Emerging Interest in the Intermediating Role of Work Life Balance and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: A Position Paper

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ABSTRACT

The link between job satisfaction, employee motivation, work-life balance and productivity has widely been discussed by various authors in the past starting from 1930s with little emphasis on organisational citizenship behaviours and work life balance. However, in contemporary employee motivation studies, these uncovered aspects of organisational behaviour is gaining prominent interest as more and more employees show symptoms of work related stress and burnout with far reaching economic and socio-cultural implications. The objective of this review is to explore the intricate patterns of strategic human resources management, organisational citizenship behaviour and work life balance. It answers questions pertaining to the extent to which employees’ job satisfaction and motivation stimulated by a positive culture and work life balance impacts on employees’ performance in the workplace and organisational citizenship behaviour in general.

Keywords: Organisation, Citizenship, Behaviour, Work-Life-Balance

INTRODUCTION

Organizations reach their objectives by using their human resources. Human capital plays an important role in the success or failure of any organization. Various studies shows that satisfied and motivated workforce exert more performance in the workplace (Katz, 2005). To get most out of the employees, it becomes important for the organization to understand the factors which influence employees’ motivation. With growing competition in the market place, every organization strives to build competitive advantage using their human capital; creating importance to understand the factors influencing job performance which includes motivation and job satisfaction. Studies that seek to establish the relationships amongst employees’ job motivation, organizational performance, organisational culture, work life balance etc is transitioning from the traditional personnel management approach to a more strategic human resource management perspective. This is an important part of organizational and industrial psychology. The link between job satisfaction, employee motivation, work-life balance and productivity has widely been discussed by various authors in the past starting from 1930s (Helepota, 2005) with little emphasis on organisational citizenship behaviours and work life balance. However, in contemporary employee motivation studies, these uncovered aspects of organisational behaviour is gaining prominent interest as more and more employees show symptoms of work related stress and burnout with far reaching economic and socio-cultural implications. The objective of this review is to explore the intricate patterns of strategic human resources management, organisational citizenship behaviour and work life balance. It answers questions pertaining to the extent to which employees’ job satisfaction and motivation stimulated by a positive culture and work life balance impacts on employees’ performance in the workplace and organisational citizenship behaviour in general. Understanding what motivates employees and how they are satisfied have is critical to future inter-organisation and intra-organisation policy implications. Though some research studies have been done, these researches require more
examination due to their deficiency in integration towards the literature and adaptation.

Work Life Balance and Performance

The literature on the relationship between job motivation, work-life balance on one hand and job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour has grown along with many developments in the field. The main purpose of the current research is to re-examine the relationship under current circumstances. Though much empirical literature (Kim, 2005; Luthans et al. 2007; Armstrong & Murlis, 2004 and Luthans & Stajkovic, 2000) proved the positive correlation between job motivation, work-life balance and performance, there is equal literature (Beckers et al., 2004; Bright, 2007 and Judge et al., 2001) available which disproves the relationship. These differences make the subject an inconclusive one with regards to the linkage between the variables. There are rare case studies which provide the details about work life balance activities being practiced in Asian countries (Sector et al 2007). Cook (2005) interprets the importance of human resource practices and how it plays an important role in the economy of any country and the impact of human resource practices on organizational performance. Cook (2005) also mentioned that majority of the work structure is same in the developed countries like Europe and North America.

There is no doubt that the practices related to work life play an important role in any organizational structure. Management should be strong and firm in making policies regarding work life balance as it would become a serious threat if the policies have not been made up to a certain standard as it impacts the complete organization (Kalliath and Brough, 2008). Two important concepts, which are, improved performance in an organization and the perception of various employees have a direct link with work life balance practices. Importantly, improved management plays a critical role in higher level of employees’ commitment, their level of job satisfaction and improved performance.

Work-Life Policies Implications

The topics related to the responsibilities of employment and employees’ family commitments have been discussed many a times by researchers (Glass and Riley et al 1998). The researchers tried to link the policies related to work life balance and their performance in workplace. Pleck, Staines & Lang (1980) says that conflicts came into existence when employees are burdened with extra work load and they have to spend extra hours at office in meeting the assigned targets. According to Maxwell et al (2005) good support at work, flexible work hours and training while on job help the employees to balance their professional and personal life at the same time. The practices related to work life balance have now become an important aspect of human resource management. This has become important majorly after the era of globalization, outsourcing and after the huge success of virtual organizations (Schwarts 1996).

In the recent times employers’ focus on the wellbeing of employees in order to extract out the best performance out of them. Improved human resource practices play a significant role in the retention of skilled workers in any organization, which is actually very important in the success of the business. Skilled workers are expected to balance their work and family life in order to bring out the best results and this can only be possible when the worker are highly satisfied with their job and performance appraisals. Many companies try to adopt practices that help the employees to manage their work and personal life simultaneously so that they can prove to be highly productive in their professional fields. Researchers can research on this topic extensively as it provides huge opportunities which are still unexplored (Deery, 2008). Presently, researches have been done on flexible working hours, job structures which are family oriented and social working aspects (Hall, 2001).

The policies related to work life focuses on employees’ medical and health care, flexible work time, labour unions, insurance of family and development plans of child etc. According to Grover and Crooker et al (1995) workers who have balanced family life are more committed towards achieving organizational targets and work devotedly to achieve benefits for the organization. In other words, employees’ commitment with organization has a direct link with good work balance policies (Dockel et al., 2006).

Work-Life Policies and Employee Turnover

Thompson, Andreassi & Prottas, (2003) are of the view that the policies related to work life serves as performance indicators to the management which help the managers to understand the priorities of individuals. According to Valcour & Batt (2003), those people who are balanced in their professional and personal life can prove to be an asset in an organization. Employers who give prime importance to work life policies can improve the overall organizational culture along with improving family
values among workers. Conflicts arise in those organizations where employees cannot meet the demands of an organization and family at the same time and hence prove to be completely incompatible (Higgins, Duxbury & Lyons, 2007). This conflict impacts negatively on individual’s performance as well as on the overall productivity of an organization. According to Yu (2008) good policies related to work life sharply reduce the turnover rate of employees in an organization. Glass & Riley (1998) describes that employee turnover impacts negatively to an organization and it is among the key issues which need to be addressed as soon as possible. Researchers all over the world and specifically in Pakistan named, Bashir & Ramay (2008) highlighted the importance of these policies in an organization. Hom & Kinicki (2001) says that many organizations are in continuous search for the policies related to work life in order to reduce the turnover rate in an organization. According to Konrad & Mangel, (2000: 23), “Work-life programs are effective in reducing work-family conflict, and efficient in improving attitudes”. In the recent times with the improved human resource practices, organizations have become more careful and know the importance of work life balance and for that reason they are adopting policies for helping the employees to manage work and family life simultaneously (Yasbek 2004). The major reason of the conflict arises when an employee is unable to manage personal and professional tasks which negatively impacts organizational performance (Thaden 2007). Batt & Valcourt (2003) interprets that management should make policies related to work life balance, which can easily be adopted by employees’ so that they can improve the overall productivity of an organization. Policies must be related to flexible working hours, job designing and re-designing, bonuses and incentives. Policies related to these factors would surely improve the overall performance of individuals and an organization.

**Work Life Policies and Flexible Work Structures**

Flexible working hours are one of the most important factors while making policies regarding work life balance practices. According to Marks & Scholarios (2001) flexible working hours plays an important role in balancing work life related issues. Rau & Hyland (2002: 124) suggested that flexible work schedules can resolve the conflicts which arise due to excessive work load. This approach of flexible working schedules is being followed in the countries of west in order to achieve the positive results in terms of understanding between employees and the employers, which will eventually lead to the most effective and proficient outcomes. Flexible working environment help employees to reduce their level of stress and help them becoming committed to their work, which lasts for long period of time (Yasbek 2004). Hudson (2005) says that work life balance can be achieved by doing job redesign and provide flexible work schedules to employees so that they can balance out their personal and professional tasks. Thompson, Andreassi, & Prottas (2003) discovered the major components while making work life balance policies are care for employees, flexible work schedule and attainable targets. Ling & Phillips (2006) says that conflicts in family arises psychological disorders and lack of work efficiency.

**Flexible Schedules and Job Satisfaction**

Flexibility in working hours provided by organizations has a positive impact on the performance of the employees as well as on their job satisfaction level. It also decreases the turnover rate of employees and increases their organizational commitment (Aryee, Luk, & Stone, 1998). Williams & Ford et al (2000) suggested the connection between flexible working hours with the improved job satisfaction, devotion and loyalty. This topic of employees’ commitment and job satisfaction has been discussed by numerous researchers (See Goldberg, Hamill, & O’Neil 1989; Crooker and Groover 1995; Younghood 1984). The researchers have discovered that some facilities like day care centres, flexible work hours and services like referrals play an important role in achieving organizational targets and improved level of employees’ job satisfaction. Baltes & Newman et al (1999) did analysis and came to this conclusion that employees who are given flexible work hours are satisfied with their job and performance. The new idea of virtual organization is at boom (Callemntines 1995). Virtual offices provide this feasibility to the workers to work from anywhere they want. Workers can choose to take a particular quantity of work and appropriate delivery time in accordance with their family’s responsibility (Daniels & Lamond, 1999). This policy has been adopted by Teleworkers and they are enjoying this facility at the fullest (See Quaid and Lagerberg’s 1992). Harrison and Gajendra (1997) described and analysed the relationship between flexible work hours and higher level of job satisfaction and commitment along with the massive reduction in the conflicts among workers.
Stress and Work-Life Policies

The policies related to work life balance have a significant impact on the health of workers; with it is physical or mental state of health. Leontaridi & Ward et al (2002) proved that higher level of stress and depression of workers has a negative impact on their job performance. Pressure of meeting deadlines, strict policies and difficult rules and regulations made the overall process difficult for the workers to achieve the required targets and hence it affects negatively on their health. According to Thompson et al (2003) organizations need to reevaluate their rigid policies and make it flexible in order to achieve efficient outcomes from the workers. Rigid policies make the situation worse by directly affecting the health of the workers arises due to long working hours and work pressures.

Thaden (2007) interprets that workers take stress because of extreme work load, newly made targets, lack of helping staff and extra-long working hours and this is the reason that organizations have to face increased turnover rate and a major loss of time and money because of that. According to Kemery et al (1987) job satisfaction level has inverse proportion with stress. Otis & Pelletier (2005) stated that long working hours increases the turnover rate and hence decline the job satisfaction and productivity. Braaten (2000) relates stress with psychological disorder and the growing intention to leave the job. Higher the level of stress lower would be the productivity and efficiency (Kavanagh, 2005).

Work Practices and Organisational Success

An organization would be effective only when its policies have a good relationship with work life balance practices. Policies are eventually made to achieve the goals but when it is unable to achieve the targets then organizations have to face the major loses, that is, monetary and non-monitory. There are many organizations which make policies but fail to implement those policies correctly and hence it proves to be a major failure and loss for an organization (Harper and Dench 2002). Many studies have shown that majority of the workers are not aware about their rights and the policies related to work life practices in their organization (Kagan & Heaton 2000).

Importantly, even if the workers or employees are aware about the policies related to work life balance, they become reluctant in following those policies (Berry & Rao 1997). Research have shown that there are very less male workers who avail the leaves on the rare occasions like birth of a child or other family gatherings (Pleck 1993). It hurts their ego to take the leaves for the family matters as majority of the people consider these leaves are specifically for the female workers, especially in the eastern culture. So the male workers have sharp declining trend of taking leaves on these occasion in eastern countries (Hall 1990). Studies have shown the different trend among male and female workers with respect to taking family leaves. There are other factors which affect sharply and impact the level of job performance, these include extra work load, rigid policies etc. There are certain criteria on which one can measure organizational productivity; these include punctuality of workers, managing extra workload and any other kind of responsibilities. Theories related to genders play an important role in understanding the behaviour of the employees as male workers avoid taking leaves for the family purpose to prove themselves as more competent and loyal workers (Hall 1999).

According to Eaton (2003) these policies related to work life practices are meant to increase the work efficiency of the workers. Cunningham (2001) believes that in many organizations, workers do not prefer to opt for part time jobs. Eaton et al (2003) believes that policies should be made with practical approach and it should be rightly implemented in order to achieve high rate of productivity from employees.

Unsupportive Organisational Culture

The worst impact of lack of work life balance have been described above and its negative effect on the overall productivity of an organization. Ryan & Kossek (2008) are of the view that policies related to work life balance should be properly implemented and for that, there should be the required support from the top management, supervisors or line management. Moreover, the policies should be followed by everyone so that employees remain satisfied with their job and produce better results. Proper implementation of work life related policies shows the actual culture of an organization. Management and the top most authority should be in favour to implement work life related policies and make sure that these policies are being followed by every worker. Bailyn (1997) is of the view that extra work load and hectic assignments make an employee stressed out and hence he is unable to deliver his best and remain less committed to his work which affects the loyalty of the workers.

According to Lewis (1997) workers who are unable to cope up with long working hours and deadline are not efficient workers and often being considered as
not so good asset to an organization. There are many employees who are of this view that taking leaves and opting for flexible working hours would bring a negative image and it would work as a barrier in the way of their promotion (Houston & Waumsley, 2003). Their other perception include, small network, isolation, few opportunities of learning and not so active participation in work when they would opt to avail work life balance opportunities or policies in order to give more time to their family members (Cooper & Kurland 2002). Moreover, some privileges associated with work life policies cannot be enjoyed by upper level management. These privileges include flexible working hours, benefits of late sittings and family leaves etc. It is the normal pattern to measure the effectiveness of an employee or his work by observing the time he has spent in the office (Bailyn, 1997; Perlow, 1995).

Quality work Life & Organisational Effectiveness

One of the famous scientists named David (1972) came up with this new concept of Quality Work Life (QWL) that actually deals with the emerging needs of employees and take part in the major decisions related to Quality Work Life policies. According to Robbins (1990) the policies related to QWL are made especially for the ease of employees. Research has shown the major elements of QWL practices are security of job, reward system, bonuses, salary benefits, employee commitment, and organisational effectiveness. Quality of life in the social aspect can be termed and defined as a social phenomenon but particular in business terms, human and labours are the key resource to any organization, as a result, Quality work life practices means the given working conditions and environment. The quality of life employees are enjoying and the standards up to which they are living defines their way of spending lives. The policies related to social compliance have also been added to the structure of an organization. Certain standards like ISO 9001 and ISO 14000 have been made to improve the quality of workers. Anderson (2002) stated that the policies related to QWL are linked with monetary rewards which will help the employees to remain satisfied with their job which will eventually result in good standard of life.

Work-Life Organisational Factors

QWL activities or practices can provide the best working environment, satisfaction of job among workers, financial benefits and opportunities of training and development in an organization (Lau & May 1998). It is the responsibility of human resource department to motivate, hire, train and provide the workers proper appraisal to help the organization or the firm to achieve its desired targets with the help of their key resource working in their organization. Satisfaction of job is an important aspect among workers in order to increase the productivity of an organization. According to Zain (1999) motivating employees and appraisals are the key ingredients for job satisfaction, which deals with the emotional state of the workers. Job satisfaction increases when an employee’s gets motivation from its working environment. Policies related to work life are based on the element of job satisfaction. Other elements which are the part of work life policies are related with pay scale, relationship with colleagues, and behaviour of top management along with the rules of promotion, monetary rewards and job redesigning (Nash, 1985). According to the theory presented by Herzberg et al (1959) that employees should be motivated from internal work environment which will help them to remain satisfied with their jobs. As satisfied employees would prove to be more productive and achieve better work life balance.

Labour Union and Work-Life Balance

Enterprises can initiate and implement quality work life practices by offering good wages, expanded social network, hygienic working conditions and good leave offers (Zohir 2007). It is important to realise for the management to ensure good and healthy work relations among workers along with stable labour union. Gilgeous (1998) highlighted the importance of active participation from workers which play an important role in the profitability of an organization. In contrast, Eaton (1990) is of the view that there is also a negative relationship among QWL practices and labour union. According to many surveys, many studies have supported the importance of labour union in an organization. Strong working union play an important role in the overall productivity of an organization (Eaton et al., 1992). Good relationship with labour union helps the companies to achieve the desired targets. There is a negative concept of labour union but it can be changed with the participative workers and their participation in the decision making process. Labour union can help in promoting social network, training and development and also negotiating with workers (Zohir 2007). In an organization where there is no labour union, creates an unstructured management, hence, the workers cannot raise their voice for their
common problems. In a way, it declines the chances to negotiate and resolve the conflicts. Mustafa et al (2007) says that the problems related to long working hours, health and other facilities can be sorted out smoothly if there is a proper labour union.

**Work Life Balance and Employee Health**

Employee retention can be increased by focusing on improved health care facilities and medical insurance, as medical expenses keep on increasing with the passage of time (Nielsen & Welling, 1994). Health plans need labour union representatives to keep the check on plans’ validity (Guy, 2003). This concept of taking care of employees’ health is an underestimated concept by the employers. They neglect this fact that healthy work force would remain available to the management for managing extra work load, can sit for long working hours and hence will play an important and significant role in the success of business. Management should also consider workers’ family wellbeing while making work life related policies as disturbed family life would lead to less work efficiency among workers.

There is no doubt that good working conditions, that is, hygienic work environment and health are among the basic needs of employees’ (Maslow 1970), good and healthy lifestyle help the workers achieve satisfaction in their job and commitment towards organization. Importance of work life policies cannot be neglected. Yasbek (2004) says that flexible work hours and structure along with positive and flexible policies can enhance the commitment of workers towards work. Management can make the job more attractive by redesigning the job, providing flexible work hours, good and hygienic working conditions etc (Secret, 2006). According to many studies, increasing organizational commitment has certain components which include flexible work structure, care and concern from management etc (Thompson et al, 1999). Less efficiency in work is the result of conflicts among family members and unachievable work targets (Wood & de Menezes, 2008).

**Classical Models of Work Life Balance**

In 2002, work-life balance was defined by Joshi as a twice perspective; these perspectives are individual and organizational. Initially work-balance was considered as only organizational perspective and it was defined as the activities and processes designed by the organization for the employees. On the other hand, individual’s perspective is all about what they do for themselves. Bird (2006), also supported the concept Joshi (2002), and explained that work-life strategy for organization is standing on two legs that are individual and organizational approach. Individual approach (Right leg) is about how the work-life of the individuals is balanced. While, organizational approach (left leg) is what organizations are doing for the betterment of individual’s work-lives.

Left leg, i.e. organizational approach can be followed by organization if it offers flexible working hours to the employees, insurance for their health and safety and employee assistance program (EAP) etc (Bird, 2006). Because every employee and his/her work-life vary from another employee depending upon their level of employment, therefore, individual approach (left leg) is highly focused. For instance, work-life balance for an individual who has just started his professional life will be entirely different from an individual who is going to be retired.

In a broader spectrum, work-life balance is based on the different periods of a person’s life. According to Clarke, Shaw & Koch (2004), as the name indicates, work-life balance can be defined as the stability, equilibrium and regularity in the life, which leads to generate a sense of agreement in the mind of individual. According to Greenhuas, Shaw & Collins (2003), there are three factors of work-life balance. First factor of work-life balance is the Time, which is of two types, free time and work time. With what intensity a person is associated with work and non-work time is called the involvement balance, which is the second factor of individual approach, while the intensity of a person to get satisfied with the work and non-work time is known as satisfaction balance, which is third and last feature of individual approach. In order to define the association between work and non-work lives, there are five models which are defined (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990 and O’Driscoll, 1996). According to “segmentation” model, a person’s work and non work-life are different parts which don’t create any impact on one another. But this model is can be taken as a theory, but it doesn’t provide any logical reasoning or facts. There is another model named “spillover”, which emphasizes upon the association between both the parts of life and do influence each other whether positively or negatively. There are many experiments which support this model, it is not considered important in real life. More detailed form of ideas, nature, reason and result related to spillover concept is needed. Compensation model is the third one, which explains that if a person feels any lacking in work or non work-life, he would try to compensate this loss from the part. For instance, if an employee is upset due to his personal (non-work) life, he would try to overcome that feeling by doing more work or increasing the no. of working hours in order to forget
that problem. Instrumental model is the fourth one, which is defined as a person tries to increase its efficiency or hard work in one part with intention to get success in the other sphere. We can take a most common example that a person works hard in order to get his salary increased so that he/she can buy whatever he/she wants in order to enhance his/her standard of living. Last model, named “conflict” model explains that if a person’s spheres of life increase its requirement and demands, as a result a person has to complete it by facing some conflicts, by taking difficult decisions and by overload upon him. Due to families with double career, this model is highly focused with greater research nowadays, while compensation and spillover models are still under consideration. Lacking in these models is of the factor which helps to create a balance between work and non-work life of people.

These descriptive models can be taken in to consideration if more research and analysis is done on its causes and effects. This research will be helpful in order to differentiate between work and non-work life. Clarke (2000), represented a theory named “border theory”, which explains this approach in descriptive form. This theory is based upon the border-crossing of people, as they regularly travel between home and work. Argument against this border theory is raised that what will be the border line for people who perform their duties from home; their home jobs can be the traditional ones, in which people use to run their restaurant from home, or they can be farmers, or people can use advanced technology to perform their duties in home. For instance, according to Arthur & Rousseau (1996), there are some benefits attached with the diminishing boundary between home and work, also, idea of “mosaic society” was given by the European Union Future Project, in which boundary between work and home was reduced.

In order to understand a person’s work-life balance, boundary between his work and non-work life can help to find out the problems which are resisting balance in work-life, because boundary helps to analyze the physical and psychological features. It is written in many literature reviews of researches that due to advanced technology and increasing competition have resulted in augmented and exhaustive work. As every individual has its unique level of work-life balance, and this difference is explained in these work-life models. And people do their work by sacrificing other non-work activities. This difference in the perception is categorize as workaholics and over workers, over workers are those who work for long hour but possess a perception that reward can never defend his/her efforts, while workaholic are those who also work for long hours in order to get rewarded (Pieperl & Jones, 2000).

The researches on this concept have just highlighted the elements of work-life balance, but in order explain what work-life balance is, researchers needs more analysis of its causes and effects. Contemporary model has been developed in order to explain the modern approach towards perception of balance between work and life. Some of the main problems related to work-life balance are defined in this model. In this model, analysis of work-life balance is done by considering the individual’s perception by the characteristics of organizational approach.

Although the model depicts that the objective and subjective variable should be taken in to account, but there is a possibility that both these kind of variables are associated with each other. Issues can be determined by Standard surveys. For instance, according to Guest & Conway (1998, 2000), there was a survey conducted by annual UK CPID (1999) upon the relationship between employment state and psychological contract. In both years, they took 1000 working people as a sample and asked questions about their work-life balance. Result showed that 73% (1998) and 74% (2000) people were satisfied from their work-life balance, and thought that they had the right balance. Or we can say that “just” about 25% people weren’t satisfied and thought that they have wrong work-life balance. If we take the whole population, inequality in this research can be taken as high because researchers did not count the people who are not employed or they are working independently. 90% of those who said that their work-life isn’t balanced were due to the fact that their part of work life has controlled their non-work life. As a result, high time spending on work is strongly connected with the feeling of wrong work-life balance.

According to Green (2001), due to augmented work and competition, people in UK rarely get a free time in their working day. A call center can be taken as an example, where the response time and pattern is designed already, but still phone calls are in queue. This is also proved that the promise made with the employees which usually not kept by the organization is related to the working hours (Annual CPID 1999).

One should also consider the fact that people who work in friendly environment feels lesser work pressure and get their work-life balanced easily (CPID 1999). In order to explain and differentiate the concept of supportive supervision, in which flexibility is given in case of any uncertain problem,
temporal flexibility, in which some authority is given to the workers, and operational flexibility, in which independence and authority is given to the employees, Clark (2000) entirely removed the concept of “family friendly”. Unexpectedly, UK surveys showed that family-friendly environment has lesser influence when compared with the concept of operational flexibility in which authority and independence is given to the employees. If we consider the border theory, family-friendly practices doesn’t help to reduced the boundary between work-life and non work-life.

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who use family leave. Sex Roles, 49, 233-246.


