Chapter – 8

Summary and Conclusions
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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Work life balance refers to how people combine paid work with life’s other responsibilities. The work life balance is an issue that is important both to the organizations and to employees. This issue has come to the fore due to a multitude of changes in the work place, in employee demographics and in the family sphere. Global labour market is becoming highly competitive and companies are outsourcing to reduce labour costs. The employees are thus under a lot of pressures and feel compelled to put in longer hours of work to prove their worth and meet the expectations of the organizations. The ‘24/7 lifestyle’, dominates the lives, especially of highly educated and skilled professionals and managerial personnel. Advancement in technology has blurred the line between office and home, and with a laptop, employee is on call at virtual office 24 hours a day (Thane, 2002). As time spent at work is increasing steeply, quality time available for the family is shrinking. Moreover, the health of employees is also being affected. Further, women have joined the workforce in large numbers and are now performing a dual role i.e. of a breadwinner as well as a homemaker. This puts an extra pressure on them. In the family sphere changes like, nuclear families, single parent, dual earning parents, parents placed at different locations and increasing demands of household work further add to the problems. Yet another change is an increasing emphasis on leisure activities. Young persons like to travel, socialize, pursue
hobbies, take up adventure sports and thus demands on available time are increasing leading to frustration when not able to fulfill their interests and hobbies.

It is in this context that the notion of “work life balance” has assumed great importance. Issues related to work life balance constitute an area of human resource management where the employer’s twin goals of a productive organization and a highly motivated staff and the government’s dual policy objectives for a high value added, high employment economy and a fair and just society, confront each other (Joshi 2007).

8.1.1. Work Life Balance: Concept

Work life balance was initially conceived in terms of work family conflict. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work family conflict as: “A form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role.” Most researchers make the distinction between work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Work-to-family conflict occurs when experiences at work interfere with family life. Family-to-work conflict occurs when experiences in the family interfere with work life. However, workers' everyday experiences showed that work and family are both sources of growth and support as well as burdens and strains (Barnett, 1998; Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Crouter, 1984). This evidence suggested the possibility that work and family can benefit each other, and that work-family conflict is distinct from positive spillover or work-family enhancement (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000).
In the recent years, it is being realized that life involves multiple domains and is not restricted to the domains of work and family only. Warren (2004), for example, noted that over 170 different life domains have been identified in previous investigations. The major ones include domains of work, financial resources, leisure, dwelling and neighborhood, family, friendships, social participation and health. All these domains of life are closely related to each other. This means, that neglecting or inappropriately preferring one life area will have an impact on other areas. A broad term thus emerged in literature to refer to work/non-work conflict and it is “Work Life Balance” (Fisher, 2001; Hobson et al., 2001). It offers more inclusive approach to study work/non-work conflict compared to work family conflict.

8.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

salience to be a strong predictor of work family conflict for the women, but found it to be unrelated in case of men. Hyman et al. (2003) found that organizational pressures combined with lack of work centrality lead to conflict, thus causing imbalance.

Family related variables such as spouse support (Suchet and Barling, 1986; Aryee, 1992; Frone et al., 1997; Aryee et al., 1999(b); Grzywacz and Marks, 2000), spouse work hours (Loerch et al., 1989), couple’s employment status (Loerch et al., 1989; Kinnunen and Mauno, 2007), number of children (Pleck et al., 1980; Loerch et al., 1989), parental responsibilities (Aryee, 1992; Aryee et al., 1999(b); Frye and Breaugh, 2004), home responsibilities (Loerch et al., 1989; Aryee, 1992) have been studied in relation to work life balance/conflict. Both spouse support and parental demands have been found to be predictors of work family conflict.

Greenhaus et al. (1989), Voydanoff (2004), Butler et al. (2005) found task autonomy to be associated with work family conflict. Hammer et al. (1997) reported that higher levels of perceived work schedule flexibility were related to lower levels of work family conflict. Alam et al. (2009) found that respondents working for 5-7 hours a day did not consider working hours as a factor to affect work and family balance. On the other hand, women managers in corporate sector, having long working hours (9-10 hours a day) agreed that time was a crucial factor for work family imbalance.

A number of studies have reported the consequences which result from the lack of work life balance. It has been reported that lack of work life balance leads to strain (Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003; Duxbury, 2004), job dissatisfaction (Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003; Ezzedeen and Swiercz, 2002; Duxbury, 2004), less happiness and more
frequent burnout (Ezzedeen and Swiercz, 2002). It lowers the level of commitment and affects recruitment and retention issues (Duxbury, 2004).

8.3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to:

- study the relationship between each of the individual related variables (emotional intelligence, work centrality, age, gender and marital status); family related variables (household responsibility, spouse support and parental demands); work related variables (task variety, task autonomy and work schedule flexibility) and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry.

- examine the differences among IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of individual related variables, family related variables, and work related variables, on work life balance and its dimensions.

- study the nature of work life balance programmes provided to working professionals in organizations included in the study.

8.4 HYPOTHESES

On the basis of the review of literature the study was advanced on the following hypotheses:

- There will be significant correlation between each of the individual related variables (emotional intelligence, work centrality, age, gender and marital
status); family related variables (household responsibility, spouse support and parental demands); work related variables (task variety, task autonomy and work schedule flexibility) and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry.

- There will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of each of the individual related variables, family related variables, and work related variables, on work life balance and its dimensions.

### 8.5 SAMPLE

The sample for the study consisted of randomly selected 308 IT and ITES professionals from fourteen IT and ITES companies.

### 8.6 TOOLS USED

Nine scales were used to elicit the requisite information/data related to work life balance and individual, family and work related variables. Further, a checklist was used to get information regarding various work life programmes operational in the organizations. The various tools used were: Work life balance scale (Hayman, 2005); Emotional Intelligence scale (Hyde, Peth and Dhar, 2002); Work centrality scale (Paullay et al., 1994); Household responsibility index (Hyman et al., 2003); Spouse support scale (Suchet and Barling, 1986); Parental demands scale; Independence in your work scale: Dutch Questionnaire on the Experience and Assessment of Work (VBBA; Van Valdhoven and Meijman, 1994); Variety in your work scale: Dutch Questionnaire on the Experience and Assessment of Work (VBBA; Van Valdhoven
and Meijman, 1994); Work schedule flexibility scale (Staines and Pleck, 1986); and a Checklist.

### 8.7 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis) were computed to study the nature of distribution of scores on various variables of the study. Pearson product moment correlations between individual related variables; family related variables; work related variables and work life balance and its dimensions were calculated to ascertain the extent of relationship between these variables. For the variables of age, gender, marital status and parental demands (number of children), point biserial correlations were calculated.

One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to study the main effect of individual related variables, family related variables, work related variables on work life balance and its dimensions. Further, wherever F-values were found to be significant, t-test was applied. t-test was also used to study the differences in work life balance of IT and ITES professionals with respect to age, gender and marital status.

### 8.8 FINDINGS

The major findings of the study include the following:

#### 8.8.1 Individual Related Variables and Work Life Balance

- The scores on work life balance scale could range between 15 - 105. However, the scores of IT and ITES professionals on overall work life balance ranged between 48 and 105. The average work life balance of IT and ITES working
professionals was found to be 70.77 and median was found to be 70. 50% of the IT and ITES working professionals scored below the score of 70 and remaining scored above the score of 70. The results indicate that the mean work life balance of the professionals was above average.

- Emotional intelligence (EI) was found to be significantly positively correlated with the dimensions of personal life interference with work (PLIW, $r= .28$), work/ personal life enhancement (WPLE, $r= .26$) and with overall work life balance (WLB Total, $r= .25$). The results showed that higher the EI, higher is the work life balance and higher is the work/personal life enhancement and lesser is the interference of personal life with work and vice versa. Thus, hypothesis $H_{1a(i)}$ that “there will be significant correlation between the emotional intelligence and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” is accepted for the dimensions of personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of work interference with personal life.

- Significant differences were found among IT and ITES working professional with low, average and high emotional intelligence on the dimension of PLIW ($F=5.89$), WPLE ($F=8.88$) and on WLB Total ($F=3.56$). Professionals with high EI were found to have lesser personal life interference with work, higher work/ personal life enhancement and higher overall work life balance as compared to professionals with low EI. Again, professionals with average EI were found to have lesser interference of personal life with work and higher work/ personal
life enhancement than the professionals with low EI. Hypothesis $H_{Ia(ii)}$ that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of emotional intelligence on work life balance and its dimensions” is thus accepted for the dimensions of personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of work interference with personal life.

- Work centrality was found to have significant positive correlations with dimensions of WIPL ($r=0.11$), WPLE ($r=0.26$) and with WLB Total ($r=0.20$). The results indicate that higher the work centrality, lesser is the work interference with personal life, higher is the work/personal life enhancement and higher is the overall work life balance. Thus, hypothesis $H_{Ib(i)}$ that “there will be significant correlation between the work centrality and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” is accepted for the dimensions of work interference with personal life, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of personal life interference with work.

- Significant differences were observed among IT and ITES working professionals with varied levels of work centrality on the dimension of WPLE ($F=11.40$) and on WLB Total ($F=8.33$). The professionals with high work centrality were found to have higher work/personal life enhancement and higher overall work life balance as compared to the professionals with low work centrality and professionals with average work centrality. Hypothesis $H_{Ib(ii)}$ that
“there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of work centrality on work life balance and its dimensions” is therefore accepted for the dimensions of work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of work interference with personal life and personal life interference with work.

- No significant correlations were found between age and work life balance and its dimensions. Further t-test indicated that there were no significant differences between IT and ITES working professionals less than or equal to 25 years and 26-45 years of age, either on overall work life balance or on any of its dimensions. Hypotheses H_{1c(i)} that “there will be significant correlation between the age and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” and H_{1c(ii)} that “there will be significant differences between the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of age on work life balance and its dimensions” are thus rejected.

- Significant correlation was found between gender and the dimension of work interference in personal life ($r = -.13$). The t-test indicated that women showed more interference of work with personal life as compared to men. However, no differences were found between men and women on the dimensions of PLIW, WPLE and on WLB Total. Hence, hypotheses H_{1d(i)} that “there will be significant correlation between the gender and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” and H_{1d(ii)} that “there will be significant differences between the mean scores of male and
female IT and ITES working professionals on work life balance and its dimensions” are accepted for the dimension of work interference with personal life. However, H_{id(i)} and H_{id(ii)} are rejected for the dimensions of personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance.

- Correlations between marital status and work life balance and its dimensions were found to be insignificant. Further, no significant differences were found between the married and unmarried IT and ITES working professionals either on overall work life balance or on any of its dimensions. Both married and unmarried IT and ITES working professionals showed similar levels of work life balance. Hypotheses H_{le(i)} that “there will be significant correlation between the marital status and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” and H_{le(ii)} that “there will be significant differences between the mean scores of married and unmarried IT and ITES working professionals on work life balance and its dimensions” are thus rejected.

8.8.2 Family Related Variables and Work Life Balance

- The correlations between work life balance and its dimensions, and household responsibility were found to be insignificant. Further, the results of ANOVA indicated that there were no significant differences among IT and ITES working professionals with varied levels of household responsibility (i.e. high, average and low) either on overall work life balance or on any of its dimensions. Hypotheses H_{Fa(i)} that “there will be significant correlation between
the household responsibility and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” and $H_{Fa(ii)}$ that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of household responsibility on work life balance and its dimensions” are thus rejected.

• Spouse Support was found to be significantly positively correlated with the dimensions of PLIW ($r=.29$), WPLE ($r=.33$) and with WLB Total ($r=.24$) indicating that higher the spouse support, lesser is the personal life interference with work, higher is the work/personal life enhancement and higher is the overall work life balance. Hypothesis $H_{Fb(i)}$ that “there will be significant correlation between the spouse support and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” is therefore accepted for the dimensions of personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of work interference with personal life.

• IT and ITES working professionals with varied level of spouse support showed significant differences on the dimensions of PLIW ($F=6.20$), WPLE ($F=7.90$) and on WLB Total ($F=5.02$). The IT and ITES working professionals with high spouse support had lesser interference of personal life with work, higher work/personal life enhancement and higher overall work life balance than the IT and ITES working professionals with low spouse support. Again, these working professionals with high spouse support also had higher work/personal life enhancement and higher overall work life balance than the working
professionals with average spouse support. Hypothesis H_{fb(ii)} that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of spouse support on work life balance and its dimensions” is hence accepted for the dimensions of personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of work interference with personal life.

- No significant correlations were found between work life balance and its dimensions, and parental demands (number of children). Further, no significant differences were found among the IT and ITES working professionals with 0, 1 and 2 or more children, indicating that IT and ITES working professionals with varied number of children had similar levels of work life balance. Hypotheses H_{fc(i)} that “there will be significant correlation between the parental demands (in terms of number of children) and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” and H_{fc(ii)} that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of parental demands (in terms of number of children) on work life balance and its dimensions” are thus rejected.

- The correlation between work life balance, its dimensions and parental demands (in terms of responsibility of children) was found to be insignificant. Again no significant differences were found among the IT and ITES working professionals with high, average and low parental demands. All the groups were found to have similar work life balance. Hypotheses H_{fd(i)} that “there will
be significant correlation between the parental demands (in terms of responsibility of children) and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” and $H_{Fd(ii)}$ that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of parental demands (in terms of responsibility of children) on work life balance and its dimensions” are thus rejected.

8.8.3 Work Related Variables and Work Life Balance

- Task variety was found to be significantly positively correlated with the dimensions of WIPL ($r=.17$), PLIW ($r=.13$), WPLE ($r=.16$) and with WLB Total ($r=.21$), meaning thereby, that higher the task variety, lesser is the interference of work with personal life, lesser is the personal life interference with work, higher is the work/personal life enhancement and higher is the overall work life balance and vice versa. Hypothesis $H_{Wa(i)}$ that “there will be significant correlation between the task variety and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” is hence accepted.

- Significant differences were found among the IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of task variety on the dimensions of WIPL ($F=7.15$), PLIW ($F=3.72$), WPLE ($F=5.24$) and on WLB Total ($F=10.68$). The working professionals with high task variety were found to have lesser work interference with personal life, lesser personal life interference with work, higher work/personal life enhancement and higher overall work life balance as compared to professionals with average task variety and professionals with low
task variety. Hypothesis $H_{Wa(ii)}$ that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of task variety on work life balance and its dimensions” is thus accepted.

- Task autonomy was significantly positively correlated with all the three dimensions namely, WIPL ($r=.26$), PLIW ($r=.32$), WPLE ($r=.27$) and with WLB Total ($r=.38$) indicating that higher the task autonomy, lesser is the work interference with personal life, lesser is the personal life interference with work, higher is the work/personal life enhancement and higher is the overall work life balance. Hypothesis $H_{Wb(i)}$ that “there will be significant correlation between the task autonomy and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” is thus accepted.

- Significant differences were found among the IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of task autonomy on all the dimensions of work life balance, namely, WIPL ($F=9.57$), PLIW ($F=19.94$), WPLE ($F=22.38$) and on WLB Total ($F=29.11$). Professionals with high task autonomy had lesser interference of work with personal life, lesser interference of personal life with work, higher work/personal life enhancement and higher overall work life balance than the professionals with low task autonomy and professionals with average task autonomy. Again, professionals with average autonomy showed lesser interference of work with personal life, lesser interference of personal life with work and higher overall work life balance than the professionals with low task autonomy. Hypothesis $H_{Wb(ii)}$ that “there will be significant differences
among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of task autonomy on work life balance and its dimensions” is hence accepted.

- Work schedule flexibility was significantly positively correlated with the dimensions of WIPL (r=.15), WPLE (r=.17) and with WLB Total (r=.17). The results indicated that higher the work schedule flexibility, lesser is the work interference in personal life, higher is the work/personal life enhancement and higher is the overall work life balance. Hypothesis H_{Wc(i)} that “there will be significant correlation between the work schedule flexibility and work life balance (including its dimensions) of working professionals in IT and ITES industry” is thus accepted for the dimensions of work interference with personal life, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of personal life interference in work.

- IT and ITES working professionals with high, average and low work schedule flexibility, showed significant differences on the dimensions of WIPL (F=3.37), WPLE (F=4.40) and on WLB Total (F=4.03). Working professionals with high work schedule flexibility showed lesser work interference with personal life, higher work/personal life enhancement and higher overall work life balance as compared to IT and ITES working professionals with low work schedule flexibility. The professionals with high work schedule flexibility also showed higher work/personal life enhancement than professionals with average work schedule flexibility. Hypothesis H_{Wc(ii)} that “there will be significant differences among the mean scores of IT and ITES working professionals at varied levels of work schedule flexibility on work life balance and its dimensions” is thus
accepted for the dimensions of work interference with personal life, work/personal life enhancement and for overall work life balance. However, it is rejected for the dimension of personal life interference with work.

8.8.4 Work Life Programmes

- Flexible leave arrangements, flexi time, employee wellness programmes and employee assistance programmes, are the main work life balance programmes / provisions being made available by the IT and ITES organizations.

8.9 SUGGESTIONS

- Training programmes should be organized to enhance emotional intelligence of IT and ITES professionals, which will in turn improve their work life balance and enable them to contribute more productively to their organizations. Training should be given in self awareness, self management, empathy and interpersonal effectiveness. Employees should be made to understand the role of emotions at the workplace. Activities should be designed to help the employees become aware of their feelings at any point of time. Through various exercises, the employees should be made to explore/evaluate their emotional response patterns and identify the changes they need to make. Training should also focus on developing the skill of understanding other’s emotions and improving interpersonal relations.

- During the recruitment process, weightage should be given to work centrality as it has been found to be significantly positively related to work life balance.
Individuals having work as their central life interest should be preferred over others.

- IT and ITES professionals who have work as their central life interest and perform better than others need to be recognized and rewarded to motivate IT and ITES professionals to accord more importance and priority to the work in their lives.

- Both work flexibility and autonomy has been found to be significantly positively related to work life balance, and professionals with higher levels of flexibility and autonomy showed higher levels of work life balance. Thus there is a need to provide greater work flexibility and autonomy to IT and ITES professionals in general and to female professionals in particular, to enhance the work life balance and minimize the work interference in personal life as perceived by female professionals.

- Greater task variety should be provided to IT & ITES professionals by assigning non routine and non repetitive task, job rotation or job enlargement, as well as involving the professionals in creative problem solving.

- IT and ITES professionals with higher level of spouse support showed higher levels of work life balance. The organizations, though cannot directly increase spouse support, but can provide facility of day care centres/crèches for children, organize get together for spouses of employees to sensitize them towards the nature and importance of work being performed by their counterparts and this in
turn may help them to develop more favourable attitude towards the career of their spouses.

- IT and ITES industry should provide for a variety of work life balance programmes in order to meet diverse needs of IT and ITES professionals. The professionals need to be oriented towards the various work life balance programmes being offered by the organization so as to motivate them to take benefit of the programmes. The responsibility of creating awareness may be entrusted to the human resource department of the organization.

8.10 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- The sample for the study was selected from fourteen IT and ITES companies in NCR and Chandigarh region. Study can be replicated in large number of IT and ITES companies (large, medium and small scale) across the country involving employees working at varied levels.

- The study can also be replicated for other industries.

- A comparative study of work life balance of employees working in different industries can be undertaken.

- Impact of work life balance programmes on employees and organizations can be studied.

- A comprehensive study of both antecedents and consequences of work life balance can be undertaken.