



Impact of work-life enrichment on organisational commitment and stress experiences: Mediating role of work-life balance

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Abstract

This study investigates the impacts of the work-life enrichment (WLE) on individual outcomes like organisational commitment and stress among a sample of 180 employees from IT industries in Kerala. The results of data analysis support the stated hypotheses. Multiple regression analysis has indicated that work-life enrichment have significant influence on organizational commitment and stress. Work-Life Balance has been found to full mediating effect on the relationship between work-life enrichment and employees' individual outcomes. Directions for future research are provided.

Keywords: work-life enrichment, work-life balance, organizational commitment, stress

1. Introduction

Today, Work-Life Balance has become increasingly pervasive for employees and employers in an organization. When there is a right balance between work and life the employees tend to put in their best efforts at work as their families are happy. Over the coming decade the executives and HR professionals are expected to manage issues relating to work life balance amongst the employees.

With the changing socio-cultural environment and increasing educational opportunities, women are aware of their potential to develop their skills. India has the largest number of working women in any single country in the world, which can be partly attributed to the growth of the IT industry. "Out of the 400 million workforces in India, around 30-35 % are female and only one-fifth of these women work in the urban areas" (The Economic Times, 2009). Women's participation in the IT workforce is seen as a critical enabling factor for the continued growth of the industry.

Today's professional women who are ambitious are continually challenged by the demands of the full time work and they carry more of the responsibilities and commitments at home. However work and family roles may be mutually beneficial due to the spillover or transfer of positive experiences from one role to the other (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) [8].

Work-Life Researchers view Work-Life Balance in two different views, that is Work-Life Balance is entirely distinct construct from Work-Life Conflict and Work-life Enrichment (Greenhaus & Allen 2011; Greenhaus *et al.* 2012; Wayne *et al.* 2004) [11, 30] and the other view is treating Work-Life Balance is a combination of both Work-Life Conflict and Work-life Enrichment (Grzywacz and Carlson 2007; Aryee *et al.* 2005) [5, 16, 1, 6].

We aim to contribute to WLB research at solidifying the concept of WLB by examining its relationship with two individual outcomes: Organizational commitment and stress experiences.

The present study was intended to address these needs in the work-life literature. Firstly, we contribute to establish Work Life Balance as a solid construct that sheds light on major individual outcomes; secondly, we measure Work Life Enrichment, Work Life Balance, Stress & Organizational Commitment for women employees; thirdly, examine the impact of work life enrichment on individual outcomes such as stress and organizational commitment and finally check whether work life balance mediates between Work Life Enrichment and Individual outcomes such as stress and organizational commitment

2. Theoretical and empirical backgrounds

Despite frequent attention in the scholarly literature, the meaning of work-family balance is elusive because the concept is often not formally defined and different scholars conceptualize balance in different ways. After reviewing a variety of perspectives on work-family balance (e.g., low work-family conflict, equal involvement in the work and family domains), Greenhaus and Allen (2011) [11] concluded that employees experience feelings of work-family balance when they are effective and satisfied in those parts of their lives that are salient to them. As a result, factors that promote effectiveness and satisfaction in the work and family domains enhance feelings of balance. Therefore, Greenhaus and Allen (2011) [11] viewed work-life enrichment as an antecedent to work-family balance.

This research is based on a few empirical and theoretical foundations. The first foundation is based on the review conducted by Greenhaus and Allen (2011) [11] and Greenhaus *et al.* (2012), who empirically tested and proved that Work Life Enrichment is related to Work Life Balance. The second foundation is based on the study by (Wayne, Allen, Mathews, & Casper, 2013) [29], which supports the link between Work Life Enrichment and employee commitment. The third foundation of this research is based on the role balance theory, which suggests that individuals who handle all the role

expectations (work or family) with even-handed alertness produce beneficial consequences, both in work and life (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). This study theorize that Work Life Balance could be a mediating construct to test the effect of Work Life Enrichment on individual outcomes like stress and organizational commitment. Recently, Haar (2013) [17] used the role balance theory to link various individual outcomes through Work Life Balance. Based on these theories and empirical support, a mediation model on Work Life balance for testing in the Indian context was developed.

Work Life Enrichment, Work Life Balance and outcomes

In this empirical work, we have attempted to link Work Life Balance with Work Life Balance, because very little research has been carried out in this domain. Traditionally, researchers on Work Life Balance have assumed that Work Life Conflict and Enrichment are equivalent to Work Life Balance (Odle-Dusseau, Britt, & Bobko, 2011; Post, DiTomaso, Farris, & Cordero, 2009). Carlson *et al.* (2009) [7] and Greenhaus *et al.* (2012) recently established that these constructs are distinct and there exists a positive relationship between Work Life Enrichment and Work Life Balance. A female worker who experiences Work-Life Enrichment is more likely to be a productive employee and may experience less occupational stress, more job satisfaction, commitment and engagement (Van Aarde & Mostert, 2008; Mostert *et al.*, 2006; Franks *et al.*, 2006; Montgomery *et al.*, 2003) [27, 22, 21, 10]. The relationship between work stress and family stress are weaker for individuals who have more satisfying, high quality work experience. (Barnet, Marshall & Sayer, 1992; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999; Barnet, Marshall & Pleck, 1992) [3, 15]. Therefore it is hypothesised that Work-Life Enrichment is negatively related to stress.

Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) comprehensive theoretical framework of work-family enrichment draws upon previous work by Sieber (1974) and Marks (1977). Work-to-family enrichment represents "the extent to which individuals can apply resources gained in the work domain to their family roles, thereby helping them be better family members." (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006) (Wayne, Allen, Mathews, & Casper, 2013) [29, 6] in their study suggest that Family –Supportive Organisation Perception was positively related to employee work-to-family enrichment, which was positively associated with employee commitment. (Odle Dusseau *et al* 2012) [23] in the study noted a positive relationship between Work Life Enrichment and Organizational Commitment. (Bhargava and Baral 2009) [4], (Carlson, Zivnuska, & Grywacz, 2009) [7] found positive relationship between Family Work Enrichment and Organizational commitment. (Aryee and colleagues 2005) [1] reported that greater work-to-life facilitation or enrichment was associated with greater organizational commitment and job satisfaction. It is hypothesized as Work-Life Enrichment is positively related to organizational commitment.

(Carlson, Zivnuska, & Grywacz, 2009) [7] did consider balance as being additional construct beyond conflict and enrichment, although their conceptualization of balance and the focus on family differ from the approach undertaken here. Work-life balance is defined as people's overall appraisal of their effectiveness and satisfaction with work and family life

(Greenhaus & Allen, 2011) [11]. Work-Life Balance, employees perceiving greater balance among their multiple roles will enjoy additional positive benefits beyond the influences of conflict and enrichment. Cultivating this attitudinal flexibility allows individuals to reduce strain by alleviating the stress involved in worrying about one role while performing another, and allows us to engage in and enjoy whatever role-related task being performed at any given moment (Carlson, Zivnuska, & Grywacz, 2009) [7]. (Haar, 2013) [17] provides strong empirical support for the benefits of work–life balance (WLB) as a mediator. Based on these assumptions and literature, we expect that Work Life Balance may mediate the relationship between Work-Life Enrichment and individual outcomes like stress and organisational commitment. It is hypothesised that Work-Life Balance mediates the relationship between Work-Life Enrichment and individual outcomes (stress and organisational commitment).

3. Method

3.1 Samples and procedures

The participants in the study were female (n=180). A total of 115 of the participants was married, 65 were single. Participants were invited to complete a questionnaire through distribution at their company premises. The sampling method used for the study is purposive sampling because the researcher could not get the list of women employees in IT companies and hence the sample was selected based on the researchers' judgment.

3.2 Measures

Work Life Balance

Work–family balance was measured with a 6-item scale developed by Carlson *et al* (2009) (e.g., 'I am able to negotiate and accomplish what is expected of me at work and in my family.'; 'I do a good job of meeting the role expectations of critical people in my work and family life.'). Cronbach's alpha value is .891. The six items represent the definition developed by Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) [5, 16, 7] of work– family balance that refers to the extent to which an individual is meeting negotiated role-related expectations in both the work and family domains.

Work life Enrichment

We used the 18-item work–Life enrichment scale developed by Carlson *et al.* (2006) [6]. This scale consists of nine items measuring the work to life direction of enrichment and nine items measuring the life to work direction of enrichment An example items were, 'My involvement in my work helps me to acquire skills and this helps me to be a better family member.' 'My involvement in my family puts me in a good mood and this helps me be a better worker.' Cronbach's alpha values of this scale is .924.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational Commitment was measured with nine-item scale of organizational commitment designed by Balfour and Wechsler (1996). An example item for this scale is, 'I am quite proud to be able to tell people who it is that I work for.' Cronbach's alpha values of this scale was .701.

Stress

12 items for measuring Stress was based on the General role stress scale Pareek U. (2002). An example item for this scale is ‘I am not able to do many things for which I have a great liking.’ Cronbach’s alpha values of this scale was .84

All question items for Work-Life Enrichment, Work-Life Balance, Organizational Commitment and Stress were scored on a five point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). These constructs were measured as reflective latent variables.

4. Results

Prior to PLS model estimation, it is important to perform a series of analyses. Firstly, construct reliabilities were evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha (α) and composite reliability coefficients. The results, as shown in Table 1, indicated that all coefficients exceeded 0.7 as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981) [9]. Next, the test for

discriminant validity was performed using average variance extracted (AVE). As recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981) [9], the square root of the AVE of each construct must be greater than other correlations involving that construct in order for discriminant validity to exist. The results were also satisfactory.

Table 1: Construct reliability indicators.

	WLE	WLB	Stress	OC
Composite reliability	0.935	0.919	0.876	0.792
Cronbach’s alpha (α)	0.924	0.891	0.841	0.701

Note: WLE=Work-Life Enrichment, WLB=Work-Life Balance, OC=Organizational Commitment

Table 2 reports correlations among variables as well as reliability and discriminant validity indicators of latent variables.

Table 2: Correlations among latent variable with sq.rts of AVEs.

	WLE	WLB	STRESS	OC
WLE	(0.693)			
WLB	0.689	(0.810)		
STRESS	-0.598	-0.388	(0.642)	
OC	0.539	0.477	-0.685	(0.625)

Note: Square roots of Average Variances extracted (AVEs) shown as a diagonal

Results from the PLS analysis is presented in Fig. 1. Given the statistical methods outlined above, the five hypotheses either met or did not meet the criteria for statistical significance as described below. To summarize quickly, hypotheses 1–5 showed significant relationships. The details are as follows:

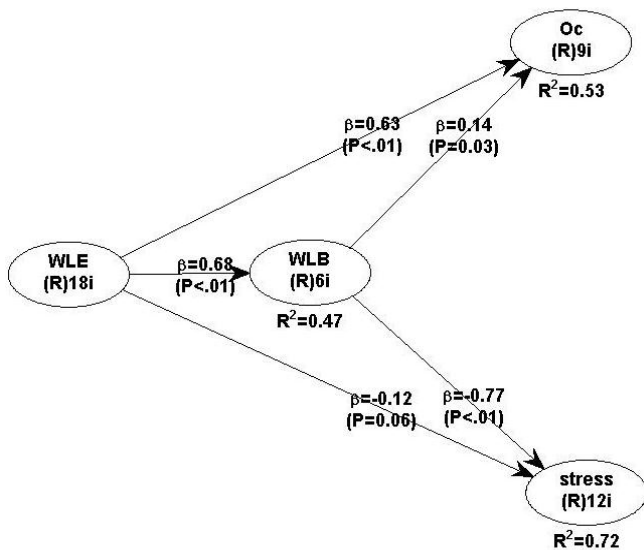


Fig 1: Results from PLS analysis

- Hypothesis 1 predicted a negative link between Work-Life Enrichment and stress. The result revealed a negative and not significant relationship between them ($\beta = -0.12$; $p = 0.06$). Thus, hypothesis 1 is not supported.
- Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive link between Work-Life Enrichment and organizational commitment. The result

indicated a positive and significant relationship between them ($\beta = 0.63$; $p < .01$). Thus, hypothesis 2 is supported.

- Hypothesis 3 predicted Work Life Balance is negatively related to stress. The result indicated a negative and significant relationship between them ($\beta = -0.77$; $p < .01$). Thus, hypothesis 3 is supported.
- Hypothesis 4 predicted a positive association between Work Life Balance and organizational commitment. The analysis showed that their relationship is positive and significant ($\beta = .14$; $p < .05$). Thus, hypothesis 4 is supported.
- Hypothesis 5 (a) predicted an indirect relationship between work-Life enrichment and organizational commitment as mediated by the variable of Work-Life Balance. In order to test the mediating effect, the method suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) was performed in Warp PLS 5.0. The analysis shows a positive and significant result ($\beta = .11$). This finding confirms the mediating effect of work-life balance on the positive link between work-life enrichment and organizational commitment. Therefore, hypothesis 5 (a) is supported.
- Hypothesis 5 (b) predicted an indirect relationship between work-Life enrichment and stress as mediated by the variable of Work-Life Balance. The analysis shows an indirect relationship between work-life enrichment and stress ($\beta = -0.523$). This finding strongly supports the mediating effect of work-life balance on the negative link between work-life enrichment and stress. Therefore, hypothesis 5 (b) supported.

Overall, these results provide additional evidence that experiences with work-life enrichment with both organizational commitment and stress experiences. The

Present study shows a partial mediation (Work Life Enrichment → Work Life Balance → organizational commitment) with $\beta = 0.11$ and full mediation (Work Life Enrichment → organizational commitment) with $\beta = 0.14$. The results show that there is only partial mediation (Work Life Enrichment → Work Life Balance → Stress) with $\beta = -0.52$ and the result shows that there is no full mediation (Work Life Enrichment → Stress) because there is no direct effect only indirect effect.

5. Discussion

This study augments to the growing literature on Work Life Balance. Additionally, the study also showed the direct effect of Work Life Enrichment on Work Life Balance and indirect effect on Organizational Commitment through a mediating process and indirect effect of Work Life Enrichment on Stress. Our results also explained the association of Work life Enrichment on Organizational Commitment. In particular, the indirect effect of Work Life Enrichment of Organizational Commitment through Work-Life Balance was substantially stronger. Overall, there exists a strong support for Work Life Balance influencing Organizational Commitment (Carlson *et al.*, 2009; Haar, 2013) ^[17, 7]. At the same time direct effect of Work Life Enrichment of stress was lesser, and study results in the indirect effects of Work Life Enrichment of Stress through Work Life Balance that means there need a Work Life Balance than resources for an individual to reduce the effect of stress in their life.

The findings have also supported the direct effect of Work Life Balance on Organizational commitment and stress. A balanced work and Life role positively enhance Commitment to the organization and reduce the stress on the individual. Additionally, in the partial and full mediational models, shows that Work Life Balance makes a relatively higher contribution to stress than organizational commitment. Therefore, balanced work and life are equally important for individuals.

This study gives emphasize on the importance of ensuring Work Life Balance in individuals when there is Work Life Balance there is a low stress among the individuals. In this study, since the data were collected through self-reporting, there was a possibility of common method bias. The common method bias was tested by the single-factor (Harman's) test. However, common method bias is not a serious concern and it may not inflate the relationship among the constructs (Spector, 2006) ^[25]. This study lays the foundation for specific future research. First, the present research work has proved the relationship between Work-Life Enrichment and Work Life Balance and has provided evidence to establish that these two constructs are distinct. Future studies are required to test this effect with different samples. Second, through mediation analysis, the effect of Work-Life Enrichment on Stress through Work Life Balance was partially supported. Further frameworks may be required to use both the directions of Work-Life Enrichment to test this effect (Jaga & Bagraim, 2011) ^[18].

6. Limitations and recommendations

The present study is not without its limitations. This is a cross sectional study which means data was gathered at one point of

time. It is therefore recommended that a longitudinal research designs are used in future research. Another limitation is the study was done on a homogenous sample consisting of women. This study only includes women employees as samples, future researchers can investigate the work life enrichment phenomenon amongst the sample of male employees as well. In the past it has indeed been found that men and women experience different relationships between their work and family domains (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999) ^[15]. Men may also experience work-family enrichment differently, as their household situation differs from than that of women.

7. Conclusion

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, this study have provided key insights to the existing work-life literature. The study linked Work Life Enrichment with Work Life Balance by considering that the two constructs are distinct. The study also provided sufficient evidence for the partial mediating effect through Work Life Balance. Finally, this study on work life balance will help women employees to reduce the stress that they experience and make them committed to their work by extending the benefits gained from one role to the other role. The study can help employers to retain the IT women employees by providing them better work life balance which in turn would help companies to have more women managers.

8. References

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