



IMPACT OF WORK VALUES ON WORK LIFE BALANCE

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Abstract

Work values actually represent our personal relation to what we want to achieve through our work and career. However, the time and environment in which the employees acquired the system of work values in the organization is also important in determining the work life balance. Work and family are most important domains in lives and the two roles are often in conflict. As a result, work-life balance becomes a hot topic of discussion among the research community. The major objectives of the present study are to understand significant variations and relationship between work values (WV) and WLB among of service sector employees. A descriptive research design was used for this study. The result shows that WV is positively related to WLB and WE/PE and negatively related to WIPL and PLIW.

Keywords: Work Values, Work Life Balance, Service Sector.

INTRODUCTION

One of the central aspects that define values is their preferential character that a value is primarily an activity or preferential process of singling out a given behavior. The preferential character of values also acts simultaneously in setting up an order or a hierarchical structure of respective values. Another aspect is that espoused values represent a sort of preference and it is obvious that, implicitly or explicitly, some kind of order is established. The totality of this order represents the value matrix/system of the person. Thus values guide daily actions, bind groups, help resolve conflicts and stimulate development and thereby intimately related to WLB. All cultures contain more-or-less explicit value systems that determine behavior (Schein, 1984 Garcia and Dolan, 1997; Dunkel and Mayrhofer, 2001).

Work values actually represent our personal relation to what we want to achieve through our work and career (Sverko, 1999). However, the time and environment in which the employees acquired the system of work values in the organization is also important in determining the WLB. According to Abele *et al.* (1999), the system of work values is the most important variable in the choice of one's profession. According to Super (1970), work values varied significantly depending on whether they are extrinsic or intrinsic; and in the life sphere, variation existed for values pertaining to order and family life as well as to achieve social economic status. Based on these concepts, Super (1970) formulated a work values inventory with fifteen indices (dimensions) framed from both intrinsic and extrinsic values. They are creativity, management, achievement, surroundings, supervisory relations, and way of life, security, associates, esthetics, prestige, independence, variety, economic returns, altruism, and intellectual stimulation. All these values are directly linked to work and working environment, which contribute immensely to WLB and its dimensions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jackson (1966) introduced the concept of value crystallization in his discussion of norms and the "amount of agreement involved in norms and roles". Jackson's definition of crystallization is expressed in measurement terms, or an index of crystallization. Chatman (1989), in her work about person-organization fit, suggested that the congruence between an individual's values and an organization's value system forms the basis for person-organization fit, and that the crystallization of organizational value systems describes how widely shared the values are. Individuals were more likely to select jobs where their personal value systems were similar to the organization's values (Judge and Bretz, 1992). Carlson and Kacmar (2000), added to the literature by examining the moderating role of life role values on WIPL and PLIW. Their findings highlight the importance of considering family and work values. Significant differences were found between those with low versus high work role values as well as between individuals placing more or less importance on work and family roles. For those who place more value on the family role compared to the work role, greater time and involvement at work negatively impacts job satisfaction. In contrast, if work is more salient than family, family sources of conflict have a greater impact on outcomes. In terms of life role importance, the relationship between family role conflict and family interfering with work, as well as job involvement and job satisfaction was stronger among those with a high value on work and a low value on family, compared to individuals who highly value both work and family. Likewise, for those who highly value both work and family, work role conflict has a stronger effect on job satisfaction and job involvement has a stronger effect on life satisfaction, compared to

those who do not value both domains. Finally, a stronger relationship was found between work stress and job satisfaction among those with low work and high family values compared to those with low work and low family values.

According to Carlson and Kacmar (2000), most research has simply considered the situation of the individual and not the values the individual holds regarding the work and family domains. To overcome this limitation, the present study includes the impacts of work values on WLB and its dimensions among the service sector employees.

METHODOLOGY

Since this was a descriptive study, therefore, survey and secondary data methods were used to collect the requisite information. Our surveys aimed to determine the influence of the work values on WLB of employees of service sector. In this connection a self-administered questionnaire was circulated amongst the employees. The first part of the questionnaire was designed to collect biographical information that includes gender, age, marital status, qualification and job grade. The second part consists of work value and work life balance scales. A random sampling technique was used for data collection. The statistical program used for the data analyses and presentation of data in this research is Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 17.0.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Work values with 15 factors (creativity, management, achievement, surroundings, supervisory relations, way of life, security, associates, esthetics, prestige, independence, variety, economic returns, altruism, and intellectual stimulation) comprising the various WV related issues of the service sector employees. At this juncture it is important to ascertain the existence of heterogeneity in the sample population. In order to test the heterogeneity, K-Means cluster analysis was performed and the result showed the presence of three clusters of employees having different characteristic features of work value related issues as presented below (Table 1).

Table 1. Cluster status of prominent work value issues of the respondents

WV and its dimensions	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3	
	High WV		Medium WV		Low WV	
	N = 32 (8.75%)		N = 68 (17%)		N = 300 (75.25%)	
	\bar{X}	Level	\bar{X}	Level	\bar{X}	Level
Work value	191.56	High	131.35	Medium	67.47	Low
Creativity	13.61	High	7.08	Medium	4.06	Low
Management	11.87	High	8.33	Medium	5.25	Low
Achievement	14.23	High	9.65	Medium	5.31	Low
Surroundings	12.08	High	8.94	Medium	4.92	Low
Supervisory Relations	12.11	High	7.98	Medium	4.67	Low
Way of life	13.09	High	8.01	Medium	4.44	Low
Security	11.64	High	7.49	Medium	5.02	Low
Associates	12.87	High	8.23	Medium	4.11	Low
Esthetics	10.89	High	6.52	Medium	3.84	Low
Prestige	14.03	High	9.21	Medium	4.92	Low
Independence	12.89	High	8.01	Medium	3.87	Low
Variety	13.67	High	8.89	Medium	3.91	Low
Economic Returns	12.42	High	7.84	Medium	3.88	Low
Altruism	12.25	High	7.91	Medium	4.26	Low
Intellectual stimulation	13.88	High	7.26	Medium	5.01	Low

Note: W.V = work values.

Source: Primary data computed.

The first group (cluster) of respondents had high WV with high levels of creativity, management, achievement, surroundings, supervisory relations, way of life, security, associates, esthetics, prestige, independence, variety, economic returns, altruism, and intellectual stimulation. They were designated as “high WV group”. The second cluster comprised of respondents who had medium levels of WV due to medium levels of creativity, management, achievement, surroundings, supervisory relations, way of life, security, associates, esthetics, prestige, independence, variety, economic returns, altruism, and intellectual stimulation. Therefore this cluster was named as “medium WV group”. The third cluster comprised of employees

who had the lowest levels of WV due to low levels of creativity, management, achievement, surroundings, supervisory relations, and way of life, security, associates, esthetics, prestige, independence, variety, economic returns, altruism, and intellectual stimulation. The third group was suitably named as “low WV group”.

Tables 2. Overall level of WLB issues and its dimensions among the respondents

WLB and its dimensions	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3	
	1. High WLB issues		2. Medium WLB issues		3. Low WLB issues	
	N = 301 (75.25%)		N = 62 (15.5%)		N = 37 (9.25%)	
	\bar{X}	Level	\bar{X}	Level	\bar{X}	Level
WLB	60.11	Low	45.35	Medium	82.35	High
WIPL	27.84	High	18.79	Medium	6.92	Low
PLIW	28.26	High	16.87	Medium	8.10	Low
WE/PE	4.01	Low	9.69	Medium	17.33	High

Note: WLB = work life balance; WIPL = work interference with personal life; PLIW = personal life interference with work; WE/PE = work/personal life enhancements.

Source: Primary data computed.

Data given are frequencies and corresponding percentages (Table.2). It was observed that the service sector employees of Chidambaram Taluk experienced different levels of WLB, which may be categorized into high, medium, and low levels as shown in the tables

Table 3. Association among clusters of work values and work life balance issues

Level of WV	Level of WLB issues			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
High	0	30	2	32
Medium	5	49	14	68
Low	267	33	0	300
Total	272	112	16	400

Source: Primary data computed.

From the above table maximum frequency (267) was found in the cell which has the low work values and high WLB issues and nil frequency was found in the two cells created at the intersection of high WLB issues and high work values along with low work values with low WLB issues.

In order to find out the association of work values and WLB issues, the null hypothesis was proposed as follows.

H0: 1. There is no significant association between work values and WLB issues.

To test the null hypothesis, chi-square test was performed.

Table 4. Chi-square test showing status of WLB issues and work values

Parameters	Value	df	Significance
Pearson Chi-Square	293.062	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	261.022	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	153.144	1	.000
Total	400		

Source: Primary data computed.

The chi-square value 293.062 and P value = 0.000 are statistically significant at 5% level. Therefore it can be concluded that work values and work life balance maintain a closeness in the service sector organisations in Chidambaram Taluk. In particular, majority of the employees belonging to cluster 2 and cluster 3 experienced high or medium levels of WLB issues .Work values (WV) can be considered general and relatively permanent goals which individuals strive to achieve through

their working roles. Hence, human activities of all kinds are directed towards endeavors to achieve various goals which can satisfy needs. Entering the world of work, or determining one's professional career, each person attempts to achieve certain goals which represent his/her work values (Knezevic, 1998, 1999; Knezevic and Jovancevic, 2001). According to this assertion, each person will aspire to that area of work in which it seems he/she will be best able to fulfill their work values so that they face minimum WLB issues. However, such aspirations need not get fulfilled as one's wish goes and on many occasions, WV varies, with organizations, working environment and the employees' personal/family life perspectives as evidenced in the present study. Values have been defined as desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles (Schwartz, 1994). Values are important for understanding the foundation of attitudes and behaviours of individuals in organizations and often serve as a way in which individuals integrate personality and regulate behaviour (Posner and Munson, 1979; Carver and Scheier, 1982). While a great deal of research has examined how values held by individuals affect their behavioural orientations (Schwartz, 1992), values research has not been extrapolated much to the area of WLB.

The incorporation of values in to the work-family issues literature is important because WV are central to organizing meaning and action for working people. Values motivate action and are the basis from which individuals define their roles (England and Harpaz, 1983; Schwartz, 1994). Thus value expression represents the physical manifestation of values related to an individual's identity or self concept (Katz and Kahn, 1978). In addition, the simultaneous pursuit of different values may lead to WLB issues (Schwartz, 1992; Smelser, 1998) especially when WV leads to WIPL and PLIW.

CONCLUSION

As the study has revealed influence of work values on WLB issues faced by the employees; organisations should take special care to ameliorate these issues by implementing a family-supportive work environment which include alternative work arrangements, support from the supervisors and coworkers, support to amend long hours of work etc. Based on this study service sector organizations can also make provisions for some sort of communication channels/ mediators or mentors that are available to employees to discuss their WLB issues so as to find solutions. These mediators should be encouraged to arrange specific meetings with the employees-in-problem along with their family members to explore an amicable solution so that both organization and employees are benefited. Such provisions could possibly reduce stresses arising in the work as well as family domains well as health risks. This is particularly important in retaining the specifically trained manpower in the respective field.

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