

WORK LIFE BALANCE OF EMPLOYEES: THEORETICAL CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Neelima Gokhroo*
Dr. Bhawani Shankar Sharma**

ABSTRACT

Work-life balance aims at ensuring that the employees of an organization are able to divide their personal and professional life in a harmonious manner. The management of an organization needs to understand that developing and implementing policies under work-life balance, is a necessity in today's scenario in order to increase productivity, enhancing education standards as well as talent retention. In today's world, most of the organizations have started introducing various policies in order to create a conducive working environment by the means of flexible working hours and job sharing responsibilities, which further leads to better work culture, effectiveness and organizational productivity.

Keywords: *Worklife Balance, Emotional Intelligence, Workalcoholic, Conflict, Attitude.*

INTRODUCTION

An employee is also a human resource, which is basically a competitive advantage for any organization, as they are required to fulfil their objectives, mission and vision (Chenoweth, 2014). Apart from being an employee, an individual is also the life of a family, completing various roles on day to day basis, carrying out husbandly/wifely duties and possesses interests and hobbies outside work (Acas, 2015; Kaur, 2013).

Women employees have their own challenges to deal with, both in personal and professional arena, as they have to juggle between different roles in personal domain where concept of responsibility sharing does not exist with their spouses and family members. Other factors like timings, gender biasness, promotion barriers and other day-to-day professional life issues keep testing them to maintain their work life balance.

* Research Scholar, Department of Business Administration, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

** Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Factors affecting work life balance of female employees

Personal domain factors	Professional domain factor
General factors	
Marital status, Number of dependents, Type of family structure, Gender, Life stage, Qualification, Personality trait, Experience, Self-expectations, Psychological factors	Peer support, Leave policy, Performance appraisal, Promotion, Job security, Type of leadership, Size of organization, Placement pressure, Publicity pressure, Remuneration policy, Faculty development opportunities, Career growth, Training, Communication, Managerial Support, Faculty participation in decision making ,Organizational culture, Working conditions, Technical know- how, Working hours, Weekly load of Teaching, Nature of employment: Permanent/ Temporary, Working hours, Domain of Teaching
Specific factors	
Family support, Spouse support, Social norms, Attitude of relatives	Gender bias, Conveyance facility, Moral and ethical issues, Child care policy

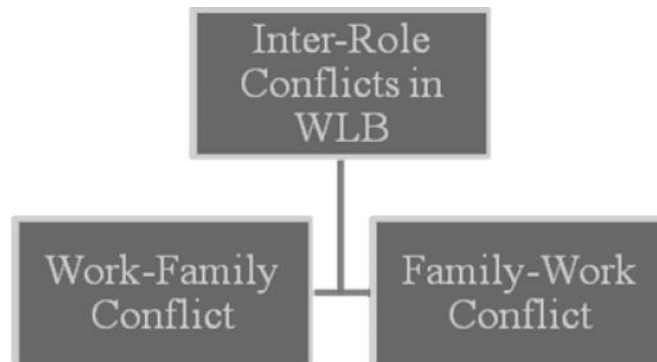
WORK-LIFE BALANCE - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of Work-life Balance i.e. WLB, backs the efforts of the employees to divide their time and energy between work, family and the other aspects of their lives. In recent years, WLB has occupied a significant role in the higher education sector - research and academia, enabling employees or faculties to pay attention towards personal, societal and professional aspects of their lives as well. Organisations in general have realised that there is a need to plan and promote work life balance policies for increasing both qualitative and quantitative productivity. The steps taken by organisations to do so include - job sharing, flexible working hours, family events at work etc. This has been done so, to bridge the gaps between professional, personal and social lives of the faculties with an aim to improve organizational work culture and effectiveness.

Coser (1974) had said that, "Work-life balance is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home. Work and family have increasingly become antagonist spheres, equally greedy of energy and time and responsible for work-family conflict."

Japan, is considered as one of the most hard working country and the culture of the country is work oriented. But this has led serious issue for the majority of the citizens, as their lives are revolving only around their professional life. Japan as on date has the highest working hours amounting to 80 hours overtime in a month which goes unpaid to the employees. Issues persistent in the country are - low birth rate, lonely lifestyle of the citizens, overburdened with work and sleeplessness epidemic. Hence, the country is trying its best to adopt work-life balance policies in order to improve the situation of its citizens (The Guardian - 2019).

Quality of work life as proposed by Tapomoy Deb (2016), as a solution to address the work-life imbalance issues, follow the objectives - to attract and retain talent, to prevent stress and burnout, to increase job satisfaction, quality and productivity through higher job satisfaction and to balance personal/family and work related demands on an individual employee for maintaining optimum levels of personal effectiveness. It is further proposed, that if the quality of life could be improved further, it shall benefit and uplift the employees, the organization and the society collectively.



INTER ROLE CONFLICT

Work Life Balance is conflicted because of the inter-role conflicts- 1.Work-Family Conflict and 2.Family-Work Conflict. Work-Family Conflict can be defined as the inter-role conflict where few responsibilities under work and family domains are not compatible and have a negative influence over employee at work front, e.g. low job satisfaction, negative attitude, being late for work, repetitive mistakes, resistance to change. Whereas, Family-Work Conflict concludes where family and work responsibilities are not compatible, which negatively impacts the home front, e.g. conflict within the family, lower life satisfaction.

Gerson, Katherine (2011) cited that young men have been demanding balance between paid work and personal attachments without being browbeaten at work, whereas compared to women, traditional stereotypes are starting to lessen in regard with responsibilities for child care. Even though, employers now are offering various work-life balance opportunities to help their employees, it is turning out to be a catch 22 situation for women employees. The reason behind it is, that even though the option is available, it is seen as occupational dead end as they do not want to be marginalized. Galinsky and Stein (1990) have described that main problem being faced by employed women include looking after children, and elders, long work hours, transfers and job demands etc.

With building pressures from organisations, it becomes difficult for a woman to maintain work life balance and they end up living the lives of a workaholic (Yanchus, et. al, 2016).The term “workaholic” refers to an individual becoming completely devoted towards his work which can eventually become a matter of risk towards their health, personal happiness, interpersonal relationships and social functioning in general (Brady, et. al. 2008).

DETERMINANTS AND FACTORS OF WLB

The key determinants that contribute towards work life balance are – individual, organisational and societal factors.

Individual Factors	Organisational Factors	Societal Factors
Personality	The work arrangement	Return on Investment
Well-being	Work Life Policies & Programs	Demography
Emotional intelligence	Segregation of Duties	Achieving Work Life Balance
	Job Demand-Resources Model	
	Role Related Factors	
	Career Management	

THE INDIVIDUAL FACTOR

Poulose & Sudarsan (2014) had proposed three categories under individual factors personality, well-being and emotional intelligence.

PERSONALITY

Human Resource professionals use Big Five Model of personality to determine the talent acquisition and placement, under which an individual's personality traits are assessed in order to sum up their overall personality. As per a survey conducted by Kaur in 2013, it was found that correlation between work life balance and factor like satisfaction in life, openness dimension, extrovert behaviour, had a positive relationship. Similar result was processed by Priyadharshini & Wesley (2015), after surveying 205 IT employees wherein personality factors significantly affect the work life programs and in predicting work life conflict. But it is to be noted that neurotic dimension has no co-relation with work life balance. The dimensions taken into account under personality traits are:

- Openness: open minded, ready for new things or new experiences, intelligence, imaginative, creative on and have wide variety of interest.
- Conscientiousness: reliable and prompt, goal oriented, neat and orderliness, high responsibility factor and hardworking.
- Extroversion: very energetic, possess specific plan on their duty, easy -going, get motivated from the surrounding environment and enthusiastic.
- Agreeableness: friendly and compassionate, easy to cooperate, forgiving, kind and trustworthy
- Neuroticism: more inclined towards negative emotions, moody, tensed and always worried.

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

It is directly related to an employee's physical, psychological and emotional well-being. As per World Health Organisation (WHO), an employee's well-being is correlated with his/her mental health which they in their own capacity have the power to cope up with the normal stresses of life in order to work productively and contribute to their respective communities (MacLeod & Clarke, 2017).

Any conflict in work-life balance affects an individual's health significantly, as it leads to stress and poor mental as well as physical health, which further leads to low morale, emotional exhaustion, less physical activity, higher levels of stress, sadness, fatigue, depression and eventually leading towards drug and alcohol abuse (Delecta, 2011). It is

argued by Cooper (2014), that high psychological well-being leads to positive outcomes in an individual such as commitment, high morale and better health which further leads to an improved organisational performance and productivity.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

As defined by Robbins & Judge (2012), "Emotional intelligence is an ability of an individual to recognize feelings and understanding behaviour in adapting to his surrounding situations involving emotions, enabling him/her to think, respond and react accordingly." Through emotional intelligence, one is able to measure self-awareness, self-management, maintain interpersonal relationships and recognize emotions. It enables an individual to understand people and manages emotional cues as well as uses it to make a decision and act accordingly.

As per a study conducted by Kumar & Rajaram (2012), correlation between emotional intelligence and work life balance was found among employees of an educational institution. With a difference between teaching and non-teaching staff, 60% of the teachers (professional level) were more competent in balancing their needs as well as responsibilities in regard with corporate responsibilities, learning process, research work guiding, project exam management, student counselling etc and also towards their social obligations as well as duties towards their family and work environment during working hours.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

There are various factors within an organisation which affect the work life balance as the demands of the organisation keeps changing as per the changing needs of its external as well as internal environment. External environment demands such as political, economic, social, technological, legal forces contribute towards intense pressure and organizational restructuring (Luthan & Doh, 2012). With such changes, it becomes important for an organisation to align their employees to these changes and continue the process of working towards achieving the goals and targets of the organization. The various work life conflicts correlate with organizational and individual outcomes (Raisinghanil and Goswami, 2014). If the outcomes are adverse and not in favour of the organization, it leads to absenteeism, increased managerial stress, low productivity and reduced job satisfaction.

THE WORK ARRANGEMENT

By providing flexible working hours, an organisation enables employees to have their own time and the liberty to work as per their ease. Even though flexible work arrangement provides an alternative to the traditional 9-5 working hours, employees try to skew in various roles even in the flexible hours in order to maintain work-life balance.

WORK LIFE POLICIES AND PROGRAM

In order to maintain and sustain competitive advantage of an organisation, it is vital that the organization is willing to hear the needs of their employees and adhere to the need for quality work-life balance. Hence, it becomes important for an organization to strategize and implement work life policies and programs for their employees, for their own benefit in the long run (Azlinzuraini et al, 2014). In implementing work life balance policies, an organization should raise questions like:

- Is the organisation ready for work-life initiatives?
- Is the culture shift required?
- Will it benefit the organisation and its employees?
- Will it be cost effective for the organisation?
- Will the environment be able to sustain the changes?

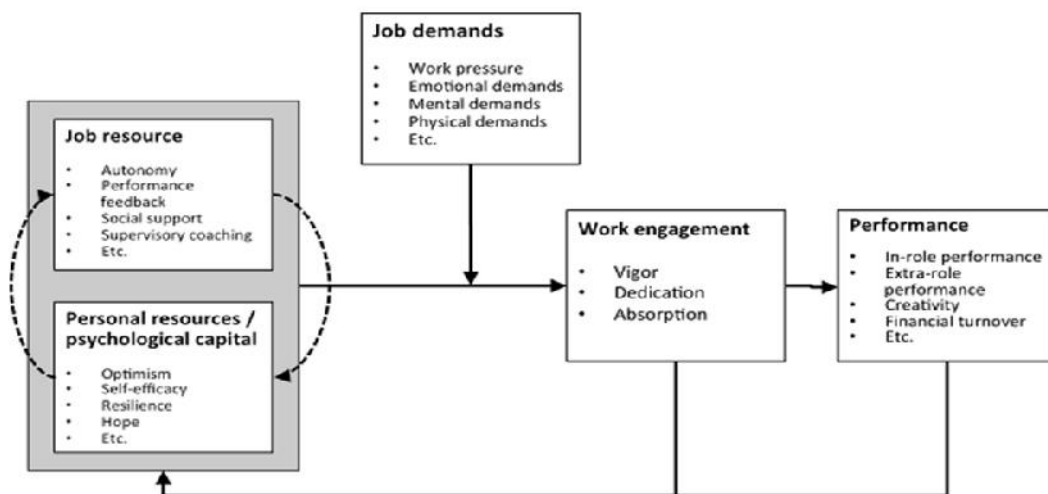
It has been revealed through various studies that work-life benefit programs have brought in greater commitment, less attrition and less work-family conflicts. And it has also seen a positive shift in working attitudes of employees and perceived managerial support.

SEGREGATION OF DUTIES

According to Gramling (2010), segregation of duties is the basic key for internal control and the most difficult task to accomplish in an organisation. Segregation and delegation of duties, in nutshell controls the entire work-force of an organisation and that also lets their employees know their role and importance in their environment. Clear demarcation of responsibilities and duties provides employees with a sense of belongingness and holds them accountable for the responsibilities adhered to them.

JOB DEMAND-RESOURCES MODEL

The model is used to determine employee burnout and employee engagement as it describes the assumptions of every occupation in regard with employee well-being. The model classifies the work environment into two categories – Job Demand and Job Resources. Job Demand affect the employee's mental and physical health which take place due to the struggling effort to meet job demands and skills towards achieving organisational goals. Job Resources, on the other hand relates to individual motivation clubbed with functional management through social support and performance feedback. Job resources are also related to aspects like job security, role clarity, working environment and combating negative effects of job demands. With higher job demand and lower job resources, it is bound to result in job strain, demotivated employees, burnout and other negative aspects affecting the employees mentally, physically and spiritually.



Imbalance in job demand and job resource will significantly affect the work engagement of an employee which will further result in burnout, whereas high job demands and high job resources shall have lesser consequences in terms of burnout stages as well as create positive work outcomes. Even with jobs high in demand and low in necessary job resources, shall result in burnout. Hence, it is vital for a balance to be maintained between job demand and job resource (Yanchus, 2013).

ROLE RELATED FACTORS

Role overload and role ambiguity predict employee's strain over-time but not role conflicts. Role overload exists when expectations towards job roles are greater than the individual's capabilities and motivation to perform the given task. Role ambiguity is related to an individual's lack of clarity, authority, knowledge towards their task and inappropriate role expectation and demand from the same creates role conflict. Job demands will encourage an employee, to put an effort in order to take a challenging task as long it is within his/her capabilities and that can lead to increase in productivity. In case the situation is reversed, it will leave the employee under stress/strain which occurs mainly because of fatigue and incompetency that results from pressure to comply with the set of demands.

CAREER MANAGEMENT

Married women at professional level decide to slow down their career movement, even if an organisation provides the work life practise as their concerns shift after child-birth, and constant worry of the infant healthcare or childcare bothers them (Subramaniam et al, 2015). Employee engagement through rewards system, career growth prospects, promotions, increments and other benefits provide a systematic career management to the employees.

THE SOCIETAL FACTOR

An organizational environment is referred to as the societal factor in work life balance, which usually compatible with the culture of the country of functioning of the organisation. Every region has a different take on work life balance practices i.e. work life balance practices between United States and European Union will vary, as their cultural differences shall focus on different requirements and agendas to achieve.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Every policy or a strategy devised by an organisation is done keeping return on investment in mind, be it financially or as an environmental benefit for the organisation. Work life balance practice is done as an investment towards their employees, in order to maintain their heightened productivity levels by showing that company cares. It is a basic method to reduce attrition rate and increase job engagement of the employees (Joshi, et. al, 2002).

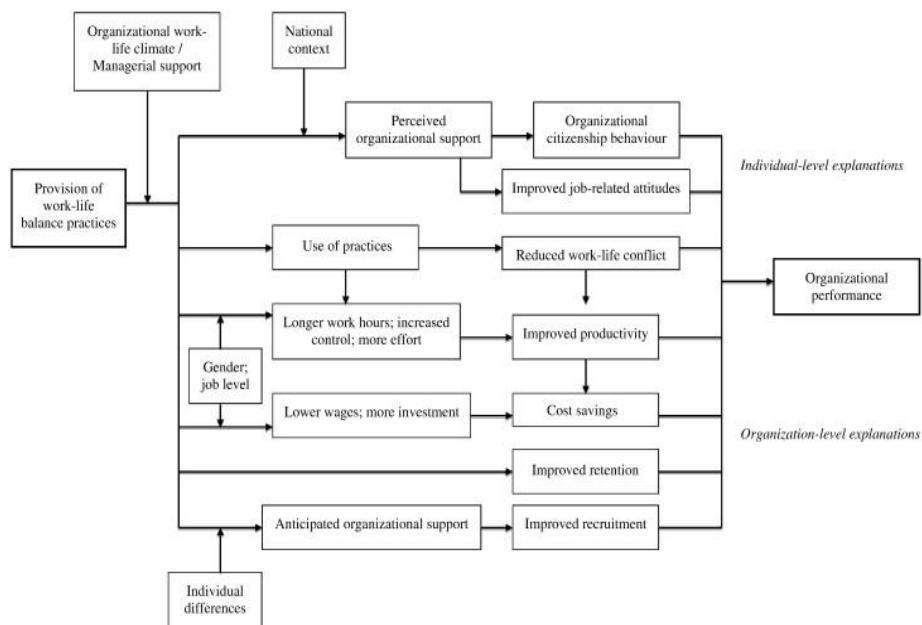
DEMOGRAPHY

According to Dike (2013) ,labour force in today's market is diverse and diversity of employees needs to be managed accordingly by the organization. The workforce diversity with diverse demands especially on achieving satisfactory work-life roles, organizations need to be more passionate in regard with implementation of the quality of work life balance programs.

Lavanya & Thangavel, (2014) in their report discussed that older employees used many dependent policies such as childcare, elder care, paid maternity leave and pension policies. Many researchers and surveyors have mentioned that married women are more in need of work life balance programs as compared to men, due to their dual responsibility both at home and work. It was also discussed that women tend to take spontaneous leaves in order to fulfil their family demands and needs, hence work life balance programs for them should be initiated more in order to retain women employees.

ACHIEVING WORK LIFE BALANCE

Time management skills are the key to managing and achieving a balance among all spheres as every individual has 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, which needs to be allocated profusely for all the activities - basic need to exercise, sleep, social events, work demands, family demands and personal pursuits. Hence effective time management can help reduce stress and bring balance to life in and out of the office. Organizations can help employees by providing training modules for time management, delegation and help them prioritise their needs, wants and commitments accordingly.



SHIFTS IN ROLES OF WOMEN IN WORK FORCE

- **Phase I:** Early years of communal living. Entire family engaged in work for subsistence.
- **Phase II:** Pre industrialisation period. Partial segregation of workplace and family life.
- **Phase III:** Industrial revolution in mid 1800s. Strengthening of segregation of workplace and family life. Men started to dominate workforce.
- **Phase IV:** Between late 18th and early 19th century. Separation of work and family strengthened due to division of labour.
- **Phase V:** Between early 19th century and 1950. Human strength dependent technology abetted male domination at workplace.

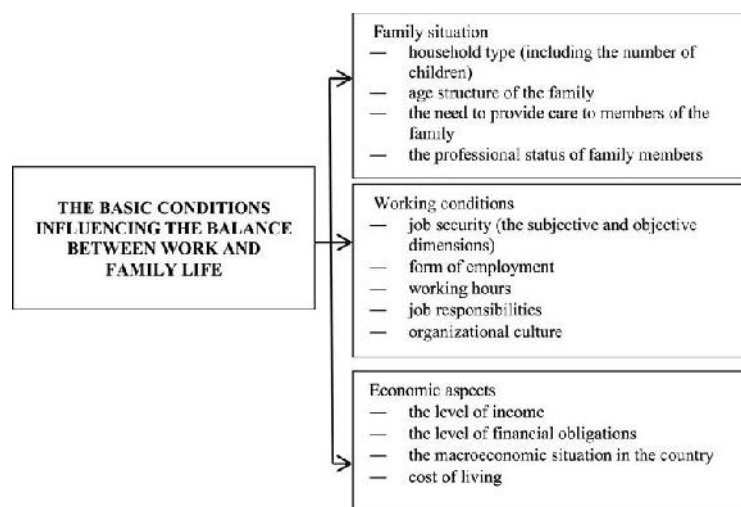
- **Phase VI:** Between 1950s and early 1980s. Gender division reversed due to technology. Introduction of work-life balance facilities.
- **Phase VII:** Between 1980s and 2008. More women and mothers in global workforce. Significant growth in work-life balance facilities.
- **Phase VIII:** Recession - 2008 onwards. Increase in work-family related challenges and reduction in work-life balance facilities.

FACTORS AFFECTING WORK LIFE BALANCE OF FEMALES

- Demographic profile and biographic profile
- Perception towards hours of work, work logistics and lifestyle choices
- Professional satisfaction and willingness to continue in the present assignment
- Organizational support
- Chance for correction of errors while performing of tasks
- Expectation of facilities at work place and enhancement of skills
- Superior interaction at work
- Facing biological hazards while performing tasks
- Impact of stress on self
- Understanding emotions, role of empathy while performing tasks
- Perception towards different components for WLB policies

CONSEQUENCES OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Considering that work life balance holds a pivotal role in any individual as well as organisation's periphery, it does possess certain consequences if not managed well. Poor work life balance is often demonstrated within a range of physical and psychological strains i.e. depression, anxiety, low self-confidence, insomnia, mental imbalance, burnout, low productivity, low morale, fatigue, hypertension, high-blood pressure and even increase relationship fall-out. Another consequence of poor work life balance is that work-family conflict increases emotional exhaustion and lowers satisfaction levels at job front (Karatepe and Tekinkus, 2006).



Organisations also face toxic consequences both directly and indirectly due to poor work life balance among employees. In terms of direct consequences – issues like poor productivity, accidents at work place increase, lower involvement of employees at work come into play. Whereas indirect consequences like apathetic attitude towards work, conflicts at work, poor interpersonal relations and so on come into play which spoil the overall working environment of the organisation.

Lack of work life balance adversely affects the family domain as well; as it results in violence, dissatisfaction at home front, child abuse, marital discord, increase divorce rates, low birth rates, disharmony within the family and neglecting the elderly. All of these lead to societal malfunctioning and disharmony, hence it becomes important to address the issues of work life balance in order to maintain balance through all spheres of the environment.

CONCLUSION

The Indian scenario has been altering rapidly due to globalisation, disproportionate competitiveness and organisational work culture. The work life balance among men and women working in several organisational organisations have been trying to intensify their work life balance, which is of great significance on their efficiency, productivity as well as well-being. Organisations have been effectively focusing on these issues and trying their best to implement various work life balance policies, in order to provide healthier working environment for workers in their organisations. Institutions have realised the need for providing a balanced life to their workforce by understanding that they are not bounded by the financial security provided by their jobs but with their need of managing various roles outside the work environment which demands their time and attention at all times. The productive management of human assets is a challenging task for any organisation as the current working scenario has changed into a global village and every country is undergoing changes rapidly. Work life balance has emerged as an apex agenda for various organisations and employers have become conscious about the need for the same.

REFERENCES

- ⇒ Bird. J (2006), "Work Life Balance Doing it Right & Avoiding the Pitfalls", Employment Relations Today, Vol. 33 No.3.
- ⇒ Kudachimath B & Rotti A, (2014) "Work Life Balance: Emerging Challenge to HR Professionals", International Journal of Multifaceted and Multilingual Studies, Vol. I , Issue II.
- ⇒ Newth.D, (2011), "Stress and Work/Life Balance : Insight for Managers", bookboon.com pp- 31-33.
- ⇒ Singh .S (2014), "Measuring Work life balance in India", International Journal of advance Research in Computer Science and Management Studies, Vol. 2 Issue.5, pp 35-45.
- ⇒ Visser . F & Williams .L (2006), "Work life Balance: Rhetoric Versus Reality?",

