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WORK / LIFE BALANCE REFLECTIONS ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyze the relationship between employee satisfaction and work/life balance. The construct used for this research consists of career opportunity, recognition, work tasks, payments, benefits, superior subordinate relationship, employee satisfaction, and work/life balance. The study was conducted on a total of 210 respondents working in IT organization. This study makes a contribution to join two distinct research streams, namely employee satisfaction, and work/life balance. Findings suggest that high correlation exists between work task and employee satisfaction with a mediator variable namely work-life balance.

Keywords: employee's satisfaction, IT organizations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Work/life balance has important consequences for employee attitudes towards their organizations as well as for the lives of employees. The work/life boundary may be especially significant in the management of highly skilled knowledge workers, such as technical professionals, whose commitment and loyalty present a challenge to employers (Scholarios et al., 2006). Software engineers have enjoyed considerable labor market power in recent years, a situation that has encouraged mobility across organizations rather than promoting loyalty to a single organization. Changing societal trends, such as an increase in the number of women entering the workforce combined with an economy that requires dual incomes support an average standard of living, contribute to

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work-life conflicts. As a result, today's human resource managers evaluate personnel practices to meet those needs with the hope of increasing employee loyalty toward the organization. In addition to this, many organizations have begun to take a role in developing quality of work-life programs.

Job satisfaction has identified a number of factors like reward system in work, perceived quality of supervision, working conditions, and individual determinates such as status and seniority, age group, marital status, and years of experience that cause people to become satisfied or dissatisfied with their job (Mosadeghrad et al., 2008). The current study examines the relationship between job satisfaction and work-life balance among IT employees in India. Firstly, the relationship is examined between the different constructs Career opportunities, Recognition, Work task, Pay, Work/life balance, Superior subordinate relationship, and employee satisfaction. Second, keeping the work-life balance as a mediating construct, it is analyzed whether it leads to employee satisfaction.

2. PAST RESEARCH ON JOB SATISFACTION

Some theorists view job satisfaction as being the positive emotional reactions and attitudes an individual has towards his job (Oshagbemi, 1999). Others have viewed it as a bi-dimensional construct consisting of ''intrinsic'' and ''extrinsic'' satisfaction dimensions, (Warr et al., 1979) or, alternatively, of ''satisfaction / lack of satisfaction'' and ''dissatisfaction/lack of dissatisfaction'' dimensions (Winefield et al., 1988). More recently, debate has arisen as to whether job satisfaction is a global concept

or is composed of facets of satisfaction with various aspects of an individual's job (Wanous et al., 1997; Umukoro et al., 2009).

The satisfaction of the external customer depends on the satisfaction of the internal customers (Bailey & Dandrade, 1995). Being successful in the competitive markets depends on the level of the satisfaction of the workers in the establishments. The satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the workers affects the performance of the organization. Also the job satisfaction provides positive attitudes and behaviors of the workers (Organ, 1997). One of the most important factors that affect the behaviors of the workers in the establishments is the feeling of working satisfaction, that is to say, job satisfaction. There is growing evidence that current trends in employment conditions may be eroding levels of job satisfaction and directly damaging the physical and mental health of employees (Kenny et al., 2000). New working practices and rapid technological advances are changing the nature of many jobs (Cooper, 1999).

The career orientations of employees can have important implications for their job satisfaction, commitment, and retention within organizations. A job is compatible with a career orientation when it involves duties and assignments that the employee finds interesting, when it requires abilities that the employee possesses values, and when it provides rewards that the employee finds desirable. Employees whose job is compatible with their career orientation should experience positive feelings about their work lives and should feel bonded to their organization (Igbaria et al., 1991).

In a path analysis of job commitment among U.S Air Force personnel, it was found that job commitment was best explained by the "fit" between the organization and

family. (Bielby, 1992) Degree of "fit" was indicated by life satisfaction, perception of organizational responsiveness to families and the quality of the organizational environment as a child rearing milieu, and spousal support for one's career. These results suggest that an organization that accommodates the familial concerns and constraints of its employees is able to sustain a higher level of work commitment among its labor force.

'Managerial Support' is consistently emphasized in discussions and studies as a factor influencing work/life balance. Managers play an important role in the success of work/life programs because they are in a position to encourage or discourage employees' efforts to balance their work and family (Perlow, 1995). There are several styles of leadership: autocratic, bureaucratic, laissez-faire, charismatic, democratic, participative, situational, transactional, and transformational leadership (Mosadeghrad, 2003). Not everyone agrees that a particular style of leadership will result in the most effective form of organizational behavior. Different styles are needed for different situations, and each leader needs to know when to exhibit a particular approach. No one leadership style is ideal for every situation, since a leader may have knowledge and skills to act effectively in one situation but may not emerge as effective in a different situation (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). Organizational success in obtaining its goals and objectives depends on managers and their leadership style. By using appropriate leadership styles, managers can affect employee job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity. Leadership style can be viewed as a series of managerial attitudes, behaviors, characteristics, and skills based on individual and organizational values, leadership

interests, and reliability of employees in different situations (Mosadeghrad, 2003). This factor captures the extent to which management respects workers, operates with honesty and integrity, promotes efficiency, and has open lines of communication with employees (Aronson et al., 2003; Živković et al., 2009).

Managers, especially, possess both formal and informal power to provide resources, reward, punishment, and support that can be a barrier or facilitator to the uptake and implementation of the work/life balance policy. In fact, the research shows that if Supervisors enthusiastically support the integration of paid work and other responsibilities, employees will be more likely to take up available work/life programs (McDonald, Brown, & Bradley, 2005). On the other hand, it has been suggested that even in 'family-friendly' organizations, managers may send negative signals indicating that the use of flexible benefits is a problem for them, their colleagues and the organization as a whole (Kirby & Krone, 2002). Managerial support on a daily basis appears to be a critical variable in employees' decisions to use available benefits and programs (Bardoel, 1993). This is particularly the case if employees work with supervisors and colleagues who can buffer them from the perceived negative effects of their careers (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002). In other studies, employees whose supervisors supported their efforts to balance work and family were less likely to experience work-family conflict and, in a sample of New Zealand nurses, were less likely to experience job burnout (Kalliath & Beck, 2001). Hence this research is undertaken to identify the relationship between Career opportunities, Recognition, Work task, Pay,

Work-life balance, Superior subordinate relationship, with work/life balance and employee satisfaction.

3. METHOD

The study employed the survey method, which allows for broad coverage, flexibility, and convenience with inputs on related populations or events. The questionnaire used in the study was developed through review of literature to collect the data. Collection of data was self–administered to determine the level of work-life balance and employee satisfaction. The constructs used for this research are given in Table 1.

A seven point Likert scale with (1) one

Table 1. Constructs and its Indicators

Constructs	Indicators
Career opportunity	Opportunities for personal growth, opportunities to develop skills, opportunities to move between different functions, availability of career opportunities, career opportunities for qualified people, promotion, clarity of roles and responsibilities
Recognition	appreciation for my contribution, criteria for recognition
Work tasks	Work challenges me to use my knowledge and skills, mistakes are used to learning, company's mission and goals provide meaningful direction, interest in work, sufficient variety in the work, individual is consulted and explained well regarding new roles / assignments
Payments	Fair payment, impact on performance, understanding the pay changes, fair payment when compared to my peers and colleagues, sharing the financial success, salary is structured in the best possible manner
Benefits	Better benefits program compared to other companies, benefit program are in line with the IT industry practices
Work-life *balance*	Immediate managers encourages me to find a healthy balance between work and personal commitments, fun place to work, appropriate control over my workload, flexibility to modify my work schedule to address personal situations, company has practices and programs that help me to address personal commitments
S*uperior Subordinate relationship*	Managers are available to answer my questions or concerns, managers provide timely and constructive feedback on my performance, manager recognizes my good work, I have confidence in the decisions made by my manager, manager develops a positive team atmosphere, manager actively works to resolve conflicts that I face
Employee Satisfaction	Consulted during major changes, passionate about high performance, managers support and implement our people practices to good effect, developing a workforce that adapts well to change, attracting people to achieve more, promoting the people who are best equipped to meet the future demands, people genuinely appear to have a good time while working here

being "strongly disagree" and (7) being "strongly agree" was used. A stratified random sampling procedure was employed. A total of 210 middle level employees from twenty IT companies are selected for this research. IT Companies having total employment of 2000 and above in middle level organization is selected.

IT Companies are now having the policy of "Employees first and customer second" by believing that happy employees can keep customers happy. There is increasing awareness of the benefits of providing more flexible HR strategies, reflecting increasing recognition of the fact that work and other life commitment cannot be separated. As the IT organizations move towards more participative and flat structures in which employees are expected to manage increased workloads, the demands of the environment increase and maintaining the balance between the demands of the environment increase and maintaining the balance between the demands of a career and life responsibilities becomes more difficult. Hence the study is made to find out the effects of work-life balance over job satisfaction.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected is analyzed by various statistical tools. Regression analysis is used to explain the variation in one variable based on the variation in one or more other variables. The regression equation is judged for its usefulness based on the overall f-test for the model and in order to decide which variables in the model are good explanatory variables of the dependent, the individual t-test for each variable needs to be analyzed. The R-square value of a model explains by what percentage of the variations in the dependent variable surpasses the independent variables in the model.

5. RESULTS

Multiple regression analysis has been used to find, at what extent the employee satisfactions is determined by career opportunity, recognition, work task, pay, benefits, work-life balance, and superior subordinate relationship. The result given in Table 2 reveals that, Employee satisfaction has positive relationship with career opportunity, recognition, work task, benefits, work/life balance and superior subordinate relationship and negatively associated with pay.

The statistical significance of the model and the R^2 value are shown in table 2. This indicates that the model is statistically significant at a confidence level of .01. The t-test for the significance of independent variables indicates that at a significance level of 95% only work tasks, benefits, work-life balance, and superior subordinate relationship are statistically significant in the model. The other independent variables career, recognition, and pay are statistically not significant. Structural modeling allowed us to test our overall model simultaneously. The structural equation modeling (SEM) has been gaining increasing popularity due to its robustness and flexibility in establishing unidimentionality. The standard SEM is composed of two parts the measurement model (a sub model in SEM that specifies the indicators of each construct and assesses the reliability of each construct for later use in estimating the causal relationships) and the structural model (the set of dependent relationships linking the model constructs).

Table 2. Regression analysis

Predictors	R^2	F	ΔR^2	Sig. of F change	B value	t-value	Sig. t
Constant	.757	85.527	.757	.000	.064	.288	.774
Career opportunities					.048	.720	.472
Recognition					.023	.549	.583
Work task					.410	5.874	.000*
Pay					-.006	-.160	.873
Benefits					.094	2.971	.003*
Work-life balance					.154	2.988	.003*
Superior subordinate relationship					.270	4.729	.000*

* p<.05

Model data fit is evaluated based on multiple fit indexes. The Chi-square is perhaps the most popular index used to evaluate the goodness of fit of the model. It measures the difference between the sample covariance and the fitted covariance. However the chi-square value index is sensitive to sample size and departures from multivariate normality. Therefore, it has been suggested that it must be interpreted with caution in most applications (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989). Some measures of overall model fit are Comparative fit index (CFI), Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), Root mean square residual (RMR), Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) etc. Goodness-of-fit statistics (GFI) indicates that the relative amount of variance and covariance jointly explained by the model. Many researchers interpret this index scores in the range of 0.80-0.89 as representing reasonable fit; scores of 0.90 or higher are considered as evidence of good fit (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989). The RMR indicates the average discrepancy between the elements in the sample covariance matrix and the model generated covariance matrix. RMR values range from 0 to 1, with smaller values indicating better model; values below 0.05 signifies good fit (Byrne, 1989). RMSEA value less than .05 signifies the good fit. The values of adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) range between 0 and 1. Scale, with higher values (0.95) indicating better model fit.

6. THE PROPOSED MODEL: GENERAL STRUCTURE

The initial model given in Figure 1 is constructed by taking variables like Career Opportunities (CO), Recognition(R), Work Task (WT), Pay (P), Work-life Balance (WLB), Superior Subordinate Relationship (SSR) and Employee Satisfaction (ES). The observed, endogenous variables are employee satisfaction and the work/life balance. The observed, exogenous variables are career opportunities, recognition, work task, pay and superior subordinate relationship. The unobserved, exogenous variables are e1 and e2.

Based on the above discussion, the existence of model fit was identified using the chi-square value and the goodness of fit
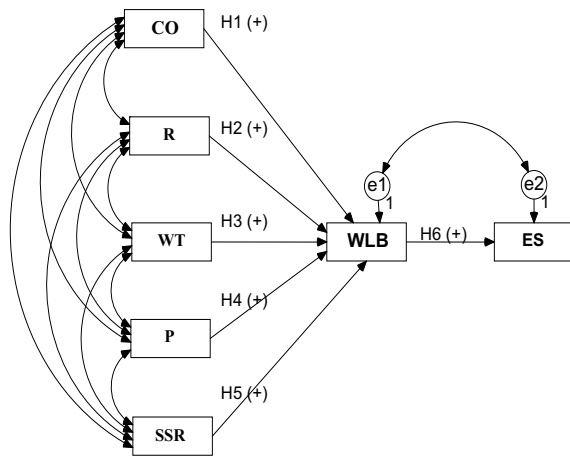
Figure 1. Initial Work/life Balance mediation model

Table 3. Index value

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA
Default model	0.010	0.984	0.889	0.040

was assessed based on the GFI, RMR and RMSEA values. In the structural model, if the chi-square has attained the minimum value and its probability value is greater than 0.05, the model is said to be good and satisfactory. The model fit statistics given in table 3 prove that there is an excellent model fit with GFI greater than 0.9, RMR less than 0.05 and RMSEA less than 0.05. The result further evidenced that the constructs form a

good model as there is a satisfactory chi-square coefficient (6.33). Therefore no further modifications was done and all the items from the construct in the final instrument.

We examined the paths in the mediation model to determine which variables had direct relationships with work task and to assess the support for our specific hypothesis. The hypotheses framed for this model and tested results were given in table 4 and depicted in Fig.2. Hypothesis testing is made to identify whether the data is supported adequately. There exists a positive relationship between the variables and supported the specific hypothesis. (Table 4).

Causal path analysis was performed to investigate the direct and indirect impact of career opportunities, recognition, work task, pay, superior subordinate relationship, and work/life balance and employee satisfaction (Table 5). In the indirect effect, work task has more effect on employee satisfaction with work/life balance as a mediator. Work/life balance has the largest overall effect on employee satisfaction.

Covariance matrix (Table 6) specifies that the values obtained are fit for applying correlation.

Table 7. presents the means, standard

Table 4. Hypothesis testing for Work-life Balance Mediation Model

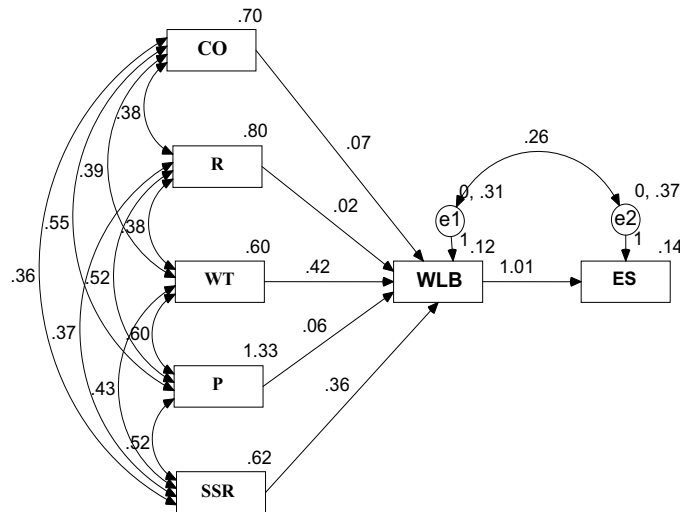| Hypothesis	Expected sign	Estimate	Support (yes/no)
H11: career opportunities → work-life balance	+	0.071	yes
H12: recognition → work-life balance	+	0.015	yes
H13: work task → work-life balance	+	0.424	yes
H14: pay → work-life balance	+	0.064	yes
H15: superior subordinate relationship → work-life balance	+	0.358	yes
H16: work-life balance → employee satisfaction	+	1.014	yes

Figure 2. Final Work/life Balance Mediation Model

Table 5. Casual Path analysis - Effects of Variables on Employee Satisfaction

Variables	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Career Opportunities	-	0.0707	0.0707
Recognition	-	0.0202	0.0202
Work Tasks	-	0.4242	0.4242
Pay	-	0.0606	0.0606
Superior Subordinate Relationship	-	0.3636	0.3636
Work/life balance	1.01	-	1.01

deviation, intercorrelations and reliabilities of the measures in the study. Mean substitution was used to deal with missing data. Although correlations are provided in table 7., the hypotheses were tested examining the standardized regression weights from structural equation modeling rather than correlation coefficients. This decision was made because the regression weights provide an estimate of the bivariate relationship after controlling for other model variables and thus provide a clear picture of the relationship.

7. DISCUSSION

This present research contributes to our knowledge by examining the relationship between work/life balance and job

Table 6. Covariance Matrix

	SSR	P	WT	R	CO	WLB	ES
SSR	.622						
P	.517	1.326					
WT	.434	.603	.603				
R	.372	.519	.380	.796			
CO	.361	.554	.386	.382	.699		
WLB	.484	.582	.466	.355	.406	.752	
ES	.472	.576	.496	.376	.379	.502	.619

Table7. Mean, Standard deviations, Correlations and Reliabilities

	Mean	SD	SSR	P	WT	R	CO	WLB	ES
SSR	4.969	.791	.75[a]	.570	.708	.528	.548	.708	.760
P	4.652	1.153		.68[a]	.674	.505	.575	.583	.636
WT	4.860	.725			.82[a]	.548	.594	.692	.812
R	4.819	.897				.88[a]	.512	.459	.536
CO	4.782	.677					.83[a]	.560	.577
WLB	4.664	.867						.90[a]	.737
ES	4.872	.792							.88[a]

satisfaction of middle level employees in IT industry. The findings confirm most of our hypothesis. We found that sufficient opportunities within the company were given to develop their skills to assume greater responsibilities. Secondly, we found that the recognition was linked with work/life balance, which leads to employee satisfaction, and the effects of recognition and appreciation for the employee contribution are reflected in their satisfaction. Thirdly, the relationship between work task and work/life balance is positive due to the reasonable challenges given to the employees. In this case the employee's mistakes are turned to learning opportunities in order to meet the companies' mission and goals of the employee. This enhances the employees to look forward for more tasks to be performed.

Fourth, our findings also suggest that pay is related to mediating factor of work/life balance which ends up in employee satisfaction. Fifth, the relationship between benefits and work/life balance is highly correlated. Better benefit program is the key factor in a company which will lead to employee satisfaction. It is a known fact that all IT companies have better benefit program, which satisfies the personal needs of the employees and helps to improve their performance.

Adams et al, 1996, in the study of work/life balance involves the examination of people's ability to manage simultaneously the multi-faceted demands of life. Generally, the work-life balance assumes that individuals have too much rather than too little work – a debilitating long working hour's culture is said to be pervasive. The organization benefits have been identified in terms of improved retention and recruitment positioning from work/life balance, easier service delivery (Hogarth et al, 2000), enhance quality service (Lasch,1999), employee flexibility and skills to succeed in rapidly changing markets (Vincola,1999). The facts that work/life balance is a key mediating mechanism through which all the exogenous variable have a positive relationship which leads to employee satisfaction. Such an approach may be practical from several perspectives.

Tombari and Spinks (1999) research identified that, management support is critical to work/life balance initiatives. Similarly Kropf (1999) comments that poor supervisory skills and behaviors can inhibit

work/life balance in practice. Through this research it is identified that there is a positive relationship between work/life balance and superior subordinate relationship. This type of conducive environment can be strengthened to provide timely and constructive feedback on the employee performance.

Finally, the driving force of organization is employee satisfaction. The empirical research undertaken for this research strongly suggests that there is strong relationship between work/life balance and employee satisfaction. Previous research was done to establish the importance of a wide range of variables associated with the overall well being of the employees and with the level of employee contribution to the organization (Berg et al, 2003; Batt & Valcour, 2003). Today's human resource has come to a conclusion that there is a relationship between the employee satisfaction and business results. This realization has intensified the organization to focus and develop corporate policies and programs on work/life issues. Changing, developing and promoting the human resource are quite well – planned in this organization in order to meet the future uncertainty.

8. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research found work/life balance leads to employee satisfaction in IT industry. A strong emphasis should be made on work/life balance in order to have satisfaction. It can also be concluded from the data that the individuals work/life balance correlates significantly with his/her level of satisfaction. Although our study makes a unique contribution by identifying the relationship between work/life balance and employee satisfaction, there are limitations to consider. One limitation of the present study is that, the career satisfaction and life satisfaction is not examined. By examining the effects of both career satisfaction and personal satisfaction on employee satisfaction, future research may shed further light on these complex relationships. In addition the data on respondents work status beyond their specific exempt or non exempt job category is not gathered. Some of the relationships identified might be potentially differ for part time, temporary and contract employees. To ensure representativeness, the study should be replicated to cover a bigger sampling frame and the results should be compared to those found in this study. Another limitation comes from the fact that the study was conducted within a single organization and a single industry. Further research is needed to determine and assess the employee satisfaction over a period of time by considering the drawbacks.

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РАВНОТЕЖА ИЗМЕЂУ ЖИВОТА И ПОСЛА И ЊЕН УТИЦАЈ НА ЗАДОВОЉСТВО ЗАПОСЛЕНИХ

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Извод

Циљ овог истраживања је да анализира зависност између задовољства запослених и равнотеже између приватног живота запослених и посла. Основа која је коришћена за истраживање заснива се на могућностима напредовања у каријери, подршке претпостављених, радних задатака, плаћања, бенефиција, односа са претпостављенима, задовољства запослених и равнотеже приватног живота и посла. Студија је извршена на укупно 210 запослених који раде у ИТ организацији. Допринос ове студије је у повезивању две наизглед одвојене истраживачке области, задовољства запослених и равнотеже приватног живота са послом.. Резултати истраживања показују да постоји висок ниво коралације између радних задатака и задовољства запослених, при чему се као медијатор промењива мора разматрати равнотежа посла и приватног живота.

*Кључне речи:*равнотежа посао-приватни живот, мотивација запослених, модел

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