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Ethical Values and Workplace Behavior among IT Professionals

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Abstract

The present study tests the hypothesis that perceived ethical values like organizational justice and opportunity for combining work and family would affect the workplace behavior like Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and work-family conflict of IT professionals. The sample comprised of 154 IT professionals who worked for various IT companies across Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, and Bangalore, belonging to different job hierarchies, i.e.; senior-level, junior-level, and middle-level managers. The findings revealed that procedural justice was positively correlated with conscientiousness, courtesy & helping co-worker dimensions of OCB. Work-family conflict was negatively correlated with conscientiousness, courtesy & Helping co-worker. Further analysis showed that perception of distributive justice and interactional justice and opportunity to balance work and life significantly negatively predicted work family conflict of IT professionals. The only dimension of helping co-workers of OCB was found to be predicted significantly by distributive justice & opportunity to balance work and family. The findings suggest that perception of distributive justice and opportunity for combining work and family affect the helping behavior of employee's at the workplace, and reduces work-family conflict. The results have been discussed in the context of IT sector and how the ethical values can enhance positive workplace behavior and reduce work-family conflict.

Keywords: organizational justice, citizenship behaviour, work-family conflict.

Introduction

According to a recent study by National Association of Software and Services Company (NASSCOM), a non-profit foundation has seen that the Indian IT-BPO industry has contributed immensely to India's progress. India achieved this success by bringing about constant changes and transformation in itself in a very short span of time. The IT sector itself has contributed immensely than any other sector and has made a lasting, sustainable, and multi-fold addition to the country's growing economy (NASSCOM 2014).

Due to growing global demand, this sector brought a new work environment and changes in the employment trends like adhering to strict behaviors regarding completing of deadlines set by their customers, working in different time zones, team interdependency, multitasking, increased interaction with offshore clients and extended work hours. IT professionals are constantly under pressure to deliver the services on time and also to remain cost effective. At the same time, more women participation especially in the IT sector has enhanced the social mobility and high work participation of female employees in catching up with the direct opportunities provided by the sector Ahuja (2002). A growing number of women are coming to the forefront. Such changes in the work culture and environment lead to high stress in the professionals as well as contribute to the problems of work-life balance, conflict and work-place behavior.

Organizations have started recognizing high stress as an area of concern to address growing attrition rate prevalent in this sector. However, under these circumstances, the perception of organizational ethics and values play a vital role in influencing the workplace behavior and conflict management in the personal and work-life of the employee. Thus, this research explores how the perception of organizational ethics and values influences organizational citizenship behaviour as the

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workplace behavior and work-family conflict which in turn affects individual performance. The authors have selected organizational justice and organizational support for work life balance as two salient ethical values which may affect the employees' OCB, and work-family conflict.

Work-Life Balance: According to Frame & Hartog (2003), work-life balance (WLB) can be defined as a measure of proper control as to how, when and where people work. Similarly, Clutter back (2003) defined WLB as an awareness of different demands towards energy and time, ability to allocate the time and energy among various domains of work and life and then to apply and make a choice (as cited in Irfan & Azmi, 2015).

With the advent of technologies, workplaces have evolved and made life simpler and work manageable with easy access to emails, computers, cell phones which have reduced the physical boundaries of the workplace. It was observed that employees who were more career oriented made use of technology to keep up with the work even after work hours (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2005). Also, organizations that provide the opportunity to balance work and life are perceived as ethical and are preferred workplaces by employees. This leads to an understanding of the five common work-life balance initiatives like flexible work time, job sharing, telecommunicating, personal leave programs and childcare support.

Work-life Balance & IT: The organizations that provide an opportunity to balance work and life, with reduced working hours and flexible work patterns and support their employee's in their efforts, and also engage them are perceived as more attractive and found to help them maintain their health as well as quality of work (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2011; Swan & Cooper, 2005; Worrall and Copper, 1999). Studies in IT sector also have reported that higher perception of opportunity to balance work and life is negatively correlated to intention to leave (Noor 2011; Jnaneswar 2016). Women IT professionals reported that odd

working hours, especially the time to travel for work and the difficulty to balance work and family life has negatively affected their lives, and their inability to maintain balance (Bharathi, Mala & Bhattacharya, 2015; Kumari & Devi 2015; Maran & Usha 2014). These researches have highlighted the importance of opportunities given to balance work and family by the organization as imperative for better performance at the workplace.

Having a balanced work and family life helps the employee to focus on both the arenas and in turn perform efficiently, which will reduce the likelihood of turnover, and also possibility of work-family conflicts

Work-Family Conflict: With the rise of women participation in the corporate world, family dynamics have also seen changes leading to increase in conflicts, and difficulty in balancing work as well as the family which is one of the often cited comments in EAP provided by the various IT organizations (Hindu Business Line, 2006). A work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressure from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect.

The participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1987). It is a conflict that arises due to work responsibilities interfering with family responsibilities as well as family responsibilities interfering with work responsibilities. The different types of conflicts as out forth by Greenhaus & Beutell (1985), i.e. time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based was found to affect the employees' ability to maintain balance effectively (Srivastava & Srivastava, 2012). As the nature of work and job characteristics of IT sector are demanding, regarding long work hours due to projects that are time-based, this affects the work-family dynamics (Valk & Srinivasan 2011; as cited in Padhi & Pattnaik, 2014).

Organizational Justice: Organizational Justice has been studied as an important organizational value since the 1980s and has been researched extensively in the context of employee's workplace behavior, satisfaction and commitment.

According to Rousseau (1995), greater organizational support helps to shape an implicit psychological contract between the organization and the individual which aids and enhances their work & non-work conflicts and at the same time increases the individual's sense of commitment, whereas, Alvesson (2002) calls this a social exchange, a mutual and fair exchange, where a supportive organization is perceived as "fair" and thus enhancing the desire to reciprocate to one's employer through higher commitment (cited in Chawla & Sondhi, 2011).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has been studied since the late 1970s and has been linked to overall organizational effectiveness, also known as extra role behaviour, or behaviour that is discretionary can have an important role to play in an employees' life. Exhibiting OCB led to greater favourable rating of the employees by their managers may be due to overall assessment of employee as favourable, even at the time of crisis (Podsak off, Whiting, Podsak off & Blume (2009); Organ, Podsak off & MacKenzie (2006); Zhang 2011, as cited in Kark & Waismel-Manor, 2005).

It has been found that more the organization engages their employee's they will tend to show citizenship behaviour as it focuses on employee involvement and commitment that is beyond the given parameters of the organization (Ahmed, Rasheed & Jehanzeb, 2012). Peterson (2004) found that the relationship between corporate citizenship and also organizational commitment was stronger among employees who believed in the importance of the social responsibility of businesses. Also the ethical measure of corporate citizenship was a stronger predictor of organization commitment than the economic, legal, and discretionary measures. The results of the study

reflected that the extra-role behavior was more strongly associated with the organization commitment among female employees. Research on different sectors show a positive relationship between OCB and existing culture of the organization, personality and reduced job stress (Mohant, 2012; Sohrabi, Zadeh, Bastani, & Ravangan, 2011).

Organizational Justice and OCB: Cropanzano et al. (2007), suggested that organizational justice should become an integral value of the management practices. McFarlin and Sweeny (1992) found that positive justice perceptions could be linked to the important individual as well as organizational outcomes (Mathur & Padmakumari, 2013). Research also indicates that when employees perceive their organizations as fair, it significantly affected their OCB (Messer & White 2006; Giap, Hackermeler, Jlac & Wagdarikar 2005 as cited in Kaur (2011). When studied private and public bank employees found no difference in their OCB as well as their perception of organizational justice. However, the study revealed that female employees had the more positive perception of organizational citizenship behavior than the male employees (Kaur, 2011).

Indicating gender differences Farrell, Sarah, and Finkelstein (2007) suggests that women are more likely to participate in the helping dimension of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) whereas men, on the other hand, participate in the civic virtue dimension. The existing values of the organization were also found to determine the employees' intention to leave. Even though it's a discretionary behavior employee do exhibit them, as a result of satisfaction, commitment, the perception of ethical behavior.

Considering the various studies that were reviewed have brought to light few areas that needed to be studied further.

Table 2: Organizational Values and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Variables	Conscientiousness	Courtesy	Sportsmanship	Helping Co-worker	Civic Virtue	Total OCB	Work-Life Balance
	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta
Distributive Justice	0.18	0.24	-0.19	0.11	0.127	0.156	
Procedural Justice	0.25	0.17	0.088	0.29	0.156	0.25	
Interactional Justice	-0.22	-0.18	0.089	-0.213	-0.164	-0.2	
Work-Family Conflict	-0.01	0.28	-0.072	-0.026	0.003	-0.004	0.432
F	3.914	3.499	0.834	3.471	1.442	3.379	32.876
R	0.308	0.293	0.168	0.292	0.155	0.288	0.422
Adj R ²	0.071	0.061	-0.004	0.061	0.031	0.089	0.372

A significant regression equation was found between conscientiousness and procedural justice and interactional justice. Whereas work family conflict did not predict conscientiousness.

Distributive justice significantly predicted courtesy whereas procedural and interactional justice was found to be significant predictors of helping co-worker as well as overall OCB. However organizational justice did not predict sportsmanship and civic virtue. Opportunity to combine work and family were found to be high predictors of work family conflict.

Table 3: Mean, SD and t values of organizational justice, work life balance, work family conflict & OCB

	MALES		FEMALES		t value	Sig
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD		
Distributive Justice	15.26	3.54	13.44	4.62	2.69	0.008
Procedural Justice	21.68	4.52	20.64	5.4	1.25	0.211
Interactional Justice	15.52	3.24	15.02	3.13	0.92	0.35
Work life balance	14.47	4.63	15.04	4.12	-0.73	0.46
Work-Family Conflict	14.26	4.38	16.06	4.223	-2.39	0.018
Conscientiousness	33.08	6.27	31.2	5.52	1.81	0.071
Courtesy	19.85	4.43	18.1	3.79	2.4	0.017
Sportsmanship	15.91	4.55	16.48	4.1	-0.74	0.45
Helping Co-worker	17.62	3.89	16.34	3.95	1.9	0.058
Civic Virtue	13.98	3.52	12.74	3.12	2.11	0.036
Total OCB	101.08	15.19	95.54	14.15	2.16	0.032

The "t" values were statistically significant at .05 levels. From the above table, it can be seen that there was a significant difference between males and females and their perception of distributive justice as well as work-family conflict. Men and women differed in showing courtesy, as well as their sense of civic virtue. However, there was a significant difference between males and females in their overall OCB.

Discussion

From the above results, it was seen that there was a negative relationship between work-life balance and organizational justice. With employees believing that they are given the opportunity to combine their work and family life which somewhere influences their perception of their organization being just. Work-life balance was also negatively related to conscientiousness, courtesy, helping behavior and civic virtue. It is observed that when the employees are not able to balance their work and their family life it affects their work performance, also the same is seen to transfer its effects on their interpersonal relations with significant others at their workplace.

Employees perceiving greater opportunity to balance work and family as well as their organizational justice were found to have reduced work-family conflict, it is assumed that greater employee feels that the organization is fair less the work-family conflicts. Distributive justice was found to be significantly correlated with conscientiousness, courtesy, helping the co-worker and civic virtue. The feeling of fairness in the distribution of resources and outcomes fairly among the employees the more the employees would reciprocate those positive feelings by showing extra role behavior and extended their help to their co-workers. The scores also show a negative relationship between distributive justice and sportsmanship. Procedural justice was significantly related to conscientiousness, courtesy, and helping co-worker, whereas there was no relationship with sportsmanship and civic virtue.

Regression analysis indicates that procedural and interactional justice strongly predicted conscientiousness, helping the co-worker, as well as overall organizational OCB. Distributive justice also predicted courtesy, employees with the perception of fairness were greater in performing citizenship behaviour as compared to employees with the perception of unfairness (Messer & White, 2006). This outcome validates the H1 which states that perceived organizational justice will lead to greater OCB.

H2 which states that greater work-family conflict will be negatively related to OCB, from table 1, it can be seen that work-family conflict was negatively related to all the five dimensions of OCB. Lambert (2012), found that family on work and strain based conflicts were negatively related to OCB. There were factors of work-family conflicts that produced strain among the employees and hence found lower levels of OCB.

H3 states that there will be no significant relationship between employees' opportunity to combine work and family and their OCB. It was seen from table 1, that there was the negative relationship between their work-life balance as well the four dimension of citizenship behavior i.e. conscientiousness, courtesy, helping co-worker & civic virtue.

H4 states that there will be the significant negative relationship between employees' work-life balance and their work-family conflict. It was found that employees those who perceived lesser opportunity to combine their work and family were found to have greater conflicts, also when job creates a work and non-work conflict for an individual to juggle between two roles it creates difficulty in maintaining balance in them (Alvesson, 2002, as cited in Chawla & Sondhi, 2011).

H5 states that there will be no significant relationship between employees' perception to combining work and family with their perception of organizational justice. Opportunity to combine work & family was negatively related to all the three types of

organizational justice i.e. distributive, procedural, & interactional justice (Table 1). The more the employees had an opportunity to balance their work and family the more they perceived the organization as just. When the employee feels that they have the autonomy and freedom to carry out their job & believes that the organization is fair in compensating, their work-life balance would be higher (Chawla & Sondhi, 2011).

H6 states that there will be the significant difference in males and females and their organizational citizenship behaviour. There was no significant difference between males and females and in their perception of work-life balance (Table 3). However, researches find that women tend to show difficulty in balancing work and family; however, there was a significant difference between males and females and their extra role behaviors (Bharathi, Mala & Bhattacharya 2015; Farrell, Sarah, and Finkelstein 2007) which suggest that women are more likely to participate in the helping behavior whereas men are more likely to participate in the civic virtue dimension. The differences in males and females on courtesy could also be seen. The qualities of helping a co-worker, courtesy are more often associated with females as compared to males. Scores on civic virtue also showed that men tend to practice this more than women.

H7 states that there will be a significant difference between males and females and their perception of opportunity to combine work and family. The scores did not indicate any significant difference in males and females on their perception of an opportunity to combine work and family. Other studies also show similar results where no significant difference were found indicating that females showed more lack of opportunity to combine work and family as well as not able to spend more time with their families due to work related activities as compared to men (Goswami 2014; Tewathia 2014). More women were preoccupied with work-related thoughts even after they leave their workplace.

Limitations

The present study also has its limitations. Even though the sample was large, it was not sufficient enough to cover the perceptions of the overall population of IT professionals. Also, an uneven sample of male and female participants make the outcome less generalizable. This would have led to discrepancies in the outcomes.

Implications

The present study has addressed the concern regarding how ethical values like organizational justice, opportunity to combine work and family & work-family conflicts can affect an employees' citizenship behavior. Only when one understands the importance and relevance of incorporating ethical values do we bring about changes in the perception, intentions, and attitudes of the employee that in turn can affect the organization's outcome.

Conclusion

For an organization to prosper, it needs to bring about changes at various level. When the employees feel they care and their needs are met with, they will be motivated to exhibit behaviors that are above and beyond their expected roles. The present study does focus on the importance of having ethical values well established in the organization.

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