

STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY LIFE - KEY DRIVER TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

Manpreet Kaur

Assistant Professor, Chandigarh Business School of Administration, CGC Landran, Mohali, Punjab, India

Received: 13 Mar 2018

Accepted: 21 Mar 2018

Published: 26 Mar 2018

ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is a notion that supports the efforts of employees to divide their time and energy between work and the other significant aspects of their lives. The changing conditions of economic and social demands have changed the nature of work throughout the world. Due to uncertainty in the external environment, the working environment has become dynamic throughout the world. The concept of Work- life balance is becoming quite relevant in a changing working environment. This paper attempts to study the concept of work- life balance and how it relates to employee productivity. It also focuses on finding out the benefits of achieving Work- life balance for both employees and the organization. This study is descriptive by nature. The paper also studies various challenges faced by the employees in achieving Work life balance. It was observed through the study that achieving Work- life balance would be mutually beneficial for both employees as well as the organizations. It would improve employee satisfaction, foster employee productivity, and enhance organizational performance. This paper also gives a few suggestions on achieving work life balance.

KEYWORDS: *Work Life Balance, Employee Productivity, Organizational Performance, Employee Satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance includes proper prioritizing between work (Career and ambition) on one hand and life (health, pleasure and leisure, spiritual) on the other hand. Work-life balance is a notion that supports the efforts of employees to divide their time and energy between work and the other significant aspects of their lives. Besides fulfilling the demands of the workplace, work-life balance is a daily effort to create time for family, friends, society participation, religion, personal growth, self-care, and other personal activities. Employees with work- life balance feel their lives are fulfilled both inside and outside of work, and they experience minimal conflict between work and non-work roles and life in general and lower levels of stress in general.

From the prospective of employees, WLB is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home. Work- life initiatives are those strategies, policies, programs, and practices initiated and maintained in workplaces to address flexibility, quality of work life and work-family conflict. Strategies of WLB in organizations include policies covering flexible work arrangements, child and dependent care and family and parental leave. It leads to not only improved the productivity of an employee, but also leads to an organizational success.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the concept of work-life balance.
- To study the relationship between work-life balance and employee's productivity.
- To study the benefits of work-life balance strategies for both employees and organizations.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES

Work-life balance is a key driver of employee's satisfaction. Demonstrating respect, trust and integrity ensures sustained and enhanced performance and productivity. Adopting such practices could improve workers health, increase productivity, lower turnover, and decrease absenteeism.

In order to maintain a balance between work-life and family life, some common work life balance practices should be adopted by organizations to improve employee's productivity -

- 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 tasks
- Expectation of facilities at workplace and enhancement of skills
- Superior interaction at work
- Facing biological hazards while performing tasks
- Impact of stress on self
- Understanding emotions, the role of empathy while performing tasks

LITERATURE REVIEW

T. Alexandra Beauregard and Lesley C. Henry (2009) in their paper, "Making the link between work-life balance practices and organizational performance", analyzed the various methods by which organizational performance is influenced by organizational work-life practices. At both the individual and organization level, they reviewed the support available for the link between work-life practices and organizational performance. They suggested that modifications need to be made in business organizations to reflect the various means by which work-life balance practices can influence organizational performance, including increased cost savings, enhanced social exchange processes, reduced turnover and improved productivity.

Susi.S, Jawaharrani. K (2010) in their paper, "Work-Life Balance: The key driver of employee engagement" shows that a changing economy and a maturing workforce can collectively create an employment environment where competent employees who are not satisfied with their current situations are encouraged to find a new place to shed their

stress. As compared to an unengaged workforce, a highly engaged workforce shows 50% more productivity. The success of any business organization depends upon employee engagement, according to most of the HR professionals. It has been suggested in this paper that for employee engagement and their retention, work-life balance is considered to be an important factor.

Diksha Garg and Shilpa Rani (2015) in their paper, “Work-life Balance: A Key Driver to Improve Organizational Performance” have suggested that human resource professionals having a positive attitude seeks innovative ways to enhance their organization’s competitive advantage in the marketplace and find that work-life balance challenges offer a win-win solution. In this study, an effort has been made to reveal the outcomes and benefits of implementing work life balance practices not only for the employees themselves but also for their families, organizations, and society.

Purohit Manisha (2013) in their paper “A Comparative Study Of Work Life Balance In Various Industrial Sectors In Pune Region”, examined the organizational policies and provisions regarding work-life balance of the employees, which was carried out among a cross-section of leading corporate entities in Pune representing equally the four industrial sectors, namely, Manufacturing, Information technology, Educational, and Banking sector. The study revealed the organizational responses to work-life balance requirements of the employees presented under four sections, namely, the profile of the respondents, the profile of the participating organization, policies on work-life balance and provisions for work-life balance. Most of the respondents (76.7%) had between two and four years of experience in the present company. The years of experience in the company ranged from 2 to 15 years. Employees of a little more than half of the participating companies (56.7%) worked in shifts. In this excluded all companies in the Information Technology (IT) sector but included all in the manufacturing sector and a few in the service sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary Data

This study is descriptive by nature. The data for this study has been collected from primary sources that are the employees of the respective organizations like Education, IT Industry, and Manufacturing etc. The sample size is 25 respondents who have been selected randomly for this study.

Methods of Collecting Primary Data

- Direct Personal Interviews.
- Indirect oral interviews
- Mail questionnaire method.

The primary data in this study was collected by questionnaire method considering a sample size of 25 through direct interview method.

Secondary Data

Data which are not originally collected but rather obtained from published and unpublished sources are known as secondary data. Sources of secondary data are:

- Published sources

- Unpublished sources

Secondary data in this study was collected through HR textbooks, Company annual reports, and documents.

Method of Analysis

Raw primary data was collected with the help of a questionnaire. The raw data was then tabulated. Based on this bar charts and pie diagrams were prepared. The analysis was conducted and interpreted. Conclusions were drawn based on that.

Tools and Techniques Used

- The data collected is tabulated in MS EXCEL.
- A study is conducted with the help of Table, Graphical representation & interpretation with each graph & charts.

Limitations of the Study

- The accuracy of the study is purely based on the information as given by the respondents.
- This study was limited to Sample Size of 25.
- This study has been limited by time and cost factors.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To gain an understanding of the work-life balance programs followed by many industries to improve employee performance, the respondents were asked a series of questions. Their responses have been tabulated and presented in the form of Bar Diagrams, Pie Charts, and Histograms etc.

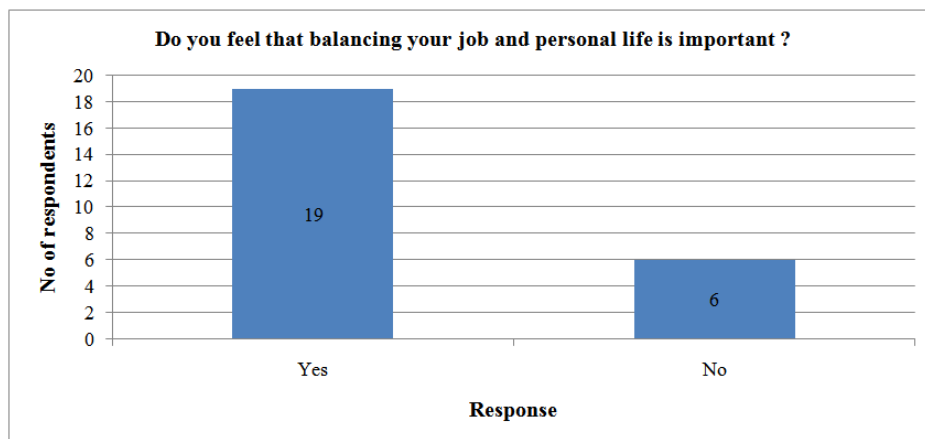


Figure 1

From the above bar graph, it can be depicted that 76% of the respondents strongly agree that balancing of job and personal life is important, as life is a balancing act.

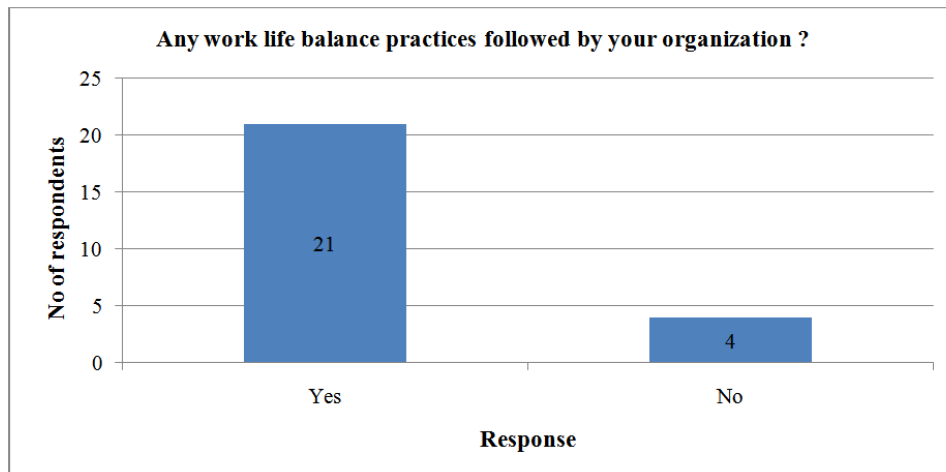


Figure 2

From above graph, it can be inferred that 84% of the organizations follow work life balance practices in their organizations. While on the other hand, in spite of dramatic changes in the field of Human Resource Management, according to survey, there are still 16% of the organizations who do not follow work life balance practices.

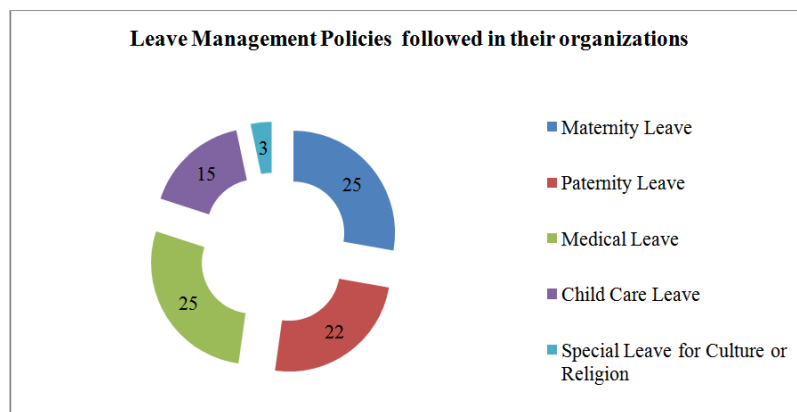


Figure 3

Based on the above graph, it can be interpreted that Maternity Leave and Medical Leaves are given in all organizations. While on the other hand, few organizations are providing Child Care leave and Special Leave for culture/religion to their employees.

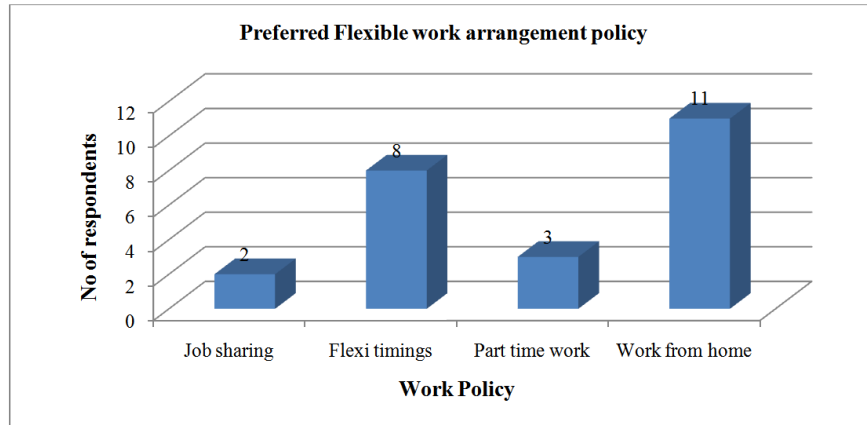


Figure 4

The above graph depicts that 46% of the respondents prefer to Work from Home whereas 33% of the respondents prefer Flexible timings. Very few of the respondents give preference to Part-Time Work (12%) and Job sharing (8%).

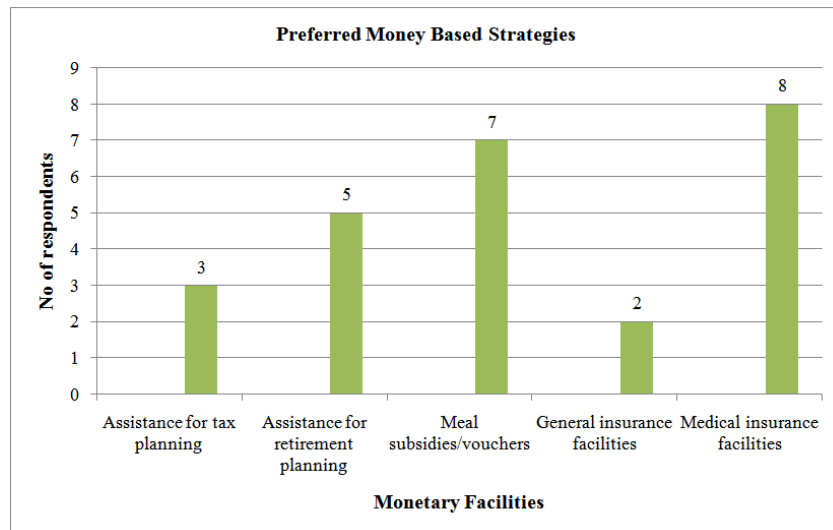


Figure 5

From the above diagram, it can be interpreted that most of the respondents prefer two main money based strategies, i.e. medical insurance facilities (32%) and Meal subsidies/vouchers (28%). On the other hand, very few respondents prefer General Insurance Facilities (8%) and Assistance for Tax Planning (12%)

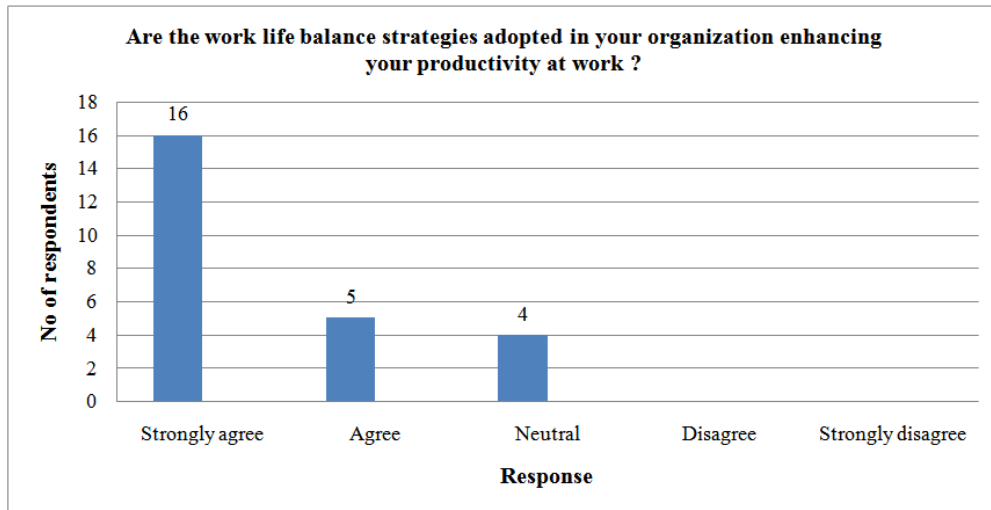


Figure 6

Based on the above graph, it can be interpreted that 64% of the respondents Strongly Agree that work-life balance strategies adopted in the organization are enhancing employee productivity. On the other hand, there are no disagreements, but still, 16% of the respondents are neutral.

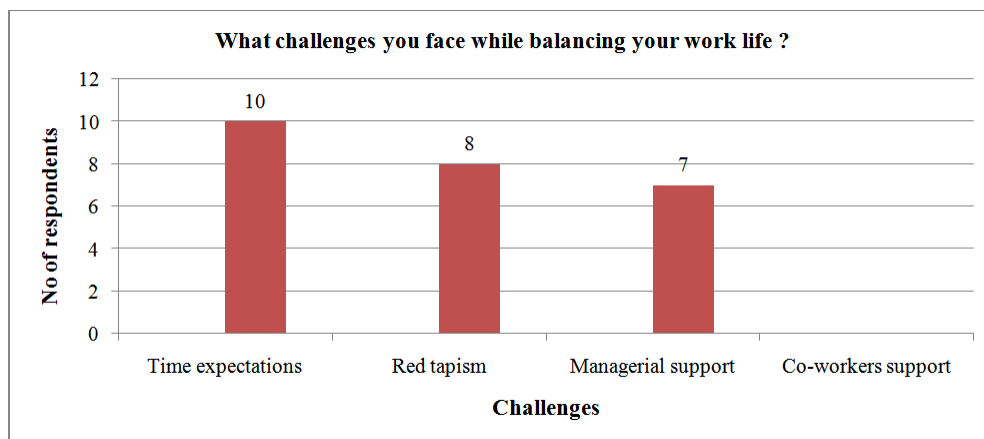


Figure 7

From the above graph, it can be depicted that Time Expectations (40%) is the biggest challenge to work-life balance. On the other hand, Co-Worker Support (0%) is easily available, but Managerial Support (28%) and Red Tapism (32%) also provide some challenge to the work-life balance objective.

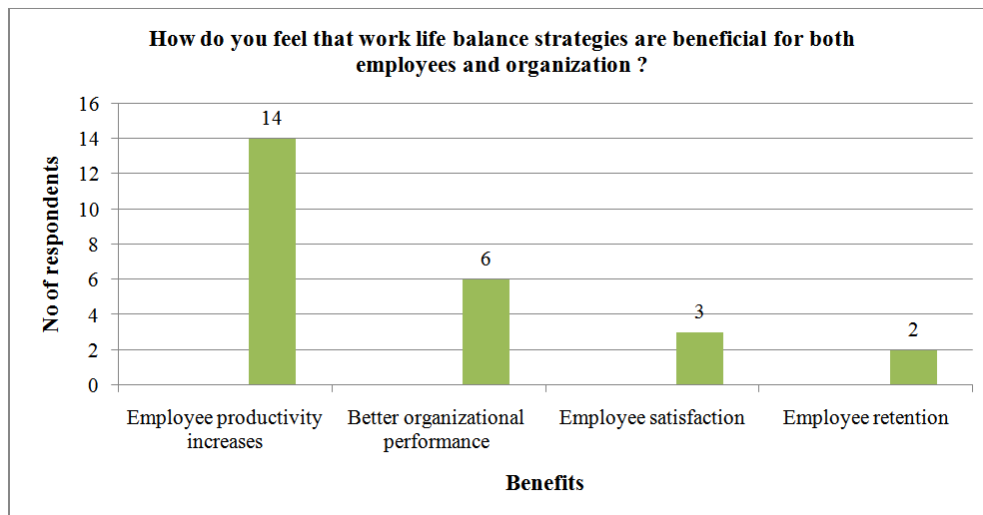


Figure 8

From the above data, it has been observed that productivity of 56% of the respondents as well as their respective organization (24%) has increased due to the adoption of work-life balance strategies. While employee satisfaction (12%) and retention (8%) has not shown good outcome out of adoption of work-life balance strategies in their organizations.

FINDINGS

- It has been found from the study that 76% of the respondents strongly agree that balancing of job and personal life is important, as life is a balancing act.
- It has been observed that 84% of the organizations follow work-life balance practices in their organizations. While on the other hand, in spite of dramatic changes in the field of Human Resource Management, according to a survey, there are still 16% of the organizations who do not follow work-life balance practices.
- It has been interpreted that Maternity Leave and Medical Leaves are provided by all organizations. While on the other hand, few organizations are providing Child Care leave and Special Leave for culture/religion to their employees.
- It has been found that 46% of the respondents prefer to Work from Home whereas 33% of the respondents prefer Flexible timings. Very few of the respondents give preference to Part-Time Work (12%) and Job sharing (8%).
- Most of the respondents prefer two main money based strategies, i.e. medical insurance facilities (32%) and Meal subsidies/vouchers (28%). On the other hand, very few respondents prefer General Insurance Facilities (8%) and Assistance for Tax Planning (12%)
- It has been interpreted from the study that 64% of the respondents strongly agree that work-life balance strategies adopted in the organization are enhancing employee productivity. On the other hand, there are no disagreements, but still, 16% of the respondents are neutral.

- Time Expectations (40%) is the biggest challenge to work life balance. On the other hand, Co-Worker Support (0%) is easily available but Managerial Support (28%) and Red Tapism (32%) also provide some challenges to the work-life balance objective.
- It has been observed that productivity of 56% of the respondents as well as their respective organization (24%) has increased due to the adoption of work life balance strategies. While employee satisfaction (12%) and retention (8%) has not shown good outcome out of adoption of work-life balance strategies in their organizations.

SUGGESTIONS

Work-life balance strategies are beneficial for both employees and the organization. It includes benefits such as flexible work hours, child care and elder care arrangements, improvement in employee efficiency and enhanced organizational performance. Some suggestions to achieve work-life balance for employees would be time management, prioritizing activities, focus on organizing, recreation and use of technology to save time. A few suggestions for organizations would be flexible working hours, facility of work from home, creche facilities at the workplace, options of part-time work and parental leave.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, it can be seen that work life balance practices benefit everyone, i.e the business, through easier recruitment, improved retention and easier service delivery, the economy as the labor market grows skilled and experienced people are available to work, parents and careers that can spend quality time at home, as well as be providing financial support through work. This study basically made us understand the different work-life balance practices followed in the organization also helped us to understand the importance of the different practices followed in the organization. An overall conclusion of WLB practices is most effective when they enhance employees' autonomy and increase their capacity to perform well in work and in a family situation. Work/life programs have the potential to significantly improve employee morale; reduce absenteeism, and retain organizational knowledge, particularly during difficult economic times. In summary, a successful convergence between work and non-work aspects can be winning –win situation for employees and employers alike.

REFERENCES

1. Manisha Purohit(2013), "A Comparative Study of Work Life Balance In Various Industrial Sectors In Pune Region", *International Journal of Marketing, Financial Services & Management Research*, Vol.2, No. 3, ISSN 2277- 3622
2. Lazar, I., Iosoiian, C., & Ratiu, P. (2010). "The role of work life balance practices in order to improve organizational performance", *European Research Studies*, XIII (1).
3. Susi, S., & Jawaharrani, K. (2011). "Work Life Balance: A Key driver of employee engagement", *Asian Journal of Management Research*, 2 (1).
4. Hye Kyoung Kim – "Work-Life Balance and Employees' Performance: The Mediating Role of Affective Commitment", *Global Business and Management Research: An International Journal* Vol. 6, No. 1 (2014)

5. *Beauregard, Alexandra and Lesley C. Henry (2008), "Making the link between work-life balance practices and organizational performance", Human Resource Management Review, Volume19, Issue 1, article available on www.sciencedirect.com*
6. *V. Krishna Priya & R. Amutha, An Impact of Training on Employee Productivity and Development, International Journal of Human Resource Management and Research (IJHRMR), volume 5, Issue 5, September-October 2015, pp. 41-44*
7. *Diksha Garg and Shilpa Rani (2015), "Work life Balance: A Key Driver to Improve Organizational Performance", International Journal of Research (IJR) Vol-2, Issue-1 January 2015 ISSN 2348-6848*