

HR Bundles for Effective Work Life Balance

An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Work Life Balance (WLB) is one of the most important issues at workplace in today's competitive business environment. A large number of studies have been carried out on WLB in the human resource and other academic fields. Most of the studies find major factors related to the work life balance. This paper, however tries to find the HR bundles related to various factors of WLB. The bundles basically club the major items affecting WLB under limited number of broad constructs. This study basically works on the variables related to Job Motivation, Organizational Culture, Flexi Workings, and Work Culture etc. For the purpose of this study data has been collected from 125 IT professionals from Delhi-NCR. The sampling method is judgmental sampling where only those employees have been selected that are married and have at least one child. Factor analysis and Descriptive have been used for data analysis. The paper significantly contributes in the literature by

establishing relationship between HR bundles and Work Life Balance. Further, the study also finds and elaborates the reasons why these variables have come up the most important and bundled together under one broad construct.

INTRODUCTION

Work life balance is defined as effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and the other activities that are important to people. Work life balance of employees is important for all the stakeholders in an organization. In the CIPD report (2010) it was highlighted that work-life balance and the opportunities to work flexibly are the major strengths in this organization. Creating

an Engaged Workforce Findings from the Kingston Employee Engagement Consortium Project Good organizations always take care of their employees like assets and that is why they take care of their work life balance too. Maintaining a good work life balance is the duty of both employer and employees. Yasbek (2004) concluded that work-life balance can enhance productivity in various ways.

Employees should not demand high, which is not feasible for the organization as well as the employers should not avoid anything which is reasonable and may contribute in WLB in a positive manner. This may be understood as 'competitive tradeoff', which is explained in the figure 1

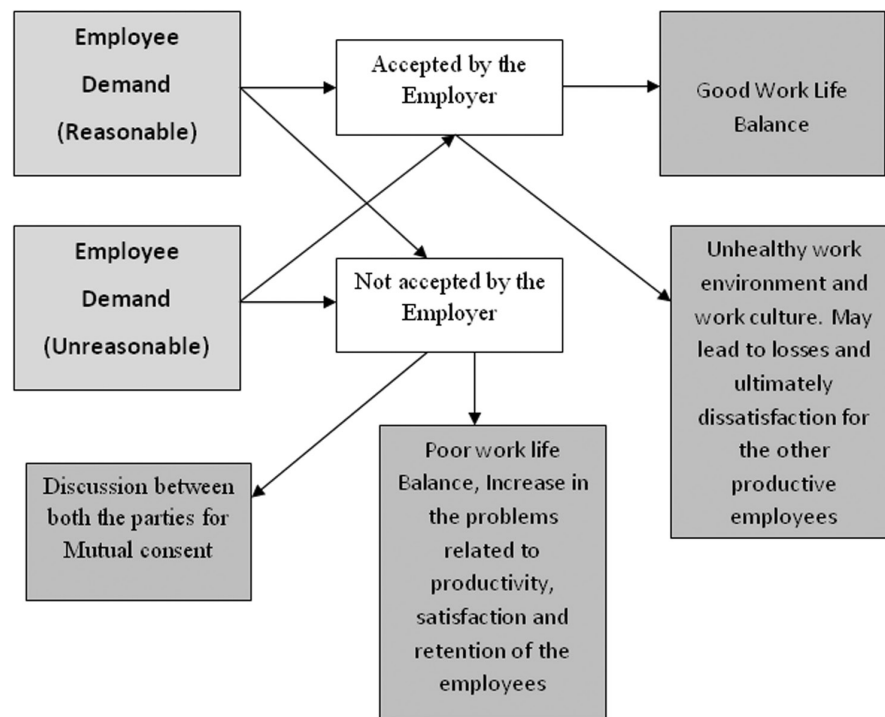


Figure 1: A comprehensive employer-employee trade off model of WLB

The two types of demands and four different types of results have been presented. It is explained in the figure that, when the reasonable demands from the employees are accepted by the employers or they become the part of their policy then a Good Work Life Balance can be maintained. 'Good work life balance' includes better employee productivity, better satisfaction and better work culture. When the reasonable demands are not accepted then the result in poor work life Balance and increase the problems related to productivity, satisfaction and retention of the employees. On the other hand if unreasonable demands are accepted an unhealthy work environment and work culture may be developed in the organization,

which may in long term lead to losses and ultimately dissatisfaction for the other productive employees. More importantly if the unreasonable demands are not accepted by the organization, there may be discussion between the employer and employees for consensus upon the matters.

The evidence that supports the organizational benefits of work-life policies is mixed, primarily due to methodological issues (e.g., a focus on individual organizational case studies and non-random samples). The few cost-benefit analyses that have been conducted examining organizational work-life balance policies are predominately focused on the short-term consequences.

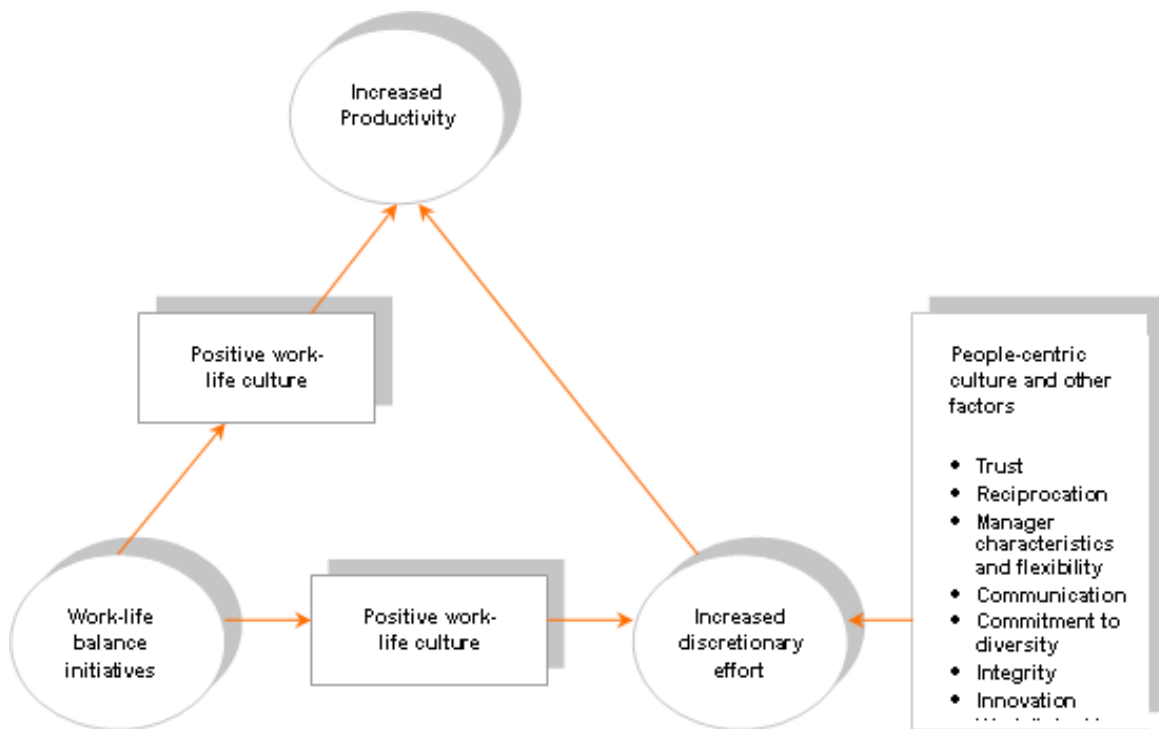


Figure 1 A comprehensive employer-employee trade off model of WLB

While the real benefits of family friendly/ work-life balance policies are often long-term and can be difficult to disentangle. Research demonstrating that societal issues, such as declining fertility rates can be improved through effective work-life balance policies is only now emerging and is considered to be an important area for future research. This review provides evidence for why work-life balance should certainly not simply be considered to be an individual concern. **Brough (nd)**

Equal Employment Opportunity Trust (2007) in its report 'Work-life balance, employee engagement and discretionary: A review of effort the evidence.

Relationship between work-life balance, workplace culture, discretionary effort and productivity.

Singh (2013) proposed that in absence of proper work-life policies, work-life interface can be decreased by informal family friendly initiatives and self management.

Challenges in WLB Efforts:

While work-life initiatives serve a purpose in highlighting the need for organizational adaptation to changing relationships between work, family, and personal life, however they usually are marginalized rather than mainstreamed into organizational systems (Kossek et al. 2010). Despite the fact that work-life conflict has significant business costs associated with lack of engagement, absenteeism, turnover rates, low productivity and creativity or poor retention levels, there

are some factors of organizational work-life culture that may compromise availability and use of these practices (Lazar, et al). Visser and Williams (2006) carried out an independent report commissioned by UNISON titled Work-life balance: Rhetoric versus reality? The authors recommended more focus on achieving greater employee involvement in decisions over staffing patterns, and more honest discussions about rising expectations and how to create responsive public services. The authors have also found that there are high levels of unmet demand for some work life balance options that go beyond the current 'family friendly' approach. At the top of the organizational hierarchy, the majority of individuals are males, and assumptions can be made regarding their lack of personal experience with the direct and indirect effects of work-family conflict (Williams and Boushey, 2010).

ACAS (2013) published a report on Flexible working and work-life balance and highlights the fact that customers expect to have goods and services available outside traditional working hours, organizations want to match their business needs with the way their employees work and individuals want to achieve better.

Objectives of the Study

1. To bundle the various organizational efforts (HR practices/ policies) that maintains effective work life balance.

2. To trace out the challenges in implementing the proposed HR practices/policies in order to maintain effective work life balance.

Methodology

This study basically works on the variables related to Job Motivation, Organizational Culture, Flexi Workings, and Work Culture etc. For the purpose of this study data has been collected from 125 IT professionals from Delhi-NCR with the help of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire listed closed ended question on a five point Likert scale. The sampling method is judgmental sampling where only those employees have been selected that are married and have at least one child. The collected data has been analyzed with the help of Factor analysis and descriptive.

Data Analysis

Profile of the Respondents:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

<i>Gender</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>%age</i>
Males	88	70.40%
Females	37	29.60
Total	125	100
Age		
Below 30	70	56%
Above 30	55	44%
Total	125	100
No. of Children		
One Child	65	52%

<i>Gender</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>	<i>%age</i>
More than 1	60	48%
Total	125	100
Demographics on the basis of Judgmental Criteria		
Occupation - IT professionals	125	100
Marital Status – Married	125	
Work Experience		
Less than 5 Years	29	23.2
5-10 Years	71	56.8
More Than 10 Years	25	20
Total	125	100

Organizational efforts (HR practices/policies) that maintain effective work life balance

Barlett's test of sphericity

Bartlett test of sphericity determines the appropriateness of factor analysis examines the entire correlation matrix and MSA, Measure of Sample Adequacy is to check the appropriateness of factor analysis.

Table 2: Barlett's test of sphericity and Measure of Sampling Adequacy

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.654
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1517.716
	df	136
	Sig.	.000

The significance (.000) is less than the assumed value (0.05). So we reject H0. This means that the **factor analysis is valid. KMO (Maiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling) coefficient (.654)** value is more than 0.5. So this implies that the factor analysis for data reduction is effective.

Table 3: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.597	32.921	32.921	5.597	32.921	32.921	3.269	19.230	19.230
2	2.852	16.774	49.695	2.852	16.774	49.695	2.908	17.103	36.333
3	1.955	11.500	61.195	1.955	11.500	61.195	2.425	14.265	50.598
4	1.308	7.693	68.888	1.308	7.693	68.888	2.237	13.160	63.758
5	1.092	6.423	75.311	1.092	6.423	75.311	1.964	11.553	75.311
6	.911	5.357	80.667						
7	.887	5.218	85.886						
8	.620	3.645	89.530						
9	.374	2.200	91.731						
10	.349	2.053	93.783						
11	.254	1.492	95.275						
12	.200	1.175	96.450						
13	.190	1.116	97.566						
14	.168	.990	98.556						
15	.096	.564	99.120						
16	.087	.512	99.633						
17	.062	.367	100.000						

Deriving Factors and Assessing Overall Fit

Table 3 presents the information regarding the 17 possible factors and their relative explanatory powers as expressed by their **Eigen values**. If we apply the latent root criterion, 5 components will be retained. Further the Scree Plot is also shown in **Figure 3**. Scree Plot shows the 17 factors extracted in this study. In the first 5 factors the plot slopes steeply downward but after that it becomes an approximately horizontal line. The point at which the curve first begins to straighten out is considered to indicate the maximum number of factors to extract. As seen in the figure 3, we consider that 5 factors will qualify. Therefore, these results illustrate the

need for multiple decision criteria in deciding the number of components to be retained. The 5 Factors retained represent 75.311% of the variance of the 17 variables.

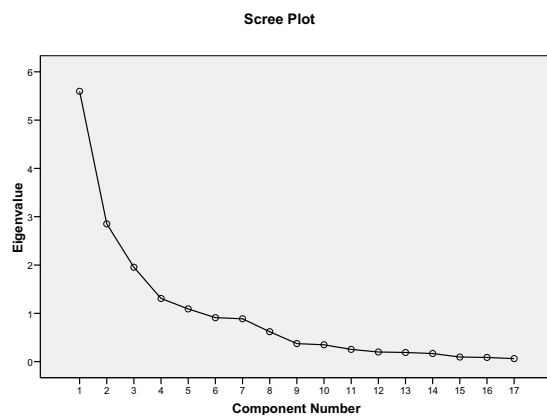
**Figure 3:** Scree Plot

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix(a)

	Component				
	<i>Flexi Working</i>	<i>Support From Office</i>	<i>Support from Seniors</i>	<i>Effective Leadership</i>	<i>Organisational Rationality on WLB</i>
1	-.172	.351	-.032	.796	.148
2	.102	.152	-.252	.366	.775
3	.050	.176	.094	.070	.766
4	.062	.774	.286	.006	.346
5	.195	.575	.672	.116	-.094
6	.216	.881	.032	-.020	.147
7	.461	.482	.497	-.383	.200
8	.211	-.079	.093	.697	.199
9	.051	-.044	.868	-.129	.034
10	.446	.558	-.240	.165	-.098
11	.843	.244	.194	-.068	.158
12	.791	-.027	.200	.379	-.062
13	.237	-.101	-.098	.716	.028
14	.445	.155	.689	.208	-.260
15	.680	.197	.011	.251	.183
16	.590	.309	.370	-.077	-.398
17	.525	.495	.231	-.039	-.474

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

After analyzing the solution Factor Loading has been done on the basis of significant values. For each factor the component in the each column with more than **0.5 values** has been selected as the component to constitute a factor. The following **Table 5** presents the factors and their loadings.

Table 4 shows that factor analysis has reduced 18 variables in 5 factors. The VARIMAX rotated five factors have been shown in **Table 5** viz. Flexi Working Hours, Work from Home, Short, Leave Flexibility, Compressed Working Week, and Emergency Leaves constitutes **Factor 1** which is named as “**Flexi**

Working”. This factor explains around **19.23%** of the total variance (refer table 3).

Factor 2, is a combination of five important variables of work life balance namely Job Sharing, Providing Assistants, Duty Adjustments by Office, Specific Period Relaxation and Reduced Workload. This factor explains 17.103% of the total variance. It has been suitably titled as “**Support from Office**”

Factor 3 has been named “**Support from seniors**” which explains **14.265%** of the total variance and includes two important variables namely, seniors’ participation and Empathy.

Factor 4 is combinations of three factors; they are Mentorship, Role of Boss and Motivation. It explains 13.160% of variance. This factor has been named “**Effective Leadership**”. **Factor 5** explains 11.553% of the variance and combines two variables namely ‘Productivity rather than No. of Hours’ and Relevant Discussions on WLB. The factor has been named “**Organisational Rationality on WLB**”.

Table 5: Factors Loading: Bank Selection Criteria- Executive Respondents

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Factors and Variables</i>	<i>Factor Loadings</i>
Factor 1	Flexi Working	
	Flexi Working Hours	.791
	Work from Home	.843
	Short Leave Flexibility	.680
	Compressed Working Week	.590
	Emergency Leaves	.525
Factor 2	Support From Office	

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Factors and Variables</i>	<i>Factor Loadings</i>
	Job Sharing	.482
	Providing Assistants	.881
	Duty Adjustments by Office	.575
	Specific Period Relaxation	.774
	Reduced Workload	.558
Factor 3	Support from Seniors	
	Senior's Participation	.868
	Empathy	.689
Factor 4	Effective Leadership	
	Mentorship	.796
	Role of Boss	.697
	Motivation	.716
Factor 5	Organizational Rationality on WLB	
	Productivity rather than No. of Hours	.775
	Relevant Discussions on WLB	.766

Challenges in Work life Balance

Table 6: Challenges in Work life Balance

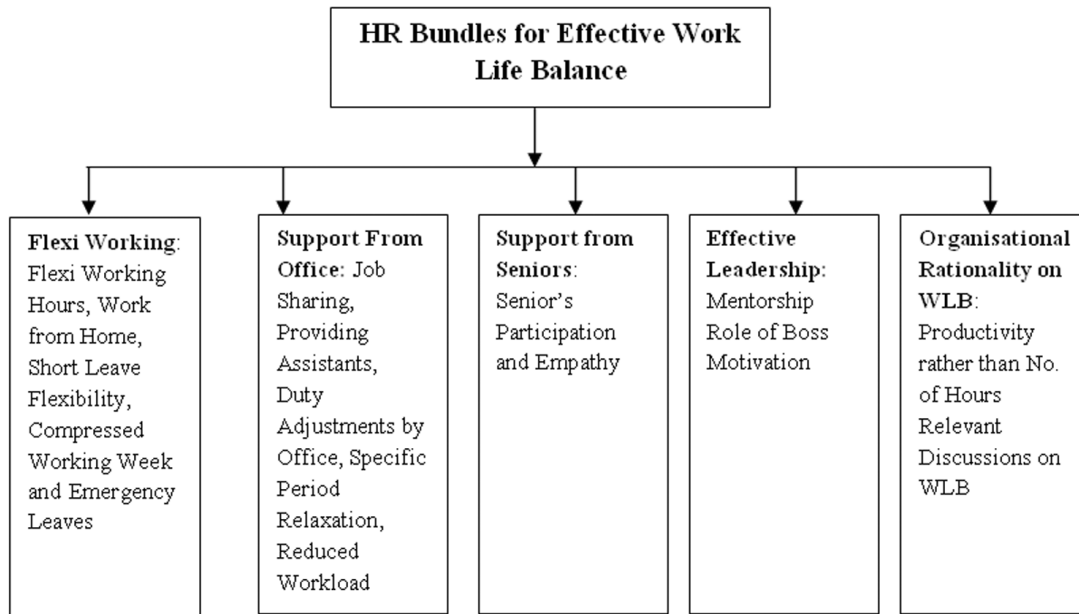
<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Challenges</i>	<i>Mean (Out of 5)</i>
1	Corporate Culture in India	4.33
2	Leadership/Boss Attitude	4.31
3	Job Profile itself	4.20
4	Office Politics	4.16
5	Top Management Attitude	
6	Lack of support by Colleagues	3.84
7	Individual Organization's Work Environment	3.51
8	Industry Job Environment (Manpower Supply and Demand)	3.42
9	Organizational Hierarchy	3.19
10	Organization's Brand	2.98
12	Age of the Organization	2.83

Table 6 shows that the biggest challenges in maintaining a strong work life balance are corporate culture in India, Leadership/ Boss Attitude, Job profile itself and office politics. These four variables have got a mean value more than five, hence may be considered as the most important variables. On the other hand, Organization's brand and age of organization are not the important variables as challenges in the way of effective work life balance as they have got the mean value below 2.83.

Findings and Conclusions

The present study finds the HR bundles in the form of organizational efforts for Work life balance. These bundles are Flexi Working, Support from Office, and Support from seniors, and Effective Leadership Organizational Rationality on WLB. Collectively these bundles make a comprehensive organizational environment which supports work life balance. The findings in the form of HR Bundles may be presented as the following diagram:

So far as the challenges are concerned, the organizations must review, revise and customize the corporate culture as per their needs. Role of leaders should not be like the role of a typical boss, rather it should be like a coordinator. Some of the Job profiles are very critical in an organization, and that is why the flexibility is less. Top management must motivate delegation and development of people as alternatives so that flexibility may be given to the key persons.



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