

Literature review: work-life balance



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In the past decade the issue of work – life have received significant attention from the Politicians, employers, workers and media. The concerns for work life balance have become salient due to various reasons. Women have entered the corporate world due to social and Demographic changes. Having working mothers is almost must for the average families. The advancement in Technology e. g., Internet, cell phones, etc have made it easy for work to intrude in the personal and family lives of the people or employees. Also the global competition has increased pressure not only on the organizations but the individual employees too. Therefore they are expected to be more flexible and responsive to the demands.

However, the current prospect of an ageing workforce and skill shortages that it is now absolutely necessary for the organizations to encompass work – life balance practices to retain talent, not only from traditional sources but also from untapped and diverse social groups. These are social groups whose lifestyles can frequently demand greater attention to work-life balance, like working mothers, aged workers and some minority groups.

The organizations need to ensure they not only encourage but mandate a workable and practical work-life balance policy, by meeting the need of not only the organization but the employees too, for the future commercial sustainability. Since organizations do not provide with real opportunity for work-life balance, there is an increased attrition rate due to more and more dissatisfied and unproductive employees. Therefore, fostering an organizational culture that supports the

Use of available policies is of great importance, by just creating work -life policies is not sufficient.

There is a need for employees and employers to find flexible and innovative solutions that can help to maximize productivity without damaging employees well - being, their family relationships and personal lives.

DEFINITION OF WORK – LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance can be defined as “ conceptualised as a two way process involving a consideration of the needs of employees as well as those of employers” (Lewis, 2000: p. 105). It’s the satisfactory level or fit between the multiple roles in a person’s life. It’s about maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life. The study of work/life balance involves the examining people’s ability to manage the multi-faceted demands of life, simultaneously. To engage employers in this process it is important to demonstrate the benefits that can be derived from employment policies and practices that support work-life balance, and the scope that exists for decreasing their negative effects on the management.

Although work/life balance has been assumed to involve the equal amounts of time to paid work and non-work activities, more recently the concept has been recognised as more complex and has been developed to incorporate additional components.

1. Time balance concerns the amount of time given to work and non-work activities

2. Satisfaction balance the level of satisfaction achieved from work and non-work

activities.

3. Involvement balance Implies the level of psychological involvement and commitment towards work or non-work activities.

This model of work/life balance, involvement and satisfaction components enables a broader and more inclusive picture to emerge. For example, someone who works for three days a week and spends the rest of the week with his or her family may be unbalanced in terms of time (i. e. equal measures of work and life), but may be equally committed to the work and non-work activities (balanced involvement) and could also be satisfied with the level of involvement in both family and work (balanced satisfaction). Someone who works 64 hours a week might be perceived as not having work-life balance, in terms of time. However, like the person who works only a few hours a week, this individual would also be unbalanced in terms of time, but may be quite content with this greater involvement in paid work (balanced satisfaction). Alternatively, someone who works 42 hours a week doesn't enjoy his or her job and spends the rest of the time pursuing preferred interests may be time-balanced but unbalanced in terms of involvement and satisfaction. Thus, achieving balance needs to be considered from various perspectives.

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1.3 INTRODUCTION TO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

In order to identify factors that are important for success in life has been a challenge to researchers since long. Almost from a decade before it was believed that traditional intelligence, which could be measured as Intelligence Quotient (IQ) was responsible for success in life. A number of intelligence scales have been developed based on this assumption, (for instance, Stanford-Binet test, Wechsler Adult Intelligence test and Binet-Simon test,). These scales indicate technical expertise of an individual that helps him/her in performing the job and therefore, acts as facilitating factor in getting recruited, such scales are not meant for predicting why people are better in interpersonal relationships, more acceptable to people and better managers of their lives careers and stress. Then what qualities of mind or spirit would determine who would succeed? Researches revealed that adaptability, leadership, self-confidence and interpersonal skills are some of the most important factors that distinguish the top performers from the poor performances and that they have no direct relationship with the so called traditional intelligence (IQ). Rather they are related to the effective and intelligent management of emotions.

numerical or analytical ability. It has little or no significance with success in professionals or personal life. So, the question is, “ What is the component that makes Jack Welch, Bill Gates, Gandhi, and Einstein better leaders, experts or professional in their field?” It has been suggested by experts like Goleman that it is not IQ but Emotional Intelligence (EI) that makes these

individuals pioneer in their respective fields. Emotional intelligence is measured as Emotional Quotient or EQ.

The world today is undergoing a change more profound and far reaching than any experienced since the dawn of the modern age. Rapid environmental changes are causing fundamental transformations that have a dramatic impact on organizations and present new challenges for human resources management in general and leadership in particular. The transformations do represent a shift from traditional intelligence to new paradigm of emotional intelligence. It has been human nature to desire stability even in the ever-changing professional lives. The system of life – and organizations – is fluid, dynamic, and potentially self-renewing wherein today's best leaders are learning to “go with the flow” to accept the inevitability of constant change and recognize change itself as a potential source of energy. These profound changes cannot be cuddled and integrated without addressing the deepest thoughts and feelings of Indian executives. This requires the executive to open up the heart and deal with the emotions, welcoming them into the workplace to ensure success in this ever-changing industrial environment. Various research studies have unraveled that the leaders with higher emotional intelligence see changes as opportunities for something better, and they do not cherish stability but ongoing development of individual workers and of the organization itself become their prime agenda. This phenomenon of paradigm shift has led many researches in the area and the present one is also an attempt in the line.

1. 3. 1 BACKGROUND

The term Emotional Intelligence first appeared in a series of academic articles authored by John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey (1990, 1993). These publications generated little attention. Two years later, the term emotional intelligence entered the mainstream with Daniel Goleman's 1995 best-seller *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* and subsequent articles in *USA Weekend* and *Time Magazine* (October 2, 1995). More recently, Goleman's latest book, *Working With Emotional Intelligence* (1998), has caught the attention of human resource practitioners.

1. 3. 2 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE – CONCEPT & DEFINITION

The concept of emotional intelligence is an umbrella term 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. Most of the authors on the topic note that in order to be a well adjusted, fully functioning member of society (or family member, spouse, employee, etc.), one must possess both traditional intelligence (IQ) and emotional intelligence (dubbed EQ). Emotional intelligence involves being aware of emotions and how they can affect and interact with traditional intelligence (e. g., impair or enhance judgement, etc.). This view fits well with the commonly held notion that it takes more than just brains to succeed in life – one must also be able to develop and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships. Taken from this perspective, emotional intelligence is nothing new. Emotions are an intrinsic part of our biological

makeup, and every morning they march into the office with us and influence our behavior. On some level, we've always known that the ability to understand, monitor, manage and capitalize on our emotions can help us make better decisions, cope with setbacks and interact with others more effectively. But thanks to the work of Goleman and other researchers, we now have hard data to prove it.

According to Mayer and Salovey (1993): Emotional Intelligence allows us to think more creatively and to use our emotions to solve problems. Emotional Intelligence probably overlaps to some extent with general intelligence. The emotionally intelligent person is skilled in four areas: Identifying emotions, using

emotions, understanding emotions, and regulating emotions. Goleman (1995) takes a somewhat broader position in describing emotional intelligence. In his writings, emotional intelligence consists of five factors: Recognizing emotions in others, knowing one's emotions, handling relationships, motivating one self, and managing emotions.

1. 3. 3 Why Study Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is a topic of growing interest in organizations and research. Modern technology and globalization has led the human race into a zooming life where the risks involved are high. Most people in organizations today undergo motions of crumbling trust, jarring uncertainty, stifled creativity, distance between managers and co-workers, and vanishing loyalty and commitment. Either organizations are ignorant of these symptoms or do not want to recognize them (majority of the times), as they would have to do

something about it. Emotional intelligence calls for recognizing and understanding of these issues in organizations. It calls upon 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 gives rise to strategic leaders in organizations” At a microcosmic level, EI will produce an employee who will know his capabilities, 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.

Finally, Researchers today are interested in finding the effects of emotional intelligence on employees and thereby, organizations, and analyzing the various other facets of EQ. Corporate interest appears to be strongly related to the continuing search for a way of securing sustainable competitive advantage which can be developed through attention to “ people issues” 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.

1. 3. 4 MODELS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Two types of emotional intelligence models are available in the existing literature:

1. Ability model, which focuses on the mental abilities to define emotional intelligence
2. Mixed models, which seek to define emotional intelligence as a mixture of abilities and some personality traits and characteristics.

1. Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence

This model of emotional intelligence (Mayer and Salovey, 1997) emphasis on the cognitive components of emotional intelligence and conceptualizes emotional intelligence in terms of potential for intellectual and emotional growth (Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden and Dorheim, 1998). Four sets of mental abilities ranging from basic to more complex psychological process were proposed in this model. The first set, ‘ Perception, appraisal and expression of emotions’ allows an individual to identify and express emotions in self and others. The second is ‘ assimilating emotion in thought’ It allows an individual to use emotions and to facilitate thinking and to recognize respective consequences of different emotional responses and to justify the appropriate one. The third set ‘ understanding and analyzing emotions’ concerns with the ability to understand, label and acknowledge emotions and to use emotional knowledge.

The fourth set is ‘ reflective regulation of emotion’ which deals with the ability to manage and adjust the emotional response to support the situational requirement (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

2. Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence

The mixed models include non-ability traits such as optimism, motivation, interpersonal skill, and stress management in conceptualizing emotional intelligence. The various types of mixed models are explained below.

Bar-On's (1997) model of emotional intelligence is one of the most well known mixed models. This model was fundamentally based on the personality characteristics. Five broad areas of emotional intelligence were proposed in this model: intrapersonal skills (such as emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self regard, and self-actualization); interpersonal skills (such as social responsibilities, empathy); adaptability (such as problem solving, reality testing and flexibility); stress management (such as, stress tolerance and impulse control) and general mood (such as happiness and optimism).