AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EMPLOYEES IN MUMBAI

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ABSTRACT
The study examines the work-life balance form analysis of interviews of 20 employees of information technology companies in Mumbai. The study tries to look into the work related stresses that affect the work life ultimately creating an imbalance in the work-life balance. The Analysis of the interviews and the scope of the employees to have a balance between their work and life offered to them in the organization, the role of the team leaders and the level of job satisfaction. Factors that affect the work-life balance of the employees were investigated. The importance of the workplace culture that enabled employees to attain a balance between work and life was highlighted in the results.

Keywords: Family; Home; Work; Work and Organizational Psychology; Stress; Work Related Stress; Work Life Interference; Work Life Balance

INTRODUCTION
The natural factors that affect an individual while acting either from the inside or form the outside of the individual or both are called stress. The environment and the individual is affected when that individual reacts to stress. While most of the people tend to perceive stress that one experiences in everyday life in the negative sense, stress can also be a positive experience in some cases and to a certain extent. Both internal and external factors contribute to creating stress in a person (Joshi, 2005). Physical environments like job, relationships, challenges, difficulties and expectations are external stress factors that one experiences in everyday life. The process of dealing with these external forces is decided by internal factors in an individual. Factors like nutritional status, overall health and fitness levels, emotional well being and the amount of sleep and rest are internal factors for an individual.

Stress is induced by the demands of a modern lifestyle and the modern organizational setups which often act as stress factors for an individual. Such stress as the work place, while affecting the individual, also affects the organization as the output of that particular individual is affected by stress (Reindl, 2013). Long working hours and tight deadlines are often the reason for stress when an individual cannot cope up with such deadlines and working hours. These are factors for work related stress. In today’s workplace, stress is a very common thing and is also well accepted as influencing force at work.

Stress in work is not related to any particular sector or job or industry and can affect anyone no matter the position of that individual in the organization (Reuters, 2014). The overall well being of an individual’s mind and body is affected by stress and as such the individual’s performance at work is negatively affected by continuous stresses at job that can be caused by conditions at work. Job stress can manifest itself in one or more physical or mental illness and in some cases it can cause chronic illness or psychiatric conditions in individuals. While in early stages of job stress it can act as a booster...
to enhance performance, continued exposure to stress has negative results on an individual. Such stress eventually affects that balance of an individual between work and life as the individual is affected either physically or mentally or both (Reindl, 2013). Most often, the individual suffering from prolonged job related stress is unable to manage both the work stress and life and hence fails in either one or both of these. In this study there is an attempt to see the conditions and factors of job stress for IT employees of Mumbai that can affect work life balance negatively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Having a measure over when, where and how a person works is the essence of work life balance. Most of the people perceive the work life balance to be the extent to which it is allowed by an organization. But many others see it as an bi-dimensional thing rather than blaming the stress at work only. This relates to what individuals are able to do to achieve the balance for themselves. Achievement at work and enjoyment in life are the two aspects that need to be balanced to attain a work life balance. Such enjoyment can be at work or outside. Enjoying the work one does is very critical in achieving work life balance (Voydanoff, 2004). Achievement and enjoyment in family matters, in relation with friends and with oneself is another aspect of work life balance. Though stress conditions can appear at any point in life, those related to work affect a working person the most.

The theories relating to work life balance deal with the concept of boundary-spanning resources and stress and strain in the family life (Patterson, 2002). The theories at work place related stress looks into the correlation between stress and workplace support, supervisory support, work-schedule flexibility, work-life balance, and employee well-being.

The Border theory related to work life balance says that though work and family influence each other though they are essentially separate entities. This theory suggests that an individual often has to bargain options between work and family so that the individual is able to strike a balance between life and work. According to Desrochers and Sargent “the central proposition of border theory is that integrating work and family facilitates transitions between these domains” (Desrochers and Sergent, 2004).

The rise of industrialization has given rise to the concept of nuclear families and to the notion of both the partners working. This also gave rise to the concept where work was regarded as official life and family was considered to be private life (Parsons and Bales, 1955). It was also considered that the workplace belonged to the male fraternity while the family or home was the prerogative of the female folk. This notion gave rise to long hours, gender division and social ignorance of caring work.

In recent researches on work life balance, study was based on the factors related to emotions between work and home and home and work (Keene and Reynolds, 2005). The spillover theory was used for this purpose. The studies tried to find out the reasons that relate between conflict reductions between work place and home. Such studies were mainly related to the tress that individuals faced at their work place and how such stress caused emotional problems that spilled over at home, with the family and with friends thus affecting work-life balance in a negative way. The vice versa was also true where stress in family life and at home or with friends caused problems at work. The stress caused outside of work spilled onto the workplace affecting work efficiency of an individual (Rossi, Quick and Perrewe, 2009). The theories suggested that the reduction in stress at work can help a person achieve balance between work and life. The broader theory suggests that people should devote equal amounts of time to work and family.

The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention says that the stress at the workplace can be caused by many factors. Such factors relate to the design of tasks like heavy workload, long work hours and infrequent breaks in between work hours. The management style concerned about participation by workers and proper communication can cause job stress (Cdc.go, 2014). Other factors include interpersonal relationships (between co-workers), stringent work rules, career concerns (career advancement and opportunities) and other work environmental conditions (pay packages and facilities,
etc.). Though stress at work (place is primarily caused by external forces and work related environment, experts suggest that as a person, an individual can take steps to reduce the stress. This can be done by managing work schedules so that a balance between work and family and personal life is achieved. One needs to activate and use a network of family and friends who act as support network to relieve work related stress and to acquire a relaxed and positive approach to work (Cdc.go, 2014).

Thus it is seen that the work place is the actual place that can cause imbalance between an individual’s work and life. A supportive workplace culture is very essential for the maintenance of work life balance. This is perhaps the most important variable (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, and Kalleberg, 2005). A good example is the role of the supervisors and their attitude towards colleagues and subordinates is a vital factor in workplace environment. the supervisors, who are generally directed and guided by company work culture, as well as the company policies themselves need to be sympathetic towards employees. There needs to be some degree of flexibility in company policy and the supervisors’ attitude as they are the primary people who execute company policy and contribute significantly to creation of a culture at work place. For example, employees would expect companies to be lenient in cases of a family crisis or when a person needs time off from work and devote the time for the family, the company culture needs to be accommodating and flexible to take care of the such employee’s needs. Such a supportive and sympathetic work culture could also mean flexible daily starts and finish time for shifts (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, and Kalleberg, 2005).

Many researchers have strongly suggested that the role of the supervisor is the most critical factor for an employee to achieve balance between work and life (Mennino et al., 2005).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
The study is about how employees if Information and Technology companies, who work under lot of stress, and what are the factors that affect their balancing of their work life and personal life. The study was conducted on 20 employees of IT companies form Mumbai. The objectives of the study can be summarized as below:

1. To find out supervisor role in work
2. To find out if employees suffer from job stress
3. To find out the causes of such stress
4. To find out organizational culture to allow less stress at work
5. To find out participation of employees in company
6. To find out job over load situations at work

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES
The Research hypothesis will be as follows
Employees at IT companies in Mumbai feel work stress
Employees at IT companies in Mumbai do not feel work stress
Employees at IT companies in Mumbai feel that work stress affects balance of work and life
Employees at IT companies in Mumbai do not feel that work stress affects balance of work and life

Data Collection
The data for this study is collected from primary sources. Given below is the Data that is collected form a survey of 20 employees who work in different information technology companies in Mumbai. The survey was done by way of a questionnaire that the respondents were asked to answer. They were chosen at random and their permission was taken for this survey. They were assured that none of the information thus collected would be made public without their knowledge. While some of the
respondents chose to answer themselves, others took help of the researcher to understand and answer the questions.

The data is presented in the form of a table on an excel sheet.

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**DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected shows the following:

90% of respondents who were interviewed claimed that the team leaders were facilitating in executing the floor tasks of the company.

A majority, 65% were of the opinion that the team leaders were effective enough in solving the programming problems that the employees faced in their daily routine. 25% of the people interviewed were non-committal about answering the question.

Most of the employees, 75%, were of the opinion that the training programs that were provided to them by the team leaders were adequate in improving their skills and adequate to satisfy the needs for the job. 5% of the respondents said that they had no opinion to express in this matter.

A majority of the students, 70%, were of the opinion that the training programs that were offered to them and which they had undertaken were fruitful in the employees gaining a practical knowhow on the computer programming. Just 5 percent of the respondents did not agree to this while 10% of the people interviewed were very optimistic about the training programs.

60% of the employees interviewed felt that the team leaders or the supervisors were able to make the work more interesting and engaging for the employees. Just 5% of the employees strongly disagreed to this assumption.

More than half of the employees agreed that the team leader acknowledged the good work of a member of the team or of the entire team. Just 15 percent of the employees disagreed to this presumption. The same number of employees, 60%, said that the recognition given to them was a motivational factor for them and made work harder. Just 5% strongly disagreed to this question. While a majority of the employees, 60% agreed to the question of a self-managing team being developed by the leaders, 20% of the employees disagreed to this fact.

An overwhelming 80% of the employees surveyed said that the programs were able to provide a balanced work life to them. None of the respondents disagreed to this preposition.

55% of the respondents said that an open door communication strategy was followed by the team leaders while directing any process of IT programming to their team of employees. None of the employees disagreed on this point.

Most of the employees agree that a system of regular meetings practiced by the team leaders as well as by the programmers with the organizational employees and enabling them to maintain and lead a balanced work life. 60% agreed and 35% choose to stay neutral to the issue.
65% of the respondents feel that they are able to get enough time for their leisure-time activities. 30% did not comment and 5% disagreed to this presumption.

A huge number of employees interviewed, 70%, said that they were able to have breaks during their working hours, necessary for the mental and physical health. 15% agreed and just 5% of the employees surveyed answered in negative to this question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The balance between work and life depend primarily on the conditions of work. The study looked not the aspect of the work environment of 20 employees and the effect it had on the work life balance of the employees. The as seen earlier, the supervisor plays a very important part in the maintenance of a good work atmosphere. The team leaders, as in the case being discussed, are the focal point of maintaining good work environment.

Floor task is very important for any company and employees are expected to complete the tasks on a daily basis. The team leader should assist an employee in this. In the study it is revealed that 90% of the employees interviewed respondents claimed that the team leaders were facilitating in executing the floor tasks of the company. This means that the leaders of the IT companies were co-operating enough to the employees.

It is also important or the team leaders and the company to provide easy solutions of the complex problems that they are faced with. A majority of the employees were of the opinion that the team leaders were effective enough in solving the programming problems that the employees faced in their daily routine. Just a handful of the interviewees were non committal about answering the question. The skill development of the employees is an important factor in determining whether the employees are happy at work or are they more inclined to maintain the balance of work and life. The answer to the question was overwhelming as more than 75% of the employees interviewed said that the training programs that were provided to them by the team leaders were adequate in improving their skills and adequate to satisfy the needs for the job.

It was necessary that the training programs that were being organized were fruitful in the employees gaining a practical knowhow on the computer programming. 70% of the interviewees agreed to the fact. Just 5 percent of the respondents did not agree to this while 10% of the people interviewed were very optimistic about the training programs.

It is important that the employees are able to make work more interest in despite the boring routine of every day. These efforts include jiterest9ng way of work presentation etc. In our interviews 60% of the employees interviewed felt that the team leaders or the supervisors were able to make the work more interesting and engaging for the employees. A very minor segment of the interviewees disagreed.

The question now was whether the employees of the IT companies able to get quality life and work balance. According to the survey 80% of the employees surveyed said that the programs were able to provide a balanced work life to them. None of the respondents disagreed to this preposition. This means that the corporate policy followed by the company is satisfactory and is reason the goals. Good communication is necessary for patients to voice their concerns and to understand that medication.55% of the respondents said that an open door communication strategy was followed by the team leaders while directing any process of IT programming to their team of employees. Majority of employees agree that the employees are agreeable to regular meetings practiced by the team leaders as well as by the programmers with the organizational employees and enabling them to maintain and lead a balanced work life.

Most of the employees agree that a system of regular meetings practiced by the team leaders as well as by the programmers with the organizational employees and enabling them to maintain and lead a balanced work life. 60 % agreed and 35% choose to stay neutral to the issue.
65% of the respondents feel that they are able to get enough time for their leisure-time activities. 30% did not comment and 5% disagreed to this presumption. This means that the company policies and the role of the supervisors is conducive for the employees to maintain work life balance. This was further reiterated by the analysis that 80% of the employees surveyed felt that the programs that were being undertaken by the company did allow them to balance work and life.

Participation of the employees in the company affairs and an open communication system is a factor in maintaining work life balance. Majority of the employees agreed that the company as well as the supervisors allowed open communication and the system of regular meetings did help in achieving a degree of balance between work and life.

Another fact in favor of the company policies for work life balance came out of the analysis. Majority of the employees were of the view that they got time for leisure activities and have breaks between work and working hours, very important factors in achieving balance in life.

Just 5% of the employees disagreed.

This results of the analysis shows that the company policy is such that the employees of the IT industry in Mumbai are able to achieve a balance between work and life.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that the employees of the IT companies in Mumbai are able to achieve a balance between work and life. The company policies need to be somewhat flexible to allow this. The supervisors too have an important role to play in the employees achieving the balance. The employees need to feel that they have a say in the functioning of the company and have breaks and time for leisure activities. The programs of the company should be so designed that they do not become burden of the employees. The work load is also an important factor and too much of work load causes stress. The combination of the all the above factors discussed are responsible for employees in achieve work life balance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important for companies to have flexible rules in favor of the employees. The company should also be considerate to the needs of the employees. The company policies should be such that the employees are not over burdened with work and the employees are allowed to participate in the decision making process of the company (Rossi, 2009). The company training programs should be designed so that the employees get career development and hence job satisfaction. The supervisors need to allow the employees to have leisure time in between work and the work schedule should be so designed that the employees get leisure time.

FUTURE SCOPE

The study is empirical in nature and has discussed the factors that can lead to work life balance achievement. The study was conducted and limited to the employees of IT industry in Mumbai there is scope in the future to include employees from other industries as well. The study has discussed the theories in work life balance and the family relation theories in a limited manner. Future studies can undertake extensive studies on this issue. The study has also found out the factors that affect the achievement of balance between work and life. There is further scope for detailed discussion about the factors and how to increase or decrease their role.

REFERENCES


