

## **Emotional Intelligence: Its Positive Influence on Work-Life Balance**

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### **Abstract**

In this time of increasing work pressure, stress, changing technology, unrealistic deadlines and globalization, Work-life balance is a serious issue for individuals. While life in general entails the pursuits of career, profit, family, society obligation, spiritual achievement, mental and physical health, striking equilibrium is often a challenging task. A state of stability for an individual is where perfect synchronization and balancing of the above-mentioned tasks is required. However, it leaves the individual in a constant state of distress and turmoil. This quest of seeking balance causes many to experience emotions of breaking trust, baffled uncertainty, stagnant creativity, forsaken commitment, disappearance of team loyalty and strained relationships between colleagues and peers. Therefore, the need to control and manage emotions constitutes a pivotal part of our lives.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the ability to manage one's own emotions and that of others too. Work-life balance in the literal sense is viewed as a division of one's time and focus between professional and family time/activities.

This study looks into understanding the relationship between emotional intelligence and Work-life balance. It also examines the role of emotional intelligence and Work-life balance among the employees.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Work-life Balance, Quality of life, Stress, Team Loyalty, Professional Activities.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of Work-life balance has received great interest and attention in the recent years due to the positive benefits it offers with related outcomes. In this century of constant stress and pressure, individuals are facing perform or perish ultimatums on a daily basis. Caught in the speed of life where organizations frequently modify new roles and responsibilities on the employees which result in low quality of Work-life and improper Work-life balance. Here the employees have to possess high levels of intelligence quotient (IQ) and emotional intelligence (EQ) to cope with the heavy demands of quick decision making and apt problem solving.

There are numerous factors that contribute to quality of Work-life. These are: Fair payment/remuneration, equal opportunities, health working conditions, security, promotion, mutual respect individual rights and of course personal attributes which include family time,

working hours, schedule, field work and so on which influence the emotional intelligence of an individual. A complete stress-free life is however impossible and stress is interwoven into the fabric of human existence. In the past individuals have coped with stress through deployment of various methods, one of which includes emotional intelligence (Siren, 2007). Through secondary data the researchers have established a positive association between emotional intelligence and Work-life balance by discussing the pivotal role emotional intelligence plays in improving the quality of life.

## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to one's ability to understand, control, evaluate and perceive emotions. It comprises of a set of qualities of competencies of soft skills or inter and intra personal skills that are woven inside our biological makeup, thus influencing our behaviours and actions. While some researchers claim that EI is an inborn trait other suggest that emotional intelligence can be honed and strengthened. Emotional intelligence allows individuals to separate emotions and to also make correct choices for thinking and reacting (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997; Mayer and Salovey, 1993).

Emotionally intelligent people are defined as a group who can control their emotions according to sense reality model of emotional functioning. This intelligence can be learned, developed and improved (Perkins, 1994; Sternberg, 1996).

Furthermore, emotional intelligence enables individuals to think innovatively, by utilizing emotions to resolve problems. Daniel Goleman (1996) popularized this term and firmly believed that emotional intelligence is a set of psychological abilities that is linked to Work-life balance and success in life. It is relationship management and leadership skills that will be the foundation of Work-life balance and personal relationships. The capability to control feelings and settle stress is huge element of emotional intelligence that has been found to be crucial for successful Work-life balance. It also to understand and knowing when and how to display emotions by controlling it. Empathy is a very crucial element and backbone of emotional intelligence as it assists in social lives and it is considered to be a vital organizational factor. Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990) in their popular article "Emotional Intelligence," defined emotional intelligence as, "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions".

### **Daniel Goleman has framed a mixed model of emotional intelligence constructs:**

- 1. Self - awareness:** The ability to know one's own emotions and strengths
- 2. Self - regulation:** It involves the controlling and adapting
- 3. Motivation:** To achieve a personal drive to achieve and excel
- 4. Empathy:** The ability to consider other's emotions
- 5. Relationship Management:** It involves management of others emotions

Goleman (1998) concludes that the main dimensions segregating successful from unsuccessful individuals are the nested competencies underlying emotional intelligence.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The first definition of work family conflict by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal (1964) was stated as "the interrole conflict people experienced between their work roles and other life roles." It was later added on that work family stress occurs when demands of one's responsibilities interferes with the demands of another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Work-life balance (WLB) is about having the correct balance and control of work and personal life. It is a perfect stability between achieving work performance to the fullest degree as well as enjoying the leisure time with self, family and friends. If, however this balance is tipped towards work, then many negative effects are born. These negative effects include high rate absenteeism, low motivation and reduced productivity. It also affects the physical and psychological wellbeing of employees over a period of time. With the ushering in of demographic changes, men and women are both working under tremendous amounts of pressure as women too are become working mothers leading on to the in balance of family life. Work-life balance simply allows that convenient arrangements are made available to both parents and non-parents to maintain a healthy mix of professional and personal life (Redmond, Valiulis, & Drew, 2006).

Technological advancements too have paved the way for easier communication but constantly intrude into family/ personal life. Work-life balance is said to become a crucial element in both private and public sector organizations as it is ingrained into the psychological, physiological, social and economic fabric of every individual. These elements are viewed as a pre required factor of good performance of any employee. It is stated that employee code of behaviour, intentions and organization's performance is completely dependent on the Work-life of the employees of that organization (Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux & Brinley, 2005). Furthermore, the shift towards the global competition has accelerated organizations to demand their employees to be more flexible and responsive to changes.

Work-life balance can therefore be stated as those practices that agree and target to assist and facilitate the requirements of an employee to achieve balance between Work-life and personal life (Maini, Singh, & Kaur, 2004).

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

To Study the Emotional Intelligence and Work life Balance at Workplace

To Analyse the Factors Influencing Emotional Intelligence and Work Life Balance

To evaluate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, Work Life Balance and Work Productivity.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

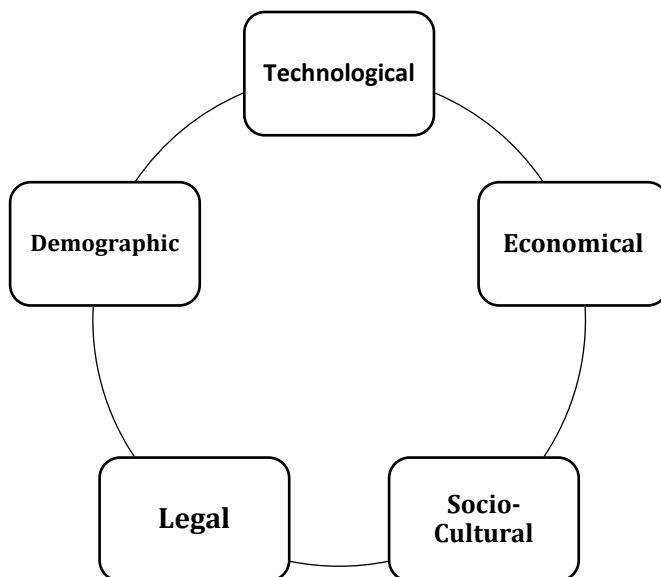
The research is mainly descriptive cum explorative and based on secondary data. The conceptual review is made for data analysis and on the basis of which conclusion and suggestions are made.

## **INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EI AND WLB**

- Employees who are highly emotionally intelligent are having a keen sense of self perception and strong interpersonal relationships with fewer problems in achieving a balanced Work-life.
- Highly emotionally intelligent employees are seen more positively by peers and superiors as they are socially well equipped and more empathetic.
- Improved family and social relations are maintained with high EI employees.
- There are strong social dynamics at work along with sound negotiating abilities that are present with an emotionally intelligent person.

- Emotionally intelligent individuals are having a high level of employee satisfaction, self-esteem and possess a healthy outlook of life.

## FACTORS HINDERING WORK-LIFE BALANCE



### a. Technological Factor

Technology has contributed a lot to saving time and hours of strenuous labour by enabling employees work at flexible hours and from flexible locations. However, it has also invaded the privacy of employees by disrupting their family/personal time. Technology thus can be viewed as a contributing factor to maintain Work-life balance but along with increment of family conflict.

### b. Economical Factor

Globalization competitiveness and production have broken down the barriers of countries. Hence more stress is put on employees to perform better as outsourcing is the option many times considered.

### c. Social Cultural Factors

There is a difference between employees working in different countries. The work – life balance will be different as well.

### d. Legal Factor

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has taken drastic initiatives to secure a healthy working environment of the employees. Both Maternity and paternity benefits have been recommended.

### **e. Demographic Factor**

Work – life balance are regulated by many factors such as age, gender, qualifications, family background, personality traits and support system.

### **IMPACT CAUSED BY WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND WORK CONFLICT**

Many times family conflict leads to adverse effects on an employee's career leading to broken marriages and families. This in turn could lead to financial and non-financial losses to an organization. Past research explored shows that organizations with improved work – life balance proved to be more productive with increased employees' organizational commitment (Ferrer & Gagne, 2006).

### **MISSING ELEMENT BETWEEN WORK POLICY AND WORK BALANCE**

Many previous studies have pointed out that there is a serious disconnect between Work-life policies established in an organization and utilization of these policies to improve the work conflict faced by employees. This disharmony could be resulting from the pre-set organization culture. The various aspects of culture affecting an organization are stated below:

#### **a. Top Management Support**

The top line managers play a crucial role in the harmonious functioning of the work balance policies. They are responsible to either assist or hinder the motivation of employees to balance their professional and personal life.

#### **b. Negative Impact on Career Growth**

There is often a wrong assumption factors with the regards to negative career choices. It is often viewed that employees who utilize family friendly policies are not as dedicated to the organization's goals and often by passed for training, increments, promotions and other benefits.

#### **c. Over Time Expectations**

Another major factor influencing the Work-life policies are the company's assumption of the required hours of work. There is a false expectation that the more the hours an employee puts in the more productive they are. Commitment to given tasks are only judged as per the hours clocked in.

#### **d. Gender Discrimination**

Even if the work policies seem non – discriminatory in nature there is an undermining factor. It is only the female staff who are encouraged to utilize the work policies not the male employees. Here only the male employees get a chance to be career driven and female staff are only viewed as mere homemakers and home builders. Paternity leave could be extended to encourage the sharing responsibilities between men and women.

### **WORK BURDEN Vs WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

The work burden often means the amount of work that employees perform both physical and cognitive work without hurting their health and safety by being efficient (McDowall 2009).

Due to the constant quick changes that are occurring in an organization the work load is going on increasing causing an imbalance in the overall working schedule of an employee. An employee's work load is a big threat to balance work and it consists of various factors such as

challenging tasks, higher demands, remuneration, specific job roles, hygienic working conditions and time utilized for work and with family and friends.

The Work-life balance concept has been started in many organizations to improve the performance, lower attrition, reduce absenteeism and stress, increase job satisfaction and performance Sheena (2007). It has also been concluded that these employee friendly balance programs will increase an employee's loyalty, perception and dedication towards the organization.

In this global context this concept of Work-life balance is fetching more importance and its best if organizations to think with a strategic mind-set and arrive at creative techniques to provide a more refined equilibrium between work and personal life of employees.

## **RESEARCH DISCUSSION**

It has been explored that Emotional intelligence is a key player in identifying the abilities required to sense subtle changes in the overall emotional tones of others. This provides the ability of staying calm and composed during times of crisis and heavy pressure. It also aids to building and establishing better relationships, maintaining a positive outlook towards work and life in general. Hence, EI is establishing itself as a critical element in the human resource management and as a special focus towards improving the quality of Work-life. In recent times there has been huge amounts of research that has explored to understand the impact emotional intelligence has on individuals, groups and organizations. It was found that highly emotional individuals are able to handle both work and family life in a balanced manner (Carmeli, 2003).

Hence, at a glimpse the review from different literatures on emotional intelligence and Work-life balance emphasized the multiple dimensions. Emotional intelligence and work balance was explored with reference to work pressure, performance, productivity, job satisfaction, commitment, leadership, organizational change, employee well-being, motivation, culture and so on.

Organizations must focus on framing employee friendly policies to aid the Work-life balance to retain and attract new employees. There must be official policies laid down with real practicability matching the employees' experiences/expectations. The human resource department must play a crucial role in implementing and evaluating these initiatives relating to striking a balance between personal and professional life. This can also be supplemented by training programs and stress control workshops to enable the employees to balance their personal and professional life better.

## **CONCLUSION**

It had been established that this study strongly indicates that high emotional intelligence leads to a balanced work and professional life and individuals and organizations work in harmony to achieve this balance. It can also be concluded that EI has a significant part in leading to the employees' wellbeing, performance and professional attainment.

All organizations must invest focussing on developing, designing, incorporating and implementing a better work-life and policy framework to build a sustainable and strategic organization. They must also create a dynamic working culture that supports the resources and talents of the organization. This will automatically lead to reduction of stress, grievances, over burdens and disputes among individuals so they can focus on improving daily performances.

This paper contributes to the existing literature by establishing a positive relationship and influence between emotional intelligence and work-life balance.

### **SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As there are not numerous volumes of research conducted related to the aspects of emotional intelligence and work-life balance it is very crucial that there is a need to explore this area more. Further research may be done with the aid of primary data and structured questionnaires can be utilized to gather real life experiences. There can be an established link with individuals and professional working life by measurement tools and evaluation measures to support the findings.

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