

INFLUENCE OF WORK ENVIRONMENT AND WLB PRACTICES ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT OF PRIVATE HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Every organization seeks committed and dedicated employees since they are an important element for the endurance. India's healthcare sector is confronted with many challenges and high employee turnover is prominent among these. Apparently it is the noncommitted staff that have the propensity to leave. Repercussion of high employee turnover is dreadful. Enormous investment incurs after each employee is selected, followed by orientation and training subsequently. This study focuses on influence of the factors – work environment and work-life balance policies implemented in multi-specialty hospitals, on organizational commitment of the valuable employees. Study also attempts to understand the relationship between these two factors with the hospital employee's organizational commitment. It is imperative to make the employees committed and retain them for a long tenure with the hospitals, because without the committed and dedicated staff, organization might fail to provide patient satisfaction and quality healthcare services. Considering a sample size of 500 paramedical staff employed in 10 private multispecialty hospitals, Pearson correlation and Multiple regression were applied to test the hypotheses.

KEY WORDS : Work environment, work-life balance practices, organizational commitment.

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Introduction

An organization having a stable and productive workforce becomes successful in building their competitive advantage. Organizations are keen to identify the factors that make their employees committed. “Millennial generation members”, born between 1981 and 2000, hold 12 to 15 jobs in their lifetimes- according to Forrester Research (Milligan, 2015). Organizational commitment is a job attitude of employees and committed employees are less likely to leave the organization (Lissy and Venkatesh, 2014). The employee turnover is a potential loss for any firm and cost of turnover which includes direct costs and indirect costs is hideous. While the process of recruiting and training replacement staff is the direct costs associated, indirect costs include learning costs for new employees and the loss of organizational knowledge which is taken away by the leaving talents.

A great work place doesn't mean only salary, perks and benefits, but a great work environment. It is decisive that the employees have to be satisfied with their requirements to enhance their commitment towards the organization. Work environment includes the surroundings and conditions under which an employee functions. It also includes the social interactions with peers, subordinates, supervisors etc. Paramedical staff work under vulnerable conditions including life threatening situations such as exposure to radiation, outbreak of fatal epidemics etc. It becomes imperative for the hospitals to provide a safe and conducive work environment to their employees. A positive work environment is decisive for the employees to feel good about coming to their work. Paramedical staff have to work under different timings (shifts) as well, which causes imbalance in their personal life and work life. Experiencing work-life balance is defined as having the ability to meet career goals, while devoting attention to family/personal life and working for an organization that supports employees' efforts to balance work and family/personal responsibilities. Today Work-life balance has become an essential part of Corporate Social Responsibility. Those employees who have achieved work life balance proved to be more productive and for those who couldn't achieve work-life balance, had a negative attitude towards their work life. Since there are enormous opportunities abroad for the doctors and nurses, they are always inclined towards that. It is prudent for the HR managers to understand the perception of their employees to induce them and make them committed to the hospitals.

Today, multispecialty hospitals have become an important aspect of healthcare sector of India and plays key role in facilitating quality healthcare. Multi-specialty hospitals are multifaceted healthcare institutions that include every branch of medicine and surgery under various departments all under one roof. There is a surge in the number of multispecialty hospitals in India over the last decade that has improved the healthcare system to a great extent. Private practitioners and hospitals are the major providers of health care in India.

Present study is undertaken to understand whether work environment and work- life balance policies of the hospitals influence on organizational commitment of their employees, by measuring the perception of the hospital staff selected from 10 multi-specialty hospitals in Bangalore.

Review of Literature

Building and maintaining a great culture, requires committed leaders who devote time and attention. Companies with an engaged workforce turn in better financial performance. Trust and engagement are key factors that make a work culture great. Trust should be both ways, employee's trust on leader and leader's trust on employees. (Feffer, 2015). Positive work environment, flexibility & freedom, employee involvement and growth, employee communications & assistance and compensation & benefits were identified as retention factors in the study conducted by Kemelgor and Meek (2008). Lingard and Lin (2004) conducted a survey of women in the Australian construction industry to examine the relationship between career, family and work environment variables on women's organizational commitment. Career choice commitment, satisfaction with career progression, job involvement, supervisory support and perception of the organizational diversity climate were significantly correlated with respondents' organizational commitment. Berg et al., (2003) examined the effect of high-performance work practices, job characteristics, and the work environment on workers' views about whether the company helps them balance work and family. Data was collected from a survey of workers across three manufacturing industries. Results revealed that a high-commitment environment—characterized by high-performance work practices, intrinsically rewarding jobs, and understanding supervisors—positively influences employees' perceptions that the company is helping them achieve this balance. Work environmental factors such as promotional

opportunities pay and benefits satisfaction, performance appraisal satisfaction, training, workload and supervisory relationships are positively related to job satisfaction (Ellickson , 2002).

Work-life balance is the general term used to describe organizational initiatives aimed at enhancing employee experience of work and non-work domains.(Darcy, et al., 2011). Cascio (2000) defines work-life balance programs as “any employer sponsored benefits or working conditions that help employees balance work and non-work demands”. Lockwood (2003) defined work - life balance “from the employee viewpoint as the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities” and Work- life balance from the employer viewpoint as “the challenge of creating a supportive company culture where employees can focus on their jobs while at work.” Work-life balance (WLB) is a concern for both employees and employers equally. Those employees who work for long hours and odd shift hours undergo lots of stress and confront with difficulties in balancing their personal and professional life . Burn outs and exit from the work etc. will be ensued as a repercussion. Managers are key to the initiation and implementation of WLB policies with some of those policies being the introduction of flexible working hours and arrangements, providing better training, breaks from work and better work support (Maxwell, 2005). Parkes and Langford (2008) defined work-life balance as an individual’s ability to meet both their work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities. Work-life balance (WLB) strategies have been suggested as a retention strategy as well as tool to improve organizational commitment of the employees (Deery, 2008). Study conducted by Chawla and Sondhi (2011) showed that organizational commitment has been influenced by WLB on 75 school teachers and 75 BPO women employees. Noor (2011) in her study examined the relationship between perceived work-life balance satisfaction of academics in Malaysian public higher education institutions and their intentions to leave the organization. The results indicated that perceived work-life balance satisfaction was correlated negatively with intention to leave the organization among academics. Parkes and Langford (2008) assessed whether employees are satisfied with their ability to balance work and other life commitments. Study also explored how individual and organizational variables were related to work-life balance. Results indicated that work-life balance was least related to employee engagement and intention to stay with an organization.

Based on the research by Johnson & Johnson it was found that there was a 50% decline in absenteeism among employees who used flexible work options and family leave policies. (Landauer, 1997). Research also indicated that company commitment to work/life initiatives is closely aligned with employee motivation and productivity (Gottlieb, et al., 1998). Firms have taken initiatives such as : temporal arrangements that allow employees to reduce the number of hours they work (e.g. job sharing where two employees share one job, part-time working where an employee works less than a full-time equivalent); flexible working arrangements such as flexitime where employees choose a start and finish time which matches their personal needs but work certain core hours and tele-working/home-working/e-working where employees have locational flexibility in completing their work as WLB practices (Darcy, et al., 2011; Rajadhyaksha and Smita, 2004). Work–life balance has been identified as a potential factor to affect important workplace issues such as employee turnover, stress, organizational commitment, absenteeism, job satisfaction, and productivity (Bloom and Van Reenen, 2006 ; Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk and Beutell, 1996; Veiga, Baldrige, and Eddleston, 2004).

Organizational commitment is a strong belief in the organization's goals and values and a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization. Organizational commitment is regularly conceptualized as an affective attachment to an organization as a consequence of an individual sharing the organization's values, their desire to remain in the organization, and their willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization (Mowday, Porter and Steers ,1982). Organizational commitment is an attitude in the form of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization and those individuals who are committed to their organization are less likely to leave their organization. Robins, Timothy and Sanghi (2009), described organizational commitment as a job attitude. According to Meyer et al (1993), there are three separate dimensions to organizational commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective organizational commitment is the emotional bond of employees to their organization and has been demonstrated to have the strongest positive correlation with generally desirable work behaviors. Continuance commitment is the perceived economic value of remaining with an organization compared to leaving it. Normative commitment is an obligation to remain with the organization for moral and ethical reasons.

Hypotheses development

Following hypotheses are developed based on the literature review.

H₁: Work environment has significant relationship with hospital employee's organizational commitment.

H₂: WLB practices have significant relationship with hospital employee's organizational commitment.

H₃: Work environment has significant influence on hospital employee's organizational commitment.

H₄: WLB practices have significant influence on hospital employee's organizational commitment.

Methodology

Data was collected from randomly selected 500 paramedical staff from 10 selected multispecialty hospitals in Bangalore within the time span of November 2013 to March 2014. Though 18 private multispecialty hospitals were approached for the study, final consent was received from 10 hospitals. HR managers coordinated with respondents for administering the survey after reassuring the confidentiality of the data obtained. Based on the nature of the study, instrument was developed with the three variables – work environment (WE), work-life balance (WLB) and organizational commitment (OC). 7 Statements for the variable –organizational commitment were adopted and modified from Organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). Questionnaire covered elements with respect to the factors involved in the work environment and work-life balance practices adopted by the hospitals. All three variables were measured on a 5 point agreeableness scale. Reliability test results were found to be reliable and results are presented in Table 1. All three variables were found to have Cronbach's Alpha values 0.7 or above which are above the acceptable level according to Hair *et al.* (1998) .

Results & Discussion

Statistics of the demographics indicated that 88% of the respondents were females and 12% were males. Age group was ranging from below 30 years to 50 years with a data, 37% of the respondents were below 30 years, 50% were between 31 to 40 and 13% were between 41 to 50. Mean scores of the three factors are displayed in Table 1. It is evident from Table 1 that the mean of the responses is also found close to mid value on the scale of 1 to 5 which indicates that the

perception is common among the sample studied. Mean score of the construct- work environment, 3.55 is slightly above the mid-value which indicates that respondents are neutral about the work environment in their hospitals. Mean value of WLB practices seem to be the lowest , 3.36 with a standard deviation 0.66. Construct OC has the highest mean score, 3.63 , with a standard deviation 0.55 which indicates that on an average, respondents are neutrally committed towards their hospitals.

Table 1 - Mean scores of the factors

Factors	N	Mean scores	Standard deviation
Work Environment	500	3.55	0.74
Work-life Balance Practices	500	3.36	0.66
Organizational commitment	500	3.63	0.55

To test hypotheses, correlation and multiple regression were employed. Correlation results are presented in Table 2. It is evident from table 2 that correlation between work environment and organizational commitment is significant at 1% level with $r = .627$ and $p \text{ value} = 0.0$. Table 2 also indicates that correlation between WLB practices and organizational commitment is significant at 1% level with $r = .340$ and $p \text{ value} = 0.0$. Results in table 2, supports hypotheses H_1 and H_2 which implies that both work environment and WLB practices have a significant positive association with organizational commitment of hospital employees. In order to boost the organizational commitment of their staff, hospitals should provide a positive and conducive work environment. Results displayed in table 2, indicate that relationship between WLB practices and OC are moderate. It can be concluded that robust WLB practices are crucial to enhance the commitment of the hospital staff.

Table 2 : Correlation results

		Organizational commitment
Work environment	Pearson Correlation	.627**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000
	N	500
WLB practices	Pearson Correlation	.340**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000
	N	500

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

To establish linear relation between independent variables and dependent variable, multiple regression was employed and results are presented in Table 3. R in this model, 0.399 explains the degree of relation between set of independent variables on dependent variable selected for the study. R square 0.488, in this model ascertains the goodness fit of the model. ANOVA results depicted in Table 4, explains the significance of the model which was found to be significant at 5% level. The regression model seems to explain around 48% of the commitment of the employees in multispecialty hospitals.

Table 3 – Regression model

Dependent Variable	Independent variables	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Organizational commitment	Work-life Balance Practices, Work environment	0.699	0.488	0.480	0.396

Table 4- ANOVA results for the Regression model

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Organizational commitment	Regression	73.28	8	9.16	58.55	0.00
	Residual	76.82	491	0.16		
	Total	150.11	499			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Work-life Balance Practices, Work environment
 b. Dependent Variable: Organizational commitment

Table 5 displays the co-efficient values of the regression model. From the table, it is evident that work environment emerges as the most significant factor that contributes towards the commitment of the hospital staff with a coefficient of 0.83. Both factors significantly influence organizational commitment of the hospital employees at 1% significance level. This supports hypotheses, H₃ and H₄. Co-efficient value of the construct, WLB practices implies that employees are not in agreement with the WLB practices implemented in the hospitals. Management should look into this aspect meticulously and implement practices that are acceptable from employee's perspective.

Table 5 – Coefficients of the model

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.73	0.22		7.83	0.00
Work Environment	0.62	0.06	0.83	11.05	0.00
Work-life Balance Practices	-0.14	0.04	-0.16	-3.60	0.00

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational commitment

Conclusion

Study highlights the significance of work environment and WLB practices on organizational commitment of the hospital employees. Organizations should treat their employees as the way they treat their customers/patients. A great organization should have managers that motivate and appreciate the contributions of their staff and provide a pleasant work environment. There should be proper and transparent communication channel in the organizations to facilitate the employees to perform. There should be recognition for the performance of the employees and contribution

of the employees towards the growth of the organization. It is also imperative for the hospitals to provide their employees a safe and secure environment free from hazards. Flexibility, trust, collaboration and appreciation are few aspects employees are expecting from the organizations today. Majority of the hospital employees are females and they often find it difficult to balance their personal and professional lives due to various shifts involved. Flexibility should be provided to the needy and leave policies should be flexible enough to meet the requirements of the employee's balancing issues thus making the hospitals a great place to work with.

Confining to two variables identified, study has its own limitations. Future research can incorporate more variables, organizational level as well as individual level that enhance the organizational commitment of the hospital staff. The study location was limited to Bangalore city, future research can be spread out to other geographical locations.

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