Impact of Quality of Work Life Dimensions on Employee Satisfaction in an IT Company: An Empirical Investigation

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Abstract

Under present market forces and strict competition, the IT firms have become more complex, dynamic and fast paced. In this competitive environment where there is a constant pressure to improve results, companies are always in the process of seeking ways to become more efficient, productive, flexible and innovative. As a result these organizations are characterized by long working hours, stressful deadlines and struggling employees to maintain work life balance. In this changing work environment, organizations are facing issues of stress and employee burnout on a large scale. HR managers are expected to come up with innovative practices that serve to motivate and retain talented workforce for sustainable competitive advantage.

The purpose of this study is to highlight the importance of work life balance and also to identify the impact of initiative taken by IT companies on the work life balance of employees.

Keywords: Work life balance, IT Company, Middle level managers, dimensions, Employee satisfaction.

Introduction

In present scenario, employee's personal responsibilities are increasing due to childcare and elderly care, and family commitments along with this their work responsibilities. There is always a conflict between personal and work commitments which results in work stress.. As more and more IT companies are embracing the technological change and are moving towards globalization, work is no longer confined to the workplace. Managers are supposed to contribute and work from any place using laptops, tablets, smart phones; and telecommuting .Nowadays managers can access their work emails and assignments all 24 hours, and vice versa employers and clients can also access them. Although employees are working in flexible work systems but lines between work and personal life is blurring very fast. Now the typical working hours of most of the employees in IT Company are not only restricted to traditional 40-48 hours a week.

This results in imbalance in work and personal life which not only impacts employees, buts also the companies in which they work for. It has been observed that stress among employees increases the level of burnout which impacts productivity at work. Further stressed employees have a higher potential for health problems and absenteeism, which again can impact cost effectiveness of the organization. Besides, employees may also experience dissatisfaction due to poor personal and peer relationships which further can lead to reduced job satisfaction.

IT companies are taking several Green Workforce initiatives which include flexible work options like Telecommute, Flexible Work Hours, Compressed Work Weeks or Goal-oriented Employment. Going green for workforce has high impact on company's operating costs, bottom line and the environment at the same time Green Workforce initiative is much easier to adopt and less expensive as compared to Green IT initiative.They are implementing policies which support employees work life balance and managers are encouraged to ensure that employees are taking benefits of these policies. Flexible work schedule system helps employees to design their work pattern according to their personal and professional commitments, which helps them in reducing conflict between work responsibilities and personal responsibilities. This option allows employees to work from home, plan their work schedule to meet personal commitments, for this they can use job sharing ,remote working, and compressed work weeks. Employees should be encouraged

to use annual leave without any disturbances during nonworking hours. Most of the IT Companies are implementing wellness programs and creating wellness centre, gyms at workplace for reducing stress.

The study suggests that Managers and IT Professionals who are personally satisfied contributes their best and increase the organizational productivity and reduces cost associated with high attrition rate.

Literature Review

Organizations across the globe have experienced various tangible and intangible benefits by adapting work life balance for their workforce. They have reaped multiple intangible benefits and it has helped in reducing stress, absenteeism, emission and improving employee health, which has made them a preferred choice for employment and a brand among employees.

Quality of Work Life Balance

The term 'Quality of Work life' has coined importance in USA in 1970's.Till date there is no generally accepted definition about this term. It is a complex, multidimensional, generic concept (Hsu & Kernohan, 2006). However, some attempts were made to describe the term quality of work life [QWL]. It refers to the favourableness or unfavourableness of a job environment for people. QWL means different things to different people. J Richard and J.Lloy define QWL as "the degree to which members of a work organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experience in the organization". Quality of work life improvements are defined as any activity which takes place at every level of an organization, which seeks greater organizational effectiveness through the enhancement of human dignity and growth...a process through which the stakeholders in the organization management, unions and employees-learn how to work together better...To determine for themselves what actions, changes and improvements are desirable and workable, in order to achieve the twin simultaneous goals of an approved quality of life at work for all members of the organization and greater effectiveness for both the company and the unions.

According to Korunka, Hoonakker, & Carayon, 2008; Lewis, Brazil, Krueger, Lohfeld, & Tjam, 2001; Schouteten, 2004; Van Laar, Edwards, & Easton, 2007 equivalents such as work quality, function of job content, employee's well-being, the quality of the relationship between employees, working environment, and the balance between job demands and decision autonomy or the balance between control need and control capacity . QWL is thus recognized as a multi-dimensional construct and the categorization is neither universal or eternal.

Need for Quality of Work Life

According to Hansen (2002), a traditional myth of increasing the working hours in the organization, which enhances the work quality, has been challenged over a period of time. On the contrary studies (Fox, 2001 & Altman 2000) proves that, it only results in increasing stress of the employees and thereby work-life conflict.

The rising complexity of the competitive business world and the cumbersome process of wage bargaining, wage negotiation deadlocks and bargaining, and the consequential disruptive nature of labor disputes has made many companies to view their employees' quality of work life as an important strategic factor in protecting companies from unwanted disasters (e.g., Beauchamp and Bowie, 2004; Carroll and Buchholtz, 2006; Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, 2008). In the management discipline in general, prior researches often link quality of work life to job-related outcomes such as employee job effort, productivity, low absenteeism, and organisational performance (e.g., Danna and Griffin, 1999; Cummings and Worley, 2005; Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2007; Leopold, 2005; Wheelan and Hunger, 2006; Yorks, 2005) among others.

Dimensions of Quality of Work Life

Different researchers have tried to identify different dimensions and factors which influence quality of work life.

Walton (1980) divided QWL main components into four categories. According to him, the affecting factors on QWL include: work meaningfulness, work social and organizational equilibrium, work challenge and richness.

Klatt, Murdick and Schuster (1985) have identified eleven dimensions of QWL in the year. They are: pay, occupational stress, organizational health programmes, alternative work schedule, participate management and control of work, recognition, superior-subordinate relations, grievance procedure, adequacy of resources, seniority and merit in promotion and development and employment on permanent basis.

Schermernrhorn & John (1989) opined that the following factors must exist in the organization - fair and adequate pay , health and safety of working conditions ,creating opportunities to learn, growth in the

According to Casio (1998) quality of work life comprises both the mental and objective aspects of work life. The objective ones emphasize the circumstances and procedures relating to promotion policies, participatory supervision, and safe working conditions, whereas the subjective relate to supervision, communication, leadership etc. He identified 8 factors that determine quality of work life as given under. Communication, employee involvement, desire and motivation to work, job security, career progress, solving problems, salary, and pride of a job.

Winter et al., (2000) viewed QWL for attitudinal response among the employees which includes role stress, job characteristics, and supervisory, structural and social characteristics to directly and in directly shape academicians' experiences, attitudes and behaviors. **Mosharraf (2000)** analyzed the security of employment, job/role clarity, understanding supervisors, work not stressful, access to relevant information and social and welfare facilities to measure the QWL in banks. According to Nadler & Lawler the types of QWL activities can be listed as (i) Participative problem solving, (ii) Work restructuring, (iii) Innovative rewards systems and (iv) Improving the work environment.

Sirgy et al. (2001) suggested that the key factors in quality of working life are (i) need satisfaction based on job requirements, (ii) need satisfaction based on work environment, (iii) need satisfaction based on supervisory behaviour,(iv) need satisfaction based on ancillary programmes, (v) organizational commitment

Mirsepasi, (2006), having examined the different views and observed that QWL is explained by the following factors: (i) Fair and proper payment for good performance (ii) Safe and secure work situation, (iii) The possibility of learning and using new skills, (iv) Establishing social integration in the organization, (v) Keeping individual rights, (vi) Equilibrium in job divisions and unemployment and (vii) Creating work and organizational commitment.

Bhanugopan & Fish (2008) suggested indicators like lack of job stress, lack of job burnout, lack of turnover intentions and job satisfaction. They included measures like job satisfaction, earning money, membership in successful teams, job security & job growth

Connell & Hannif (2009) reported three factors – (i) Job content; (ii) Working hours and work-life balance; and (iii) Managerial/supervisory style and strategies. They believe key concepts tend to include job security, reward systems, pay and opportunity for growth among other factors.

Adhikari & Gautam (2010) are: adequate pay and benefits, job security, safe and health working condition, meaningful job and autonomy in the job. Measures of Quality of Work Life include - (i) increased worker involvement, participation and power, (ii) Increased emphasis on employee skill development, (iii) Increased autonomy for action and decision making at worker level and (iv) Reduced status distinctions among levels in hierarchy

Employee Satisfaction and Quality of Work Life

The Third Work-Life Balance Employees' Survey, conducted in early 2006 by Hooker et al, has found high levels of employee satisfaction and a significant increase in the availability of most flexible working arrangements since 2003. In all, 87 per cent of employees said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with their current working arrangements – up from 81 per cent in 2003. Almost all employees (90 per cent) reported

that at least one flexible working arrangement was available to them if they needed it. The working arrangements most commonly available were part-time working, reduced hours for a limited period, and flexi time. The arrangements most commonly taken up by employees were flextime, working from home, and part-time work. Demand for all flexible-working arrangements except term-time working has fallen since 2003.

According to Batt. R. (2006), most of the managers opined that certain leave policies reduced employee absences due to sickness of the dependent. It was recommended that rather than taking a sick day, organization can use emergency leave or provide informal flexibility to employees so that they will be more honest and committed to the organization. Deven.F (2007) found that the introduction of flexi-time had reduced absenteeism. As with retention, the degree of flexibility seems to be important. Kolb.D. (2007), found that flexible schedules which gave employees more control and did not require line manager authorization were more effective at reducing absenteeism.

According to Rao (2005), as a result of devoting time more on work even after office hours or traveling during office hours causes stress among employees and results in work-life imbalance. His findings are based on the study conducted among the technical and non-technical executives of Bangalore based public sector unit.

The role of superior in supporting their subordinates in balancing their work life cannot be ignored. Being the 'executor' and 'facilitator' of work-life policies initiated by the organization, supervisors are critical in determining employees' work-life experience (Henly, Shaefer, and Waxman 2006; Wang and Walumbwa 2007). In particular, a large number of past studies report that a supportive superior is associated with diminished work-life conflict (Hammer et al. 2007; Wadsworth and Owens 2007).Superiors who are sensitive to employees' non work needs tend to be helpful in adjusting work arrangements such that employees' non work commitments are not affected by work.

Purpose of the Study

Based on the foregoing review the current study seeks to explore the impact of dimensions of quality of work life on employee satisfaction in IT Company. The main emphasis of this study is to examine the relationship between the dimensions of QWL and the overall satisfaction of the employees in the IT Sector.

Accordingly, following hypothesis is developed and tested for this study:

Hypothesis

H_1: There is a significant relationship between flexi working hours and employee satisfaction.

H_2: There is a significant relationship between fair compensation and employee satisfaction.

H_3: There is a significant relationship between welfare & leave policies and employee satisfaction

H_4: There is a significant relationship between Green workforce Strategies and employee satisfaction.

H_5: There is a significant relationship between Job Security and Employee Satisfaction.

H_7: There is a significant relationship between Skill and Creativity Utilization and Employee Satisfaction.

H_8: There is a significant relationship between Superior Support and Employee Satisfaction.

H_9: There is a significant relationship between Peers Support and Employee Satisfaction.

H_{10}: There is a significant relationship between Work Environment and Employee Satisfaction.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire on 5 point Likert scale where A stands for strongly disagree, B for somewhat disagree, C for neither agree nor disagree, D for somewhat agree, E for strongly agree. Questionnaire was distributed among 225 employees of middle level, out of whom 200 respondents were finally included for further analysis. The data was

analyzed using SPSS tool and the test applied was Pearson's correlation coefficient to analyze the relation between dimensions of work life balance and Employee satisfaction.

Analysis and Results

The following results examine the various dimensions of work life balance.

Table 1: Awareness About Policy for Work Life Balance

Response	No. of respondents	%age of respondents
Yes	153	76
No	47	24

Table 1. Suggests that majority of respondents (76%) are aware about the work-life balance policies of the company, 24% of the employees are not aware about the work life balance policy of the company.

Table 2: Provisions Under the Policy of Work-Life Balance

Policy	No. of Respondents	%age of respondents
Flexible starting time	63	31
Flexible ending time	34	17
Flexible hours in general	47	24
Holidays/paid time-off	24	12
Job sharing	12	6
Career-break	2	1
Others	18	9

Table 2 depicts that 31 percent of the respondents are aware about provision of flexible starting time, 24 percent are flexible hours in general, 17 percent are flexible ending time,12 percent about holidays/paid time-off, 6 percent were job sharing, I percent about career break and 9 percent about other options comes under work-life balance policies.

Table 3: Activities to Manage Stress Arising from Work

Activities involved	No. of respondents	%age of respondents
Yoga	27	13
Meditation	24	12
Entertainment	69	34
Dance	27	14
Music	43	22
Others	10	5

Table 3 shows that 34 percent respondents are managing their stress arising due to work with the help of entertainment, 22 percent with music, 14 percent with dance, 13 percent with yoga, 12 percent with meditation and 5 percent explores some other way.

Correlation of Dimensions of Work Life Balance and Overall Employee Satisfaction

H$_1$: There is a significant relationship between flexi working hours and employee satisfaction.

Table 4: Correlations Between Flexi Working Hours and Employee Stisfaction

		Employee Satisfaction	Flexi working hours
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.749**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	200	200
Flexi working hours	Pearson Correlation	.749**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	200

Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted to test the association of the between the satisfaction of the employees with QWL dimensions (Table 4). The results of the study indicate a positive relationship between flexi working hours and overall satisfaction experienced by the employees (r = 0. 749). Correlation was significant at 0.05 of alpha level. Hence, the H_1 is accepted. This coefficient shows that there is strong and positive relationship between working hours and satisfaction. So, there is a significant relation between flexi working hours and employee satisfaction and it is concluded that as flexi working hours have strong relation so it has impact on the level of employee's satisfaction in IT sector.

H_2: There is a significant relationship between fair compensation and employee satisfaction.

Table 5: Correlations between Fair Compensation and Employee Satisfaction

		Employee Satisfaction	Fair compensation
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.765
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	200	200
Fair compensation	Pearson Correlation	.765	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	200	200

Compensation was positively related to the overall satisfaction of the employees with the significance value of r = 0.765(refer table 5). This indicates that fair compensation is important to retain the employees and motivate them in IT sectors.

H_3: There is a significant relationship between welfare & leave policies and employee satisfaction

Table 6: Correlations between Welfare & Leave Policies and Employee Satisfaction

		Employee Satisfaction	Welfare & Leave Policies
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.873
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	200	200
Welfare & Leave Policies	Pearson Correlation	.873	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	200	200

Table 6 suggested that Welfare & leave policies were positively related with overall employee satisfaction with the significance value of r = 0.873. This indicates that a fair welfare and leave policy is important to retain the employees and motivate them in IT sectors.

H$_4$: There is a significant relationship between green workforce strategies and employee satisfaction.

Table 7: Correlations between Green workforce Strategies and Employee Satisfaction.

		Employee Satisfaction	Green work force strategies
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.666
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	200	200
Green work force strategies	Pearson Correlation	.666	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	200	200

Table 7 depicts that correlation value is 0.666, hence there is a moderate level of correlation between employee satisfaction and the Green work force strategies one of the dimension of work life balance adopted by IT sector (refer Table 7).

H$_5$: There is a significant relationship between job security and employee satisfaction.

Table 8: Correlations between Job Security and Employee Satisfaction

		Employee Satisfaction	Job Security
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.734
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012
	N	200	200
Job Security	Pearson Correlation	.734	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	
	N	200	200

From table 8 it can be observed that Job Security is positively correlated with employee satisfaction (r=0.734). This indicates that overall employee satisfaction is depending on how much employee feels secured. Employers can no longer promise job security, but they can help people maintain the skills they need to remain workable in the job market**.**

H$_6$: There is a significant relationship between working conditions and employee satisfaction.

Table 9: Correlations between Working Condition and Employee Satisfaction

		Employee Satisfaction	Working Condition
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.462
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	200	200
Organizational Climate	Pearson Correlation	.462	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	200	200

From table 9 it can be observed that the overall satisfaction of employees in the organization is also supported by working condition. This was found to be positively related (r = 0.462) to the overall satisfaction. Climate within an organization refers to an environment of physical health and safety, which is observed to predict individual safety behaviour, industrial accidents and physical health. Thus, it relates to how the employees perceive the commitment of the management in terms of safety policy, procedures, and practice

towards employees, well-being. Therefore, organizations should have a suitable policy for overtime, occupational hazards like over use of computers, phones, etc. for IT sector employees.

H_7: There is a significant relationship between skill and creativity utilization and employee satisfaction.

Table 10: Correlations Between Skill and Creativity Utilization and Employee Satisfaction

		Employee Satisfaction	Skill and Creativity Utilization
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.639
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	200	200
Skill and Creativity Utilization	Pearson Correlation	.639	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	200	200

Skill utilization and Scope for Creativity has a significant impact on the overall satisfaction with the work and the company. Skill and Creativity Utilization was also positively related (r = 0.639) to the overall satisfaction of the employees with the organization. Thus, an organization, which does not take the initiative to keep its workforce motivated and challenging, may soon lose best of their talent due to dissatisfaction.

H_8: There is a significant relationship between superior support and employee satisfaction.

Table 11: Correlations Between Superior Support and Employee Satisfaction

		Employee satisfaction	Superior Support
Employee satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.728
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	200	200
Superior Support	Pearson Correlation	.728	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	200	200

The correlation value here is 0.728, which is strong, and it shows that superior support is affecting the overall employee satisfaction. Hence, Employee Satisfaction depends upon the match between their expectations and attitude of their supervisor/manager.

H_9: There is a Significant relationship between peers support and employee satisfaction.

Table 12: Correlations Between Peers Support and Employee Satisfaction

		Employee Satisfaction	Peers Support
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.845
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	200	200
Peers Support	Pearson Correlation	.845	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	
	N	200	200

The above table suggests that Social integration in the organization has a significant impact on the overall satisfaction of employee. Peer relationship within the organization is an important dimension of QWL, where work and professional development are pursued within the framework of social integration. In this

study, social integration in the work organization was positively related (r = 0.845) to the overall satisfaction of the employees.

H$_{10}$: There is a significant relationship between work environment and employee satisfaction.

Table 13: Correlations between Work Environment and Employee Satisfaction

		Employee Satisfaction	Work Environment
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.720
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	200	200
Work Environment	Pearson Correlation	.720	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	200	200

Work environment in an organization can have positive impact on the health of the organization. Work environment was also positively related (r = 0.720) to the overall satisfaction of the employees with the organization. A conducive working environment motivates the employees to work towards organizational goal along with working for personal development.

Conclusion and Future Prospective

From this study it can be concluded that in this IT Company quality of work life dimensions like flexible working hours, fair compensation, welfare and leave policies including green workforce strategy, job security conducive work environment containing better working condition, with superior and peers support plays a very strong role in improving employee satisfaction and people management practices. The Company can reap benefit by applying these strategies; especially work time and work location flexibility, and the development of supportive managers, which contribute to increased work-life balance and employee satisfaction

Limitation of the Study

The sample size is too small to reflect the opinion of the whole organization and data is collected from a single company hence the opinion shared by employees is restricted to this company and cannot be generalized for other IT Companies. For wider results the further research can be conducted including different Companies in IT sector.

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