

Work-Life Balance: The Role of Stress and Consequences for Employee and Employer

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Abstract—

In the today's competitive world, the work-life balance and stress management for employees are becomes highly important. If there is no job satisfaction and regularity in life, it can create many problems to employees. The work stress has become a common problem which is faced by employees of every organization. Both work-life balance and stress go hand in hand. The employees should balance the personal and professional lives and the policies at work place should support to achieve this goal. This paper focuses on the role of stress and the consequences for both employee and employer. For successful balance of work-life balance of employees, the employer needs to frame policies that would reduce the work load of employee without affecting the productivity of the organization.

Keywords— Work-life balance, Stress, Productivity, Performance, Organisation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Work-life balance is a state of balance between personal and professional life. The stress and work-life balance are inter connected. The root cause of stress is the work-life imbalance. The demand of both personal life and professional life leads to stress. Work determines a person's worthiness and place in the community. It influences one's mental identity and sense of well being. The paid work establishes one in the community and gives the purpose to existence. The satisfaction of human needs and desires can be achieved by one's work. It is apparent that work needs to be satisfied for a mutual benefit of employee and employer.

Work-life balance and stress management has become very important factor for both employee and employer. Each role, personal or professional, has different set of demands. When the demands of roles overlap, multiple problems are faced by the employee and lead to stress. The potential cause of stress is that any event in life which is threatening, difficult to cope with or causes excessive problem. In reality, the paid and non-paid work develops, interacts and facilitates stress. Stress leads to a problem that reduces productivity of the organization and morale of the employee. On the other hand, the dissatisfaction in job causes heavy stress and work-life imbalance.

II. WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND STRESS

Employees are the greatest resource of an organization. The success of the organization remains in attracting and retaining the right people. Loyal employees are important for each and every employer. Many researchers have exposed that there is a significant cost to employer and employee when the stress is not properly addressed. According to Hanes (2002), stress is condition of physical or mental strain or physical/emotional wear and tear that can be result of a real or perceived threat. While an overstressed condition can have negative impact on employee, in some cases stress will result in higher performance if the stress is handled properly.

The outcome of the research on extra organizational stress is the work-life imbalance. The work-life imbalance is a form of inter role conflicts where fulfilment of work obligations interfere with family responsibilities. The inter role conflicts can be classified as below.

1. Time-based conflict – time devoted to each role.
2. Strain-based conflicts – strain originating from one role affecting the expectations of another role.
3. Behaviour-based – the pattern of behaviour required for one may not match with characteristics of another role.

The work-life imbalance occurs when the responsibilities of personal life interferes with the responsibilities of professional life or vice versa. The conflict between these two different domain responsibilities leads to stress in one's life. The stress may be of different types as given below.

1. Physical stress
2. Behavioural stress
3. Emotional stress
4. Mental stress.

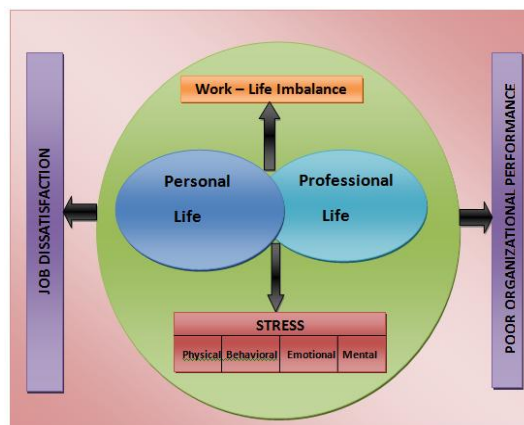


Fig .1 Consequences of Work-Life Imbalance and Stress

The consequences of the stress lead to job dissatisfaction among the employees which in turn affects the performance of the organization. Work-life imbalance and stress of employee at last affects the success of the organization. The clash between domestic duties and personal commitments has an impact on the career of an employee and performance of the organization.

III. THE EMPLOYEE, EMPLOYER AND THE STRESS

Stress is one of the most important factors that affect the performance of the organization which is operating in a highly competitive world. Stress is concept that incorporates the interaction of environment and the individual. According to Gok. O (2002), the organizational stress is belonging to the working environment and negative or stressful situation. Always, people have an obligation to co-ordinate their efforts to realize their personal objectives and to reach their professional targets. For this, employees have to accomplish more than they can do on their own. The interaction of many factors related to the individual with group, they belongs to, affects the employer in turn. Organizational stress is due to overlapping of resistance from the employees and their capacities. The recent studies show that the most of the absenteeism is due to stress in the work place. The employees and employers should have a comfortable conversation about positive and negative situations. The comfortable conversation can reduce the problems at work place and influence them to tackle stressful situation. Without clear communication among employees, it is impossible to reach the goals of their performance. This leads to a problem to employee because they cannot understand what employer wants.

On the other hand, the employer also become stress because of the expectation of employee performance is not match with their expectations. The pressures of the working life and personal life can lead to the situation of stress. According to various studies, it is obvious that such situation affects the employee's health both physiologically and psychologically. Hence, it is important for employees to maintain a healthy balance between paid work and their private lives with less stress and high job satisfaction. In turn, the employer should design a appropriate policies for employees to take care work-life balance and stress of an employee.

IV. RESULTS OF STRESS

The high level of employee's stress leads to various issues such as psychological, physiological, and behavioural damages on employee. It negatively affects the physical and mental unity of employees and reduces their performance. The employee may experience difficult decision making situation and behavioural instability. The results of the stress can be classified as below.

1. Individual Results of stress
2. Organizational Results of stress

1. Individual Results of stress:

- a) Physiological Results: Heart diseases, cancer, diabetes, lung and skin diseases, headaches, backaches are observed.
- b) Psychological Results: Family issues, depression, psychological disorders, sleeplessness, burnout are observed.
- c) Behavioural Results: Smoking, making accidents, alcohol, violence, poor attention is observed.

2. Organizational Results of stress:

According to Babatunde (2013), stress is becoming an increasingly important apprehension for the companies since it can be resulted in vital economic implications for the organizations. Stress causes a decrease in employee

efficiency and result in lesser productivity. Increasing rate of occupational accidents, physiological and psychological problems are experienced by employees due to stress. Stress may cause loss of quality work force which in turn leads to additional cost to the organization. Due to stress, the employees are demotivated and they start to experience health problems which may cause following problems to the organization.

1. Performance Loss
2. Employees turn over
3. Absenteeism and
4. Alienations in the organization.

V. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK – LIFE BALANCE AND STRESS

Work-Life Balance is almost adjusting work patterns to complete overall performance. A good work-life balance enables the employer to succeed. It enables the employees to easily combine work with other and responsibilities. The consequences of work-family conflicts have a link with work-life balance and stress. The consequences of personal and professional life conflicts affect the job satisfaction, absence and performance. When the paid work and un-paid work are analysed, it is evident that the presence of stress in the organization. It is not possible to get a complete stress profile by examining only at source of stress in the work place. Low performance and job accidents are consequences of job stress. The presence of work-life conflicts could generate the same results like job stress. The employers who expects for a high performance should make every efforts for framing policies and practices that balance their unfavourable effects of outside work. According to Leontaridi and Ward (2002), stress has negative impacts on the employee and employer. Work-life balance programs are much contributing to reduce the conflicts of paid work and family duties. Many organizations are taking much effort to formulate different strategies that will helpful to maintain the proper work-life balance thereby reducing the stress.

VI. CONCLUSION

The importance of stress among employees has been increasing over last few decades. It has important implication for both employee and employer. The stress affects the outcome of the organization; it is become an extremely important. It is a prime responsibility of an employee to balance personal and professional life and have to take necessary steps to reduce and burnout. Organizations can indeed facilitate this process. The employee has to explore his values, aspirations and goals to understand the expectation from work and life and then develop the suitable ways of balancing paid work and life. On the other hand, the organization can take necessary steps for essential work-life practices to help the employees to manage their affairs more efficiently. Organizations can also train employees to understand the impacts of work-life and stress management programs. It is the responsibility of both employer and employee to contribute to the better work-life balance and stress free life.

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