

# Impact of Work Life Balance Practices on Employer Branding in Select IT Companies in Chennai City

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**Abstract**—In an increasingly competitive business environment, Employer Branding is seen as the perception of an organisation as a “great place to work”. Work Life Balance is receiving increasing attention due to several factors. Organisations which invest in Work Life Balance initiatives are often perceived to have a good employer brand. This study examines IT employees’ perceptions with regard to Work Life Balance as a construct of Employer Branding and analyses the relationship between employees’ demographic profiles and their perceptions of Work Life Balance. Primary data was collected from 600 respondents from top 20 IT companies ranked by NASSCOM using a structured questionnaire. t-test and ANOVA was used to find the results. Findings reveal that employees exhibit a high level of satisfaction with Work Life Balance initiatives of their organisations. The study highlights the impact of Work Life Balance practices on employer branding.

**Key words**— Employer Branding, Work Life Balance, IT companies, IT employees

## I. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive business environment, Employer branding is seen as the perception of an organization as a “great place to work.” It is the totality of the thoughts and feelings that people associate with an employer, and its stakeholders, potential and existing employees, clients, customers, etc (Wardini & Nawangsari, 2021). Employer brand in an organization consists of instrumental (tangible) benefits and symbolic (intangible) benefits. Instrumental benefits consist of ‘physical, objective, and tangible attributes’ while symbolic benefits consist of ‘abstract, subjective, and intangible attributes’ (Bhasin et al., 2019). Over the past two decades, the concept of employer branding has developed dynamically. Employer branding is recognised as a key resource for attracting high-quality employees in the competition for talent (Kucherov et al., 2022).

The term “Employer branding” was coined by Ambler & Barrow (1996) in their seminal work and

is defined as a series of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by a job from a company (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Thus, employer branding can be understood as a process to building a unique identity as an employer that differentiates the company from other companies (competitors) (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). According to Jain & Bhatt, 2015, organisations that have employer branding provide positive perceptions to the employees which includes benefits, rewards, career development, and a comfortable work environment. Work Life Balance is receiving increasing attention from various stakeholders such as Government, management, employee representatives and media (Pocock et al, 2001). Global competition, renewed interest in personal life/family life, changing demographic trends, changing technology, complexity of work and human roles, dual income households and prevalent entry of women in the work force are important factors which contribute to the interest in Work Life Balance (Lockwood, 2003, Sverko et al, 2002, Bird, 2006).

Organisations which invest in Work Life Balance initiatives are often perceived to have a good employer brand. Several research studies have been carried out to establish the relationship between Work Life Balance and Employer Branding. The following section examines the plethora of literature available on the same.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Felstead et al (2002) identify four theoretical perspectives that explain the adoption of Work Life Balance practices in an organisational context, namely, institutional theory, organisational adaptation theory, high commitment theory and situational theory. Institutional theory suggests that organisations mirror and conform to “normative pressures” in the society based on the need to maintain social legitimacy. Organisational adaptation theory expounds that Work Life Balance concerns

depends upon the characteristics of the workforce and the management attitude towards Work Life Balance. High commitment theory suggests that adoption of “family – friendly” work practices raise employees’ commitment to the organisation. Situational theory states that Work Life Balance practices are the organisation’s responses to increased issues of talent attraction and retention.

Thompson (2002) classified Work Life strategies as time based (flexitime, telecommuting, part time work, compulsory vacations etc), information based (resource and referral services, dependent care resources etc), money based (subsidy for childcare, flexible spending accounts, leave with pay and so on), direct services (concierge services, on-site dependent care, emergency back-up care, after school and school holiday activities and so on) and culture change services (training to help employees deal with Work Life Balance conflicts, family friendly policies, counselling, wellness programmes, fitness initiatives and so on).

Grigg & Da Silva (2008) contend that organisations using work life balance strategies as part of their employer branding strategy to attract and retain their employees. Work life balance initiatives are more of a necessity for employers than being optional, initially concerned with working women, it is now applicable to all classes of employees (Bird, 2006). Effective work life programs facilitate a mutually beneficial relationship between the employer and employee which contribute to better performance, employer branding and retention of employees apart from being an instrument of competitive advantage. Study results on work life policies and provisions among manufacturing, IT and services organisations in Chennai enumerates the Work life initiatives of IT companies namely flexible working hours, ‘work from home’ options, career break, maternity leave, compensatory off, five-day work week, phased return to work, employee assistance programs, planned vacation options, leave facilities, relocation assistance, provision for financial planning, life insurance, scholarships and educational loans for employees’ wards, consideration of request for relocation, camps and activities for the employees’ children, employee engagement and welfare programmes, talent enrichment activities, on-site health and fitness facilities, recreation facilities, sports or activity clubs for employees and community volunteer programs. The study also

indicated the factors which promote and hinder work life balance. Factors promoting work life balance include family-friendly practices, employee engagement initiatives, programs for employee health, job attributes, organisational culture and good interpersonal relations. Factors which hinder work life balance were extended work hours, work intensification, personal constraints and lack of interpersonal relations. Organisations should strive to create work life balance in its employees by providing practical interventions rather than money-based strategies (Gunavathy, 2011).

‘Family-friendly practices’ such as support for child care, generous personal leave and flexible work arrangements followed by the organisations ensure a better work life balance for its employees resulting in positive work-related attitude. This positive attitude manifests in the increased loyalty of the employees leading to retention. These ‘family-friendly practices’ seem to impact the organisational attractiveness positively (Bourhis & Mekkaoui, 2010). Organisations offering non-monetary benefits such as on-site gym, healthcare etc. have a better image amongst its employees. Organisations having family-friendly practices such as flexible scheduling, parental leave have a favourable impression on its employees leading to better satisfaction, low absenteeism and better retention of employees (Heather, 2003).

The rationale for adopting Work Life Balance strategies is varied. Wood et al (2003) found that adoption of Work Life Balance practices is due to the combination of institutional pressures as well as competitive factors, situational conditions and changing perceptions regarding work and family programs. The benefits of Work Life Balance initiatives for the organisations are better talent attraction, enhanced productivity, talent management, reduced work stress, reduced absenteeism, better motivation, employer branding and talent retention. (Department of Labour, New Zealand, 2003, Byrne, 2005, Pocock, 2001, McPherson, 2007).

Naithani (2009) develop a Work Life Balance macro level model drawn upon the compilation of five individual theories by Guest (2002) to illustrate the association between work and life outside the work place.

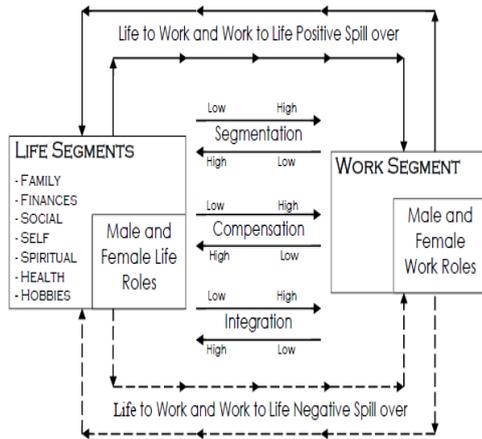


Figure 1: Work Life Balance – Macro level model

Accordingly, the theories of Work Life Balance have not been understood as separate entities but as emerging entities to include a wider meaning. According to the above model, segmentation, integration, compensation and spillover of different degrees create positive and negative influences in the work life of an individual. Work Life Balance is thus a stage where the total sum of the influences is positive or where the total sum is not negative.

Manasa & Showry (2018) studied the relationship between the strategies that are practiced to resolve Work Life Balance issues especially among women in the IT industry and found that there is a significant relationship between the two and that adoption of Work Life Balance strategies have a positive influence on women. Maurya et al (2020) examine the effect of perceived Work Life Balance on the perceived level of Employer Branding on a sample of middle level executives of IT companies through the development of a structural model. Perceived Work Life Balance was found to be positive and significantly predicted Employer Branding. The study focused on the issues faced by employees within the IT sector with an aim to understand and solve issues generated with shifting patterns in an organisational environment such as increasing women participation, dual earning couple and maintaining the difference between categories of employees at the practice level.

Aradhya et al (2021), in a study on IT employees in Bengaluru, found the existence of a positive influence of Work Life Balance factors on Employer Branding. Specifically, the results of the study indicate that certain Work Life Balance factors such

as work from home opportunities, flexible working hours are highly correlated.

Vaidya et al (2023) suggest that there are significant differences across gender groups in terms of remote working and work life balance with social support of employees acting as a moderator.

Hendriana et al (2023) opine that employer branding is rarely integrated into Work Life Balance research. They investigate the role of employer branding in the relationship between Work Life Balance and employee retention in Gen Z workers in Indonesia. Findings reveal that instead of mediating the relationship between Work Life Balance and Employee Retention, Employer Branding significantly moderated the relationship among Gen Z workers and suggest that these findings could be utilised to develop human capital strategies to retain Gen Z employees. Rahmatulloh et al (2024) examined the effects of Work Life Balance on employee performance with employer branding as a moderating variable on Gen Z in Kediri City. Results indicate that employer branding strengthens the relationship between Work Life Balance on employee performance negatively and significantly. Babu & Sahayam (2024) in their research on Work Life Balance among IT employees, highlight the evidence that social support, flexible work arrangements, psychological empowerment and organisational policies significantly impact Work Life Balance in the IT sector. Their study also emphasises that Work Life Balance has a significant influence on women IT employees. The study recommends that employer branding may be strengthened by highlighting the organisation's commitment to Work Life Balance which may attract and retain talent since both potential and existing employees assign high value to an employer brand that promotes Work Life Balance.

### III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Specifically, this article proposes to address the following research objectives:

1. To analyse the perceptions of IT employees towards Work Life Balance as a construct of Employer Branding
2. To find out the relationship between demographic profile of IT employees and their perceptions towards Work Life Balance

IV. SAMPLING DESIGN

To answer the above research questions, a structured questionnaire was developed and used to capture the perspectives of the IT employees with regard to the dimension Work Life Balance on Employer Branding. Employees of top 20 IT companies ranked by NASSCOM were selected as sampling population. Judgement sampling was adopted. Data were collected from 600 respondents. Reliability score was measured using Cronbach’s Alpha which showed a score of 0.89 for the Work Life Balance construct. T test and ANOVA were applied to obtain the desired results.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To understand the perceptions of IT employees towards Work Life Balance, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Work Life Balance of IT employees

Work Life Balance	Mean	SD
Employees have a good work life balance	4.38	0.68
Need -based flexible working hours policy	4.04	1.15
Opportunity to work from home	2.68	1.63
Ability to address personal and family matters	4.43	0.69
Safe and suitable work place	4.35	0.63
Work-life initiatives	4.35	0.64

Source: Primary data

Based on the mean scores of Work Life Balance of IT employees in the table above, “Ability to address personal and family matters” is the most important factor having a mean score of 4.43 followed by “Employees have a good work life balance” (4.38). “Safe and suitable work place” and “Work life initiatives” have the same mean score of 4.35. The least factor is “Opportunity to work from home” having a mean score of 2.68 and SD of 1.63. The mean scored indicate that the respondents are very happy with their work-life balance and highly satisfied with the work-life initiates of their organisation. The respondents are least satisfied with the opportunities to work from home.

From the above responses, it can be inferred that IT employees enjoy an enviable work life balance through the work-life initiatives provided by IT companies such as flexible working hours, compensatory off, five-day work week, cafeteria, health and fitness facilities, wellness programs, cab services etc. They seem to manage their personal and family commitments due to the adequate personal leave and other leave available to them. The least score is given to the item relating to work from home. What was once a new norm due to the pandemic, has now slowly been reduced and employees are asked to report to work across the industry. Though several reasons are attributed by the IT companies, the employers should consider this important factor to further enhance the work life balance of their employees.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of Level of Work Life Balance

Level of Worl Life Balance	Frequency	Percent
Low	149	24.8
Moderate	279	46.5
High	172	28.7
Total	600	100

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals the levels of satisfaction of IT employees on Work Life Balance. 28.7% of the sample respondents are highly satisfied with the level of Work Life balance whereas 46.5% of the sample respondents are moderately satisfied with the level of Work Life Balance.

To assess the relation between demographic profile of IT employees and their perceptions towards Work Life Balance, t-test and ANOVA were calculated.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between demographic variables and Work Life Balance.

Table 3: t-test for significant differences between demographic variables and Work Life Balance

Demographic Variable	t value	P value
Gender	0.661	0.509
Marital Status	2.067	0.039

Source: Primary data

There is no significant difference between male and female respondents with regard to the dimension of Work Life Balance since P value is greater than 0.05.

Hence the null hypothesis is accepted with regard to Work Life Balance. The results indicate that with regard to the Work Life Balance dimension of Employer Branding, both male and female employees feel the same way. Work Life Balance, which was hitherto related only to female employees is now applicable to male employees too as they would also like to have a balance between work and life. There is a significant difference between married and single employees with regard to Work Life Balance. Since P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance with regard to Work Life Balance.

Table 4: ANOVA for significant differences between demographic variables and Work Life Balance

Demographic Variable	F value	P value
Age in years	1.207	0.300
Educational qualification	1.428	0.241
Designation	16.974	<0.001
Job type	0.019	0.981
Years of experience in the industry	7.011	0.001
Years of experience in the organisation	0.922	0.398
Monthly income	2.324	0.074

Source: Primary data

There is no significant difference between age groups with regard to the dimension of Work Life Balance since P value is greater than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Employees of different age groups feel the same way with regard to the above dimensions of employer branding. There is no significant difference between employees possessing different education qualification with regard to the dimension of Work Life Balance since P value is greater than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. The results show that irrespective of their educational qualification, IT employees feel the same way regarding Work Life Balance.

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance with regard to the dimension of Work Life Balance. Hence, there is a significant difference between designations of IT employees with regard to the stated dimension. There is no significant difference between job types of IT employees with regard to Work Life Balance dimension since P value is greater than 0.05. Hence,

the null hypothesis is accepted. Results indicate that this dimension is important to IT employees of different job types and employers would benefit if Work Life Balance is strengthened in their employer brand.

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. There is a significant difference between employees' experience in the field with regard to Work Life Balance. There is no significant difference between the years of experience the employee has in the organisation with regard to the dimension of Work Life Balance as P value is greater than 0.05. Hence, null hypothesis is accepted. Similarly, there is no significant difference between employees belonging to different ranges of monthly income with regard to Work Life Balance. Since P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Employees belonging to different monthly income ranges do not view Work Life Balance differently. Hence, the level of income does not matter when it comes to Work Life Balance.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Employer branding is essentially an emotional bonding between an employer and his/her employee. A loyal employee is the brand ambassador of the employer and such employees generate tremendous goodwill that is the foundation of an employer brand. Companies with strong employer brand will capitalise their competitive advantage which is vital in the highly competitive business environment. The main objective of an employer brand is in creating a workforce-friendly image of the employer which is institutionalised into a process of healthy working relationship between an organisation and its employees. Creating a balance between work and life of the employees positively impacts the employer brand. By strengthening the Work Life Balance practices, organisations can have a better employer brand which has far reaching impact on organisational performance, job satisfaction and better employee retention.

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