



Work Life Balance in Banking Sector - A Comparative Study of Public and Private Sector Banks

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Abstract.

Work life Balance not a new-fangled idea or transitory style. The programmes related with work life balance were there as early as 1930's and the term "work life balance" coined in 1986. Maintaining a proper work-life balance and having a good quality of life can be difficult. Researches show that the number of working employees today has increased from 5.1 million in 1900 to 18.4 million in 1950 to 66.2 million in 2009 [1], [2]. Both employers and employees must appreciate the importance of the Quality of work life in an organization [3]. Success of an organization mainly depends on the productivity of its workforce and this productivity can be sustained only when special care is taken to reduce job-induced stress at every level of output. A character of an organization and its potential for progress can be judged from the way it handles its female employees. The present study seeks to explore the work-life balance and quality of life among employees of public and private sector. A sample of 94 was taken and two scales were used to assess the two parameters. Recent studies have predicted that employee performance is correlated with quality of work-life [4]. Findings show that most of the work-related factors have a negative impact on quality of life. The results also highlight that employed employees are not favorably placed and this has severe implications on the families, organizations and society in general. It is highly recommended for organizations to have employees-friendly policies; on the other hand, families should also be more supportive and encouraging so that

employees have harmony, good quality of life and a work-life balance.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Quality of Life, Working employees, Psychological wellbeing, human resource

1. Introduction

According to the Quality of Life Research Unit (2004), the study of quality of life is an examination of factors that lead to goodness and well being of life, as well as people's happiness [5]. One term which is widely used with reference to quality of life is work-life balance, which is a continuous string of efforts in terms of time management of the employees between their work and other aspects of life [6]. Today, work life balance is becoming a major issue and a matter of concern for individuals as well as organizations due to the changing male centric workplace environment and huge expectations from employees, which has been leading to stress and disturbing the quality of life. The quality of life of a employee can be a better indicator of a nation's health than GDP [7]. The multiple-roles that employees are compelled to play these days lead to a major energy leak both at a psychological and physical level which adversely affects their well-being [8] and leads to role conflict. Work is becoming more intensive and dense these days and this has a direct impact on a employee's free time and her family responsibilities.

Cite this article as: Vejandla Venkata Rama Krishnam Raju, "Work Life Balance in Banking Sector - A Comparative Study of Public and Private Sector Banks", International Journal of Research in Management Studies, Volume 3 Issue 3, 2018, Page 12-17.

According to a survey conducted by Maid Brigade, more than 78% of employees felt they worked a “second shift” when it came to their daily life responsibilities. Another annual survey also suggested that daily home responsibilities prevent employees from realizing their hobbies and personal health goals, adding to stress in their lives [9]. Work-life balance is needed, in order to have a good quality of life and achieve a harmonious balance between work and private responsibilities and interests [10].

This research aims to study whether and how work-life balance and quality of life varies between public and private sector.

The role played by an individual is as important as the role played by an organization in managing this conflict. It is important to remember that striking a balance between work-life is an ongoing process, and not a one-shot deal. If there is a tilt in this balance, chances of surviving after effects becomes difficult. Sadly, in today’s modern world, there is no ‘one-size fits all’ balance that you can look for because of different priorities and lifestyles among employees [11].

2. Methodology

The primary methods of data collection were paper-pencil tests on public and private sector.

2.1. Participants

Sample size of 94 was taken from Hyderabad, Telangana State. Both single and married employees working in private and public sector were included in the study. All the employees were of middle level post.

2.2. Instruments used

The study comprised of two questionnaire assessments:

- The World Health Organization Quality of Life Scale (WHOQOL-BREF): It consists of 26 items based on physical health, psychological status, social relationship, and environment. Each item is rated on a 5-point

scale [12]. It helps in a broad and Comprehensive assessment of these domains.

- Work-life balance Questionnaire: It consists of 30 items focused on exploring the daily Work-Home experiences of the participants.

3. Results and Discussions

Table. 1: Duration of working days per week and work hours per day

SECTOR	Working Days			Working hours		
	7 Days	6 days	5 Days	9-10 Hours	8-9 Hours	7-8
Public	8%	23%	69%	13%	29%	58%
Private	5%	78%	17%	27%	42%	31%

Employees in most of the public sector enterprises enjoy 5 days a week schedule. No. of working hours in private sector is also more than that in the public sector. Previous studies also show that Employees of public sector are more comfortable with their time schedule than the private sector [13].

Table. 2: Time spent with children

SECTO	Less than 2	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	4-5	More than 5
Public	14%	18%	21%	28%	19%
Private	28%	36%	12%	14%	10%

28% employees of public sector spend 4-5 hours with their children, whereas 36% of private sector get only 2-3 hours. Past researches show links between employees entering the workforce and childhood obesity.

Working mothers spend less time on their children's diet and physical activities as compared to non-working [14].

Table. 3: Taking care of older people and dependable Adults and time Spent with them

SECTOR	Taking care of:		Time spent with older people and dependable				
	Older people	Dependable	<2Hour	2-3	3-4Hours	4-5Hours	>5Hour
Public	46%	29%	40%	12%	24%	8%	16%
Private	41%	18%	42.42%	20.27%	16.1%	6.06%	15.15%

Employees of both the sectors had similar family responsibilities with reference to taking care of older people and dependent adults. There is also no significant difference between the times they get to spend with them. Moreover, there are few young employees who have no such responsibilities.

Table. 4: Anxiety Related to Work-Life Balance and major stress related diseases

SECTOR	Anxiety Related to Work-Life			Stress-Related Diseases			
	Sometimes	Often	Always	Hypertension	Obesity	Diabetes	Frequent
Public	51%	20%	19%	6%	17%	14%	20%
Private	27%	44%	22%	5%	8%	0%	50%

The present study reveals that employees in private sector are more often having anxiety related to their work-life balance. A study found that employees are more likely to feel sad and anxious because of stress than men and are also more likely to ruminate on those feelings [15]. 10% employees in public sector and 7 % in private sector felt no anxiety. Moreover, the table clearly shows that a larger number of employees have frequent headaches in private sector than public sector. But hypertension, obesity and diabetes are more among employees in the public sector. When stress interferes with your ability to live a normal life for a long period of time, it can become dangerous. It can lead to fatigue, loss of concentration, irritation. Chronic stress can also cause wear and tear on a person's body [16].

Table. 5 : Fatigue/depression faced due to stress and Major stress busters

SECTOR	Fatigue/depression faced due to		Major Stress busters				
	Yes	No	Yoga	Meditation	Entertainment	Music	Dance
Public	77%	23%	37%	17%	15%	43%	0%
Private	89%	11%	25%	12%	52%	44%	10%

77% employees in public sector are usually tired or depressed due to stressful life as compared to whopping 89% employees in private sector.

Table. 6: Feelings about working hours and Missing out on quality time with family/friends

SECTOR	Feelings about working hours			Missing out on quality time with family/friends				
	Not happy	Happy	Very happy	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Public	11%	74%	15%	11.4%	21.5%	48%	11.5%	7.6%
Private	23%	67%	10%	6%	15%	46%	25%	8%

These statistics show that private sector employees are less happy than the public sector employees with reference to workload. Many Studies also show that time pressures, ergonomic deficiencies, role conflicts, excessive demands are common stressors among the

employees [17]. Also, as per the table, employees in both the sector most of the time miss out on spending quality time with family and friends.

Table. 7: Hindrances to work-life balance

SECTOR	Long work-time	Over-time after work	Training	Commuting	shifts	Technology	Negative attitude of	Negative attitude of
Public	28%	3%	0%	11%	5%	2%	31%	20%
Private	30%	7%	10%	8%	5%	14%	14%	12%

Long working hours, commuting to the workplace and negative attitude of peers and supervisors are the major hindrances to work - life balance.

Table. 8 : Work-life balance policies and opinion on their customization.

SECTOR	Existence of Work-life balance Policies			Opinion on customization of work-life balance		
	Existence	No	Not	Strongly	Indifference	Agree
Public	17%	71%	12%	25.7%	8.5%	65.8%
Private						

The presence of work-life balance policies is minimal in both public and private sector. However, results show that the presence is higher in private sector. There is a need for reducing the gap between the current service level of HR practices and the desired service level of HR practices with reference to work-life balance policies. [18]. Most of the employees in public sector (65.8%) and private sector (54%) agree that customization of work life balance policies would make a difference

Table. 9 : Existence of Work achievement rewards, Social functions and Routine health checkups

SECTOR	Work achievement		Social functions held for		Routine Health check-ups	
	Provided	Not	Held	Not Held	Conducted	Not Conducted
Public	19%	81%	74%	26%	13.5%	86.5%
Private	71%	29%	19%	81%	7%	93%

From the table it is apparent that the presence of work achievement rewards is higher in private sector than in public sector. Previous research also shows that Employees of Private sector get rewards or compensations that match with their responsibilities. Rewards aid attraction and retention of employees, facilitate satisfaction and commitment, and ultimately, enhances motivation to exhibit work performance. But, in case of social functions, the presence is higher in

public sector. The presence of routine health checkups is minimal in both public and private sector.

Table. 10: Quality of life among employees of private sector

Range	Physical Health	Psychological Health	Social Relationships	Environment	
0-20	0	0	0	1	0.42%
21-40	6	1	4	0	4.67%
41-60	24	20	12	12	28.81%
61-80	29	31	18	26	44.07%
81-100	0	7	25	20	22.03%
	59	59	59	59	

Table.11: Quality of life among employees of Public sector

Range	Physical Health	Psychological Health	Social Relationships	Environment	
0-20	0	0	0	0	0%
21-40	3	0	0	0	2%
41-60	13	13	3	5	24%
61-80	18	19	12	17	47%
81-100	1	3	20	13	27%
	35	35	35	35	

The above two tables indicate that maximum employees in both the sectors have an ‘average’ level of quality of life with reference to physical health, psychological health and environment whereas, they have a ‘high’ level of quality of life with reference to social relationships.

4. Recommendations and Conclusion

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in an organization as they are responsible and capable of making valuable contribution and thus they should be treated with dignity and respect [19]. The most important factor that has come out of this study is that working employees in both the sectors feel stressed out and cannot maintain work-life balance due to lack of time for self and family. Employed employees are not favourably placed in today’s society. Work life balance is becoming a major issue and a matter of concern for individuals as well as organizations as life today has become so complex at home as well as at work that it has affected the quality of life and career attainment among employees. This has

forced employees to choose between a satisfying career or marriage and children. This research has provided insight into the problems faced by employees working in private as well as public sector and their quality of life in relation to their work.

It is necessary for organizations to have good HR practices and processes in place, especially for its employees to ensure that they enjoy good quality of life. Organizations should give them flexibility to plan their office hours around their personal commitments, option to work from home, and a friendly leave policy to help them juggle roles so as to maintain a good quality of life and proper work-life balance. Crèche can be provided in the office premises to help employees concentrate more on work and simultaneously see to the well being of their children [20]. Moreover, the policies of maternity leave prevention of sexual harassment, compulsory annual health checkups should be formulated for all the employees in both the sectors. Financial rewards such as commission, bonuses, profit-sharing and stock option plans supplemented by non- financial rewards like vacations, company car, health insurance and pension cover would be a major boost. An extensive in-house employee survey should be conducted every year in which all employees have the opportunity to voice their opinion on working conditions, management, job satisfaction, well-being, etc. which would help the HR fraternity to frame employees friendly policies.

Work-life balance policies have the potential to improve employee morale, job satisfaction, performance level and reduce absenteeism. Problems have to be tackled at grass roots level by families as well as organizations and policies have to be multi-pronged. In today’s global marketplace, companies should champion work-life balance programs. Be it married employees trying to make a place in the working arena, single mothers who are trying to raise their children and make a living, couples struggling to manage dual- career marriages, or companies losing employees for other



opportunities, work/life programs offer a win-win situation for employers as well as employees [21].

Thus awareness about the stressors and the stress busters among the working employees, their families, their organizations and community at large and their willingness and ability to tackle the same will make the world a better place to live in.

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