



ISSN: 0975-833X

Available online at <http://www.journalcra.com>

International Journal of Current Research
Vol. 12, Issue, 07, pp.12172-12174, July, 2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24941/ijcr.39177.07.2020>

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF CURRENT RESEARCH**

RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE- A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 20th April, 2020
Received in revised form
29th May, 2020
Accepted 27th June, 2020
Published online 25th July, 2020

Key Words:

Perfection Seeker, Work Pressure, Teamwork, Happiness Index, Employee Turnover.

ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is a vital aspect of the overall economic and cultural growth of an organization. However, there is a need to explore the factors that affect the 'work' and 'life' balance and then the resulting outcome in improving organizational performance. Employees are the basic building blocks of every organization. Family and work both are essential elements of life. In case of disruption or conflict between any of these elements, it will negatively affect the well-being of both employee and employer. The objective of this review is to contemplate whether work-life balance initiatives and practices can be considered as an approach for human resource management, which can translate into improved individual and organizational performance. Here is a comprehensive literature review of how work-life balance affects the growth of an organization.

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Citation: Dr. Vertika Kulshrestha. 2020. "Impact of work-life balance in improving organizational performance- A literature review", *International Journal of Current Research*, 12, (07), 12172-12174.

INTRODUCTION

The pressure of work has been amplified in recent decades. On the other hand, the lifestyle of people has also gone through colossal changes. As a result, it increased concern for the demarcation of the boundary between worker's personal and professional lives. The word 'work-life-balance' was first coined in the U.K. during the Women's Liberation movement in 1986. Though work and life are completely separate but are interconnected. Clark (2000) defines balance as 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and home with a minimum role of conflict'. It is a complex and challenging task to achieve balance in your day-to-day life. However, the organization must take care of its employees. So, that they don't face such work-life conflict, as ultimately, it's going to affect the overall productivity and performance of the organization. Almost every sector is interested to know the change in demographics of employee's performance along with changes in the workplace. So, here is a brief analysis of the work-life balance.

Barriers of work-life balance: Work-life balance is an exigency of today's corporate world. Every company as well as employee wants equilibrium between their life and work. So, that they can live a good & a qualitative life and can perform efficiently in their work. Before maintaining the work-life parity we should know the causes of its imbalance.

The following mentioned points are some of the main reasons for the disparity between personal and professional life.

Work Pressure: A case study was done by Turner; Lingard & Francis (2009) explains the point clearly. Fifty-nine references were made by employees which demonstrated that the number of hours lived up to expectations were affected by the lifecycle phase of the task. For instance, assuming the project work is running late due to improper management and when the project completion date comes near, the organization starts pushing their employees to achieve the target date. As a result of this improper management, employees start looking for another organization or management techniques that are more comfortable to them.

Organizational policies and work conditions: The organizational environment, policies, and support of the supervisors and attitude of the employers along with the management are some of the important factors that affect the work-life balance. An unsupportive organizational policy and culture can increase the work-life conflict and decrease the job satisfaction of an employee, which also can increase absenteeism, and turnover rate. Work-life balance policies may be tailored to the needs of different organizations depending on the culture, demography, and needs of the organization and its employees.

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High Expectations: Every individual desires to achieve a higher quality of life. Today's human is excessively concerned about the acquisition of wealth and material possessions. Moreover, there are never-ending expectations of family and society. It is good to strive for one's desire. But on the other hand, getting obsessed leads to an imbalance between work & life. In one of the studies, people aged 18 to 25 reported the highest rates of working on their vacation to keep up with their bosses' expectation. This report demonstrated how hard young employees try to get up to their bosses' expectations. However, it could innately agitate which may even lead to anxiety and depression, hence hindering their productivity.

Perfection Seeker: Striving for perfection is exemplary but making it obligatory everywhere can be baleful. People don't accept that life is never perfect. Putting efforts to complete work perfectly is good but that inordinate attitude for perfection everywhere and every time can be noxious. It leads to workholism, social anxiety, and clinical depression like chronic stress, etc. It affects both personal and professional life, causes an imbalance in work & life.

Depression: An Ailment: Depression is one of the most important reasons for losing productivity globally. An article published on the Harvard Medical School website talks about a study that looked at the financial impact of 25 chronic physical and mental health problems including obesity, depression, anxiety, arthritis, back and neck pain. Depression ranked as the most costly health conditions (including direct and indirect costs). In the US, an estimated 200 million workdays are lost due to depression each year. This is costing employers up to \$44 billion annually. Organizations, where employees can manage their work and personal life smoothly, have various advantages. Here are some of the advantages.

Organizational outcome and benefits of work-life balance policies

Healthy and happy employees are always more productive: Happy and healthy employees are always more enthusiastic about their work. They are more accountable and efficient. There is an improved sense of commitment. This directly or indirectly affects productivity. The research shows that only 34% of the employees from the top 25 winning companies feel burnt out whereas 53% of the employees feel burnout from all the other companies. The happiness index of employees is directly proportional to the productivity of a company. Happy and satisfied employee reflects various changes in attitude. One such research was conducted to observe employees after their return from the vacation. They showed many positive changes in their attitudes. Mainly, willing engagement in the work of the office, better productivity of employees, and also increased 'we can do it' attitude.

Better teamwork and communication: Teamwork is essential for any organization to work smoothly. A flourishing organization is a combination of various departments and experts in various fields working together. For it, employees with better patience, listening skills, and a positive attitude are needed. Employees can fulfill this requirement only when there is a balance in the workplace and personal life.

Reduces employee turnover and Recruitment Cost: Unhappy and unsatisfied employees seek opportunities out of their organization. They constantly approach companies with

flexible working hours and more comfortable environments. For turning unhappy employees into a happy one, the work-life balance plays an essential role. One of the studies shows that 56 percent of employees don't consider job opportunities outside of their organization because they are getting more PTO (Paid Time Off) in their organizations. Hence, a company promoting proper work-life balance finds it easy to reduce employee turnover and saves the recruitment cost.

Reduces medical bills: Overburdened and overwhelmed employees are unhealthy both mentally and physically. Such employees will obviously take more leaves. Research shows that stressed employees spend 46 percent more on health-related expenses than unstressed employees. And again, money is the biggest stressor for the employees. This continuous cycle of imbalance goes on. On the other hand, a healthy employee proves to be an add-on to the organization through his positivity and active attitude.

Improved business reputation: Organizations with prominent work-life balance are always more attractive for the employees. Such organizations don't need to expand on searching for better employees as explained in the point (3) heading. Moreover, high-caliber talented people approach them. For example, everybody wants to work with companies like Google, Microsoft, and Facebook.

Strategies and policies of work-life balance

Create a Healthy Environment: Organizations or companies must provide a healthy, positive working environment to their employees. This will help them to work comfortably and efficiently. Employees never feel overburdened or exhausted in a healthy environment. The following are a few basic things to create a healthy environment in an office.

Maintaining good relations: Employers are recommended to maintain a good and healthy relationship with their employees. The bond between employees and employer acts as an emotional booster or results in an emotional boost.

Appreciate their good work: Appreciation is the most basic and common thing that employees expect from their seniors. Organizations can give performance recompenses to employees which can encourage them.

The team as their second family: Team of talented, hardworking, employees that share a strong bond is more effective and efficient. This bonding helps to create a homely environment.

Providing possible facilities: Employees work more effectively when felicitated well. Companies like Nevro, Costco, Starbucks, and Facebook are known for their prominent work-life balance. They provide various facilities for their workers. Such practices may include

- Flexible hour's arrangement e.g. job-sharing, flexi-time, and part-time working
- Flexible leave arrangements
- Breaks, sabbaticals, and parental leave
- Possibility of teleworking
- Availability of information on possibilities
- Emergency childcare

- Supportive organizational culture
- Situational factors
- Support from employer and management
- Support from colleagues
- Policies of organization
- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- Adaptation assistance
- Performance-related payments

Re-manage working hours: A survey suggested that 57 percent of employees say they did stay at a job with less pay if they get more paid leaves. So, the organization can manage this increase in paid leaves by some economical friendly ideas. For example:- giving at least two days' leave in a week and in turn, increasing an hour of work in remaining working days.

Task-Oriented approach: According to a Stanford education report Employees working for forty hours a week are two-third more productive than the employees who work sixty hours a week. This is due to the psychological pressure of not being time-bound. The employer or the organization must focus on the quality and quantity of work rather than on working hours.

Break the time: Instead of hiring a single employee for a task, try to go for the two at the same amount. This will increase the effective working hours. And also, the work or duty will be divided into two employees.

Conclusion

Work-Life balance is going to be a keystone in the upcoming industrial scenario. The organizational policies should be emphasized on improving work conditions which are likely to have major leverage in reducing work-family conflict. Such an organization will be able to maintain work-life balance and react to the changing market conditions more effectively. They will be able to meet their customer demands convincingly. It couldn't be denied that the work-life balance ability of an organization is going to be the future demand.

The business world has responded to work-family issues with an array of programs and policies that addresses the family needs. However, more research can be done in this perspective by identifying some more factors and doing quantitative research to add a different dimension to work-life balance.

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