Chapter 6

Implications

6.1. Research Implications
6.2. Management Implications
The conceptualization of work-life balance in the present study has various implications for research and practices.

6.1. Research Implications

From theoretical perspective, important contribution made by this study is that it provides theoretical understanding about work and life interface from the prism of work-life balance. Work-life balance is framed as an individual construct. Although, previous research studies have measured either negativity or positivity between work and family domains, the present findings support the simultaneous occurrence of interference and enhancement and that too in a larger context of life rather than family only. Thus, a nineteen items scale that measured both interference and enhancement in both directions of work and life domain is developed and proved empirically valid and reliable.

Another contribution of this study is that it integrated the literature on antecedents of work and life domain and associated it with work-life balance. Past researches have not clearly distinguished between antecedent and measure (Reiter, 2007). The results of this study however distinguished between measure and antecedents. It also depicts the significant relationship of different antecedents of work and life with overall work-life balance.

The study also supports the contention that work-life balance is not culture neutral. While some work and life antecedents were found have universal inference, certain antecedents like superior’s support, extended family and domestic help and their association with work-life balance were found to be unique in the Indian context. The present study has also contributed to the existing literature by empirically proving that work-life balance is not gender neutral. The results of the study clearly establish that...
professional men and women differed significantly in their perception of work-life balance.

6.2. Management Implications

The results of the study have important implications for practitioners. The measure of work-life balance has substantial potential in providing organisations with employee perception of work-life balance that can be incorporated into progressive human resource practices. The present study illustrates that enhancement has positive influence on balance and interference negatively impacts balance. Thus, to ensure balance it is pertinent for organisations not only to make efforts towards reducing interference but to also develop strategies for increasing enhancement.

The results of work and life antecedents provide a framework for guiding organisations for framing multi-level interventions. Perceived support from superiors is related to enhancement. Superiors may possibly need training to polish skills in order to be empathetic towards the needs of the employees and also discretionary power to exhibit support to employees. Additionally, there may be the need to sensitize superiors towards employees especially women employees to facilitate their multi-role functioning. Reward system is another factor in this study that is positively associated with enhancement. Devising reward systems that meet the aspirations of employee while being sensitive to gender differences may prove to be an important step in the direction of improving enhancement.

Similarly, the antecedent of workload, work schedule and role stress are found to be instrumental in augmenting work interference. Designing jobs that have role clarity and ensuring employees were not overloaded with responsibilities would help in reducing ambiguity and work overload. A sound leader-member relationship based on mutual trust would ensure that the employees would be in a position to communicate openly
when they feel overburdened. Simply reducing working hours would not reduce work-load and may not lead to work-life balance. Instead flexible work options would increase employees’ sense of control over their work time thereby it may effectively reduce interference and stress. The antecedent of development has mixed results for men and women in the present study. In case of men, career advancement enhanced work-life balance while for women it proved to augment interference. In order to reduce the negativity attached with career advancement, organisations need to create an organisational culture that while accepting gender differences are more inclusive in meeting individual needs.

In addition to making focused efforts in reducing interference and amplifying enhancement through these antecedents, the present conceptualization of work-life balance also has strategic implications for human resource development. Work-life balance programmes such as flexible work arrangements, leave options and other wellness and support programs lead to better integration between work and life domains of the employees. Previous research has established that adoption of wide range of work-life balance policies and practices has the potential to generate positive outcomes not just for the employees but also for the organisations. Strong linkage exists between work-life balance programmes and organisational performance.

Availability of work-life programmes gives a positive indication to the employees that the organisation is concerned about their wellbeing. Perceived work-life balance support promotes job satisfaction, lowers work stress, reduces rates of absenteeism and had a negative impact on turnover rate. Work-life balance support not only retains resources in the organisation but also attracts resources with the purpose of building human capital. These programmes increase life satisfaction and well-being, which in turn leads to higher organisational performance and higher productivity. Thus, a judicious mix of various work-life balance interventions would lead to a win-win situation for both the employee and the organisation.