

Impact of Working Hours on Family Well-Being, Health and Lifestyle of Women Employees working in IT/BPO Sector

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Abstract - The importance of women to national progress is steadily growing. Many women now split their time between working at home and in the workplace. It's a difficulty for any working woman since they have to deal with a plethora of issues in their personal lives in addition to the stresses of the workplace. They struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance due to the pressures of their jobs. Women's participation in the workforce has increased dramatically over the last three decades, and now includes the armed forces, law enforcement, the medical profession, and even the engineering sector. Shift labor became the norm in many industries, and both men and women participated. The effects on women's lifestyles and the additional stress that comes with working late hours or night shifts are well-documented. The purpose of the current study is to determine what kinds of pressures are placed on women in the ITES industry, particularly those who work late shifts and go home around midnight. Researchers in this study analyzed how working long hours affected the health and happiness of women in the information technology and business process outsourcing (BPO) sector. The balance between work and family life is greatly affected by a woman's working hours. Working long hours has a significant effect on every dependent variable, including family members' complaints about how little time women workers spend with them, the frequency with which they engage in conversation with them, the frequency with which they argue with them, and the frequency with which they "bond in relationship" with them.

Keywords - Women employees, working hours, work load, family wellbeing, IT/BPO sector

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INTRODUCTION

In India, the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) business is on the rise. The Indian labor force, like the labor force in many developing nations, has benefited greatly from BPO's proliferation of employment opportunities. Women play a crucial part in this rapidly expanding industry. BPO's workforce would be incomplete without the contributions of women. Work-life balance is a current problem that is receiving more and more attention from academics and policymakers alike. Many variables affect work-life balance, but demographic shifts in the workforce and Western work culture are particularly important in the fields of communication and information technology. The purpose of this research was to examine the work-life balance of female BPO workers (BPO).

The traditional responsibilities of wife and mother are no longer sufficient for Indian women today, who are actively engaging in the nation's economic and social growth by seeking jobs and a career outside the house (Liddle & Joshi, 1986). As a consequence of recent economic, social, and political developments, women's

positions have improved, particularly in the areas of education and employment. In India, women's labor was traditionally restricted to conventional professions like nursing and teaching. While women have typically worked in male-dominated industries like military, engineering, and BPO, they are now breaking through obstacles and preconceptions to work in all areas, including night shifts.

India's IT sector has grown tremendously as a result of the country's economic globalization and supportive government policies. There is ongoing demand on IT and IT-related professionals to provide services quickly and effectively while also keeping costs down as low as possible. The constant physical and emotional stress of working in the IT business may lead to a wide range of health issues for IT workers. Stress may cause, maintain, or worsen a wide range of illnesses. Acid peptic disease, alcoholism, asthma, diabetes, fatigue, tension headaches, hypertension, insomnia, irritable bowel syndrome, psychoneurosis, sexual dysfunction, and psoriasis, lichen planus, urticaria, pruritus, and neurodermatitis are just a few of the

health problems that are commonly associated with chronic stress in the modern world. New work connections, employment instability, uncertainty about future working circumstances, and quick obsolescence of abilities are causing stress. India's IT sector has become one of the country's fastest-growing businesses. Over the last several years, India has been ranked as one of Asia-fastest-growing Pacific's IT markets. The rationale for focusing on IT and ITES workers in particular is because their stress levels are much greater than those of their peers. Any work has goals, and employees feel upset when they're assigned unrealistic goals and can't handle a certain circumstance. It is our goal to shed attention on the high levels of stress experienced by IT and ITES professionals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Narayanan AGV et.al. (2012) The rationale and objective of this essay is to examine why work-life balance has become a major worry, and the possible consequences of the widespread dissatisfaction with current work schedules. Businesses don't operate in a vacuum; they draw on a variety of external resources, including people, money, and labor, to produce their final products and services. For a company to fulfill its objectives, the management of people is more challenging than managing other aspects of production. In today's corporate world, work-life balance is one of the many ideas in human resources. An examination of the work-life balance of IT software professionals was undertaken for the purpose of this current research. Personal data, variables impacting work-life balance, and issues resulting from inefficient work-life policies are all part of the goal of this questionnaire, which was created with that goal in mind. Data has been tested using percentage analysis, factor analysis, multiple linear regression analysis, t-test, and chi-square test. According to the survey, a number of variables contribute to software workers' work-life balance.

Amber Tariq, et.al. (2012) Increasing income created by workers, a competitive workforce, and employee commitment are all priorities for organizations as they prepare to confront the challenges of the twenty-first century. They are all priorities for organizations. Employees at all levels of management have been adversely impacted by this period of hyper-competitiveness. Work-life balance, its significance for companies, and the different evolving practices and efforts linked with it are all discussed in this exploratory research. The new study draws on existing Meta-analyses of literature that have uncovered a wealth of information on Work-life balance theory and practice. According to the results, a healthy work-life balance is critical for both individuals and employers in today's fast-paced workplaces. As a result of these benefits, the company is better able to compete in today's business environment. Similarly, work-life balance efforts help workers by increasing their drive to work, contentment, and empowerment, as well as their overall commitment to the company.

Ameeta Jaga, et.al. (2013) Orientation: From the viewpoint of positive psychology, this research studies the positive elements of the interaction between work and family and its connections with mental health. The goal of this research was to determine if work-family enrichment helps to predict psychological health, especially enhanced subjective well-being and reduced sensations of emotional weariness and sadness. The expanding literature on the work-family interface has little to say about the beneficial effects of keeping job and family responsibilities, which is why this research was undertaken. Methodology, methodology, and design of the study: A descriptive research approach was adopted by the writers. A self-administered survey questionnaire was completed by employees of two major financial retail and logistics companies. Respondents (N = 160) who said they had both family and job commitments were the focus of the study. The following are the main findings: There are two separate paths to work-family enrichment, as previous studies have shown: one leads from work to home (W2FE) and the other leads from home to work (F2WE). A multiple regression analysis found that F2WE explained a large percentage of the variation in subjective well-being, while W2FE explained a significant portion of the variance in depressive symptoms and emotional weariness. Researchers found that supporting work-family enrichment has both personal and organizational advantages. As a positive organizational psychology viewpoint grows in importance, this study offers empirical evidence for a need to concentrate on positive elements of the work-family interaction.

Arvinder Kaur et.al. (2012) In India's call centers and BPOs, women make up around a third of all workers. Despite the fact that women make a significant economic contribution to the BPO business, there are still a number of issues that need to be solved for the benefit of female workers. Safe transportation, flexible working hours, night shifts, cultural differences, and sexual harassment are just a few of the many issues that need to be addressed. Violence against women in India's BPO/Call Centers is escalating despite rigorous legislation put in place by the Government of India addressing the protection of their safety and security. There is a bright future ahead for the BPO and Call Center business in India. It is the employer's obligation to solve these obstacles and concerns as soon as possible since women are a vital component of the BPO and Call Center sector. Here, we look at the difficulties and concerns experienced by Chandigarh's female call center workers, the efforts taken by their employers to address those issues, and what those workers might anticipate from their employers going forward. This is the first time we've attempted this and it hasn't been previously demonstrated or published.

Chitra Devi, et.al. (2012) At the moment, work-life balance is a topic that is being discussed often in board rooms around the country. Some of the elements that impact work-life balance include

changes in demography and work culture, as well as advances in communication and information technology. As the male breadwinner paradigm fades away and the current generation's beliefs and attitudes change, it is imperative to address the problem of work-life balance. Women in the BPO industry work every shift, including the night shift, just like their male counterparts. Women working in BPO companies are surveyed to examine the impact of shift work on their work-life balance. Work-life conflict, life-work conflict, psychosomatic problems and desire to leave the company are all linked to working shifts. Work-life balance seems to be better for those who work in second or night shifts, according to the results of the research. The frequency of psychosomatic illnesses was found to be low among respondents who worked in second shifts, whereas the incidence of work-life conflict was found to be low among respondents who worked in night shifts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To get to the bottom of this, we polled 400 working women to get the firsthand information we need. Ten (10) BPOs supplied the responses. Convenience sampling was used because it allowed for simpler and more reliable data collection.

The right inferences have been drawn using both primary and secondary data. In-depth interviews and questionnaires were used to compile the bulk of the main data. Most of the secondary information came from previously published works in the same area of study. Mean ratings were used to examine the data gathered.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: General Profile of Respondents

Factors	Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age	20–25 Years	92	23%
	26–30 Years	216	54%
	31–35 Years	54	13%
	Above 35 Years	38	10%

Civic Status	Single	194	48%
	Married	200	50%
	Separated	6	2%
Experience	1-2 years	220	55%
	3-5 years	58	15%
	5-7 years	66	17%
	7-9 years	42	10%
	Above 9 years	14	3%
Income-Level	Rs 10000 - Rs 15000	194	48.5%
	Rs 15001- Rs 20000	138	34.5%
	Rs 20001 – Rs 25000	56	14%
	More Than Rs 25000	12	3%

Table 2: Frequency of Respondents having difficulty in adjusting their family life with their Organisational workload

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	268	67
No	100	25
Undecided	32	8
Total	400	100.00%

According to the data in the table above, 67 percent of respondents had trouble juggling the needs of their family and their career. One-quarter of those polled (25%) said they have no problems juggling work and family.

Table 3: Frequency of Respondents having problems with adjusting their Personal Life with Organisational Workload

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	102	51
No	87	43.5
Undecided	11	5.5
Total	200	100.00%

Table 3 shows that although 51 percent of respondents report difficulties balancing their personal lives with their organizational responsibilities, 43 percent report no such difficulties.

Table 4: Frequency of Respondents who encountered Work-Life Balance Problems

Response	Frequency	%
Yes	336	84
No	44	11
Undecided	20	5
Total	400	100.00%

Based on the data shown above, it seems that the vast majority of respondents (84%) struggle with maintaining a healthy work-life equilibrium. Only 12% of them say they've never struggled with a lack of a work-life balance.

Table 5: Perception towards Factors affecting Work-life balance

Factors	Mean
Support from top management	4.51
Support from colleagues	3.33
Organizational change	3.26
Working hours	4.08
Managerial style	4.49
Additional job responsibilities	3.74
Work overload	4.61
Work life conflict	4.22
Psychological distress	4.65
Physical Health	4.01
Family support	3.67
Having children	4.15
Personal financial problems	3.50

According to the data in Table No. 2, the most significant factor affecting people's ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance is emotional or mental stress, with a mean score of 4.65. The second most important

element in determining Work-Life Balance is 'support from top management,' with a mean score of 4.51, followed by 'work overload,' with a mean score of 4.61. Other elements that are thought to significantly impact work-life balance include managerial style, work-life conflict, having children, working hours, and physical health.

Table 6: Work-life balance arrangements availed of by Respondents

Arrangements availed by Respondents	Mean
Flexi-time	4.27
Parental Leave	3.01
Sick Leave	4.07
Earned Leave	3.66
Casual Leave	4.19
Compassionate leave	3.52
Additional Leave in exchange for	3.25

Job Sharing Scheme	3.87
Flexible break provision	4.01
Shorter working week	3.98
Term Time Working Scheme	3.88
Half-time work	4.00
Ad-hoc arrangements to facilitate caring needs	2.94
Events for Family members of the employees	2.96

According to the data in the table above, a larger percentage of respondents have used flexi time (4.27 vs. 4.19) than have used casual leave (4.19). The vast majority of respondents have taken use of alternative arrangements, such as sick leave, flexible break provision, half-time work, and shorter working weeks.

Table 7: Impact of Work-life Balance

Self-Health	Mean
I get adequate sleep	3.33
I get enough time to give myself, exercise, hobbies and sports	2.92
I do not suffer from headaches or migraine	2.78
I am mentally and physically active	3.42
Family and friends	Mean
I get adequate time to spend with family and friends	3.12
I am able to meet my home demands	2.86
I get adequate time for personal responsibilities	2.96
Relationship with Colleagues and Management	Mean
I get enough time to interact with colleagues and Management	3.26
I am able to build strong relationship with Colleagues and Management	3.38
I am able to express myself effectively	3.01
Work Environment	Mean
I am able to achieve my targets	3.71
I am enjoying my work	3.37
I am able to enhance my skills	3.12

Work-life balance has the greatest effect on personal health when one is both cognitively and physically engaged, as shown in Table No.7, with proper sleep coming in second. Not having headaches or migraines had the lowest average score. The average score for 'having sufficient time to spend with family and friends' was the highest among the questions on the effects of work-life balance on personal relationships, followed by 'getting appropriate time for personal duties'. The category of "fulfilling my household demands" received the lowest average score. Even if the employees' ability to get along with their supervisors and coworkers improves with a healthy work-life balance, the average score for "expressing effectively to supervisors and coworkers" was the lowest of all the factors. The effect of work-life balance on the

workplace is best shown by the median scores for "achieving aims" and "enjoying work," respectively. The category of "improving skills" received the lowest average score.

CONCLUSION

The BPO industry has an atypical workweek. Aiming too high is not an option since there are too many goals to reach. Employees must handle calls from a wide variety of customers. They might include some very demanding or angry individuals. In the meanwhile, service quality must be maintained at a high standard. Workers may experience burnout and stress as a result of this. In an effort to retain talent, improve work quality, and keep workers happy, BPO businesses are implementing policies and programs to improve the work-life balance of their employees, such as work-from-home options, flexible scheduling, and job swapping. Workplace flexibility is a stress-reliever and a boon to efficient time management. Joint-family employees enjoy more ease than their nuclear-family counterparts. Finding a good work-life balance calls for concerted effort on a variety of fronts, from the individual to the national and governmental to the organizational and the organizational. The research found that the "connection with family members" of women who work more than 12 hours a day is negatively affected. Female coworkers often hear criticism from loved ones that she doesn't talk to them or spend time with them, and that there's been an uptick in family disputes as a result. In addition, it's reasonable to believe that women who work long hours risk harming their health. Intense work hours took a toll on an employee's mental and physical health. Since the BPO sector is mostly female, its female employees are often cut off from their friends and family. During the day, they are Indian and at night, they are Westerners, therefore the ladies are split off from their friends and family. The front-facing nature of BPOs makes a significant contribution to the empowerment of young women by providing them with economic autonomy and expanding their mobility. This raises social as well as physical health problems for them. Therefore, BPOs should pay more attention to providing gyms and yoga classes for management. Wellness among male coworkers may be encouraged via the use of welcome parties and other forms of socialization as part of the onboarding process. There has to be efforts in place to help workers relax and enjoy their downtime. Full-time counselors are necessary for effective counseling.

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