Greenbatt, 2002).

4.0 THEORIES OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

A variety of theories on work life balance have been framed as a single frame work was not be universally accepted (Pitt Catsouphes et al. 2006). Some of the theoretical frame works on work life balance include spillover, segmentation, compensation, congruence, enrichment, Inter Role Conflict, boarder and boundary theory. (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990, Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1992, Clark, 2000, Edwards & Rothbard, 2000, Frone, 2003, Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

- Spillover –It is referred to the effect work and family have on each other and was described in terms of affect (mood & satisfaction) values (Important of work and family), and skills (Edwads, Rothbard, 2000). Many of the research work have been based on spillover theory (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). Researchers have long recognized that work and family are not "separate spheres", but are interdependent domains or roles with "permeable" boundaries (Kanter, 1977; Pleck, 1977).
- Segmentation – Work and family where considered to separate domain and were independent with each other (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000).
- Compensation – It considered work and family to belong to two deferent domains and the negative experience of one domain could be compensated with the positive experience of other domain. In other words work and family exhibit invert relationship (Clark 2000).
- Congruence – According to this theory addition variables such as intelligence, personality, genetic force or level of education could positively influence both work and family domains

even though they are not directly related to work and family (Staines 1980, Zedeck 1992, Edward and Rothbard 2000)

- Inter role conflict – It referred to conflict arising when meeting on demand a one domain work makes it difficult to meet the demands in other domain family (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985).
- Enrichment - Enrichment theory refers to the degree to which experiences from instrumental sources (skills, abilities, values) or affective sources (mood, satisfaction) enhance the quality of the other domain (Morris and Madsen, 2007).
- Work Family Border-Work-family border theory is devoted only to work and family domains. The outcome of interest in this theory is work-family balance, which refers to "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict" (Clark, 2000)
- Boundary theory – Boundary theory is a general cognitive theory of social classification (Zerubavel, 1991, 1996) which focuses on outcomes such as the meanings people assign to home and work (Nippert-Eng, 1995) and the ease and frequency of transitioning between roles (Ashforth et. al., 2000). Boundary and border theory can be applied to a range of work-family topics like's flexible schedules working with family etc.

5.0 FACTORS OF WORK LIFE BALANCE (WLB)

Many influencers of work-life balance have been identified by researchers in both national and international context and can be broadly grouped into individual/ Personal, organizational, societal factors and some other factors.

Table 1. Factors of Work Life Balance

Individual	Organizational	Societal	Other
1. Personality	1. Flexible Work Arrangements	1. Child/Parent care	1. Gender
2. Well Being	2. Leadership Support	Responsibility	2. Age
3. Emotional Intelligence	3. Roles Related Factors	2. Family Support	
	4. Work life policy		
	5. Technology		
	6. Job stress		
	7. Culture		

5.0.1 INDIVIDUAL FACTORS AFFECTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- **Personality** - Personality is an important criterion as it influences the extent to which family or work is a central life interest influences the perceptions of balance of every individual Guest (2002). It acts as a moderator between Stress State and Job Attitudes (Kumar and Singh (2011)). Eswaran et. al. (2011) found that there is a positive correlation between personality and job involvement. It was found that openness to experience, a personality trait, reduced family interference with work Kinnunen et. al. (2003) and it was also related to increased family to work conflict, but only for men (Rantanen et. al. (2005)). Kaur (2013) correlated personality with satisfaction with life. Chitra Devi and Sheela Rani (2012) examined the impact of personality on work-life balance and also analyzed the individual differences in maintaining a proper balance between work and non-work domains and suggested that there is no significant relationship between openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion and emotional stability and work-life balance but a positive correlation is found to exist between agreeableness and work-life balance.
- **Wellbeing** - Many researchers have reported that wellbeing plays an important role in maintaining work life balance. Keita and Sauter (1992) define well-being as a dynamic state

of mind characterized by reasonable harmony between persons' abilities, needs and expectations and environmental demands and opportunities. It has been found important for both organizational effectiveness and individual mental and physical health. Diener (2000). Golden-Biddle & Dutton, (2012) emphasized that wellbeing at work has received renewed attention as a vehicle for organizational effectiveness, social change, and a managerial lever for ensuring performance. Luthans (1998) found the work itself, Pay, Promotions, supervision & working Conditions that influence employee well-being.

- *Emotional intelligence - Organizations to be successful need to develop employee's emotional intelligence skills to work effectively in the organization. Managers with high emotional intelligence tend to play an important role in the success of work-life programs by using their position to encourage or discourage employee's efforts for balancing their work and family Perlow (1995). Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in the success of completing their goals in the workplace and hence is considered to bring greater job satisfaction. (M. M. Alam (2009)).*

Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with quality of work life and morale (Dulewicz, Higgs, and Slaski (2003)) and help to boost the employee's performance thereby benefitting the organization. Suliman and Al-Shaikh (2007) reasserted that Emotional Intelligence plays a critical role in better performance of the employees, as individuals with higher levels of EI were found to report higher levels of readiness to create and innovate. Emotional intelligence has also been found to have positive effect on job satisfaction by O'Hara 2006, Bar-On, Handley & Fund, 2005; Druskat, Sala and Mount, 2006, superior outcomes in work groups as well as leadership qualities (Lopes, Cote and Salovey, 2006), Sjoberg, (2008) stressed that Emotional intelligence apart from affecting job satisfaction was also found to be impacting work-family conflict, which is one of the variables of work life balance.

Emotions are critical for stimulating and guiding behavior and to be satisfied and effective in life.

5.0.2 ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

Many organizational factors have also been identified by researchers which affect work life balance.

- Flexible Work Arrangement - To help employees attain work–life balance was the driving force for the creation of flexible work arrangements. Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, and Neuman (1999) revealed that flexible and compressed work schedules were related to productivity and performance, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and satisfaction (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright and Neuman (1999)). According to Lee, MacDermid, and Buck, (2002) flexible work arrangements may influence the work–family interface. (Bond, Hyman, Summers and Wise, 2002). O’Driscoll et. al. (2003) suggested that individual’s control and flexibility is a significant factor in the reduction of work-family conflict and its impact on well-being. It was also found that flexible work timings was more effective than flexible locations of work Byron, 2005; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, (2006), Shockley and Allen, (2007), Galinsky, Bond, and Sakai,(2008), Gregory and Connolly (2008). Helen et. al, (2007) reported that part time is an important flexible working arrangement and helped employees to achieve work life balance and also reduce work- life conflict. Many organizations adopted flexible time schedules in order to help employee balance their work and family.

Some researchers have also reported that Schedule flexibility is negatively related to work–family conflict (Hammer, Allen, and Grigsby, 1997, Anderson, Coffey, and Byerly, 2002, Kossek, Lautsch, and Eaton, 2006).

- Leadership Support - One of the most important factors that have impact on retention is the relationship between a worker and a supervisor. Supervisors are the “human face” of an organization. According to Eisenberger and associates (1990), a worker’s view of the organization is strongly influenced by their relationship with their supervisor and results in open communication with the supervisor (Greenhaus, 1987). The supervisor support is so essential to retention that it can be said that employees leave bosses, not jobs (Ontario, 2004).

Borstorff & Marker (2007) found that abusive supervisors create conflicts in worker's attitude for job, life and organization. In organization workforce responds to praise, encouragement and support, no matter the environment is personal or professional (Silbert, 2005). Providing each level of performance and opportunities can enhance their capabilities to work (Otis and Pelletier, 2005). According to Freyermuth (2007), Organization must groom supervisors to well build the place where employees want to stay. Schmelz (1997) studied insurance agencies and found that support received from supervisors and managers was good for employees to lighten all kinds of stress, to reduce withdraw tendency, and to increase productivity.

- Roles Related - Individuals with high levels of emotional involvement in their work role may be more preoccupied with their work and, hence, may devote an excessive amount of energy to their role at the expense of their family role, resulting in work-family conflict. There is a recognition that individuals may be actively participating in one role while simultaneously feeling distracted by thoughts, emotions, or demands that are tied to another role (Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate, 2000).

According to the spillover theory, moods, stress, and thoughts generated in one role domain often influence or spill over into other domains (William and Alliger, 1994). These overlapping thoughts are distractions, which are the product of poor role quality, and may thus result in negative outcomes. Research has demonstrated a positive relationship between job involvement and work-family conflict (Hammer et al., 1997, Darry & McCarthy, 2007). Senthil kumar et. al. (2012) concluded that employees of old age category and female category perceived maximum level of stress in balancing work and family life. Most of the employees were not satisfied with their work life balance due to heavy work load at work place. Many studies have been conducted on role overload and work family conflict relationship and have released a positive relationship between the two (Aminah Ahmad and Maznah Baba (2003, 2004), (Fu & Shaffer, 2001)).

- Work Life Policy -Policies favoring employees were found to be affecting work life balance. Flexible working policies should be promoted in a way that ensures that those who avail these policies will not be adversely affected in their career paths (Fine-Davis et. al. 2004, Bunting 2004). It was found that the work family policy's aim of 'removing barriers for staff with family responsibilities' could not be successfully implemented because employees who worked part time or in job share situations in order to better manage their roles, perceived their promotion and opportunities for advancement within that organization as limited (McDonald, Guthrie, Bradley and Shakespeare-Finch (2005)). Duxbury, Higgins and Coghill (2002) recommend some policies and initiatives to improve work-life balance through changing workplace culture. Formal work family policy adoption by organizations is an important but inadequate condition to alleviate work family conflicts (Kossek and Ozeki, 1999, Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness, 1999). Kossek et. al. (2006) have suggested that employee perceptions of telecommuting practices may be more important predictors of reducing work and family conflict than the descriptive measures of policies and procedures. Haar and Spell (2004) have shown that the link between work-family practices and job attitudes may be addressed by focusing on employee perceptions relating to their knowledge of work-family practices.
- Technology - Use of technology to some extent has helped employees to balance their work life as MacDonald, (2002) points out, "Employees in today's workplaces have the facility to communicate quickly with colleagues and outsiders, the advent of modern means of communication have brought many benefits but they have also created new problems for employees/employers". The employees having the ability to access their e-mail from a multitude of devices and mediums at anytime, has definitely positively affected the work force. Jackson et. al. (2003). Availability of technologies that have created a 24*7 communication culture, email, mobile technologies) have, undoubtedly brought about a culture change in organizations with new expectations about working practices and speed of communication. Waller & Ragsdell (2012). Technologies have created a work culture which

are allowing employees to work from home as well, hence allowing them an environment where they can strike a balance between their family and work life. Geoffroy de Lestrage (2014) asserts that flexible working is a good example of how technology indeed helps us to be more productive, without damaging the work/life balance. A key advantage that emerges consistently is the flexibility mobile technology can offer, allowing workers to regulate the pace, location and time of day in which they conduct their work (Towers et al., 2006 and Middleton, 2008). Use of Enterprise solutions provide facility to do things in less time and the potential for greater productivity and efficiency (Towers et. al., 2006)

On the flip side some researchers have also concluded that advent of technology not always have positive impact on the employees, Prasopoulou and Pouloudi (2006) asserted that expectation from an employee to be available 24 hours a day, can be challenging as well as result in work life conflict.

- Job Stress - Stanton, et al., (2001) defined it as something in the work place which gives an individual an experience of discomfort. Jamal, (2005); Mostert, Rothmann, Mostert, & Nell, (2008) concluded that higher levels of work related stress could lead to organizational problems like low productivity, increased absenteeism and turnover. Environments with work pressures, coupled with job insecurity stress have been associated with burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and lack of organizational commitment. (Goddard, O'Brien, & Goddard, 2006; Jamal, (2005); Noblet, Teo, McWilliams, & Rodwell, (2005))Female employees with young children experienced negative spill over from family responsibility to work due to tiredness, absenteeism, inefficiency and inability to accept new responsibilities at work (Crouter (1984)) and this was one of the major source of stress for professionals and females (Cooper and Davidson (1987)). Shrivastava and Krishna (1991) concluded that females in “dual career couples” with part time jobs experienced lesser role stress and maintained better health as compared to those who were in full time employment.
- Culture - (Daft, 2004) and Schneider (1998), revealed through their study that organizational culture provides cohesiveness and coherence inside the organization and acts as a “glue”,

which brings and holds people together. (Lussier 1996) culture and climate are the most important determinants of employees' satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Strong organizational culture induces better communication and increases the cooperation and job satisfaction. Strong culture plays the role of a catalyst in enhancing the creativity and willingness to trust others and their satisfaction in addition to reducing the level of stress and unpleasant mood states.

5.0.3 SOCIETAL FACTORS AFFECTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

- Child/Parent care Responsibility - S. Padma and M. Sudhir (2013) – found that the there is a statistically significant impact of support in Child Care responsibilities from Spouse and Elder parents“ on Work Life Balance of School Teachers. Marital status, long working hours, child care responsibilities and support from head of the department are the major factors that influence Work Life Balance. Santhan Lakshmi et. al. (2011). Jennefer et. al. (2012) revealed that child care responsibility (Mirowsky), long working hours, tenure and gender issues were considered to be main reasons for imbalance.

Family Support -Family members have a unique opportunity to provide both emotional support and instrumental support to the worker outside of the work environment (Caplan (1976)) Adams et al. (1996) advocates that work and family relations are related to job and life satisfaction and that the level of involvement, or degree of importance, the worker assigns to work and family roles is associated with relationships between work and family. Higher levels of family involvement resulted into higher levels of emotional sustenance from family members, which, in turn, had a positive relationship with life satisfaction. LaRocco et. al. (1980) revealed through their study that the family and friend support did not predict work-related outcomes like job satisfaction, but it did predict general well-being (e.g., depression and anxiety). Ganster, Fusilier and Mayes (1986). Kaufmann and Beehr (1989) reported that emotional support from family and friends was significantly related to a

composite of variables (job satisfaction, boredom, and depression) that they labeled strain reactions, but that instrumental support from family and friends did not.

5.0.4 OTHER

- Gender - The influence of gender on work-life issues is reported throughout much of the literature in relation to the nature of the workplace, normative and gender-based beliefs and expectations. Masood and Mahlawat (2012) identified that gender variable has significant impact on organization critical factors for maintaining the work-life balance.

Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) discovered that employment type and gender had noticeable effects on work-family conflict, job involvement and job satisfaction.

Employment type (organisational versus self-employment) was revealed to be linked to employee perception regarding levels of control. Namayandeh and Yaacob (2010) revealed that married women nurses had higher work interfering with family (WIF). This study also specified that women nurses with older age, more years of job experience, and longer duration of marriage, perceived lower level of WIF and FIW (family-interfering-with-work). Sanghamitra Buddhapriya (2009) found that balancing both career and family was an arduous task for working women especially when they have small children and there is no well-equipped day care facility where they can leave their kids without any tension while they are at work. Thriveni et. al. (2012) asserted that age, experience, marital status, income, type of family, number of dependents and perception of work-life balance of women employees.

Emslie C. & Hunt K. (2009) also concluded that gender affects the work life balance issues of individuals and also work life balance efforts are controlled by available socio-economic resources and cultural norms about gender, family and work.

Fathers want to increase the amount of time spent caring for their home and children, there are many structural, cultural, familial, and personal barriers to increase further involvement in family work (Allen & Hawkin, 1999).

The number of hours worked each week has a significant effect on reports of work-family conflict, particularly for women (Voydanoff, 1988).

- Age - Women with dependent children are finding it more difficult to balance their life than those who do not have dependent children. (Hamilton and Gordon, Robbins (2005)). Thriveni et. al. (2012) found that there is a significant relationship between demographic variables and Work Life balance of women employees.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The perception of Employees of work life Balance and emotional Intelligence are very important to perform in the competitive scenario. Many theories on work life balance have been framed as there was no common consensus about the same and most of the theories have been made male oriented. Women oriented theories especially for working mothers are less available. Emotional Intelligence has emerged as a strong factor in managing work life balance, a parameter which needs careful examination by organizations. Flexible work arrangements have also emerged as an important parameter, but it has little or no impact in developing countries as there it is still in its nascent stages. Work life policies of public/private sectors are different. Technology needs to be made a catalyst for managing work life balance and not to misbalance harmony between work and family. Women with dependent children are far more susceptible to work life conflicts; job stress etc. and young people are less susceptible to work life conflicts. Transformational leadership style should be adopted by the organization to balance work and family life.

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