

Relationship Between Work-Life Balance and Personal Happiness: A Study on IT Professionals

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Abstract

Work-life balance has been perceived to be very important for employees as its balance matters much for higher creativity, productivity, and performance resulting in benefits to both employees and organizations. A healthy work-life balance involves a number of interdependent factors. Establishing a work-life balance is the art of implementing as many factors favourable for employees in both work life and personal life without becoming a burden on organization.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relation of work-life balance to happiness in personal life. Accordingly, a questionnaire-based survey was designed to determine the relations between the parameters based on dataset of 200 employees from IT sector in Ernakulam and Trivandrum districts of Kerala, India. Demographic data sheet, The Work-Life Balance Questionnaire and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire were used. Correlational analysis was conducted to examine the research hypotheses. The results indicated that work-life balance positively and significantly affect employee happiness. The results have enormous implication for the IT sector in India for implementing gender-sensitive workplace policies, flexible work arrangements, family-friendly policies, and supportive supervisory practices.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Personal happiness, IT Professionals

Introduction

Work plays a significant role in a human's life with an approximate of upto 80,000 hours being spent at work by an average person. Workplace well-being relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and work organization. It is this very reason that the need has arisen to recognize the impact of work on health and wellbeing of employees.

Work-life balance has been perceived to be very important for employees as its balance matters much for higher creativity, productivity, and performance resulting in benefits to both employees and organizations. Studies suggest that organizations not permitting work-life flexibility tend to negatively impact their employee's job performance.⁸ An individual who is not able to spend enough time away from work can suffer from increased stress, higher risk of burnout and a poor sense of well-being. Hence, an ideal work-life balance is the state of equilibrium where a person equally prioritizes the demands of one's career and the demands of one's personal life.⁹

For a healthy work-life balance, it is not only the relationship between the two sides that is important, but also the individual factors of each side.¹³ When an employee drags problems into their work life or private life, the whole balance between the sides will suffer. Clearly, a good work-life balance can only be achieved if certain conditions can be achieved within the workplace that ensure it does not stand in the way of the employee's well-being. Ideally, this well-being is the foundation and goal of a productive and healthy working relationship.

According to Sheldon happiness is often equated with perpetual cheerfulness and devoid of any negative effect. Happiness is seen as contentment, the inner peace and joy that come from deep satisfaction with one's surroundings, relationships with others, accomplishments etc.¹¹ The various factors identified as drivers of workplace happiness are fairness, being valued, meaning of work, autonomy, work engagement etc.¹⁰

Researchers have studied the outcomes of happiness and have found that happy people are more likely to be healthier and live longer, to have better social relationships, and to be more productive at work. In other words, people high in happiness

seem to be healthier and function more effectively compared to people who are chronically stressed, depressed, or angry. Thus, happiness does not just feel good, but it is good for people and for those around them.

The relation among work-life balance, well-being and happiness can be derived from Fredrickson's (1998) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. The broaden-and-build theory suggested that positive emotions increase available affective and cognitive resources, allowing those who experience positive emotions to momentarily draw on an expansion of their human capital. For example, a person who experiences happiness is more likely to experience flexible, creative, and critical thinking processes than someone who is angry.⁵

India has seen a big boom in information technology sector since the turn of 20th century. Given that the IT sector in India is one of the progressive industries in India's service sector, it is imperative that this industry needs to utilize its major resource "Human resource" most effectively. IT sector in India is riddled with the problem of attrition. The attrition rates are now being reduced by the organization through offering salary hikes as well as other retention and employee satisfaction programmes especially work-life balance policies.

The rapid changes in technology, increased workloads, and the high demands of the Information Technology (IT) profession have further increased the hurdles, which an IT professional has to face to maintain this equilibrium. Personal happiness or satisfaction of the individual, which is the perceived evaluation made by the person regarding the satisfaction of life, is directly affected to a large extent by occupational stress and work-life integration.² Previous studies suggest that achieving an appropriate balance between professional and personal life contributes positively to emotional stability, job satisfaction, and overall happiness, while imbalance may lead to stress, burnout, and reduced quality of life.¹ Therefore, examining the relationship between work-life balance and personal happiness among IT professionals is essential for understanding how occupational demands influence individual well-being and for developing strategies to enhance employee productivity and psychological health.

Methodology

Objectives

- To examine the relationship between work-life balance to the employee's work well-being in the organization and happiness in life.
- To examine the relationship between personal demographics viz. age, gender and marital status to the employee's work life balance and happiness in life.

Hypothesis

- There is significant relationship between work-life balance and employee's happiness in life.
- There is significant relationship between personal demographics and employee's work-life balance.
- There is significant relationship between personal demographics and employee's happiness in life.

Sample

The sample consist of 200 IT Professionals with 100 male and

100 female employees from Ernakulam and Trivandrum districts of Kerala, India. The sample was collected through convenience sampling.

Instruments

The following instruments were used to assess work-life balance and happiness of the employees.

1. Demographic data sheet.
2. The Work –Life Balance Questionnaire employed for determining work-life balance. It is developed by Malgorzata Kluczyk in 2013. The Questionnaire consist of 39 Items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this questionnaire is 0.86.
3. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) consist of 29 items devised as a broad measure of personal happiness by Oxford Brookes University (Hills & Argyle, 2002). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale is quite good and above 0.92.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria

- IT professionals currently employed in technical roles in IT companies located in and around Ernakulam and Trivandrum.
- Full-time employees with a minimum of six months of work experience in the IT sector
- Individuals with adequate proficiency in the English language to understand and respond to the research tools
- Both male and female participants across different age groups

Exclusion Criteria

- IT professionals working outside the Kochi and Trivandrum region
- Non-technical staff of IT companies, including administrative, human resource, and support staff.

Procedure

This is a quantitative study which employed correlation research design. The participant was selected through convenient sampling. A prior appointment was fixed with the participants. The investigator introduced herself and established a good rapport with the respondents and the purpose of the study was articulated. The respondents were made aware about the confidentiality of their responses. It was instructed to the respondent's that there was no right or wrong answer to any of the question. An informed consent was taken from the participants. Instructions were provided for various sections separately and a general instruction was provided in the first section. Doubts were clarified by the investigator. On an average the respondents took nearly half an hour to complete the questionnaire. Then the data was analysed using SPSS. The study utilized descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

The aim of the study was to assess the relationship between work life balance and personal happiness among IT Professionals. The data collected from the sample size of 200 IT Professionals were analyzed for this purpose. To achieve the purpose of the study a normality test was conducted for the data. Chi square and Spearman Rho correlation was used to analyze the data.

Table No. 1 shows the relationship with work-life balance and happiness among IT Professionals.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2
Happiness (1)	1.10	0.323	1	0.583**
Work-Life Balance (2)	1.12	0.327	0.583**	1

**=0.01 significant level

Spearman's Rho correlation analysis presented in the table indicates that relationship of work-life balance with happiness is positive and significant, $r=0.583$, $p<0.01$. Since, there is a significant relationship present between work-life balance and happiness, hypothesis is accepted.

Table No. 2 shows the relationship between personal demographics and work-life balance.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Gender (1)	0.22	0.414	1			
Age (2)	0.68	0.470		1		
Marital Status (3)	0.53	0.501			1	
Work-Life Balance (4)	1.12	0.327	-0.83**	0.009	0.071	1

**=0.01 significant level

The results indicate that gender is strongly associated with work-life balance ($r = -0.83$), whereas age and marital status do not show significant relationships with work-life balance. Hence the hypothesis is partially accepted.

Table No. 3 shows Relationship among personal demographics and happiness.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Gender (1)	0.22	0.414	1			
Age (2)	0.68	0.470		1		
Marital Status (3)	0.53	0.501			1	
Work-Life Balance (4)	1.10	0.323	-0.049	-0.039	0.005	-0.151

* = 0.05 significant level **=0.01 significant level

Summary of Spearman's Rho correlation analysis presented in the Table 3 indicates that there is no significant relationship present between personal demographics and happiness. Since, there is no relationship between personal demographics and happiness, null hypothesis is accepted in this case.

Discussion

The objective of the study was to assess the relationship between work-life balance to the employee's work well-being in the organization and personal happiness and to examine the relationship between personal demographics viz. age, gender and marital status to the employee's work life balance and happiness in life. Result revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and happiness among IT Professionals.

Results also shows that gender is strongly associated with work-life balance.

The present study examined the relationship between employee's work-life balance and happiness and found a positive association between the two variables, indicating that employees who experience better balance between their work and personal lives tend to report higher levels of happiness. This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that the ability to effectively manage work and non-work roles contributes significantly to overall well-being and life satisfaction.

Work-life balance allows individuals to allocate sufficient time and emotional resources to both professional responsibilities and personal domains, thereby reducing role conflict and stress. According to role theory, imbalance between competing roles can lead to strain and emotional exhaustion, which negatively affects subjective well-being.⁶ In contrast, when employees perceive harmony between work and family or personal life, they are more likely to experience positive emotions, fulfilment, and happiness.

The positive relationship observed in this study is also consistent with the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, which suggests that positive emotional states such as happiness enhance individuals coping abilities, resilience, and overall functioning.⁴ Employees who maintain a healthy work-life balance may experience reduced stress and increased autonomy, contributing to sustained positive affect and psychological well-being.

Furthermore, prior research has demonstrated that work-life balance is a crucial predictor of happiness across occupational groups, as it enhances job satisfaction and life satisfaction simultaneously.⁷ When organizational environments support flexible work arrangements and respect personal boundaries, employees are more likely to feel valued and content, which reinforces their sense of happiness.

The findings of the study also indicate that gender is strongly associated with work-life balance whereas age and marital status do not demonstrate significant relationships with work-life balance. The strong association between gender and work-life balance suggests that employee's experiences of balancing professional and personal responsibilities differ substantially across gender categories. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting that gender roles, societal expectations, and unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities significantly influence perceptions of work-life balance.^{6,7} In cultural context of India, women often assume greater caregiving and household responsibilities, which may intensify work-family conflict and reduce perceived balance. Conversely, men may experience different role pressures related to work demands, which also affect their work-life balance, though in distinct ways.

In contrast, age was found to have no significant relationship with work-life balance, indicating that employees across different age groups experience similar levels of balance between work and personal life. This finding suggests that work-life balance challenges may be more closely linked to organizational demands and role expectations than to chronological age. Similar findings have been reported in earlier studies, which suggest that age alone is not a consistent predictor of work-life balance when workplace conditions and job roles remain comparable.¹

Similarly, marital status did not show a significant association with work-life balance, implying that being married or unmarried

does not independently determine how employees manage work and personal life. This may reflect changing family structures and increased social support systems, where both married and unmarried individuals encounter comparable work pressures and coping demands. Prior research also indicates that marital status may interact with other variables—such as number of dependents or social support—rather than directly influencing work–life balance.¹²

Overall, the findings of the present study emphasize the importance of promoting work-life balance as a key organizational and psychological resource. Interventions aimed at improving work-life balance will enhance employee's happiness and contribute to improved mental health, productivity, and long-term well-being. The findings underscore that gender emerges as a critical demographic factor influencing work-life balance, while age and marital status appear to play a limited role. These results highlight the importance of gender-sensitive workplace policies, such as flexible work arrangements and supportive organizational cultures, to promote equitable work–life balance experiences among employees.

Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between work life balance and happiness among IT professionals with a focus on personal demographics such as gender, age and marital status. A correlation research design was employed, utilizing convenient sampling to recruit 200 participants from Ernakulam and Trivandrum districts of Kerala. Data were collected through standardized questionnaires, including the demographic data sheet, The Work Life Balance Questionnaire and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire. Then the data was analysed using SPSS.

The result revealed that there is a significant positive relationship present between work-life balance and happiness. Also, gender is strongly associated with work -life balance. However, there is no significant relationship present between personal demographics and happiness.

While these findings contribute to understanding the importance of work life balance, the study has limitations, including the reliance on self-reported data, the absence of longitudinal tracking, and the potential lack of generalizability beyond the IT sector. Future research should explore longitudinal changes in work life balance, cultural influences, and the role of additional factors such as financial security and social support. This study has practical implications for implementing gender-sensitive workplace policies. Findings of the study also help to implement flexible work arrangements, family-friendly policies, and supportive supervisory practices.

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