

WORK LIFE BALANCE OF IT PROFESSIONALS- A STUDY**Dr.J.V.Rangeswara Reddy**

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ABSTRACT

Work life balance is an important topic in both professional business practice and academic research. Work-life balance is a central issue affecting an individual, as family and work are the most important elements of everyone's life. Any competing demands of work and family life cause conflict and negatively affect the employees.

IT business has been thriving everywhere throughout the globe with a measure of dynamism and this has been the principle contributory variable where workers are included. Because of the measure of Information Technology, a great deal of representatives is included in the work and the part of work-life parity comes in picture. The business is described by high rate of wearing down, attrition going high with turnover and loads more with bad nature of job. The creating economies may have been moderate to get the pattern of the more adjusted and gendered dispersion of work and family they are nearly tolerating the ideas, The expression "work-life equalization" (WLB) was begat in 1986 so as to address the issues of developing worries by people and associations which was identified with work which can force a few confinements upon the nature of family life and the other way around. All the 24 hours are isolated into work, family and rest and consequently a greater amount of the creating nations need to comprehend the significance of these sorts of issues like that of work-life balance. Work life balance is buzz word in the contemporary issues. It becomes a focal point in the achievement of individual goals with organizational goals irrespective of type of organization and gender. This study focused on assessing the impact of work-life balance determined by work-family conflict and family-work conflict on the individuals employed in the IT sector.

KEY WORDS: *Work life balance, conflict, buzz, Information Technology, contributory variable*

INTRODUCTION

Work life balance refers to the effective management of multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and in the other aspects of life. It is an issue that is important both to the organizations and to employees. In the current economic scenario, organisations are hard pressed for higher productivity and need employees with improved work-life balance as an employee with better work-life balance will contribute more meaningfully towards the organisational growth and success (Naithani, 2010). This issue has come to the fore due to multitude of changes in the work place, in employee demographics and in the family sphere.

Global labour market is becoming highly competitive and companies are outsourcing to reduce the labour costs. As a consequence, the employees feel impelled to put in longer hours to achieve and possibly exceed the employers' expectations in order to secure their jobs. Thus, the 'long hours culture' and '24/7 life style' has come to dominate the lives of highly

educated and skilled professionals and managerial personnel. A few decades earlier, it was widely expected that new technology would shorten the working hours and bring respite and leisure to the work force. But instead of bringing relief and leisure, the developed technology has left the workers, specially professionals, with little time free from paid work. In fact, technology has blurred the line separating office from home and now the employees are expected to be available for office work, even while at home, because of the facilities that IT networking has placed at our disposal. The present global environment has thrown up new challenges where workforce has to coordinate with the western markets that are almost 10 hours behind. Thus, the work has become more taxing and burdensome. These pressures and demands of work, reflected both in longer hours, more exhaustion and the growth of evening and weekend work, leaves little 'quality' time for the family leading to problems like, juvenile crime and drug abuse among the children. Moreover, these work pressures are also having a direct impact on the health of the employees.

Again, due to rapidly changing business environment, the organization are not able to provide secure employment and that is why the attitudes and values of people in work are also changing and they are less willing to display unconditional commitment to the organization and as noted by Guest, 2002, the decline of work as central life interest along with conflicting demands of work results in an imbalance between work and rest of life. The attitude towards life too is rapidly changing among the youth today. They believe in working hard and partying harder. They like to travel, socialize, pursue hobbies, take up adventure sports etc. When they do not get time for these activities, they are gripped by frustration and unhappiness.

Family sphere changes that have impacted the work life balance of individuals in today's context include nuclear families, single parent households, and dual earning parents, parents working at different locations and increasing household work. Hence, it has become very difficult to meet the family demands. Another change is the entry of women in workforce in a big way, while still continuing with their earlier role of a homemaker. So, women are playing a dual role, that of a breadwinner as also a homemaker

Work life balance

Work Life Balance refers to the sum total of the scores attained by the working professional on three dimensions namely, work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work and work/ personal life enhancement as measured by work life balance scale.

Working professional

According to Macmillian Dictionary (2009), a professional is someone who has special skills or qualifications. For the purpose of the present study working professional refers to employees in IT or ITES industry who have acquired special skills to enable themselves to work in IT or ITES industry (e.g. data management, networking, engineering computer hardware, database and software design, management and administration of entire systems, customer interaction services, e.g., call/contact centres and email help desks, engineering and design, back office processing, finance and accounting (provided remotely), insurance claims processing (provided remotely), HR services (provided remotely), web site development and maintenance services, data search, integration and analysis,, IT facilities management (including provided remotely), network consulting and management).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Adams et al. (1996) developed and tested a model of the relationship between work and family. The results suggested that higher levels of family emotional and instrumental support were associated with lower levels of family interfering with work. Frone et al. (1997) reported that family related support (spouse & other family members) may reduce family to work conflict by reducing family distress and parental overload.

Hammer et al. (1997) collected the data from 399 dual-earner couples and found that work family conflict had strong crossover effects for both males and females, indicating that individual's level of work family conflict was a significant predictor of their partner's level of work family conflict.

Drew and Murtagh (2005) examined the experience and attitude of female and male senior managers towards work life balance. The study was undertaken in a major Irish organization, for which work life balance was a strategic corporate objective. The finding of the study was that greatest obstacle to achieving work life balance was the "long hours" culture, in which availing oneself of flexible options (e.g. flextime/working from home) is incompatible with holding a senior management post. Many of senior men could delegate family/caring activities to their wives, which was not possible for majority of women in senior positions. Hence men sought work life balance to resolve, commuting/work time issues. Both men and women in senior management recognized that their own careers would be seriously jeopardized by taking up work life balance arrangements.

Rajadhyaksha and Velgach (2009) also found that women experienced significantly higher family interference with work as compared to men. However there were no significant differences between men and women in the experience of work interference with family.

Alam et al. (2009) explored the correlation between working hours and work family imbalance, for three focused groups, namely, teaching professionals and two groups from corporate houses. It was found that respondents working for 5-7 hours a day did not consider working hours as a factor to affect work and family balance. On the other hand, women managers in corporate sector, having long working hours (9-10 hours a day) agreed that time was a crucial factor for work family imbalance. The study approved the association between working hour and work family conflict. 99 per cent of women managers reported to have work family conflict because of 9 -10 hours work every day. Only 20 per cent involved in teaching reported so.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study's findings will help to identify the individual, family, and work related variables related to work life balance. Thus the study would help the industry practitioners to: (a) understand the work life balance and its various dimensions; (b) understand the relationship between individual related variables; family related variables; and work life balance and design interventions for enhancing emotional intelligence of working professionals and also design support systems to enable the working professionals to shoulder their family responsibilities, and thus, reduce interference of family life in work; and (c) redesign work related variables such as task variety, task autonomy and work schedule flexibility so as to improve work life balance of working professionals. In addition the study will help in taking stock of the existing programmes for enhancing work life balance and evolving strategies for strengthening those existing programmes. The industry would be able to formulate policies for recruitment, development and deployment of professionals, thus leading to better talent management and reduction in costs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the relationship between the emotional intelligence and work life balance
2. To study the relationship between work centrality and work life balance dimension
3. To study the relationship between family related variables (Marital Status) and work life balance

HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between work life balance and emotional intelligence

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between work life balance and work centrality

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between work life balance and family related (Marital Status) variables

SAMPLE SIZE

200 persons are taken as sample from select IT companies. Sample are drawn randomly.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

1. Emotional Intelligence Scale
2. Work Centrality Scale
3. House Hold Responsibility Index

Limitation of the Study

- The study has been restricted to Hyderabad region only
- Sample of the study has been restricted to only IT and ITES companies in the selected regions.
- Only selected individual variables, family related variables, work related variables have been included in the study

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

It is evident from below Table that scores on emotional intelligence (EI) ranged between 91 and 171. The mean for emotional intelligence scores was found to be 131.57 and the median was found to be 132. The distribution of scores on emotional intelligence was found to be normal as skewness ($Sk=.22$, Table 1) was found to be insignificant at .01 level of significance. The kurtosis ($Ku=.51$) was also found to be within limits at .01 level of significance

Descriptive statistics for individual related variables

Statistics	Individual related variables	
	EI N=200	WCEN N=200
Mean	131.57	37.84
Median	132	38
Std. Deviation	13.4	7.1
Skewness	0.22	-0.02
Std. Error of Skewness	0.13	0.13
Kurtosis	0.51	0.22
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.29	0.29
Minimum	89	15
Maximum	168	57

Sk: Significant level 0.01

Likewise, for the individual variable, work centrality (WCEN), the skewness ($Sk= -.02$) was found to be insignificant. Thus, the distribution of scores on work centrality was found to be normal. The peakedness of scores ($Ku= .22$) was found to be within the limits at .01 level of significance.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

The correlation between emotional intelligence and work life balance and its dimensions; and differences among IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of emotional intelligence on work life balance and its dimensions are discussed below.

(a) Correlations between emotional intelligence and work life balance and its dimensions Table shows the correlations between emotional intelligence and work life balance and its dimensions. Emotional intelligence of IT and ITES working professionals was found to be significantly positively correlated with personal life interference with work (PLIW; $r=.28$), work/personal life enhancement (WPLE; $r=.26$) and with overall work life balance (WLB Total; $r=.25$) at .01 level of significance. The results imply that higher the emotional intelligence, lesser is the personal life interference with work; higher is the work/personal life enhancement; and higher is the overall work life balance and vice versa.

Correlations between emotional intelligence and work life balance and its dimensions

Work Life Balance	Correlation with EI (N=200
WIPL ¹	0.08
PLIW ¹	0.28(**)
WPLE	0.26(**)
WLB Total	0.25(**)

The IT and ITES working professionals with high level of emotional intelligence, i.e., the professionals who are focused, consistent, able to manage conflicts and stay composed and who do not mix emotions with issues at hands, can concentrate on tasks inspite of disturbances and can perform multitask and are self motivated for work, tend to show less interference of personal life with work

Again, IT and ITES working professionals with high level of emotional intelligence tend to have high work/personal life enhancement and they derive energy from work for personal life and energy from personal life for work. On the other hand, IT and ITES working professionals with low emotional intelligence tend to have low levels of work/personal life enhancement.

The IT and ITES working professionals with high levels of emotional intelligence also tend to show high levels of overall work life balance and vice versa. Professionals with high

emotional intelligence are able to minimize interference of personal life with work and enhance work and personal life by deriving energy from each other and hence tend to have high work life balance.

Hence, Hypothesis H_{01} that “there will be significant correlation between the emotional intelligence and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” is accepted for the dimensions of personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of work interference with personal life.

WORK CENTRALITY AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

The correlations between work centrality and work life balance and its dimensions; and differences among IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of work centrality on work life balance and its dimensions are discussed below

(a) Correlations between work centrality and work life balance and its dimensions The variable of work centrality was found to be significantly positively correlated with WIPL ($r=.11$, Table) at .05 level and WPLE ($r=.26$) and WLB Total ($r=.20$) at .01 level of significance.

Correlations between work centrality and work life balance and its dimensions

Work Life Balance	Correlation with WCEN (N=200)
WIPL¹	0.11(*)
PLIW¹	0.06
WPLE	0.26(**)
WLB Total	0.20(**)

*Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Significant at the 0.01 level.

The results imply that higher the importance attached to work by an individual, lower is the interference of work with personal life, higher is the work/personal life enhancement and higher is the overall work life balance and vice versa. IT and ITES working professionals who have high work centrality, i.e., who give high priority to their work in life, keep their work above other pursuits, derive satisfaction in life from work and have personal life goals work oriented, tend to show less interference of work with personal life, are able to derive energy from work for personal life and exhibit high level of work life balance.

Hence, Hypothesis H_{02} that “there will be significant correlation between the work centrality and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES

industry” is accepted for the dimensions of work interference with personal life, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of personal life interference with work.

Work life balance of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of work centrality Table shows that F-values were found to be highly significant for the dimension of work/personal life enhancement (WPLE; $F=11.40$) and for overall work life balance (WLB Total; $F=8.33$). The results thus showed that there were significant differences among IT and ITES working professional with low, average and high work centrality on the dimension of WPLE and on WLB Total.

Work life balance of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of work centrality

Work Life Balance	Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
WIPL	Between Groups	236.83	2	118.42	2.73
	Within Groups	13251.3	305	43.45	
	Total	13488.1	307		
PLIW	Between Groups	85.58	2	42.79	2.94
	Within Groups	4441.99	305	14.56	
	Total	4527.57	307		
WPLE	Between Groups	452.83	2	226.42	11.40(**)
	Within Groups	6060.14	305	19.87	
	Total	6512.97	307		
WLB Total	Between Groups	1928.49	2	964.25	8.33(**)
	Within Groups	35292.7	305	115.71	
	Total	37221.2	307		

Further t-ratios were calculated to find out significance of differences between means and the results are given in Table 4.8. Significant differences were found between IT and ITES working professionals with low and high work centrality on the dimension of WPLE ($ML=17.27$, $MH=20.29$, $t=4.65$, $p=.01$) and WLB Total ($ML=69.04$, $MH=74.57$, $t=3.15$, $p=.01$). Again significant differences were observed between IT and ITES working professionals with average and high work centrality on dimension of WPLE ($MA=18.04$, $MH=20.29$, $t=3.59$, $p=.01$) and on WLB Total ($MA=69.17$, $MH=74.57$, $t=3.85$, $p=.01$). However, no significant differences were observed between IT and ITES working professionals with low and average work centrality

Table:

**Significance of differences among mean scores on work life balance of IT and ITES
working professionals at varied levels of work centrality**

Work Life Balance	WCEN	N	Mean	SD	Group differences	t-ratio
WIPL	Low	54	30.1	7.89	Low-average	Not Applicable
	Average	86	30.12	5.68	Low-high	Not Applicable
	High	60	32.02	6.53	Average-high	Not Applicable
	Total	200	30.69	6.63		
PLIW	Low	54	21.67	3.83	Low-average	Not Applicable
	Average	86	21.02	3.82	Low-high	Not Applicable
	High	60	22.26	3.8	Average-high	Not Applicable
	Total	200	21.57	3.84		
WPLE	Low	54	17.27	3.94	Low-average	1.26
	Average	86	18.04	4.64	Low-high	4.65(**)
	High	60	20.29	4.62	Average-high	3.59(**)
	Total	200	18.51	4.61		
WLB Total	Low	54	69.04	11.77	Low-average	0.1
	Average	86	69.17	9.46	Low-high	3.15(**)
	High	60	74.57	11.52	Average-high	3.85(**)
	Total	200	70.77	11.01		

The results imply that IT and ITES working professionals who accord primary importance to work in their lives and derive satisfaction from work show significantly higher work/personal life enhancement and higher work life balance than the IT and ITES professionals with average and low levels of work centrality. Hence, Hypothesis H₀₂ that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of work centrality on work life balance and its dimensions” is accepted for the dimensions of work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it

is rejected for the dimension of work interference with personal life and personal life interference with work.

MARITAL STATUS AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

The correlation between marital status and work life balance and its dimensions; and differences between married and unmarried IT and ITES working professionals on work life balance and its dimensions are discussed below.

(a) Correlations between marital status and work life balance and its dimensions

As is evident from the Table, no significant correlation was found between the marital status of IT and ITES working professionals and the overall work life balances. Further, the correlations between marital status and the dimensions of work life balance, namely, work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work and work/personal life enhancement were also found to be insignificant

Correlations between marital status and work life balance and its dimensions

Work Life Balance	Correlation with Marital Status
WIPL ¹	-0.04
PLIW ¹	-0.09
WPLE	-0.09
WLB Total	-0.02

*Significant at the 0.05 level .

**Significant at the 0.01 level

The results thus imply that marital status and work life balance are not related. Hence, Hypothesis H₀₃ that “there will be significant correlation between the marital status and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” is rejected

(b)Significance of differences between mean scores on work life balance of married and unmarried IT and ITES professionals

Work Life Balance	Marital Status				t-Ratio
	Married		Unmarried		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
WIPL	30.39	5.73	30.96	7.36	0.76

PLIW	21.2	3.85	21.91	3.82	1.62
WPLE	18.96	4.1	18.1	5	1.64
WLB Total	70.54	10.16	70.97	11.76	0.34

The results of significance of differences entered in Table 4.14, show that there were no significant differences between the married and unmarried IT and ITES working professionals on the dimensions of WIPL ($t=.76$), PLIW ($t=1.62$), WPLE ($t=1.64$) and on WLB Total ($t=.34$). These results are consistent with the results of the study by Hsieh et al. (2005) who also did not find any differences between married and unmarried managers with regard to work-personal life balance. Hence, Hypothesis H_{03} that “there will be significant differences between the mean scores of married and unmarried IT and ITES working professionals on work life balance and its dimensions” stands rejected.

CONCLUSION

1. The scores on work life balance scale could range between 15 -105. However, the scores of IT and ITES working professionals on overall work life balance ranged between 48 and 105. The average work life balance of IT and ITES working professionals was found to be 70.77 and median was found to be 70. 50% of the IT and ITES working professionals scored below the score of 70 and remaining scored above the score of 70. The results indicate that the mean work life balance of the professionals was above average.
2. Hypothesis is accepted for the dimensions of personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of work interference with personal life.
3. The results imply that IT and ITES working professionals who accord primary importance to work in their lives and derive satisfaction from work show significantly higher work/personal life enhancement and higher work life balance than the IT and ITES professionals with average and low levels of work centrality. Hence, Hypothesis H_{02} that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of work centrality on work life balance and its dimensions” is accepted for the dimensions of work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of work interference with personal life and personal life interference with work
4. The results thus imply that marital status and work life balance are not related. Hence, Hypothesis H_{03} that “there will be significant correlation between the marital status

and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” is rejected

Work life Balance is one of the important thing should maintain by the individual working in high pressure and long working hours. If it is not maintain properly with personal life of the employee it affect the personal life and efficiency of the individual it leads to low efficiency at work place.

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