A Conceptual Study on Factors Affecting Work Life Balance of Employees Working in BPO's - a Study of Select BPO's in Hyderabad Region

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Abstract: A 'work life' balance refers to an employee's ability to maintain a healthy balance between their work roles, their personal responsibilities, and family life. Companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of helping their employees to achieve this balance as more staff are experiencing conflict between their work and personal roles. In today's age, many workers are seeing their personal responsibilities increase, from childcare and elderly care, to volunteer work, and family commitments. This comes at a time when their work responsibilities are also increasing, resulting in a conflict between personal and work commitments and an increase in stress.

There are several ways in which companies can help to encourage a work life balance for their employees, both in the policies that they implement and in ensuring that managers actively encourage employees to take advantage of these policies. Offering employees flexible working options helps employees design their work pattern to fit their personal commitments, ultimately reducing conflict between work and personal responsibilities. Flexible working options include allowing employees to work from home, adjust their working hours to meet personal commitments, use remote working, compressed work weeks, and job sharing. Managers should encourage staff to use annual leave and help employees to set boundaries by encouraging staff not respond to work related emails and calls during non-working hours. Some organizations are also implementing wellness programs, which include offering stress reduction and time management workshops, while others are creating wellness centers on the work site, helping to connect employees with physicians, mental health counselors, or on-site gyms.

This study aims to find the factors affecting work life balance of employees in BPO companies for the selected population size of 200 employees from 10 BPO's companies in the Hyderabad region. The research design used was a convenience sampling method and the statistical tool used is mean rating scores for the interpretation of the primary data.

Key words: Work lifebalance,Employee stress,Flexible working options,Personal roles.

INTRODUCTION:

In India, Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is the fastest growing segment of the ITES (Information Technology Enabled Services) industry. Factors such as economy of scale, business risk mitigation, cost advantage; utilization improvement and superior competency have all lead to the growth of the Indian BPO industry. Business process outsourcing in India, which started around the mid-90s, has now grown by leaps and bounds.

India is now the world's favored market for BPO companies, among other competitors, such as, Australia, China, Philippines and Ireland. The BPO boom in India is credited to cheap labor costs and India's huge talent pool of skilled, English-speaking professionals. Research by the National Association of Software Services and Companies (NASSCOM) has revealed that "quality orientation among leading BPO companies, 24/7 services, India's unique geographic location and the investor friendly tax structure in India have all made the BPO industry in India very popular." "There's no such thing as work-life balance. There are work-life choices, and you make them, and they have consequences", stated by Jack Welsh, former General Electric's CEO and all-round business guru (Khallash& Kruse, 2012, p. 682).

The two most important domains of an individual's life are work and family and their interface has become Centre of attention in the past two decades for researchers in the field of human resource management world-wide. The changing social structures arising out of dual career couples, single parent families, globalization, changes in the demands and patterns of work, an increasing number of parents with children care responsibilities, increasing number of women workforce and ageing parents all have contributed to escalating research in the area of work life balance. There is a need to integrate and balance family and career requirements otherwise work life balance is in jeopardy as a person is unable to perform his roles due to tiredness from work or family responsibilities hamper concentration at work (McCarthy et al., 2010; Valk& Srinivasan, 2011). Work life conflict is opposite of work life balance, that can be either related to strain-based or time-based conflicts between work and life. There are two conflicting areas: (1) how work impacts on family life i.e. work-to-family conflict and (2) how family life impacts on work i.e. family-to-work conflict. But the net impact is same and that is Work life imbalance or conflict. Work-life balance is not primarily a women's issue as the principles equally apply to men (Pichler, 2008; Crompton &Lyonette, 2006). This concept highly aims to encourage employees to adopt flexible working arrangements that can help them to achieve balance between their professional and private life.

Literature review: Thompson, (2002) classified work-life initiatives into five (5) categories namely,(1) Time-based

strategies like flexi-time, telecommuting and job-sharing;(2) Information-based strategies like relocation assistance, elder care resources, company work/life balance intranet; (3) Money-based strategies like leave with pay, scholarships for dependents; (4) Direct services like onsite childcare, concierge services and takeout dinners; and (5)Culture-change strategies like training or focus on employees' performance not office face time. Hyman et al. (2004) observed that organizational pressures, combined with lack of work centrality, result in work intruding into non-work areas of employees' lives. Such intrusions often manifest themselves differently depending on the type of work, extent of autonomy and organizational support. Burke, (2002) found out that both women and men prefer working in organizations that support work-life balance. Men appeared to benefit more than women. When work does not permit women to take care of their family, they feel unhappy, disappointed and frustrated. They draw tight boundaries between work and family and they do not like one crossing the other. Gibson, (2006) offered two explanations regarding the interconnectedness of work and life in the organizational setting: (1) the compensation effect implies that employees tend to compensate for low work or personal life satisfaction by seeking contentment in the other domain; and (2) the spillover view that indicates that job satisfaction spills over into one's work life and vice versa. Helen De Cieri et. al. (2005) argue that an organizations need to attract and retain valued employees in a highly competitive labor market is a strong motivating factor for increased organizational awareness and action with regard to implementation and management of WLB strategies. While some achievements have been made over the years, there remain substantial challenges for the uptake and management of WLB strategies. R. Baral and S. Bhargava (2011) have analyzed that family-friendliness of employers in India have been reflected in various welfare provisions which has been a matter of concern for employers since industrialization. With time, the scope and coverage of such initiatives have broadened and have become more individual growth and family well-being oriented. Rakesh Yadav, (2011) analyzed that factors such as absence of personal life, physical strains, unscheduled work hours were affecting the attrition from HR perspective which could be minimized by giving extra break to employees who work continuously in night shift for five days, compensating workers with wellness programs and stress busters and aligning employees holidays with the clients' holidays.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
- To find out the effect of work life balance on workload.
- To find out the effect of personal responsibilities on job.
- To find out the role of personal life in balancing work and life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research Design & Sample Design
The study isa descriptive research design and conducted in the city of Hyderabad where there is a dearth of population facing a balance between work and life. A random sample of 10 BPOs is selected for collecting the primary data and a convenience sampling method is being adopted for accurate and easier data analysis from the sample of 200 employees.

Data Collection:
Both primary and secondary data is used for data collection. Primary data is being collected from employees through questionnaire and secondary data is collected from lectures pertaining to literature review.
Statistical Tool Used: In this study the statistical technique applied to do the analysis is a Mean Rating Score for the findings.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Table no 1: Profile of respondents:

Factors	Classification	No of respondents	Percentage
Age	20-30	45	30
	30-40	65	43.3
	40 -50	25	16.6
	<60	15	10
Gender	Male	79	52.6
	female	71	47.3
civic status	Married	66	44
	Unmarried	45	30
	single	49	32
Experience	5	46	30.6
	5-10	35	23.3
	10-15	42	28
	15-20	27	18
	>20	0	0
salary	3-4 lpa*	48	32
	4-6 lpa	35	23.3
	6-8 lpa	29	19.3
	8-10 lpa	23	15.3
	>10 lpa	15	10
local	Local resident	128	64
Non -local	Non local resident	72	36

Source: primary data
*lpa -Lakh Per Annum

Table no.2 frequency of respondents having problem in balancing their work life with workload

Response	Frequency	Percentage
yes	55	36.6
no	45	30
undecided	50	33

Source: primary data

The table: 2, shows that 36.6 percentage of respondents have difficulty in balancing their work life with the workload. Only 30 percentage of them do not have a problem in balancing their work life with the workload.

Table no.3: Frequency of respondents who have personal responsibilities effecting work load

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	85	42.5
no	62	31
Undecided	63	31.5
Total	200	100 %

Source: primary data

The above table shows that 42.5 % of respondents cannot balance fulfill their personal responsibilities due to their imbalance in work and life. Only 31 % are able to meet to fulfill their personal life responsibilities and work load.

Table no.4: frequency of respondents whose personal and social life is effected by work life balance

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	83	41.5
no	67	33.5
Undecided	50	25
Total	200	100 %

Source: primary data

Table: 4, shows that 41.5 % of respondents are not able to meet up their friends and personal meetings due to work related measures. Only 33.5 % are able to balance their personal life with the work.

Table no.5 Perception towards factors effecting work life balance

Response	Mean
Support from top management	4.15
Support from colleagues	4.01
Organizational change	3.67
Working hours	4.49
Work overload	4.61
Physical health	4.15
Family support	3.5
Children responsibilities	3.33
Financial problems of family	3.50
Scale 1=strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= somewhat disagree 4=neither agree or disagree 5= somewhat agree 6= agree 7=strongly agree	

Source: primary data

From the table:5, it is being observed that the 'work load' has a highest impact on work life balance, next level factoraffecting is 'working hours'. It is also observed that 'support from management' and 'physical health' have an equal affect while 'employeeschildren responsibilities' have a least impact comparatively from the above data collected.

Table no.6 work life balance arrangements provided by organization to respondents

Factors	Mean
Sick leave	3.45
Maternity leave	2.25
Casual leave	4.0
Paternity leave	2.2
Work from home	3.5
Flexible break provision	3.65
Earned leave	3.25
1= never 2=rarely 3=sometimes 4=often	

Source: primary data

From the table:6, it has been observed that 'casual leaves' have been availed by many followed by 'flexi break provision' and then 'work from home' and the least to avail was 'paternity leave.'

Table no 7: impact of work life balance

Factors	Mean
1. Health	**Mean**
• Adequate sleep	3.25
• Self-Exercise time	3.33
• No sufferings from Migraine or headache	2.25
• Physically and mentally active	3..00
2. Family and friend's relationship	**Mean**
• Time for personal responsibilities	2.56
• Time to spend with family	3.2
• Time to attend friends	2. 05
3. Relationship with collogues and management	**Mean**
• Expressing infront of the management	2.2
• Building relationship with collogues	3.3
• Able to Work in teams	3.25
4. Work environment	**Mean**
• Able to achieve targets	3.2
• I am able to acquire skills	2.2
• I am able to handle multiple tasks	2.25
Scale: 1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= somewhat disagree 4= neither agree nor disagree 5= somewhat agree 6= agree 7=strongly agree	

Sources: primary data

From the table:7 with regard to health, the highest impact factor is 'adequate sleep followed by 'self -exercise time'. in the perspective of family and friend's relationship. The factor which is affecting the most is 'time for personal responsibilities'. It is also observed that able to 'work in teams' is also not possible if proper work life balance is not maintained. And the last is 'able to achieve targets' under pressure also has a highest impact of 3.2.

CONCLUSION:

In the BPO sector work is under pressure and employees have to communicate with customers all the time. Some of the customers talk rudely and some give reckless answers, having to bear all these it has been observed that employees of BPO sector are trying to work hard with a huge stress and effect on their personal life. BPO's are taking care of their employees by letting them work from home and availing them benefits of multiple types of leaves. The flexibility of work makes employees to attain the targets easily and achieve the goals of the organization. It is the responsibility at an industrial, state and at a national level to cope up with the work life balance of employees.

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