

Emotional Intelligence and Work Life Balance of Employees in the Information Technology Industry

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence is a set of qualities and competencies that captures a broad collection of individual skills and dispositions, usually referred to as soft skills or inter and intra-personal skills, that are outside the traditional areas of specific knowledge, general intelligence, and technical or professional skills. Emotions are an intrinsic part of our biological makeup, and every morning they march into the office with us and influence our behaviour.

Emotional intelligence consists of five factors: Knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating one, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships Goleman [1]. Researchers today are interested in finding the effects of emotional intelligence on employees and thereby, organizations, and analyzing the various other facets of EQ. Emotional intelligence improves individual and organizational performance. It plays a significant role in the kind of work an employee produces, and the relationship he or she enjoys in the organization.

Work-Life Balance is a challenging issue for IT leaders, managers and has also attracted the attention of researchers. Work/life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life. In this climate managing the boundary between home and work is becoming more challenging. Organizations need to ensure they not just encourage but mandate a practical and workable work/life balance policy, benefiting and meeting the needs of both the organization and its employees. Organizations not providing real opportunity for employees work/life balance are opening themselves up to increasing numbers of dissatisfied and unproductive employees and hence increased attrition rates. Merely creating a work/life policy framework is not enough; fostering an organizational culture that supports the use of available policies is also of great importance. Further there is a need for employers and employees alike to find flexible and innovative solutions that maximize productivity without damaging employee's well-being, their family relationships and other aspects of life. This study is an attempt to contribute afresh with a new perspective to the field of human resources and behavioural sciences with special reference to emotional intelligence in relation of employees work-life balance in IT organizations. It is also an earnest attempt to bridge the gap especially in this area by highlighting the relevance and importance of work-life balance and emotional intelligence to leadership, senior management, individual and organizations and hoping this study will initiate a series of serious and productive discussion on the subject. The findings and outcome of this research will be beneficial to the IT organizations in India, which is a flourishing industry and contributes significantly to the GDP of the country and the talent pool of the world. The study will bring in sharp focus the major challenges encountered in these areas and the solutions that will aid IT organizations to deal more significantly in increasingly their effectiveness. The review on the related literature in the area of emotional intelligence and work-life balance studied in this research has provided the researcher an insight into many factors. It also provides direction in designing the present study. Having reviewed several studies and having identified the gap, the investigator felt an imperative need to undertake the present investigation.

This term paper is through light on impact of emotional intelligence on performance of employees and the next objective is to know how to become an EI organization. Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions. Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while other claim it is an inborn characteristic. To do the research thoroughly, review of literature is being taken with twenty articles. Through this study, it is concluded that emotional intelligence has greater impact on performance of employees. Secondly an emotionally intelligent organization is based on an organisational strategy to improve business performance.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; Work life; Employees; Information technology; EI organization

Research Goals

Studying the role of Emotional Intelligence in managing Role Conflict and enhancing Quality of Work Life and happiness among IT Professionals.

General Goal

Studying the contribution of Emotional Intelligence in the total effectiveness of employees.

Specific Goals

- Study of the relation between Emotional Intelligence and Work

Interfering Family Role Conflict among IT professionals

- Study of the relation between Emotional Intelligence and

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- Family Interfering Work Role Conflict among IT professionals
- Study of the relation between Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Work Life among IT professionals
- Study of the relation between Emotional Intelligence and Happiness among IT professionals

Scope of Study

Each and every project study along with its certain objectives also has scope for future. And this scope in future gives to new researches a new need to research a new project with a new scope. Scope of the study could give the projected scenario for a new successful strategy with a proper implementation plan. Whatever scope we observed in our project is this study will be helpful to know the relation between the emotional intelligence and performance on the employees.

The scope for the organization whose employees, if they are lacking in their performance due to low level of emotional intelligence, they can help them to increase their emotional intelligence. Scope of study will can be helpful in future why some employees are outstanding performers while others are not. On the basis of these results an organization can choose a strategy and actions to improve the performance of their employees. It can give a new dimension in the future to conduct such research on the employees of other sector also The study of data is purely based on secondary data. To get proper understanding about this concept.

Need

In this day and age the Economy is always growing, business volumes rising. We live in a World where competition is always present and confrontations and battles at a business level are all around us. Therefore management theories develop models on “the rivalry of a company based on its human resources”, with the argument that a company can achieve competitive advantages through creation and protection that increases distinctive value. In this environment managers begin to conclude that the motto is “not knowing how to do it, but yes increasing its value”.

It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions and emotional knowledge and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

Understanding yourself, your goals, intentions, responses, behaviour and all.

Understanding others, and their feelings.

Emotional Intelligence helps the employees to increase their emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, creativity, increase tolerance, increase trust and integrity, improve relations within and across the organization and thereby increase the performance of each employee and the organization as a whole. “Emotional intelligence is one of the few key characteristics that give rise to strategic leaders in organizations”

At a microcosmic level, EI will produce an employee who will know his a capability, his job, has an outlook in the future, and is confident of a well-thought action. This will be more valuable than the action of an employee with high IQ and good knowledge, but low EI. This is where; emotional intelligence plays a significant role in the organization and becomes an important criterion of evaluation for judgment of an ‘effective’ employee. At a macrocosmic level, EI increases productivity and trust within and across the organization.

Research Hypotheses

- First Hypothesis: Higher the EI, lesser will be the WIF conflict among IT employees.
- Second Hypothesis: Higher the EI, lesser will be the FIW conflict among IT employees.
- Third Hypothesis: Higher the EI better will be the QWL of the IT employees.
- Fourth Hypothesis: Higher the EI, greater will be the perceived level of Happiness among IT employees.

Research model

The Research model is shown in Figure 1.

Research variables

The Research variables are given in Table 1.

Research Variables’ definitions

Emotional intelligence: Emotional Intelligence is the ability to become aware of even subtle changes in one’s and others’ emotional tones and to control them, to keep calm in the midst of pressure, to initiate and maintain healthy relationships with others, and to maintain an optimistic outlook towards life.

Work family role conflict: Work Family Role Conflict is an unpleasant experience whereby the person concerned feels that the demands placed on him/her by the two very important domains of his/ her life work and family are incompatible with each other to such an extent that a proper balance between them cannot be maintained. Work family Role Conflict is comprised of two domains: Work Interfering Family (WIF) Role Conflict and Family Interfering Work (FIW) Role Conflict [2]. WIF Role Conflict occurs when work related activities spill over or interfere with home responsibilities and Family Interfering Work (FIW) conflict arises when family role responsibilities spill over or impede work activities. The two types were separately considered in the study.

Quality of work life: QWL may be defined as the degree to which a work can meet the needs of an individual employee and create a sense of satisfaction within him/her. The concept is so broad that it covers the whole continuum of needs ranging from fair remuneration or physical work environment to autonomy at workplace or social relevance of the work.

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependant Variable
First	Emotional Intelligence	WIF Role Conflict
Second	Emotional Intelligence	FIW Role Conflict
Third	Emotional Intelligence	Quality of Work Life
Fourth	Emotional Intelligence	Happiness

Table 1: Research variables.

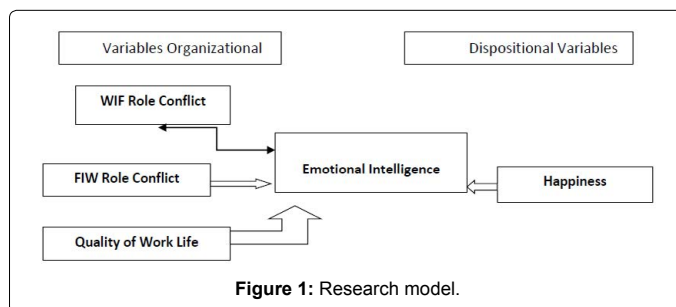


Figure 1: Research model.

Happiness: Happiness may be defined as the experience of frequent positive effect, infrequent negative affect and an overall sense of satisfaction with life as a whole [3]. IT professionals was especially the point of focus in the present study, since, researches reveal that this industry is experiencing tremendous challenges in meeting the employment market demand and a good HR solution is much needed in this domain to help the employees be more productive and happy in life [4-6]. The shift duties and frequent onsite requirements take a toll on the IT professionals, especially so for the female professionals, since, males are deemed to take the larger share of home responsibilities, even today.

Data Collection

Data were collected through administering the questionnaires mentioned below under “Tools”. The purpose of the study was partially explained, though the term ‘Emotional Intelligence’ was deliberately avoided, to minimize test anxiety. Only those participants who had expressed willingness to participate were included in the sample. Each of the participants was interviewed by the researcher in order to acquire a deeper insight into the problem area.

Tools

- A measure of Emotional Intelligence, developed by Bhattacharya [7]
- Quality of Life Scale, developed by Bhargava , Baral [8]
- Work Family Conflict Scale developed by Blau [9]
- Family Work Conflict Scale developed by Burke [10]
- Subjective Happiness scale developed by Boyatzis [11]

Data Analysis by descriptive statistics usage

- The First Hypothesis Pierson Correlation Coefficient Test Results for the Relation between Emotional Intelligence and WIF Role Conflict was shown in Table 2
- The Second Hypothesis Pierson Correlation Coefficient Test Results for the Relation between Emotional Intelligence and FIW Role Conflict was shown in Table 3
- The Third Hypothesis Pierson Correlation Coefficient Test Results for the Relation between Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Work Life was shown in Table 4
- The Fourth Hypothesis Pierson Correlation Coefficient Test Results for the Relation between Emotional Intelligence and Happiness was shown in Table 5

Discussions

From the table, two general trends may be noted:

EI bears statistically significant relationship with all the Dependent Variables included in the study

The directions of the correlations are also in line with that of research hypotheses.

Thus, it may be stated with confidence, that EI does bear a negative relationship with Work Family Role Conflict and a positive relationship with QWL and Happiness.

The negative relationship with Work family Role Conflict implies that people with higher level of EI experiences lower level of Role

Emotional Intelligence		
	Correlation	-0.46
WIF Role Conflict	Significance level	0.05
	Number	30

Table 2: Pierson Correlation Coefficient Test Results for the Relation between Emotional Intelligence & WIF Role Conflict (First Hypothesis).

Emotional Intelligence		
	Correlation Percentage	-0.46
FIW Role Conflict	Significance level	0.05
	Number	30

Table 3: Pierson Correlation Coefficient Test Results for the Relation between Emotional Intelligence & FIW Role Conflict (Second Hypothesis).

Emotional Intelligence		
	Correlation Percentage	0.54
Quality of Work Life	Significance level	0.01
	Number	30

Table 4: Pierson Correlation Coefficient Test Results for the Relation between Emotional Intelligence & Quality of Work Life (Third Hypothesis).

Emotional Intelligence		
	Correlation Percentage	0.53
Happiness	Significance level	0.01
	Number	30

Table 5: Pierson Correlation Coefficient Test Results for the Relation between Emotional Intelligence & Happiness (Fourth Hypothesis).

Conflict, and are better at managing their role demands at both fronts. This may be due to the fact that Emotionally Intelligent people are highly motivated and thus, meet their role demands without experiencing much stress. Also, since, they understand and value others’ emotions, they tend to make better bonds with people around them, their empathetic nature probably makes the significant others more understanding and empathetic towards them, thus practically lessening the role demands placed upon them.

The positive relationship between EI and QWL implies that people with higher EI enjoys better QWL as compared to those with lower EI. This may be because; High EI ensures high motivation, high inspiration level, leadership quality, high negotiation skills and a pleasant personality. Thus, individuals with high EI find themselves in a better position at the workplace irrespective of their position in organizational ladder. Moreover they tend to develop more “friends” than “foes” in the workplace. This makes them derive more satisfaction from workplace. Moreover their optimistic approach towards life goes a long way to enhance their QWL.

The positive relationship between EI and happiness indicates that higher the level of EI in an individual, greater his/her level of happiness. This may be considered to be the most impactful finding of the present study, since, the sole objective of mankind is to be happy, in whatever way they choose to achieve it. Research reveals that Happiness is dispositional in nature, rather than being circumstantial [12]. All of the four inner traits that have consistently been found to mark happy people are actually components of EI: Self-esteem, a sense of control,

optimism and extraversion [13]. Moreover, building social bonds have been found to be especially contributively towards long term Happiness [14-18], and the ability to build such bond is a key component of EI. Thus, much of the qualities possessed by Emotionally Intelligent persons directly help them to achieve greater happiness in life, reducing the impact of negative emotions and stress.

Findings

The three major behaviors of work that interferes with personal life were unhappiness with the amount of time for non – work activities followed by missing personal activities due to work and putting personal life on hold because of work.

The two major factors impacting work – life balance of IT employees are feeling exhausted at the end of days work and quitting their jobs or taking a career break because of work-life balance issues.

The major work related factor interfering with personal life were, carrying cell phone or a pager so that the employees can be reached after normal business hours and checking email or voice mail at home after returning from work.

The highest difference was noticed in Work from home all the time, followed by part time work. The least difference was found in paid leave of absence for education and paid paternity leave. In case of paid maternity leave the prevalence of it was found to be higher than the awareness of the work-life balance programs.

Usage of work – life balance programs like part time, work from home all the time, career breaks and brief paid sabbatical of 1 – 2 months had higher level of risk involved to an IT employee's position. Whereas flexible work schedules, paid paternity leave, work from home occasionally and paid maternity leave had less risk involved to an IT employee's position.

IT employees were more likely to use work-life balance programs like flexible work schedules followed by work from home occasionally, paid leave for sick family member i.e., (parent, child, spouse) and paid paternity leave. Where they were less likely to use programs like, work from home all the time, career breaks part-time work and paid maternity leave.

It was found that IT employees were high on regulation of emotion in the self, followed by appraisal and recognition of emotion in others, use of emotion to facilitate performance and appraisal and expression of emotion in the self.

It was found that level of risk to an employee's position with the usage of work-life balance programs has a strong correlation with Appraisal and expression of emotion in self, Use of emotions to facilitate performance and Appraisal and recognition of emotion in others. The relationship between emotional intelligence's influences on work-life balance dimensions was significant however the influence was weak. Appraisal and expression of emotions in self, and use of emotions to facilitate performance influenced maximum on work - life dimensions. Among the work - life dimensions risk in position with usage of work-life balance programs was maximally influenced by emotional intelligence.

Use of emotions to facilitate performance negatively influenced factors impacting work-life balance.

Appraisal and recognition of emotion in others had a significant influence on work related factors interfering with personal life.

Appraisal and expression of emotion in the self negatively influenced level of risk to an employee's position with the usage of work-life balance programs. Regulation of emotion in the self positively influenced level of risk to an employee's position with the usage of work-life balance programs.

Significant differences were found between gender and work interference with personal life, work related factors interfering with personal life and level of risk to an employee's position with the usage of work-life balance programs. All the three variables were higher for men as compared to women.

Significant differences were found between age and work related factors interfering with personal life. Work related factors interfering with personal life were highest for the 35 -45 years age group, followed by the 45-55 years age group and was lowest for employees above 55 years.

Significant differences were found between marital status and work related factors interfering with personal life and likelihood of usage of work-life balance programs. Work related factors interfering with personal life were higher for married IT professionals as compared to single or unmarried IT professionals. Further married IT professionals were more likely to use work - life balance programs as compared to single or unmarried IT professionals.

Significant differences were found between management level and work interference with personal life, factors impacting work – life balance and work related factors interfering with personal life. Work interference with personal life was highest for IT professionals at the middle management level and lowest for junior level management. Factors impacting work – life balance was highest for both junior and middle management IT professionals and lowest for senior management IT professionals. Finally work related factors interfering with personal life were highest for senior management IT professionals and lowest for junior level management IT professionals.

Significant differences were found between years in present position and work interference with personal life, work related factors interfering with personal life and likelihood of usage of work-life balance programs. Work interference with personal life and Work related factors interfering with personal life were highest for IT professionals who were in the same position for six and more years. IT professionals who were in the same position for about four years were more likely to use work-life balance programs.

Significant differences were found between overall experience and work interference with personal life and work related factors interfering with personal life. Both the variables were highest for IT professionals with 10-20 years of overall experience and lowest for IT professional 2-5 of overall experience.

Implications

Ensure that formal policies in place are consistent with what employees actually experience. Policy provision alone is not sufficient to ensure employees' work/life balance. Human resource department should look at the uptake rates of policies across different areas in the organisation because this may provide clues to the existence of unsupportive cultures.

Adopt a 'give and take' philosophy. Both employer and employee need to be willing to bend a little.

There should be a clear boundary drawn between work and non-work activities. Human Resources and the Senior Management should

take the initiative and communicate the importance of having a good balance between personal and professional life. The widespread perception that visibility = productivity should be changed. Focus on effectiveness rather than on length of work hours. Use communication technologies and skilful time-management strategies to boost output.

Conclusion

Work-Life Balance of IT employees in an issue that has attracted the interest of researchers, educationists and the leaders of the IT world. Managing both professional and personal life effectively and efficiently has become a major challenge for the IT employees. IT organizations need to make efforts to develop effective work – life balance policies and encourage their employees to make use of the available policies. This will help increase organizational commitment, improve productivity, efficiency, retain best talent and motivate the IT employees to give their best. This study confirms that both emotional intelligence and work-life balance together create organizational success and develop competitive advantage for IT organizations. Thus the human resources team and the leadership team of IT organizations should take the initiative of enhancing and improving the emotional intelligence skills of their employees. Improved emotional intelligence skills will help an individual understand and manage the emotions of one and others better which will lead to high quality service delivery. It is therefore imperative for IT administrators to strive to create a bridge between emotional intelligence and work-life balance in IT organizations. Emotional intelligence is an effective way to integrate, enhance and provide better work and family life [19-21]. Understanding the potential and the talent that their employees bring in and ensure the articulation of difference that employees bring to the work place and value them to make it a part of the organizational success. IT leaders should focus on developing, formulating and implementing, better work – life balance policies in order to build a sustainable and enriching organization. Nurturing emotional intelligence and to make employees feel values must be adopted by IT leaders.

IT organizations should come up with effective and efficient work-life balance policies and programs and foster an organizational culture that supports the use of available policies is also of great importance. This will help reduce the work – life conflict for IT employees. Further IT leaders should take initiative to improve the emotional intelligence competencies of their employees as it plays a significant role in the kind of work an employee produces, and the relationship he or she enjoys in the organization and improve individual and organizational performance.

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