



**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT
AND ALLIED SCIENCES (IJBMAS)**

A Peer Reviewed International Research Journal

**Work life balance Satisfaction among Employees of IT companies in
Hyderabad based on gender**

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ABSTRACT

The present study has been undertaken to study the variables influencing work life balance of software employees based on gender. The sample consisted of 300 software respondents consisting of both male and female. Convenience sampling technique was adopted to select the number of respondents from Hi-tech city, Hyderabad. The study uses statistical tools like Mann Whitney test and Friedman Test at .05 level of significance and revealed significant differences between the male and female respondents with respect to some variables influencing work life balance satisfaction.

Key words: software employees, gender differences, work life balance satisfaction.

1. Introduction

Indian IT industry has been experiencing a tremendous growth in service sector. The Indian software sector has expanded almost twice as quickly as the world leading US software industry in recent years. The information technology (IT) sector in India holds the distinction of advancing the country into the new-age economy. Since this Industry is highly knowledge capital intensive, it requires a huge knowledge based work force, thereby leading to lots of work pressures day in and day out. It has become necessary for organizations to explore the challenges that employees face so as to build a better WLB satisfaction through innovative WLB policies. Managing the conflict between work and family responsibilities has been recognized as a critical challenge for organizations. As India continues to evolve demographically gender differences also may impact the challenges what they encounter in day today work life. With work life balance becoming a cause of concern, facing the work life challenges within the sector is giving rise to problems of employee disengagement. Hence, the present study focuses on those software professionals for whom the boundary between work and life is generally thought to be distorted and tries to find probable solutions to face the challenges faced by them regarding Work-Life Balance (WLB).

1.1 Role of WLB in IT industry: Work-life balance is a challenge for most of us, because work and life both come with multiple roles that we are expected to fulfill. IT sector is unique in its operational methodology while compared to manufacturing sector, where knowledge based activities are centrifugal for the business operations, the individual employees knowledge and skills are the strongest investment for the successful operations of the organisations in this sector. The employees

are expected to work for long hours and flexible in their attitude towards work and work environment.

1.2 Importance of work life balance: Work-Life Balance has been of much concern in the business world today especially in the software sector. As employees and the general population have become more connected to each other with the use of technology, social media and mobile devices, it has become increasingly difficult for many people to separate work from their personal lives. Work-life balance is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable to have balance between work and personal responsibilities and thus strengthen employee loyalty and productivity. Today's workers have many competing responsibilities such as work, children, housework, volunteering, spouse and elderly parent care and this places stress on individuals, families and the communities in which they reside. Work-life conflict is a serious problem that impacts workers, their employers and communities. Long work hours and highly stressful jobs not only hamper ' ability to harmonize work and family life but also are associated with health risks, such as increased smoking and alcohol consumption, weight gain and depression. Work life conflict has been associated with numerous physical and mental health implications.

Employers are becoming increasingly aware of the cost implications associated with over-worked such as: operating and productivity costs, absenteeism, punctuality, commitment and performance. Also, India with its evolving roles of gender in the family as well as work, traditional thinking about work-life balance has tended to emphasize its relevance for women with children, there is increasing consideration of its importance for men, and for singles or couples without children which has become the much explored to be area of research.

2. Literature review

Yasbek (2004) found that work life balance policies are positively associated with the job tenure of the female employees, and moreover the practices of such policies have a great effect on the turnover rate of employees. Work life balance policies help in reducing the stress and provide a good work place where, there is less chance of accidents in the working and also provide a fair platform for every employee, ultimately enhancing productivity

Okpara (2004), states that job satisfaction in the IT sector can be predicted from personal variables, but not all variables contribute to the same degree of work life balance satisfaction as in earlier studies (Bigic, 1998; Brief and Aldag, 1975; Weaver, 1977). The findings of this study did not reveal clear gender differences in overall work life balance satisfaction. Studies related to gender and work life balance satisfaction have reported inconsistent results. Studies indicating higher work life balance satisfaction among women argue that women, compared to men, have lower expectations of the benefits they could receive from the labor market (Clark, 1997). On the other hand, other studies have shown that professional men have more job satisfaction than professional women (Chiu, 1998).

Mishra, Chandargi and Hirevenkanagoudar (2007) observes that the male officers had greater job satisfaction than the female officers. When work does not permit women to take care of their family, they feel frustrated. They draw tighter boundaries between work and family.

Vijaya Mani (2013) has revealed the major factors influencing the Work Life Balance of Women professionals in India such as role conflict, lack of recognition, organizational politics, gender discrimination, and elderly and children care issues, quality of health, problems in time management and lack of proper social support.

From the above studies, it can be concluded that the gender has a relationship with work life balance satisfaction.

Objective

3. Objectives of the study

- To identify the variables influencing work life imbalance among both male and female software employees.
- To study the impact of these variables on the software employees.

4. Research methodology

The sample of the study was drawn from software employees in the Hi-tech city in Hyderabad. As the software professionals in an organization belong to different gender, the population is divided into strata based on gender, and from these strata the sample is selected through convenience sampling from the select 3 IT organizations with a focus on a fraction of their software professionals. (E.g. Project leaders, software engineers and trainee engineers). The data is collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 items administered to 300 employees. The 5 point Likert scale was used for the study, the results of which were presented under the headings as 5=Most stressful, 4= more stressful, 3= stressful, 2= less stressful and 1= least stressful. 7 variables were identified and analysed with the help of Mann whitney test.

Table 1: Mann Whitney test result for variables under the factor 'Work life balance'

Variables	Gender	Mean	S.D	% Mean	Z value	P value
Lack of Flexibility in work	Male	3.18	1.208	63.45	2.78	0.006
	Female	3.52	1.093	70.45		
	Total	3.27	1.191	65.1		
Lack of Manager /team support	Male	3.37	1.226	67.2	0.41	0.68
	Female	3.33	1.211	66.35		
	Total	3.36	1.222	67		
Husband/wife working in different places	Male	3.28	1.12	65.4	0.03	0.979
	Female	3.28	1.12	65.4		
	Total	3.28	1.18	65.4		
Work family interferences	Male	3.28	1.255	65.74	1.71	0.088
	Female	3.49	1.151	69.68		
	Total	3.34	1.233	66.67		
Lack of Family support	Male	3.14	1.53	62.58	4.12	0
	Female	3.78	1.401	75.71		
	Total	3.29	1.531	65.66		
Job requires lot of new learnings	Male	3.38	1.462	67.49	2.55	0.011
	Female	3.78	1.15	75.71		
	Total	3.48	1.405	69.42		
Handling Time pressures and dead lines	Male	3.5	1.38	70.51	1.53	0.127
	Female	3.75	1.32	74.92		
	Total	3.58	1.368	71.55		

Source :primary data

Table 2: Mann Whitney Test result for factor 'Work life balance'

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	% Mean	Z Test	P value
Male	143	3.30	.9955	66.04	2.67	.006
Female	157	3.55	.8897	71.17		
Total	300	3.36	.9782	67.23		

Source :primary data

5. Data analysis:

Variable 1:

“lack of Flexibility in Work” was the first variable under the factor ‘work life balance satisfaction’. The lack of flexibility score of the employees is 3.27 ± 1.191 with percentage mean 65.10 which shows that they lack flexibility in work. For Male employees, the mean level of lack of flexibility variable is 3.18 ± 1.208 with a percentage mean of 63.45 whereas for female it is 3.52 ± 1.093 with a percentage mean of 70.48. Further, when it is tested for difference by the Mann Whitney Test, the lack of flexibility in work is significantly higher for Male as compared to female ($Z= 2.78, p=0.006<.05$).

Variable 2: lack of Manager/team support was the second variable under the factor ‘work life balance’. The manager/team support stress level of the employees is 3.37 ± 1.222 with a percentage mean of 67.00 which shows that it is stressful. Or male employees, the mean level of stress is 3.36 ± 1.226 with a percentage mean of 67.20 whereas for female employees it is 3.33 ± 1.211 with a percentage mean of 66.35. Further, when it is tested for difference by Mann Whitney Test, shows stress level is non-significant ($Z= .41, p=0.680>.05$).

Variable 3: High level of concentration required to do the job was the third variable under the factor ‘work life balance’. The stress level of the employees is 3.28 ± 1.180 with percentage mean 65.40 which shows that it is stressful. For male employees, the mean level of stress is 3.28 ± 1.199 with a percentage mean of 65.40 whereas for female employees it is 3.28 ± 1.120 with a percentage mean of 65.40. Further, when it is tested for difference by the Mann Whitney Test, shows stress level is non significant ($Z= .03, p=0.979>.05$).

Variable 4: ‘Work family interferences’ was the fourth variable in the factor ‘work life balance’. The stress level of the employees is 3.34 ± 1.233 with a percentage mean of 66.67 which shows that it is stressful. For male employees, the mean level of stress is 3.28 ± 1.255 with a percentage mean of 65.74 whereas for female employees it is 3.49 ± 1.151 with a percentage mean of 69.68. Further, when it is tested for difference by the Mann Whitney Test, the stress level is non significant ($Z=1.71, p=0.088>.05$).

Variable 5: ‘Husband/wife working in different places’ was the fifth variable under the factor ‘work life balance’. The stress level of the employees is 3.28 ± 1.531 with a percentage mean of 65.66 which shows that it is stressful. For male employees, the mean level of stress is 3.14 ± 1.538 with a percentage mean of 62.58 whereas for female employees it is 3.79 ± 1.401 with a percentage mean of 75.71. Further, when it is tested for difference by the Mann Whitney Test, the stress level is significantly higher for male as compared to female employees ($Z= 4.12, p=0.000<.05$).

Variable 6: ‘lack of family support’ was the sixth variable under the factor ‘work life balance’. The stress level of the employees is 3.48 ± 1.405 with a percentage mean of 69.42 which shows that it is stressful. For male employees, the mean level of stress is 3.38 ± 1.462 with a percentage mean of 67.49 whereas for female employees it was 3.78 ± 1.150 with a percentage mean of 75.71. Further, when it is tested for difference by the Mann Whitney Test, the stress level is significant for male employees as compared to female employees ($Z= 2.55, p=0.011<.05$).

Variable 7: ‘Job requires lot of new learnings was the seventh variable under the factor ‘work life balance’. The stress level of the employees is 3.58 ± 1.368 with a percentage mean of 71.55 which shows that it is stressful. For male employees the mean level of stress is 3.53 ± 1.380 with a percentage mean of 70.51 whereas for female employees it was 3.75 ± 1.320 with a percentage mean of 74.92. Further, when it is tested for difference by the Mann Whitney Test, the stress level is non significant ($Z=1.53, p=0.127>.05$).

Variable 8 : Handling Time pressures and deadlines The stress level of the employees due to the factor ‘work life imbalance’ was $3.36 \pm .9771$ with a percentage mean of 67.26 which shows that it is stressful. For male employees the mean level of stress is $3.30 \pm .9956$ with a percentage mean of 66.05 whereas for female employees it is $3.55 \pm .8898$ with a percentage mean of 71.18. Further, when it is

tested for difference by the Mann Whitney Test, the stress level is highly significant for male as compared to female employees ($Z=2.69$, $p=0.007<.05$).

6. Findings and Discussion

The study indicates that all the employees are stressed out with respect to their work life balance mechanism. In variables like “lack of Manager/team support , High level of concentration required to do the job, Work family interferences, Job requires lot of new learnings” there are no significant differences between male and female employees where as there is significant differences in the stress levels and work life balance mechanism in variables like lack of Flexibility in Work, Husband/wife working in different places, lack of family support, Handling Time pressures and deadlines. This could be due to the inability to find time to balance family needs as they spend more time with organization.

7. Limitations

It is always a matter of chance, how much true information is provided by the respondents. their opinion may be biased because of their subjective perceptions. The study is conducted only in 3 IT organizations in Hyderabad. So it may not give the exact picture of the IT industry with respect to WLB satisfaction levels based on gender.

8. Conclusion

On the whole it is observed that the work life balance is more stressful for Male as compared to Female software employees which could be due to the higher expectations from them since they can spare long work hours as compared to female counterparts. IT organizations could take precautionary steps in the interest of the welfare of the employees. The organizations should specially address the stressors which are causing a work life imbalance and handle it at the grass root level. They should identify the level of employees who are having these work life balance issues. Timely stress management programmes, get to gethers, employee recognition with awards, performance based incentives, better time management exercises should be conducted so that the employees are able to strike a balance between their personal and professional life.

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