

Work-Life Balance as an HR Strategy for Organizational Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance influence both professional and personal life of a person. The objective of this study was to measure the effect of work-life balance on organizational effectiveness and how work-life balance affected organizational effectiveness. Sample of the study was 25 disability rehabilitation professionals. Data was collected using interview method. Pilot study was conducted. Semi structured interview was prepared for data collection after comprehensive literature review. Work-life balance is the ability of the individuals to pursue successfully their work and personal lives, without undue pressures from one domain undermining the satisfactory experience of the other. Three major dimensions of work-life balance were studied. First dimension was how work is influenced by life activities, second was how life activities influence work and final dimension was work-life enhancement which include positive effects of one's work on personal life or vice versa. An organization is considered as working effectively when it is able to achieve its goals. Various dimensions of organizational effectiveness were measured. This includes organizational attachment, job involvement, self control, legitimatization, organizational commitment, innovation, consensus, independence and job satisfaction. Qualitative method was used for both data collection and interpretation. This research studied how various dimensions of work-life balance influence various aspects of organizational effectiveness. The findings of this study reveal that work-life balance is an essential component in determining the organizational effectiveness. The study suggests that work-life balance needs to be used as an effective HR strategy to improve organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: *Work-life Balance, Organizational Effectiveness, Disability Rehabilitation, Qualitative Research, Organizational Behaviour*

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INTRODUCTION

In today's world of uncertainties and challenges one of the major topics organizational psychologists are concerned is to maintain organizational effectiveness. Another challenge that faced by the people working in the field of Human Relations (HR) is to maintain work-life balance of the employees. As Indian society is a collectivistic society the importance of family and relationships are pivotal. The study is trying to understand how work-life balance can be used as a effective HR strategy for Organizational effectiveness. Persons with disability are one of the marginalized sections of the society. To create an inclusive society and ensure the equality of the persons with disability, providing education is necessary. Disability rehabilitation professionals are the trained rehabilitation professionals who educate the children with disabilities. They educate and train children with disability on the necessary life skills to be an active part of the society to ensure social participation. In the field of disability rehabilitation maintaining and improving organizational effectiveness is a major challenge. The one of the challenges of disability rehabilitation is lack of research in the HR. So this study is to seek the importance of work-life balance in organizational behavior in the field of disability rehabilitation.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

According to Clark (2000) work-life balance refers to satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict. Family as an institution had been changed. The roles played by the members changed drastically in the near decades. There are lot of reasons for this which include economic, legal, social and cultural. The traditional concept of the male parent to be the only bread winner changed. Females are also contributing economically to the family as equal to males and in some cases females economic contribution is higher than their spouses contribution. This change in the family brings a lot of structural change in the life of the family members.

The conventional method of thinking viewed work and life as competing objectives. Both are in a struggle for the same scarce resources, particularly time. There exists a new strategy that combines efforts to accomplish both personal and professional goals. Conflict between personal priorities and work can be used as catalyses for identifying inefficiency and in job. This is the new approach that laid the foundation of work-life balance.

Organizational Effectiveness

Parsons (1956) define organizational effectiveness in terms of an organization's ability to acquire and efficiently use available resources to achieve specific goals. According to Georgopolous and Tannenbaum (1957), organizational effectiveness is the extent to which an organization, within the given resources and means, achieves its objectives without overstraining the members of organization.

Organizational effectiveness is a complex multi-dimensional construct. There are some core criteria for effectiveness in the organizations. But effectiveness off organization changes in terms of the emphasis they place on factors such as job satisfaction, ethics in sales and services, contribution to society and so on.

The organizational effectiveness is a multi layer phenomenon. Organizational Effectiveness works in different functional levels. It aggregate to different levels. In the organizational behaviour the analysis takes place in three levels i.e. individual level, group level, and organizational level. The problems related with organizational effectiveness also can be outlined on same different levels.

At Organizational Level: The strategies being followed in this level will be appropriate ones for achieving the organizational goals. Different stake holders of the organization will be part of this environment. This goals have an enlarged financial, social, political and social impact.

At Group Level: The work group within the organization communicates and cooperate effectively and share a common understanding of the organizational goals. This is also concerned with resources necessary for groups to function effectively.

At Individual Level: Employees responsibilities and roles in an organization are defined in a way that considers the employees needs and the competencies are considered and managed.

Although the organizational effectiveness reflects different functional levels it's fundamentally concerned with the performance of employees. Organizational effectiveness is concern with the performance of employees at the individual level, and their skills to communicate, coordinate and work with various groups to attain the organizational goals and objectives. To bring change to an organization we even need to bring change in different levels of organizational structure by changing the behaviour of people.

DISABILITY REHABILITATION PROFESSIONALS

Rehabilitation council of India is established through Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992). The Rehabilitation council of India (RCI) regulates monitoring and training of rehabilitation professionals in India.

As per the RCI act 1992 the rehabilitation professionals are:

- Audiologist and speech therapists.
- Clinical psychologists.
- Hearing aid and ear mould technicians.
- Rehabilitation engineers and technicians.
- Special teachers for educating and training.
- Vocational counsellors, employment officers and placement officers.
- Multi-purpose rehabilitation therapists, technicians or.
- Other category of professionals as the Central Government may in consultation with the council notify from time to time.

The rehabilitation professionals educate the children with disabilities. They provide training in life skills as per the ability of the children. The teaching and training for education is provided by special educators and the therapeutic services are provided by audiologist, physiotherapist, psychologist etc as per the need of the child.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the various factors effecting work-life balance among disability rehabilitation professionals?
- What are the various factors effecting organizational effectiveness among disability rehabilitation professionals?
- What are the factors of work-life balance that effect organizational effectiveness of disability rehabilitation professionals?

OBJECTIVES

- To identify and analyze various factors of work-life balance among disability rehabilitation professionals.

- To identify and analyze various factors of organizational effectiveness among disability rehabilitation professionals.
- To identify and analyze various factors of work-life balance affecting organizational effectiveness among disability rehabilitation professionals.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this qualitative study Phenomenology was used for data analysis. Phenomenology was the most appropriate approach for this study. This design “capture the meaning for several individuals of their lived experience of a concept or a phenomenon”. (Creswell, 2007) In this study the phenomenon addresses work-life balance and organizational effectiveness of disability rehabilitation professionals.

Phenomenological study have two (hermeneutical & transcendental) approaches (Creswell, 2007). In this study transcendental phenomenology was used. Researcher need to ignore all the past knowledge and experience in this approach. A deep level of understanding needs to be made. And need to consider everything is perceived freshly and for first time. Bracketing completes the process of suspending one’s past knowledge and experience. (Creswell, 2007). Bracketing reduce researcher’s idea and familiarities.

Sample Selection

The study was conducted among 25 disability rehabilitation professionals. The disability rehabilitation professionals are recognized under Rehabilitation Council of India. Paramedical professionals also participated in the study. The disability rehabilitation professionals include Special Educators, Physiotherapist, Occupational therapist, Psychologist etc. Samples were collected from two districts of Kerala. Samples were selected from Palakkad and Trivandrum district. The disability rehabilitation professionals from Samagra Shiksha Kerala (SSK) project, Buds project and Special Schools were selected. 12 disability rehabilitation professionals from Palakkad district and 13 disability rehabilitation professionals from Trivandrum district participated in the study. 13 female and 12 male candidates were interviewed. Convenient sampling method was used for the selection of the participants.

Data Collection

Steps were taken to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection. The interviews were conducted mostly at work place and some of the interviews were conducted at home. While conducting interviews at work place and home the privacy of the participants was maintained. In interviews both personal and professional information about the participants were collected. Interviews were conducted at both work place and home where the participants had privacy to share the information. Confidential physical space was provided to the participants to assure that they can provide the information without any fear and pressure. The study was explained to the participants and verbal consent was taken from the participants before the interview. The interviews of the participants were utilized to capture different form of diversity in the data. Researcher's perspective was limited while collecting and analysing data.

Assessment Tool

The questionnaire used for the interview contains 27 structured questions followed by un-structured questions. In the questionnaire 7 structured questions were used to collect information about work-life balance and 20 structured questions were used to collect information about organizational effectiveness. The assessment tool was based on the predetermined themes. There were 3 predetermined themes for work-life balance and 9 themes for organizational effectiveness. For work-life balance themes were Work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work and finally work/personal life Enhancement. For organizational effectiveness the themes were organizational attachment, job involvement, self control, legitimization, organizational commitment, innovation, independence, job satisfaction and consensus.

Pilot Study

The questionnaires were given to a group of experts to review. After that pilot study was conducted among 5 participants. Pilot study was conducted in Trivandrum district. It was done to know the practical difficulties in conducting the interview and to understand the difficulties occur while administrating the questionnaire. This study also enabled to understand time and resources needed to conduct the interview. As per the inputs from pilot study few questions had restructured.

Administrative Procedure

The interview was conducted in a systematic manner. Rapport was established with the subject and explained about the study. The verbal consent of the participants was taken before conducting the interview. The interviews were conducted in local language Malayalam. Malayalam is the mother tongue of both researcher and the participants. Voice record was done for all the interviews with the permission of participants. The researcher and participants were only present while conducting interview. This was practiced to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the data. Average time taken for the interview was 1 hours and 45 minutes.

Analysis of Data

Transcription was done for all the interviews and transcript was prepared for voice recorded interviews. Transcript was converted into 25 units of texts. The data collection reached a level of saturation after 25 interviews. So the interviews were stopped after conducting 25 interviews. While collecting the data and analysis the opinions and judgments of the researcher were not allowed to be included in the research. Bracketing was done while framing questions, conducting interview and also while data analysis. The data was collected on the basis of predetermined themes. There were 9 predetermined themes, work-life balance had 3 themes and psychological well-being had 6 themes. Sub themes were derived during data analysis and were emerged throughout each theme.

FINDINGS

Themes on Work-life Balance

Theme-1: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL)

The theme of work interference with personal life discuss the issues faced by the participants in the personal life which was influenced by work. From the information provided by the participants sub themes were emerged. The sub themes were based on the similarity issues shared by the participants during interview. The subthemes derived are as follows:

Relationship with Supervisor

Participants shared that having a positive relationship with supervisor is essential to reduce the work related interference in personal life. Having

a positive relationship with supervisor enables the employee to work without any stress. This helps the employee to concentrate on the personal life without bringing any work stress to home. And if employee don't have a good relation with supervisor then employee need to face several problems including work overload, working for long hours, difficulty in getting leave etc. These all factors affect the personal life.

Communication Issues

Communication is a complex process and it include several components includes medium, receiver, channel, sender etc. Issues in communication play an important role in creating interference in the personal life. The role of communication depends on both sender and receiver. Even though one person is good in communication it is not enough to have a proper communication because communication depends on several factors. Lack of proper communication created a lot of work related interferences in the personal life.

Work Overload

Work overload is another issue that leads to the continuous work related interference in personal life. Work overload will result in burnouts. Work overload will not allow the employee to perform personal life activities without work related interference. This is one of the pivotal issues faced by the employees.

Role Conflict

Role conflict is another important aspect that adversely affects the employees. The lack of clarity in the job creates lot of issues and these issues are creating severe mental stress. The employees are feeling stress and they are thinking of the same in their personal life also. While going home they are not able to forget the conflicts and thus it affects the employee psychologically. The personal life activities will be influenced by this due to frustration due to stress.

Flexibility

Flexibility in work enables the employees to engage in personal activities also. The flexibility is considered as an integral component of work by the employees. Employees need flexibility in time and also in work related process. Work flexibility helps employees to do personal activities without any work related obstacle.

Role of Management

The role of management is also considered as an essential factor that ensures better functioning of life activities. The management need to take

initiative to ensure work-life balance. Without the approval and efforts of management it is not possible to create and sustain an environment of work-life balance.

Theme-2: Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW)

Personal life interference with work is predetermined theme. This theme explains about the personal factors affecting work activities. Subthemes under this theme were obtained from the collection and analysis of data. The subthemes obtained under this theme are provided below:

Health Issues

Health complications can be a major interference from performing work tasks. Health issues can be affect persons unexpectedly and it can severely affect the work performance also. The employees have shown severe concern regarding unexpected health issues which can be resulted due to accidents or even due to pandemic. Most of the participants were concerned due to the COVID pandemic.

Elderly Care

The work often gets interference due to medical conditions and health issues of elderly parents. Also the lack of technical knowledge of the old generation intensifies this interference. Health check-ups in regular intervals is a part of the routine life style. The presence of the employees during the health check ups becomes essential for further follow up and treatment. So this is identified as an important personal factor that affects work.

Family Leaves

In the Indian society our traditions and culture give more priorities to the family. As an employee both married and unmarried employees have family commitments and they need to take leaves for this. This is one of the major challenges to the employees. To convince supervisor for family leaves are really difficult and this is an important personal factor that interfere work process and it can even adversely affect the relationship with supervisor.

Child Care

Child care is a complex issue. This subtheme has different dimensions. In the nuclear family if both parents are working then child care becomes a major issue. The issues related with child care will influence the work process. The employees wish to get more sensitive approach from the management to address this issue.

Marital Issues

Marital Issues was also considered as one of important factor that cause interference for work. The support and care of the partner is essential for performing work tasks. Disturbed marital relation will affect the person psychologically and it will be difficult for the person to perform work task effectively. The family atmosphere also play an important role in the performance of work task of the employees.

Values and Ethics

Values of the participants will affect the work process. The personal values and ethics will turned in to organizational values and ethics. This will formulate an organizational culture. If the personal values and ethics are in conflict with the work process then it will affect the whole work.

Theme-3: Work/Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE)

Work/personal life enhancement theme include the factors of job that positively affect life or vice versa. In this theme we have included factors that affect positively to the life due to work-life balance of the participants. The subthemes emerged during the study is provided below.

Social Status

Social status is an important subtheme shared by participants. The participants shared that due to the area of their job they are enjoying good social status and also get respect from the society. Disability rehabilitation professionals enjoy good status in the society.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the result of life enhancement. The work-life balance leads to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction will occur when the work related and personal level activities are functioning well under work environment.

Family Atmosphere

Family atmosphere also interfere the work activities. The support of family members is essential for performing work activities. The willingness of the family members to make adjustments as per the need of work activities is essential. This will enable the employees to perform well in the work place without having stress regarding the life activities.

Self Esteem

Participants shared that this job give them an enhancement in self esteem. The job enables them to contribute to the family with resources. Being an earning member in the family and society draws respect among relatives, family members and also in the community. The job provide

financial freedom to a certain extent which will enable the participants to have a better self esteem than other non earning members in the society.

Themes on Organizational Effectiveness

In organizational effectiveness there are 9 predetermined themes. These themes are on the basis of nine different dimensions of C. N. Daftuar (1985). The subthemes generated are derived from the data collected and analyzed.

Theme-1 Consensus

Consensus is the level of uniformity in perception and attitude of employees toward various aspects including standards, ethics, values, objectives and culture. Personal values and ethics is the subtheme of this theme.

Personal Values and Ethics

The personal values and ethics of the employees need to be in tandem with the organizational culture and value system. If the values and ethics of both person and organization are conflicting then they will create cognitive dissonance in the employee and leads to job stress.

Theme-2 Legitimization

Legitimization is the acceptance among employees toward the decision of superiors. The confidence of employees towards the superiors is important in this theme. Trust and positive relations with coworkers are the subtheme for this factor.

Trust

Trusts among employees are essential for the effective functioning of the organization. Acceptance of other employees is only possible if trust is build among the employees. The decisions of the superiors will be accepted once the employees have trust towards superiors.

Positive Relationship between Staffs

Another important factor needed for legitimization is positive relation between the staffs. The positive relationship between staffs will create a more vibrant environment. This also enables the employees to accept the decisions of the superiors.

Theme-3 Self control

Self control refers to the responsibility felt by the employees towards job without any restrictions and control. The role of management and supervisor is the subtheme under this area.

Role of Management

Role of management was considered as an essential part in determining self control. The participants shared that when more responsibility was shared then the employees become more focused towards his work. And it was observed that if the responsibility of the work is not given to the employees and trying to control them using force then the employees feels offended. They feel lack of trust in this situation and get de-motivated from performing the job.

Role of Supervisor

The role of supervisor is important in motivating employees to perform work tasks with minimum monitoring. The supervisor plays an incredible role in influencing the employees and enabling them to work without any control and restrictions. The supervisors need to be role model.

Theme-4 Independence

The extent to which an employee can use his judgment in taking work related decisions. The subtheme under this area was identified as supervisor by the participants. The subtheme under independence is supervisor.

Supervisor

Supervisor plays an important role in determining the amount of independence enjoyed by the employee. The leadership style and the personality of the supervisor is an essential factor in providing independence for the employees in taking job related decisions.

Theme-5 Job Involvement

Job involvement is the extent to which person's goal is connected psychologically with his work. This is the role of work in shaping one's self image. The subtheme under this topic is social status of job.

Social Status of job

The value of the job plays an important factor in determining the status of the job. The view of society towards the job also is important in determining the job involvement. Job involvement will be high for the jobs catering higher status in the society.

Theme-6 Innovation

Innovation is the extent to which an employee can use his ideas to deal with work activities. The subtheme in this area is job stress.

Job Stress

To use the full potential of employee's ability in the work place is essential. Innovation of employees is considered as an important aspect showing the full use of potential. The employees need to have a stress free

work environment to use their ideas at work. The employees will be only willing to take risk if there is a no job stress. The employees will not be experimenting new things if they are experiencing high job stress.

Theme-7 Organizational Attachment

Organizational attachment is the feeling of oneness and employees commitment to stay with the organizations even in the worst situations. The subthemes identified by the participants are job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an important factor in determining organizational attachment. Job satisfaction enables an employee to have attachment towards the organization. This helps the employees to stay with the organization even in the testing time.

Theme-8 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the care of employees towards the prosperity of the organization. It is the extent to which employee is willing to work for organization.

Long Standing Staffs

Organizational commitment of staffs in an organization can be identified by analyzing number of long standing staffs. Interaction with the long standing staffs in a critical way will enable to understand the organizational commitment of staffs towards organization.

Job Turnover

Another mile stone that enable to understanding the level of organizational commitment is job turnover. The job turnover will be high in the organizations where there is less organizational commitment among employees and vice versa.

Theme-9 Job Satisfaction

Job

The job itself is shared as the reason for job satisfaction. The work task itself becomes the reason for the satisfaction. The work tasks which include preparing of teaching learning materials, individualized education program and scheduling the class etc is one of the reason for the job satisfaction.

Improvement in Rehabilitation

The improvements shown by the children with disabilities provide greater satisfaction to continue this job. The job itself provide a personal space to forget employees personal difficulties in life and most of the participants shared that they are blessed to provide such services to these children with disabilities.

Salary and Increment

Salary and increment is also a factor determining job satisfaction. The increments in equal intervals are also a pivotal factors influencing job satisfaction. Excluding monetary support it is not possible to reach job satisfaction.

SUMMARY

The summary of work-life balance factors that affected organizational effectiveness are provided below under each theme:

Theme-1: Work Interference with personal Life (WIPL)

- Relationship with supervisor
- Work overload
- Role conflict
- Role of management

Theme-2: Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW)

- Ethics and values

Theme-3: Work/Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE)

- Social status
- Job satisfaction
- Values and ethics

Work-life Balance as a H R Strategy

- Management support is essential for the implementation of work-life balance.
- Work-life balance policy need to be formulated and implemented.
- Health concerns of the employees need to be address by providing insurances or other health benefit schemes.
- Training need to be provided to all supervisors to work with the subordinates and address the issues like role conflict and work overload.
- Employees aspiring the values and ethics of the organization need to be recruited.
- Positive relationship among co-workers need to be build, if necessary training need to be provided.
- Employees need to know aims and objectives of the organization. And need to work to fulfil those.
- Flexibility in time and place need to be given for the employees having personal issues like child care and elderly care.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the factors of organizational effectiveness affect work-life balance. Eight subthemes are found to influence organizational effectiveness. These eight subthemes are spread under all three themes of work-life balance. These factors are identified and analyzed.

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