A Study on Work Life Balance: In Indian Travel and Tourism Industry

Shalini Shukla
Research Scholar

Prof. M. M. Bagali
Professor in HR and Head of Research in Management, Jain University, Bangalore

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the key issues associated with work-life balance (WLB) with a particular focus on practices within the tourism industry. Work life balance has recently taken the attention of both researchers and executives. This subject interests almost everyone with a professional career. This widespread interest is partly due to its reflection on all aspects of life. For those who think that the main objective in life is to work, their career becomes the core of life. The study provides an overview of the general literature and then the research that relates specifically to work life balance in the tourism industry. This study also has the potential to enable the working people to consider their stand point in terms of work–life balance and the executives to gain new perspective in order to cope with such a problem. The research sample comprised of 135 subjects. ANOVA and Pearson Correlation tests were used to analyze the data. The study reveals that those companies which provide flexible working schedules, job sharing and job clarity, sound leadership and a variety of leave arrangements for their staff, are most likely to retain their female staff. However, people have limited time and therefore have to perform many other activities other than their jobs.

Key Words: gender differences, tourism industry, work life balance.

INTRODUCTION

Today's career women are continually challenged by the demands of full-time work and when the day is done at the office, they carry more of the responsibilities and commitments at home. An integral part of our lives is our profession. Just as there is responsibility and opportunity in life, our careers are also guided by opportunities and responsibilities. We must ensure that these two factors don't work at cross purposes. Quality of life is something we all covet. Having said this, every profession affects life in general and every profession has a duty towards life.

Women report that their lives are a juggling act that includes multiple responsibilities at work, heavy meeting schedules, business trips, on top of managing the daily routine responsibilities of life and home. “Successfully achieving work/life balance will ultimately
create a more satisfied workforce that contributes to productivity and success in the workplace.”

WORK LIFE BALANCE
The expression "work–life balance" was first used in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. Work life balance can be defined as a comfortable state of equilibrium achieved between an employee's primary priorities of their employment position and their private lifestyle. Most psychologists would agree that the demands of an employee's career should not overwhelm the individual's ability to enjoy a satisfying personal life outside of the business environment.

Skills that will Help you Achieve a Better Work/Life Balance such as following:
• Learn To Say No.
• Learn to become less "Perfect".
• Better time planning.
• Learn to become physically healthy.
• Learn to socialize better.

DIMENSIONS OF WORK LIFE BALANCE
Emotional Intelligence is multidimensional and involves self awareness, self confidence, self control, empathy, motivation and social competence.

Self awareness is self observation. It is the ability of a person to identify and assess one’s own emotions. Self awareness enables a person to monitor one’s own emotional state, correctly recognize and name that emotion.
Self confidence is the genuine belief on one-self and ability to deal with any situation or person no matter that leads to success or not. It is the ability of having instinct to make decisions with certainty. A person with self confidence is able to accept new challenges with enthusiasm. Self confidence is going with the gut in unhesitant manner. Self control is the ability of a person to organize, manage and have power over one’s own emotions. Self control is absence of distress and disruptive feelings as noted by Cherniss, C., & Goleman, D. (2001). It is an ability to deal with stressful situations calmly and unfazed with hostile person. Empathy involves understanding emotions from other’s perspective. An empathic person has the skill of treating others according to their emotional reactions. It is the ability of a person to stand in other’s shoes. There are three kinds: cognitive empathy, being able to know how the other person sees things; emotional empathy, feeling what the other person feels; and empathic concern, or sympathy - being ready to help someone in need.

Motivation is the capability of a person to inspire others and also works as self-stimuli. It involves a drive for achievement, the ability to commit and take initiative and to have a sense of optimism about a goal. It is the ability to display leadership by inspiring and guiding groups and individuals. Social competence is skill-set possessed for successful social adaptation. It is the condition of possessing the social, emotional, and intellectual skills and behaviours needed to succeed as a member of society. Social competence allows an individual to behave in a particular way which would be accepted by the society.

COMPONENTS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The study Work–life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) and "lifestyle" (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development/meditation). This is related to the idea of "lifestyle choice."

The study finds out few important components of WLB:

• **Self-Management:** Sufficiently managing one’s self can be challenging, particularly in getting proper sleep, exercise, and nutrition. Self-management is the recognition that effectively using the spaces in our lives is vital, and that available resources, time, and life are finite. It means becoming captain of our own ship; no one is coming to steer for us.

• **Time Management:** Effective time management involves making optimal use of your day and the supporting resources that can be summoned – you keep pace when your resources match your challenges. Time management is enhanced through appropriate goals and discerning what is both important and urgent, versus important or urgent. It entails knowing
what you do best and when, and assembling the appropriate tools to accomplish specific tasks.

• **Stress Management:** By nature, societies tend to become more complex over time. In the face of increasing complexity, stress on the individual is inevitable. More people, distractions, and noise require each of us to become adept at maintaining tranquillity and working ourselves out of pressure-filled situations. Most forms of multi-tasking ultimately increase our stress, versus focusing on one thing at a time.

• **Change Management:** In our fast-paced world, change is virtually the only constant. Continually adopting new methods and re-adapting others is vital to a successful career and a happy home life. Effective change management involves making periodic and concerted efforts to ensure that the volume and rate of change at work and at home does not overwhelm or defeat you.

• **Technology Management:** Effectively managing technology means ensuring that technology serves you, rather than abuses you. Technology has always been with us, since the first walking stick, flint, spear, and wheel. Now, the rate of change is accelerating, brought on by vendors seeking expanding market share. Often there is no choice but to keep up with the technological Joneses, but you must rule technology, not vice versa.

• **Leisure Management:** The most overlooked of the work-life balance supporting disciplines, leisure management acknowledges the importance of rest and relaxation— that one can’t short-change leisure, and that “time off” is a vital component of the human experience. Curiously, too much of the same leisure activity, however enjoyable, can lead to monotony. Thus, effective leisure management requires varying one’s activities.

**TIPS FOR BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

*Let go of perfectionism:*

A lot of overachievers develop perfectionist tendencies at a young age when demands on their time are limited to school, hobbies and maybe an after-school job. It’s easier to maintain that perfectionist habit as a kid, but as you grow up, life gets more complicated. As you climb the ladder at work and as your family grows, your responsibilities mushroom. Perfectionism becomes out of reach, and if that habit is left unchecked, it can become destructive, says executive coach Marilyn Puder-York, PhD, who wrote The Office Survival Guide. The key to avoid burning out is to let go of perfectionism, says Puder-York. “As life gets more expanded it’s very hard, both neurologically and psychologically, to keep that habit of perfection...
going,” she says, adding that the healthier option is to strive not for perfection, but for excellence.

**Unplug**

From telecommuting to programs that make work easier, technology has helped our lives in many ways. But it has also created expectations of constant accessibility. The work day never seems to end. “There are times when you should just shut your phone off and enjoy the moment,” says Robert Brooks, a professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School and co-author of The Power of Resilience: Achieving Balance, Confidence and Personal Strength in Your Life. Brooks says that phone notifications interrupt your off time and inject an undercurrent of stress in your system. So don’t text at your kid’s soccer game and don’t send work emails while you’re hanging out with family, Brooks advise. Make quality time true quality time. By not reacting to the updates from work, you will developing a stronger habit of resilience. “Resilient people feel a greater sense of control over their lives,” says Brooks, while reactive people have less control and are more prone to stress.

**Exercise and meditate**

Even when we’re busy, we make time for the crucial things in life. Exercise is an effective stress reducer. It pumps feel-good endorphins through your body. It helps lift your mood and can even serve a one-two punch by also putting you in a meditative state.

*Limit time-wasting activities and people*:

First, identify what’s most important in your life. This list will differ for everyone, so make sure it truly reflects your priorities, not someone else’s. Next, draw firm boundaries so you can devote quality time to these high-priority people and activities. From there, it will be easier to determine what needs to be trimmed from the schedule.

**Change the structure of your life**

Instead of trying to do it all, focus on activities you specialize in and value most. Delegate or outsource everything else. Delegating can be a win-win situation.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature on Work-life balance with different prospective are studied and available, in recent years, there has been an increased interest in work family interface in the human resource management literature, especially regarding the sources and outcomes of conflict
between these two spheres. A number of studies have addressed this issue from different perspectives. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) and Greenhaus et al. (1989) examined the antecedents of conflict between family and work. Goodstein (1994) and Ingram and Simons (1995) presented an institutional perspective on organizations’ responses to work-family issues. In addition, Campbell, Campbell and Kennard (1994) have studied the effects of family responsibilities on the work commitment and job performance of women. The work-family issue is even further expanded to address the relationship of business-marriage partners (Foley & Powell, 1997). Rebbecca Bundhun quotes in —The National (2009), an Abu Dhabi National Paper that —Women and men generally have a different perception of what the "life" part of the balance involves. For women it tends to be devoting more time to family, while for men it is spending more time pursuing personal interests.[|] She also quoted the paper of Dr Katty Marmenout, a research fellow at the INSEAD School in Abu Dhabi with his words that —work-life balance is not simply about equally dividing the time spent on one's work and personal life, but establishing a harmony that reflects an individual's priorities|. So, this allows for acceptance of the happy workaholic or the satisfied stay-at-home mum or dad. "How can we measure or evaluate work-life balance? The best indicator would be that it should feel right," she said. Whereas researcher Murphy and Doherty (2011) revealed that it is not possible to measure work-life balance in an absolute way as there are personal circumstances which influence the way that is perceived but establishing a harmony that reflects an individual’s priorities whereas employees must draw a firm line between their home and work lives and be confident that the line is in the right place (Harvard Business Review, page184). Hyman and Summers (2004) classified seven major problems which are associated with current practices over work-life balance these are unevenness of adoption across different sectors and organizations, lack of formalization of policies at organizational level, restricted employee voice over the introduction and implementation of policies, policies are primarily to meet business needs rather than those of employees, there is no evidence of reduction in working hours, tangible and intangible work intrusions into domestic life, domestic responsibilities are still conducted primarily by women irrespective of their employment status. Researcher Vloeberghs (2002) revealed that there is a need for a practical instrument to measure the present situation of work-life balance. However, as revealed by the researchers Eikhof et. al. (2007), the current work-life balance policies are narrow-minded in terms of addressing the needs and aspirations of employees but there is need for its realization as reflected in Emerald article, Human Resource Management International
Digest, Vol.12 Iss: 7 (2004) which emphasized that the employers are realizing for its responsiveness and take inventive in trying to meet employee expectations for flexible benefits that help with their work-life balance. Miller (1978) emphasized that earlier the work life used to begin at age 16 and end at age 70 and now begins at 20 and ends at 62 for most of the working personals. However, restrained effects of the increase in average length of life over the last 80 years may be associated with certain changes in work-life history as more people reach the older ages with their health to permit them to enjoy leisure and image of the retirement years. In-spite of that changing view of marriage like relationships also affects work-life balance as many women are no longer expecting lifelong partners, and consequently they stress the importance of acquiring skills and qualifications as stated by researcher Lewis et al. (1999) whereas in contradiction to the above Milkie and Peltola (1999) stressed that happier marriages are related to a greater sense of success in balancing work and family. Higgins et al.(1992), Hochschild (1989), Kelley and Voydanoff (1985), Hochschild (1989) Thompson & Walker (1989) revealed that working women face well-documented conflicts due to their continuing role as primary caretakers for their homes, children, and/or elderly parents being women's greater responsibility for children and other family members and they experience more interruptions than men resulting common household problems. However, at family front researcher Milkie and Peltola (1999) stated that one will feel less successful in achieving their own work-family balance if spouse has to do the smaller portion of housework whereas Kiecolt (2003) found that who find work a haven spends no more hours at work than those with high work-home satisfaction. However, Higgins and Duxbury (1992) expressed that work conflict is a greater source of work-family conflict whereas personal or family lives, interfere with work are associated for fewer hours but work that interferes with life matters as revealed by the researcher Reynolds (2005). How do work-life balance policies affect business performance?

There are different routes by which work-life balance policies affect business performance. The pathways are often interconnected; business performance may be influenced by any, some or all of these routes. The ways that work-life balance policies affect business performance are:

1. By being necessary in a competitive labour market,
2. Reducing costs and thus increasing profitability,
3. Improving labour productivity levels and thus increasing profitability
4. Reducing the risks of workplace accidents and stress, hence reducing liability for health and safety issues.
In a competitive labour market, there is evidence that firms enhance their ability to attract the best recruits if they offer flexible policies, alongside competitive remuneration packages (Konrad and Mangel, 2000). In a strategic model, if a critical mass of firms in an industry offer work-life balance policies, it would be difficult for the other firms to hold out and not offer work-life balance programmes (Dex and Scheibl, 1999). There appear to be at least three basic ways of thinking about the relationship between work-life balance and productivity:

1. Examine how work-life balance policies affect another variable such as job satisfaction or organisational commitment, and then correlate these variables to productivity.
2. Consider how work-life balance fits into an exchange theory model, inducing workers to increase their discretionary effort and raise productivity.
3. In the absence of work-life balance policies, there will be productivity losses. There are variations on these three themes, which are discussed below.

**Job Satisfaction**

When work extends into family time, it can create stresses which then extend into the workforce. One meta-analysis suggests that there is a consistent negative relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction. As far as work-life balance policies can reduce the conflict between work and family, they can increase job satisfaction (Konrad and Mangel, 2000). There is no strong empirical evidence of a positive association between high employee satisfaction and high productivity, but job satisfaction does have a clear negative relationship to absence and turnover. A satisfied workforce may be valuable because employees are then less likely to be absent and consequently affect the bottom line (Comfort, Johnson and Wallace, 2003). Other commentators suggest that work-life balance policies can increase organisational commitment. Higher levels of organisational commitment are then correlated with lower turnover and better job performance (Eaton, 2001).

**Exchange theory**

Work-life balance programs are posited as a means to encourage workers to expend extra effort, beyond the minimum required to maintain their jobs. An exchange framework is used to explain this general mechanism. In situations with some mutual trust and commitment, more general investments by the employer may be rewarded by greater employee effort. Akerlof’s gift exchange model offers a possible explanation for why this may be the case. His
model assumes that workers develop sentiments for the firm. Gift giving is governed by norms of reciprocity. Workers can give firms the gift of extra effort in response to the gift of work-life balance policies from the firm (Konrad and Mangel, 2000). More recently, frameworks focus on general exchanges between employer and employees. Where firm investments go beyond specific monetary incentives, to include investments in general well-being and career development, firms may see greater discretionary efforts from employees. There are some empirical studies to support these claims (Konrad and Mangel, 2000).

High performance management
Another variant, using the exchange framework, examines “high-commitment” or “high-performance” management styles which involve greater mutual commitment between employers and employees. Employees only provide the necessary degree of commitment if they are treated with sufficient consideration in return. Work-life balance policies are perceived as an indication of concern for employee’s welfare and as such could assist in engaging employee commitment (Evans 2001). White et al. (2003) hypothesise that high-commitment or high performance management practices can, however, have negative impacts on the private lives of workers, as they elicit discretionary effort, which often takes the form of additional hours. Work-life balance policies are then an effort to offset these adverse effects. White et al. found that high commitment management practices have a negative effect on employees’ lives, even after controlling for the hours worked. They also found that flexibility reduced negative spill-over for women but had little effect for men. The authors concluded that employees do not always benefit from high-commitment management practices.

Reducing Negative Spill-over
A further way of arguing for the productivity gains of work-life balance policies, is to argue that in their absence, work-life conflict leads to stress and negative spill-overs from the home and a consequence of this is a decrease in productivity at work. There is a body of research that links work-life conflict to productivity loss (Comfort, Johnson and Wallace, 2003). There are fewer studies of the firm level productivity gains from implementing work-life balance policies. White et al’s (2003) finding that flexibility reduced negative spill-over for women is important. It provides empirical evidence to support the theory that work-life balance
measures will decrease negative spill-over and hence increase productivity. This theory of the connection between work-life balance policies has strong empirical support.

Countering the effects of long hours
A number of firms have made aggregate productivity gains from increasing the hours of work of their employees. However the evidence suggests that we have already reached, or passed the point of diminishing returns in many industries, particularly those working more than 50 hours per week. The relationship between extended hours of work and productivity is complex.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY
The primary objective of the study is to explore challenges face by women working in Indian Travel and tourism company. The factors that affect their work life balance and lessons derived from them. Also we would be studying the career planning path taken by these few women managers.

HYPOTHESIS
Hypothesis 1: Job satisfaction and organizational commitment will increase as the presence of work-life balance initiatives increases.
Hypothesis 2: Job stress, intentions to quit, family-work conflict and work-family conflict will decrease as the presence of work-life balance initiatives increases.
Hypothesis 3: Job satisfaction and organizational commitment will increase as use/intended use of work-life balance initiatives increases.
Hypothesis 4: Job stress, intent to quit, family-work conflict and work-family conflict will decrease as use/intended use of work-life balance initiatives increases.

RESEARCH DESIGN
The researcher used a qualitative research design and an exploratory approach to explore and describe employees’ experiences of the implementation of flexi time. Main data was collected through a questionnaire comprising of 53 open ended questions. The respondents were from metro cities Delhi Mumbai, Bangalore etc. In this research, a qualitative approach was especially beneficial because it allowed employees to describe what was meaningful or important to them about flexi time in their own words rather than restricting
them to predetermined categories. Qualitative research, using an exploratory or phenomenological approach, allows researchers to understand and present personal points of view that participants often conceal (Hammersley, 1998). An interpretative phenomenological approach aims at gaining a better understanding of the nature and quality of the phenomena (flexi time in this study) as they occur (Willig, 2008), financial and emotional stress.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY
The data in the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS.

TABLE 1: Mean differences of work and life stress on work life dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Mean MEN</th>
<th>Std MEN</th>
<th>Mean WOMEN</th>
<th>Std WOMEN</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FLEXIBILITY</td>
<td>21.725</td>
<td>2.376</td>
<td>22.870</td>
<td>1.771</td>
<td>7.103</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING</td>
<td>15.059</td>
<td>2.588</td>
<td>15.000</td>
<td>2.404</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>0.908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>18.392</td>
<td>2.538</td>
<td>19.130</td>
<td>3.103</td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td>0.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUCESSION PLAN</td>
<td>10.549</td>
<td>1.566</td>
<td>12.043</td>
<td>1.801</td>
<td>19.109</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THINKING</td>
<td>18.353</td>
<td>2.741</td>
<td>19.565</td>
<td>2.491</td>
<td>5.156</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SKILLS</td>
<td>17.784</td>
<td>2.995</td>
<td>18.826</td>
<td>3.261</td>
<td>2.689</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT</td>
<td>101.863</td>
<td>10.524</td>
<td>107.435</td>
<td>11.266</td>
<td>6.341</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTERPRETATION OF TABLE 1
The above ANOVA analysis (F= 7.103 ; p =0.009), THINKING of women(M=22.870; SD= 1.771) scored higher than men (M=21.725;SD=2.376) indicating women are more aware of their own emotions compared to men. The test also reveals that planning in women (M= 12.043; SD=1.801) has scored higher than planning in men (M=10.549; SD=1.56) signifying women plan thinks a head a little more than men.

The higher self awareness in women is due to their sensitivity towards negative situations or people, admitting mistakes, their awareness of other’s perspective about them, ability to recognize their own emotional intelligence and having clear goals and values compared to
men. The higher levels of empathy in women are because of their ability to read and understand other’s emotions, openness to new ideas and empathizing.

TABLE 2: Pearson correlation values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Work Life Balance</th>
<th>Professional Stress</th>
<th>Personal Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work life balance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Stress</td>
<td>-0.115</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Stress</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.505</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTERPRETATION OF TABLE 2

The above correlation matrix indicates that there exists a significant correlation between work and personal stress by $r=(0.505)$ at zero significance level. This indicates that work stress leads to personal in the individuals. The table also examines that there is no significant correlation between work life balance, personal and professional stress as $r=(-0.115)$ and $r=(0.079)$ respectively.

CONCLUSION

Work-life-balance means different things to different people and different things at different stages of life. It is widely recognised that employees who achieve work-life-balance work more efficiently, are more committed to their employers and are less likely to become ill as a result of stress. For employers it is very important to have correct policies which enable it. Work-life balance policies should be flexible to meet the needs of employees and the organisation as they change. They should be widely communicated, so that employees are aware of what is available and easily accessible. The business world has responded to work-family issues with an array of programs and policies that address specific family needs but do not change this basic assumption that employees' tourism in travel and work and private lives are separate and conflicting. However, Work-family research has long been guided by the role stress theory, wherein the negative side of the work-family interaction has been put under the spotlight. Finally the policies and the objective they achieve should be monitored.
and evaluated after a certain period of time, so that they are in line with the changing times and needs of the organization and its employees.

REFERENCES