



A study on work life balance amongst managers of garment units in Tamilnadu State, India

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Abstract

Work life balance plays an important role now a day. Employees want it, managers need it, and organization cannot afford to ignore it! Managers need to take work-life balance seriously particularly in garment units. The more overworked and overloaded, the higher the demands or the expectations on the department or the work unit, the more the managers have to rely on their employees to produce at the highest possible level of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality. If managers are out of balance or stressed or sick then they will be less committed to the outcomes, they will be less committed to the organization, they will be less committed to the client, the product or goods or service that they are producing. This research paper examined the work life balance amongst managers of garment units in Tamil nadu state. The methodology adopted for the study was descriptive research design. Data were collected from 480 managers through questionnaire method around Tamilnadu state, India. In the present study, stastical tools such as percentage analysis, mean value, chi-square, ANOVA, and correlation analysis were used for the analysis. The results indicated that the work life balance of managers are not completely successful due to their present working hours, working environment and increase in products prices, work load, responsibilities in work and decrease of job security due to recession.

Keywords: work life balance; garment units; work life policies; organization efficiency.

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Introduction

The garment industry of India consists of one trillion units. Almost 33% of its knitwear production and about 20% of its woven-garment production, both by volume, enters export markets. Over all about 25% of the volume of its garment production goes into export markets, leaving 75% for domestic consumption. The garment industry is running in a smooth manner and it is engaged with large number of employees. This industry is giving more importance to their employees and providing various facilities to them. At present, industries are more conscious about work life balance and are offering more friendly work life policies (Yasbek, 2004). The work life balance of workers is one of the major areas in which they are highly concentrated to make them satisfied and sustained. Work life balance is a person's control over the responsibilities between their work place, family, friend and self. A successful work life balance strategy reduces stress levels and raises job satisfaction of the employee while increasing productivity and health care costs for the employer (Thompson, Andreassi, & Prottas, 2003). Effective work-life balance policies are valuable to businesses and for a number of reasons, such as reduced staff turnover rates, becoming a good employer or an employer of choice, reduced absenteeism and sick life, improved morale or satisfaction and improved productivity. Some researchers (Bashir & Ramay (2008)) have been attempted to emphasize the significance of work life policies. "To reduce the work-family conflict and efficient in improving attitudes, work-life programs are found to be more effective" (Konrad & Mangel, 2000). Industries must be designed and implement practice those benefits and policies to help employees balance their work and lives (e.g., flexible work schedules, dependent care supports)" (Thompson, Andreassi, & Prottas, 2003).

Bruce Weinstein (2009) stated that Juggling between the obligations towards the families and expectations of the organization and constant struggle to maintain a balance can work can have serious implications on the life of an individual. Therefore, it is important for employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and their private lives. This will help them to achieve their personal and professional goals as well the organization they are working for. Indians' concerns over balancing work and life have surpassed worries about a slowing economy, according to the bi-annual global consumer opinion survey by market research company The Nielsen Co.

Changing & increasing work pressures

A decade back, employees used to have fixed working hours or rather a 9 to 5 job from Monday to Friday. The boundary between the work and home has disappeared with time. But with globalization and people working across countries, the concept of fixed working hours is fading away. Instead of just 7 or 8 a day, people are spending as much as 12-16 hours every day in office. The technological blessings like e-mail, text messaging and cell phones which were thought of as tools to connect them to their work being away from their workplace, have actually integrated their personal and professional lives. Now professionals find themselves working even when they are on vacations. The ever-increasing working hours leave the individuals with less time for themselves and to pursue his hobbies or leisure activities. This hinders the growth of the person as an individual in terms of his personal and spiritual growth. Professionals working in the BPO industry, doctors and especially IT professionals are the few examples who are facing the brunt of the hazard constantly.

Main reasons for imbalance: There are various reasons for this imbalance and conflicts in the life of a manager particularly in Garment units. From individual career ambitions to pressure to cope up with family or work, the reasons can be situation and individual specific. The speed of advancement of information technology, the increasing competition in the talent supply market has led to a "performance-driven" culture creating. Managers usually end up over burdening themselves with work. The increasing responsibilities on the personal front with age can also create stress on personal and professional-fronts.

Imbalance effects: Constant struggle and effort to maintain a balance between the work and personal life can have serious implications on the life of an individual. During recession the pressures of the work or personal life can lead to stress. Heart ailments, cardiovascular problems, sleep disorders, depression, irritability, jumpiness, insecurity, poor concentration and even nervous breakdowns are becoming common among the victims of such imbalance. Factors influencing work life balance are: family, organization, society, government, regulator, employee and industry.

Strategies to achieve work life balance:

- * Allocated time
- * Control interruption and distraction
- * Seize the week end
- * Schedule the activities
- * Drop the prejudices

Benefits of work life balance are:

(i) To the organization:

- measured increases in individual productivity, accountability and commitment
- better team work and communication
- improved morale

(ii) To the individual:

- more value and balance in daily life
- better understanding of individual's work
- increased productivity
- improved relationship both on and off the job

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Work Life Balance is a person's control over the responsibilities between their workplace, family, friends and self. A successful Work-life-balance strategy reduces stress levels and raises job satisfaction in the employee while increasing productivity and health care costs for the employer.

Work life balance: Senior management champions or laggards? In 2003 a study was undertaken in a major Irish Organization to examine the career paths and histories of managers about their work life balance, including any blockages to career advancement, in order to identify and gauge the likely success of strategies to improve gender balance, diversity and leadership capacity in senior management. The survey showed that the demographic profile of male and female senior managers differs. The survey concludes that the demographic profile, family status and childcare arrangements of male and female senior managers differ strongly. Female senior managers are more likely to be younger, single and have fewer children than their male counterpart, are no children. Male senior managers tend

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to be married with children and to have wife to look after their children full-time in the family home.

Only a very small number of senior manager currently use flexible arrangements. Both women and men cited difficulties associated with them. More than nine out of ten male and female senior managers believe that working reduced hours has impacted, or could impact, adversely on their careers. Respondents agree that taking unpaid extended maternity and/or patently level would have adverse effect on their career-promotions. More men than women in senior management expressed concurrent about potential adverse effect on their career of taking unpaid parental level. Nearly two-third of female and over one-half of male senior managers settled that there are measures that could be introduced/extended to improve work life balance: by addressing the long hours culture, working from home and actively promoting a WLB policy.

Managers' work life balance and health:

The survey explores the effects of organizational change on UK manager' perceptions of their organization and on their well-being. Cost reduction is the prime driver for change and have been implemented using delay ring, redundancy, and downsizing and off shoring often supported by culture change program. These changes have resulted in work intensification, have not delivered productivity gains and had a negative effect on other manager well being. Directors and their managers perceived the effects of change differently. Despite continuous cost reduction, productivity in the UK remains below that of European competitors nations. This calls into the questions the prevailing cost reduction ethos as a means of delivering increased productivity in the UK.

Work life balance of New Zealand managers- a survey: The first EEO Trust Work life survey was completed by 462 organizations covering 262,878 workers during May-June 2006. The survey was sent to 362 members of the EEO Trust Employers' Group, and approximately 3000 other organizations. Responses were received from 326 EEO members, 136 other organizations. The majority had 10 or more staffs and results below are from this group. Data from the 51 organizations with fewer than 10 staffs were analyzed separately. Those organization who belong to the EEO Trust employer group are likely to have more interest in work life issues and thus results are likely to be higher that might be expected across all New Zealand employers. The survey focused on the path from policy/strategy, through implementation to outcomes. It measured prevalence of work life policies/strategies,

a range of work life initiative, and the prevalence of a set of implementation steps identified in the EEO/Diversity Literature research as a necessary for successful outcomes. These steps are: senior management commitment, policy integrated into core business objectives, through out the organization, staff needs assessment, written action plan training for implementing managing a flexible workforce accountability for policy outcomes, and measurement of progress and out comes. Out comes have been identified as reduced staff turnover, reduced absenteeism and increased return rate from parental leave. The EEO trust work life survey indicates that New Zealand organization are doing little beyond having a policy, strategy for work life balance, communicating that throughout the organization, and offering a range of initiatives, the most of common of which are flexible hours and domestic and special leave.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The objectives of the study are

- (i) To identify the work life balance amongst the managers of garment units in Tamilnadu, India.
- (ii) To know about the managers' opinion about their job and its nature.
- (iii) To identify the managers' opinion about their satisfaction level of intrinsic and personal factors such as spending time with children, solving family members commitments, etc.
- (iv) To know about the reasons of stress.
- (v) To ascertain the level of work life balance of the managers during recession and criticality in taking financial decisions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study, the authors have undertaken a descriptive type of research. 500 personally administered questionnaires were randomly distributed to the managers of middle level management of the garment units in Tamilnadu (India).

Questionnaire:

Questionnaire contained five main parts such as personal data, intrinsic factors, personal/family related factor, organizational factors, external/ environmental factors and having a total of 24 items. Item were measured using Likert scales. Questions were also asked about age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, years of experience, respondent's income, and number of members in respondents' family, working persons in their family, income from respondent's family members or from any other source.

Sampling

Sampling is a fundamental method of inferring information about an entire population and a sample is a part of the target population (Kothari 2009). The target population consists of managers from middle level management of the garment units in Tamilnadu (India). Questionnaires were sent to 500 respondents but 480 valid filled questionnaires were returned.

Statistical Tools used in the present study:

The following are the statistical tools used for in the the study.

- Simple percentage analysis
- Chi-square analysis.
- ANOVA
- Mean analysis
- Correlation analysis

(i) Simple Percentage

Simple Percentage analysis is used by the authors for analysis and interpretation with the collected data.

$$\text{Simple Percentage} = (\text{Actual respondents/ total respondents}) \times 100 \quad (1)$$

(ii) Analysis of Variance

The analysis of variation is a method, which separates the variation ascribable to one set causes from the variation ascribable to other set. The technique analysis of variance is referred to as ANOVA. It helps to examine the significant mean differences between more than two groups on an interval or ratio-scaled dependent variable. The results of ANOVA show whether or not the means of the various groups are significantly different from one another, and indicated by the F statistic.

(iii) Chi-Square Analysis

Chi- Square test is applied in statistics to test the goodness of fit to verify the distribution of observed data with assumed theoretical distribution.

Thus chi-square test describes the discrepancy between theory and observation

$$\text{Chi-Square test } (X^2) = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \quad (2)$$

Degrees of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

Where as, O = Observed frequency; E = Expected Frequency; r = Number of Rows; c = Number of columns.

(iv) Mean Value

Mean, also known as arithmetic average, is the most common measure of central tendency and may be defined as the value, which is dividing the total of the values of various given items in a series by the total number of items.

$$\text{Mean } (\bar{X}) = \sum X_i / n = (X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_n) / n \quad (3)$$

Where, X_i = Value of the i^{th} items; n = Total number of items

(v) Standard Deviation:

The standard deviation measures the absolute dispersion of a distribution; the greater will be the magnitude of the deviations of the values from their mean.

$$\text{SD} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum X_i^2}{n}} \quad (4)$$

(vi) Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis deals with the association between two or more variables. When the relationship is of a quantitative nature, the appropriate statistical tool for discovering the relationship and expressing it in brief formula is known as correlation.

It is a measure of such a tendency i.e. the degree to which the two variables are interrelated is measured by a co-efficient, which is called co-efficient of correlation.

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$$\text{Karl Pearson Correlation} = \frac{\sum XY}{\sqrt{X^2} \sqrt{Y^2}} \quad (5)$$

Data Analysis and Findings

1. Simple Percentage Analysis

Table 1
Details of Demographic Factors used in the Present Study

Description	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage %
Age	Below 30 years	202	42.1
	31-35 years	96	20.0
	36-40 years	82	17.1
	Above 40 years	100	20.8
Gender	Male	340	70.8
	Female	140	29.2
Marital status	Married	332	69.2
	Unmarried	148	30.8
Educational qualifications	Diploma / Certificate course	130	27.1
	Under graduate	246	51.2
	Post graduate	104	21.7
Years of experience	Below 5 years	160	33.3
	6-10 years	150	31.2
	11-15 years	90	18.8
	16 years and above	80	16.7
Respondent's Income	Below Rs. 5000	0	0
	Rs. 5001- Rs. 10000	250	52.1
	Rs. 10001- Rs. 15000	156	32.5
	Above Rs. 15000	74	15.4
Number of members in respondents family	2 members	8	1.7
	3 members	78	16.25
	4 members	222	46.25
	5 members and above	172	35.8
Income from respondent's family members or from any other source.	Below Rs. 5000	128	26.7
	Rs. 5001- Rs. 10000	148	30.8
	Rs. 10001- Rs. 15000	96	20
	Above Rs. 15000	48	10
	No income from family or other sources	60	12.5

Research data were analysed using statistical tools. Frequencies and percentage (%) were also calculated for the exact responses of the respondents'. Maximum percentages (42.1%) of Respondents' belong to the age group of below 30 years. 70.8 % of the respondents' are male category. From the questionnaire survey, it is observed that 51.2% of the respondents' educational qualification is under graduate and 33.3 % of respondents' are having experience of below 5 years. The descriptive data can also be characterized in exploring the relationship of other different demographics with the research and the results were presented in Table 1.

Intrinsic factors:

- Most (42.5%) of the respondents are rarely missing their family due to pressure at work.
- Out of 480 respondents (35%) of them rarely feel a negative effect on personal life due to work.
- Majority (37.1%) of the respondents never feel that they are suffered from ill health relates to stress due to work.
- Most (28.3%) of the respondents opinioned that their organization is some times helping them to cope up with stress.
- Out of 480 respondents (39.6%) of them are rarely feel that they become tired, depressed or stressed due to work.

Personal/Family related factor:

- Majority (33.9%) of the respondents sometimes spent time with their children.
- Most (37.9%) of the respondents feel satisfied in solving their family members' commitments, needs and wants.
- Out of 480 respondents (41.2%) of them feel that they are satisfied with the financial support of their family members.
- Majority (35.4%) of the respondents rarely feel difficult to balance their family and personal life with work.
- Most (50.4%) of the respondents' journey to their work place is below 30 minutes.
- Out of 480 respondents (38.75%) of them are satisfied with their family members' understanding regarding their work situation and its criticality.
- Majority (52.5%) of the respondents' current working hours is moderately suits with their family balance.

Organizational factor:

- Most (41.7%) of the respondents spent more than 50 hours a week at their work.
- Out of 480 respondents (50%) of them are satisfied about the relationship with their colleagues.
- Majority (37.9%) of the respondents rarely doing their official work at home.
- Most (54.6%) of the respondents' organization is providing the work life policies & programmes.
- Out of 480 respondents (54.6%) of them are utilizing the work life policies & programmes provided by their organization.
- Majority (36.3%) of the respondents agree that there is a chance of conflict or change in work environment.
- Most (39.6%) of the respondents agree that the activities of the employees create stress to them.

CHI-Square Analysis

From the Chi-square analysis, the following points were observed

- There is a significant relationship between the Gender and the hours spent at work in a week.
- There is a significant relationship between years of experience and work life policies provided by the company to the respondents.
- There is no significant relationship between years of experience and hours spent at work in a week by the respondents.

Mean Analysis

The mean value of responses for missing family, negative effect on family, ill health, organizational help to cope up with stress, depressed or stressed, solving family members commitments, financial support of family members, relationship with colleagues, stress by employees etc are 3.47, 3.77, 3.89, 4.03, 4.01, 3.17, 3.82, 4.33, 4.37, 3.81, 3.57, 3.35, 3.25, 4.13, 3.55 respectively, which is more than the average of 5 point scale. The tired or depression due to work, difficulty in balancing family & personal life with work, chances of conflict or changes in work environment, stress created by employees in the organization

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and, increase in cost of products, expenses, work load, responsibilities, decrease in job security, difficulties in financial decisions are highly deviated from the average, so it is highly violated.

One Way ANOVA

One way ANOVA tests were conducted to find the variance between years of experience and hours spent at work in a week by the respondents.

Table 2
Details of one way ANOVA used in the present study

Source of Variation	Sample Square	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F Ratio	5% Level of Significance (3,236)
Between Sample	1.1	4-1=3 (K-1)	1.1/3 =0.366	0.366/1.158 =0.31	2.60
Within Sample	273.5	240-4=236 (n-k)	273.5/236 =1.158		
Total	274.6	239			2.60

From the above table 2, it could be inferred that there is no significant variance between years of experience and hours spent at work in a week by the respondents.

Correlation Analysis:

Table 3
Details of Correlation between expenses facing (X) and suitability in current working hours(Y)

X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
600	335	79170	152100	41209
380	396	35530	28900	43681
63	180	1029	21609	49
8	20	33734	40804	27889
0	4	38430	44100	33489
	Total Σ	187893	287513	146317

Correlation between expenses facing (X) and suitability in current working hours(Y) was obtained and found that the correlation coefficient (R) was 0.916. From the above correlation

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table 3, it is inferred that there is a positive correlation between expenses facing and suitability in current working hours.

Table 4
Correlation between negative effect on personal life (X) and increase in workload (Y)

X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
25	230	-4698	6561	3364
68	360	-7144	1444	35344
201	195	2185	9025	529
168	68	6448	3844	10816
67	5	17535	11025	27889
	Total Σ	14326	31899	77942

The Correlation coefficient was obtained between negative effect on personal life and increase in work load and the correlation coefficient (R) was 0.287. From the above correlation table 4, it is inferred that there is a less positive correlation between negative effect on personal life and increase in workload.

Table 5
Correlation between relationship with colleagues and chances of conflict (X) & changes in work environment (Y).

X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
345	120	-4864	23104	1089
480	272	34440	82369	14400
111	261	-8938	6724	11881
16826	94	9686	27889	3364
1	14	26496	36864	19044
	Total Σ	56820	176950	49713

Correlation between relationship with colleagues and chances of conflict & changes in work environment: R = 0.605. The correlation table 5 indicates that there is a less positive correlation between relationship with colleagues and chances of conflict & changes in work environment.

Table 6
Correlation between relationship with colleagues and stress created by employees

X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
345	325	21384	26244	17427
480	380	56539	82369	38809
111	165	1886	6724	529
16826	44	23213	27889	19321
1	3	34560	36864	32400
	Total Σ	137582	176950	108486

Correlation between relationship with colleagues and stress created by employees: $r = 0.984$. From the above correlation table, it is inferred that there is a positive correlation between relationship with colleagues and stress created by employees.

Table 7
Correlation between chances of conflict & changes in work environment and stress created by employees.

X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
120	325	4576	1024	20449
272	380	23760	14400	39204
261	165	-1853	11881	289
94	44	10764	6084	19044
14	3	24702	19044	32041
	Total Σ	52797	52433	111027

Correlation between chances of conflict & changes in work environment and stress created by employees: $R = 0.691$. The table shows that there is a less positive correlation between chances of conflict & changes in work environment and stress created by employees.

Table 8
Correlation Analysis Centroid Matrix

Factors	Relationship with colleagues	Chances of conflict	Stress created by employees
Relationship with colleagues	1.000	0.605	0.984
Chances of conflict	0.605	1.000	0.691
Stress created by employees	0.984	0.691	1.000

From the analysis (Table 8), it could be understood that there is an increase and decrease values in these variables. The analysis proved that there is an equal proportion change in two

variables, chance of conflict and stress created by employees, which reflected as less positive correlation.

Suggestions

- Managers first need to look at their own personal sphere of influence. If their only sphere of influence is their own approach to work-life balance, then model it, demonstrate it; that might be the best thing they can do.
- There are lots of things that managers can do to be supportive without requiring financial resources or making more work for themselves. Many of the solutions actually reduce work for managers. Managers need to start by looking at what is within their sphere of influence.
- To reduce the stress and balance their personal life with work, the respondents may undergo work life policies & programmes such as yoga, entertainment programmes and tour etc in a regular interval.
- To reduce the workload of the manager, the organization can adapt the flexible working opportunities to suit the needs of the employees such as flexi time, job sharing etc...

Conclusion

Organization's success depends on people and they have multiple responsibilities, diverse needs and often conflict priorities. The work life balance analysis of managers helps to know about the managers' working conditions, environment, and their present situation of balancing their personal life with work. Based on the analysis, the present study concluded that the work life balance of managers is not completely successful. The negative impact of the recession is not only reflected in the IT sector, also it will affect the garment industry in future due to the changes in dollar values, increase in products prices, work load, responsibilities in work, decreasing of job security. Hence, organizations must ensure that there is a work life balance to their organizations, which will pave the way for better performance, improved morale and results in higher job satisfaction, which will ultimately help to improve the organization's performance and profitability.

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