

Work Life Balance Policies, Practices and Its Impact on Organizational Performance

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Abstract: - Work life balance practices are deliberate organizational changes in programs or organization culture that are designed to reduce work life conflict and enable employees to be more effective at work and other roles. This paper mainly focuses on understanding how organization's 'Work life balance' policies assist employees in balancing their work and life responsibilities and also provides an indication on how the organization policies could be improved and how these policies when applied to all workers can be considered strategic human resource management that can translate into improved individual and organizational performance.

Keywords: - Work life balance, Organizational performance, Flexible Work Arrangement and Productivity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employees with work life balance feel their lives are fulfilled both inside and outside of work, and they experience minimal conflict between work and non-work roles and life in general and lower levels of stress in general. Historically, work life balance issues have been considered personal issues and employees have just responded to their employees needs by providing additional benefits such as onsite child care service and paid maternity leave in the workplace. However, with environmental shifts and value changes of employees, employee's desire for work life balance has increased and employees have begun to offer more active support of their employees work life balance. Thus, organization efforts for ensuring employees work life balance are needed and valued more than ever.

Competing and multi-face demands between work and home responsibilities have assumed increased relevance for employees in recent years, due to large number of demographic and workplace changes such as greater number of women in the workforce, dual – career couples, transformation in family structures – a rise in number of single parents, a growing reluctance to accept the longer hours culture and technological advances. In response to these changes and conflict they generate multiple roles that individual's occupy, organization are increasingly pressured to design various kinds of practices, intended to facilitate employees efforts to fulfill both their employment related and their personal commitments.

II. WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICIES / PRACTICES

There are number of work-life balance and flexible working arrangements. They are the clear policy statement that announces the organizations commitment for providing a flexible responsive work balance, which enables all employees to balance work and family / personal responsibilities supported by policy guidelines.

Some of the important policies and initiatives taken in the study are elaborated below:

Policies in the originations with reference to leave arrangements:

1. *Careers Leave:* It allows employees to take time off to care for and support a sick family or household member.
2. *Opportunity for leave if care arrangements –* for children or other dependents breakdown: If day care person taking care of children or dependants get sick, the employee is allowed to take leave to care for his/her child or dependents.
3. *Study/ Training leave:* It allows employees to take time off for study or training.
4. *Career breaks:* It allows employees to negotiate a fixed period away from work to undertake study, while keeping a job at the end of the term.
5. *Cultural / Religious breaks:* It allows employees to take time off for cultural/ religious reason; public holidays excluded.
6. *Bereavement leave:* It allows employees to take a minimum leave of 2 days after the death of family or house hold member.
7. *Pooling of leave entitlement:* It allows employees to pool all entitlements like sick leave, career's leave etc, giving employees a larger number of days if they need it for family reasons.

Policies in the organization with reference to Parenting and Pregnancy Policies:

1. Unpaid maternity/ paternity and adoption leave
2. Paid Maternity leave

3. Paid paternity leave
4. Paid adoption leave
5. Opportunity to return to the same job after maternity / paternity and adoption leave.
6. *Safely at work during pregnancy*: It allows changing the work of a pregnant worker to avoid long periods of standing or lifting heavy objects.
7. *Pre-natal leave*: It allows time for pregnant women or their partners to attend medical appointments during working hours, either using additional leave or sick leave.
8. *Staggered return to work after pregnancy*: It allows employees to negotiate a temporary reduction in hours of work when they return to work.
9. *Private expressing / breast feeding room*: Space provided at work offering privacy for an employee to breast feed and providing refrigeration facilities.
10. *Lactation breaks*: Time off to express milk or breast feed babies if needed.
11. *A careers room or bringing children to work in emergencies*: Provision of a safe location where staff can carry out their regular work duties while caring for dependents until other arrangements can be made.
12. *Employer assistance with childcare*: Employers paying for or reserving places in an existing or on-site child care centre.

Policies in the organization: with reference to flexible work arrangements:

1. *Job Sharing*: Job sharing is a form of part-time working where two or more people share the responsibility for full-time job. They share the pay and benefits in proportion to the hours each works. Job shares may work split days, split weeks or alternate weeks.
2. *Flexitime*: Flexitime operates in which the system allow the employees to build up additional hours, which can be used to leave early, come in late, or take longer periods off, with approval from line management.
3. *Part-time work*: Part-time working hours any arrangement where the employees contracted to work anything less than typical full time hours for the type of work in question.
4. *Compressed hours*: This is where an employee works their usual hours in fewer or longer blocks during the week. Through starting early or finishing late, employees can build up additional hours which they take as a day or half day away from work.
5. *Shift work*: It is a pattern of work in which one employee replaces another doing the same job within a 24 hour period. Shift workers normally work in crews, which are group of workers who make up for separate shift team.

6. *Annualized Hours*: It is a system where the total number of hours to be worked over the year is fixed but there is flexibility over the employees daily and weekly working patterns.
7. *Home Working*: It is a arrangement where an employee regularly carries out all or part of their duties to home rather than employer premises. It could be occasional agreed days or it could be a full time arrangement.
8. *Mobile Working*: Here an employee works all or part of their working week at a location away from employer's work place. Employees will receive instructions by phone or computer at home or in their vehicle.
9. *Hot Desking*: Here employees are not assigned their own desk but when they are in the office they can use any desk, or an available desk within a designated area.
10. *Gradual Retirement*: It allows employees to gradually reduce the number of working hours or duties over an extended period of time, after several years prior to retirement.

Additional Work Provisions:

1. Telephone for personal use
2. Counseling Services for employees
3. Health Programs
4. Exercise facilities
5. Equal Access to promotion, training and development.
6. *Referral Services for employees personal needs*: Here the organization provides a referral service – a telephone service that employees can use for assistance for personal matters.
7. *Parenting of family support program*: The organization provides a formal educational program on parenting.
8. *Relocation or placement assistance*: Here if the employee has to move for work purpose. The organization helps the whole family adapt to the new environment.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Need for the Study:

In today's society it is common for employees to have many competing responsibilities in their life. Care commitment involving children or elderly relatives, education commitment, needing to be available for religious observances, employees want a greater sense of well being and reduce stress levels. A poor balance between an employees work commitment and their other responsibilities can lead to stress, high absence and low productivity. Employees with better work life balance often have greater sense of responsibility, ownership and control of their working life. Hence this study is aimed to find

out the impact of work life balance policies on organizational performance.

Background of the Study:

The pharmaceutical industry in India is the world's largest in terms of volume and stands fourteenth in terms of value. The Indian pharmaceutical market increased at a CAGR of 17.46% in 2015 from US \$ 6 billion in 2005 and is expected to expand at a CAGR of 15.92% 2 US \$55 million by 2020. This study was conducted in the company which is a premium manufacturer of pharmaceutical containers made of neutral glass. It is one of the leading manufacturers of pharmaceutical packaging and also the leading supplier for pharmaceutical industry offering a "One Stop Shop" solution for entire range of small volume tabular glass, parenteral packaging including ampoules, vials, cartridge and sterile refillable syringes. With more than thousands of employees working in the company it becomes important to manage the work life balance to improve productivity. Hence a study is conducted to understand the different policies adopted by the organization and its impact on the organizational performance.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To know the different work-life balance policies / practices in the organization and the importance of these policies to the employees.
2. To know the benefits of work-life balance and ways to increase productivity and to find out the challenges for introducing flexible work arrangement.
3. To analyze the barriers in achieving work-life balance.
4. To understand the impact of work-life balance on organizational performance.

Type of Research:

The research is descriptive type. Descriptive research provides the researchers with a general understanding of the problem and seeks conclusive data to answer question necessary to determine a particular cause of action.

Sample size:

A size of 50 employees was chosen randomly for the survey.

Sampling Method:

The sample is selected through the simple random sampling method. The number of employees selected for survey is 50.

Method of Data Collection:

A. Primary Data:

Primary data are collected by a study specifically to fulfill the data needs of the problem at hand. Such data are original in character and are generated in large number of surveys conducted mostly by government and also by individual, institution, and research bodies.

Methods of Collecting Primary Data:

- ❖ Direct personal interviews.
- ❖ Indirect oral interviews.
- ❖ Information from correspondence.
- ❖ Mail questionnaire method.

The primary data in this study was collected by questionnaire method considering a sample size of 50 through direct interview method.

B. Secondary Data:

Data which are not originally collected but rather obtained from published and unpublished sources are known as secondary data. Sources of secondary data are:

- ❖ Published sources
- ❖ Unpublished sources

Secondary data in this study was collected through HR text books, Company annual reports and documents.

Method of Analysis:

Raw primary data was collected with the help of a questionnaire. The raw data was then tabulated. Based on this bar chart were prepared. Analysis was conducted and interpreted. Conclusions were drawn based on that.

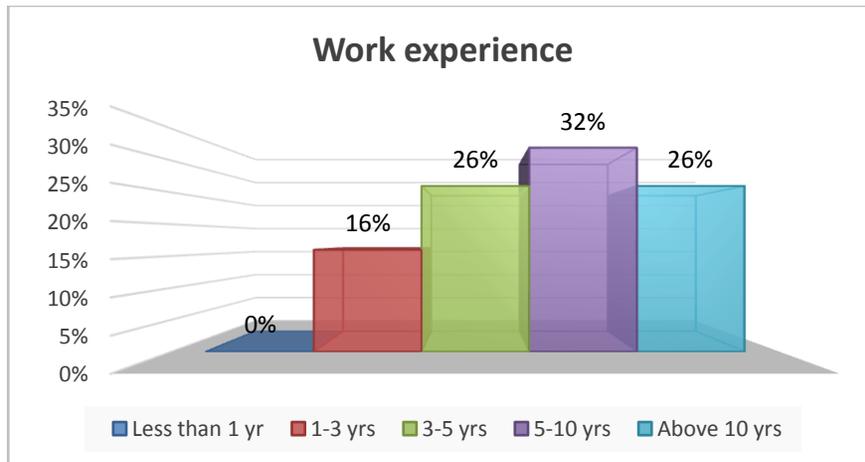
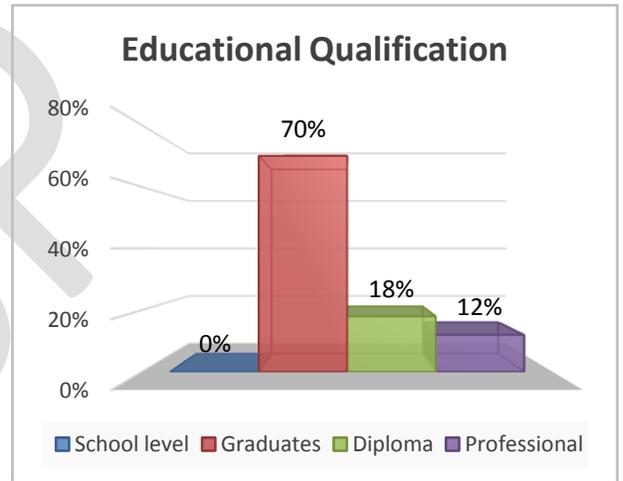
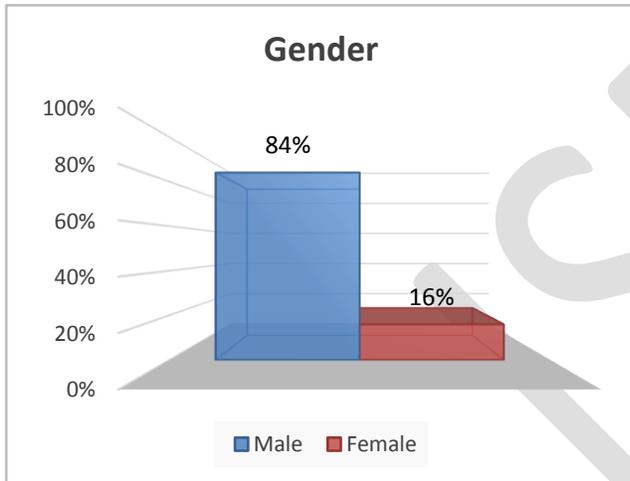
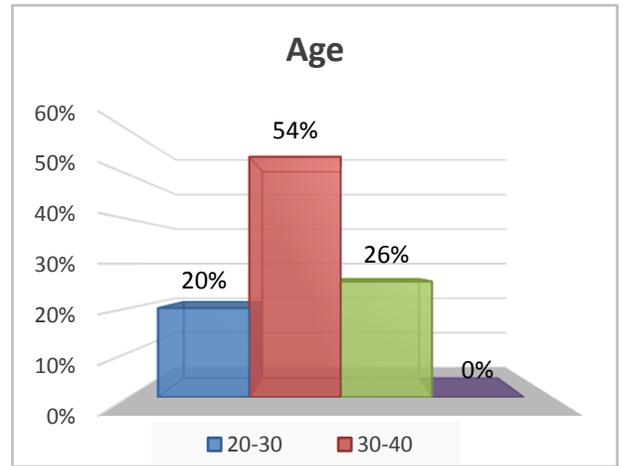
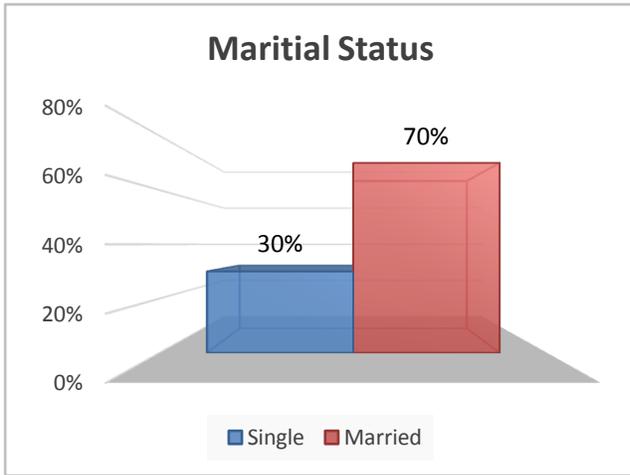
Tools and Techniques Used:

1. The data collected is tabulated in MS EXCEL.
2. Study is conducted with help of Table, Graphical representation & interpretation with each graphs & charts.

Limitations of the Study:

- Accuracy of the study is purely based on the information as given by the respondents.
- This study was limited to Sample Size of 50.
- This study has been limited by time and cost factors.

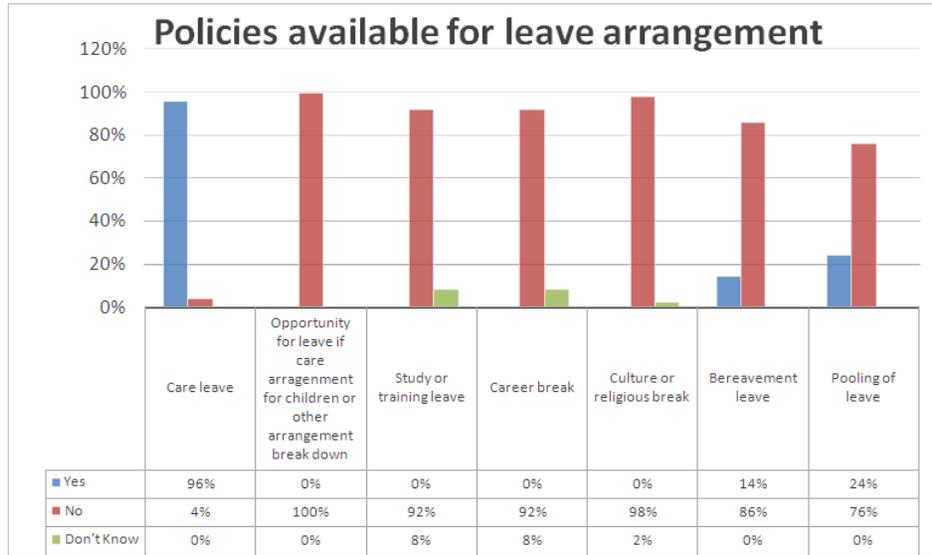
Personal Profile of Respondents:



Interpretation: From the above graphs it can be seen that most of the employees surveyed were male, were from the age

group 30-40, they were graduates, married and with a work experience of 5-10 years.

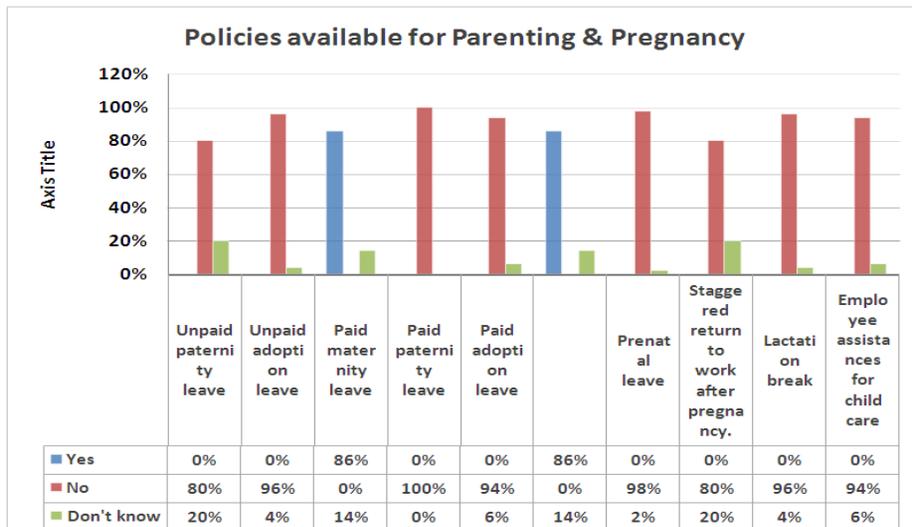
Q No 1: Do you agree that the following policies are the in the organization to manage work life balances?



Interpretation:

- From the graph it can be seen that the organization had policies for care leave as told by 96% of the employees but some say that there is no care leave, these are some of the employees who are not aware of the facility being given.
- All the employees said that there is no policy on opportunity for leave if care arrangement for children or other arrangements breakdown.
- It can be seen that 92% of the employee survey say that there is no study or training leave where as some of them say they don't know about it. These were the employees who did not know the different policies concerned to work life balance.
- The same is applicable even to career break as above.
- 98% of the employees say that there is no special leave arrangement for culture or religious ceremonies.
- Regarding bereavement leave 14% say there is a policy on it. But 86% said no. When checked it was found that there was policy on bereavement but only 14% who actually availed this leave were aware of it.
- Most of the employees that pooling of leave policy is not available (76%) but 24% say it is available. This result is obtained as the pooling of leave policy is available only for middle and top level management and not for workers and the sample survey consisted of employees of different cadres.

Policies for Parenting & Pregnancy:

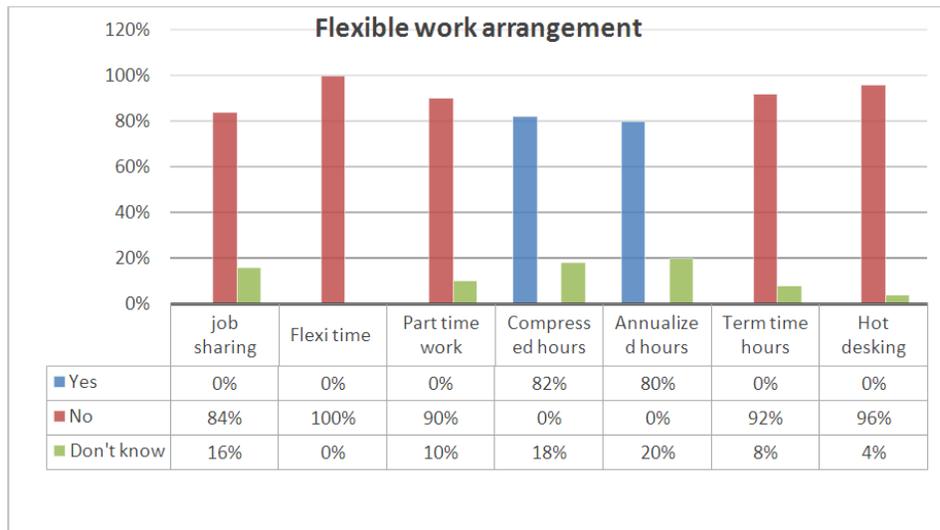


Interpretation:

1. From the graph it can be seen that most of the employees (80%) said that there is no unpaid paternity leave.
2. Most of the employees also said that there is no policy on unpaid or adoption leave (96%).
3. The employees said that there was policy on paid maternity leave.
4. All the employees said that there was no policy on paid paternity leave.
5. The same is applicable for paid adoption leave.

6. Most of the employees also said that there is a policy which says that the employees have opportunity for returning to the same job after maternity leave.
7. Almost all the employees said that there is no leave policy on prenatal leave.
8. The same is applicable as above to policies on staggered return to work after pregnancy, lactation break, employee's assistance for child care.

Flexible work arrangements:



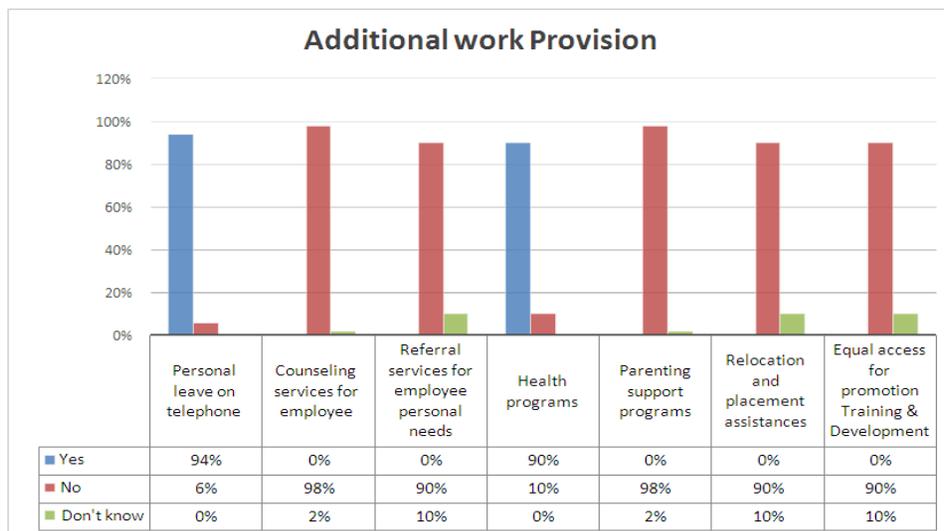
Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that

1. The policy on job sharing as regards to flexible work arrangements is not available in this organization where the survey was conducted.

2. The same applies to flexi-time, term time hours, part-time work and hot desking.
3. But the organization has policies on compressed hours and annualized hours.

Additional Work Provision:



Interpretation:

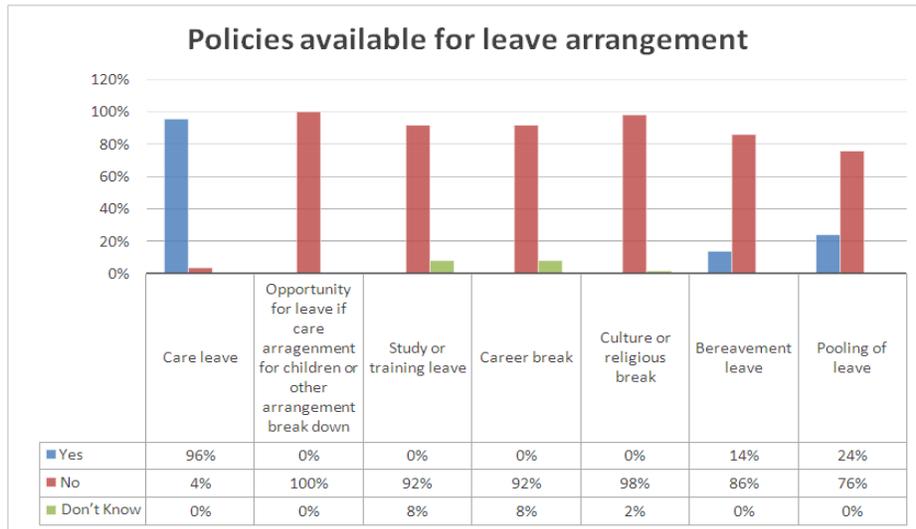
From the above graph it can be seen that

1. Additional provision regarding on telephone is available in the organization and also different health programs are conducted to manage the health of the employees.

2. It is also seen that counseling services for the employees, referral services for employee personal needs, parenting support programs and relocation and placement assistances are not provided in the organization

Q No 2: How importance is this policy personally to manage work life balance?

A. Policies for leave arrangement:

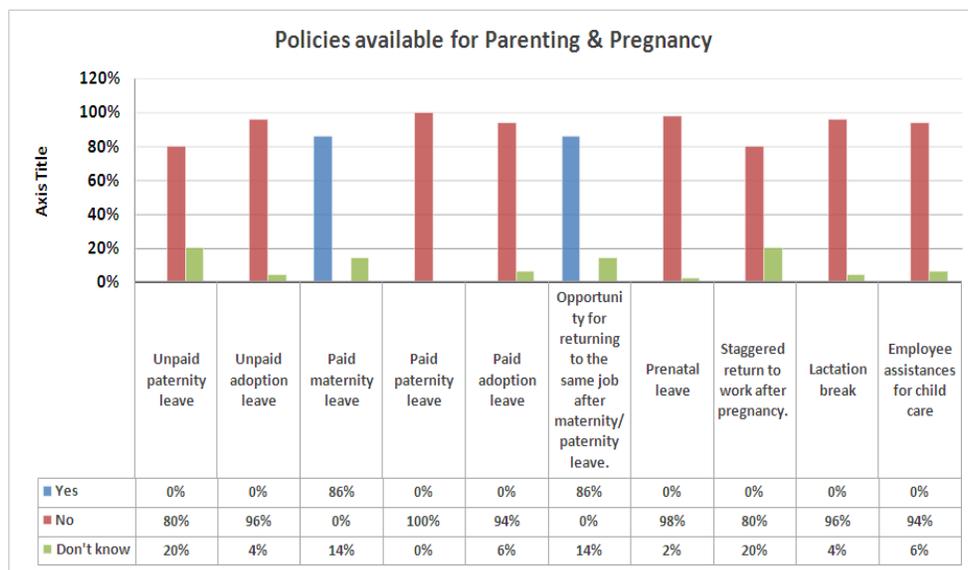


Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that most of the employees say that care leave (63%), Bereavement leave (58%) and pooling of leave (54%) are the important policies

what the employees feel the organization needs to manage work-life balance.

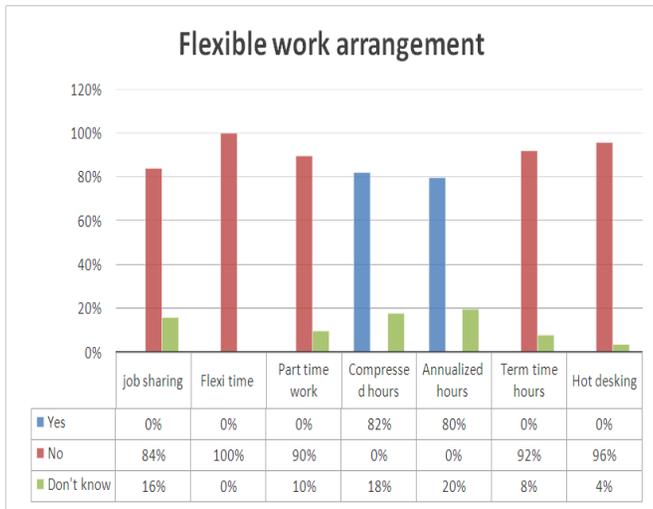
B. Policies for Parenting & Pregnancy:



Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that paid maternity leave (62%), staggered return to work after pregnancy (54%), opportunity for returning to the same job after maternity leave (36%) are some of the important policies what the employees feel are needed for parenting and pregnancy.

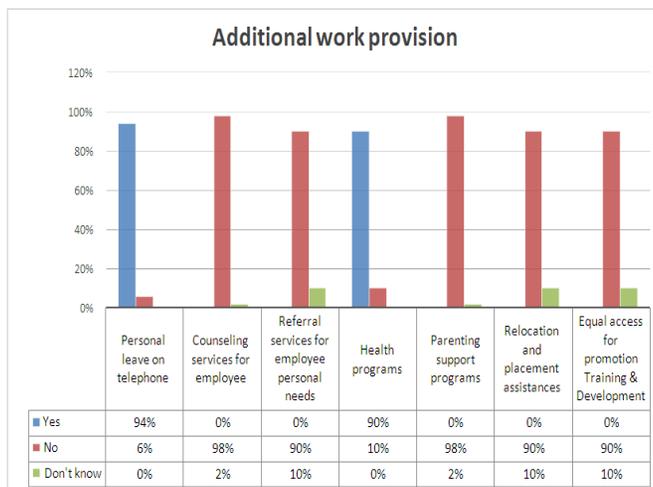
C. Flexible work arrangement:



Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that policies on compressed hours of work (52%), and annualized hours (70%) are the two important flexible work arrangements what the employees feel need to be there in the organization to manage work-life balance. The previous graph on the policies shows that these two flexible work arrangements are already available in the organization.

D. Additional Work Provision:

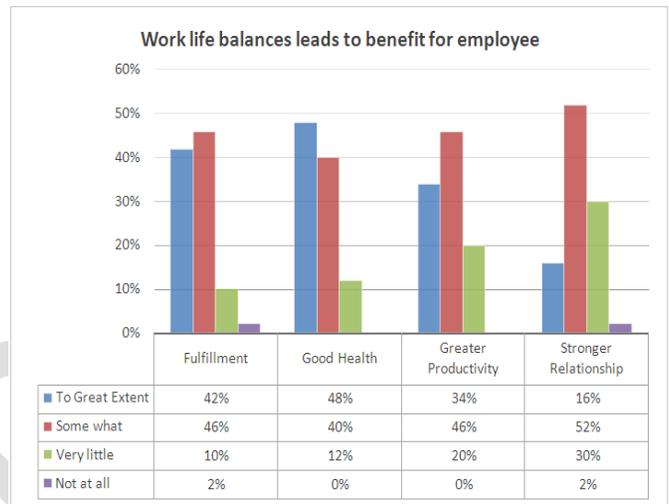


Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that the personal leave on telephone (74%), health programs (48%) are the important additional work provisions that the organization needs to provide to manage work-life balance.

Q No 3: Do you agree that work life balances leads to following benefits for employee?

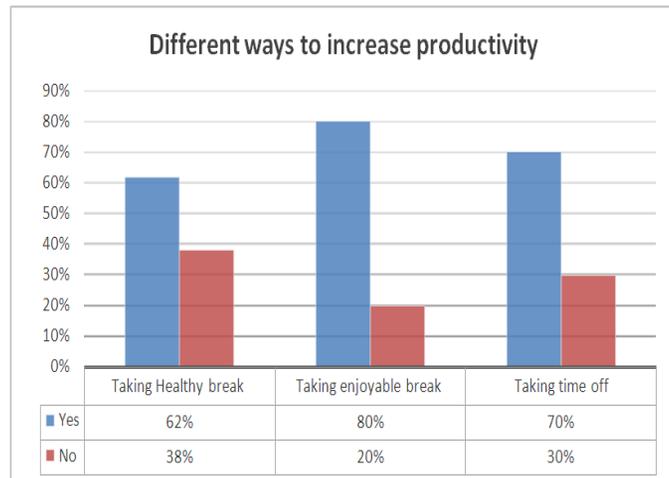
Work-life balance leads to benefit for employee.



Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that the main benefits of work life balance to a great extent as said by most of the employees are good health (48%), fulfillment (42%), and greater productivity (34%).

Different ways to increase productivity.



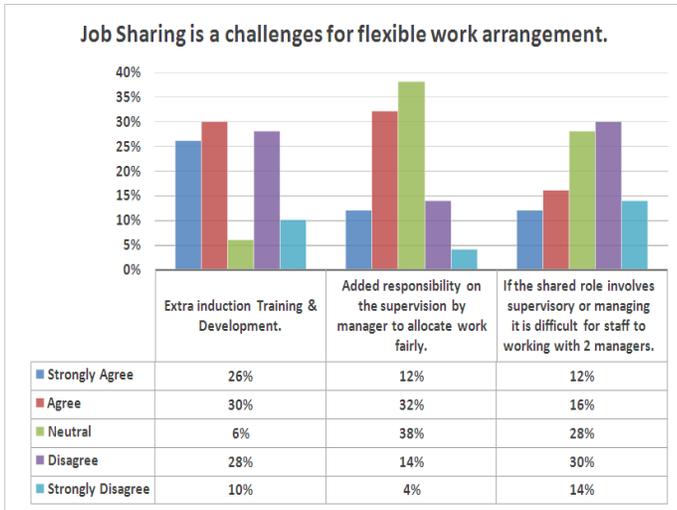
Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that the different ways to increase productivity is to take enjoyable break, taking time off and taking healthy break.

Q No 4: Do you agree that flexible work arrangement have following challenges?

reducing productivity (78%) and direct supervision throughout the day will be difficult (64%).

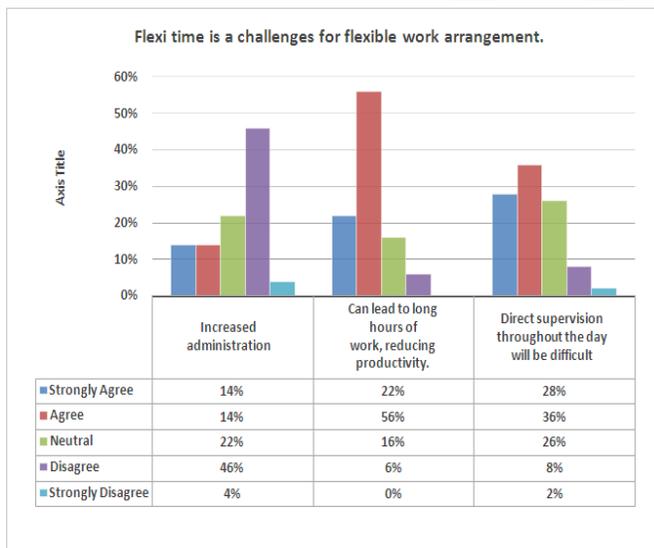
A. Job Sharing:



Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that the main challenge for job sharing is extra induction training and development (56%) and high responsibility on the supervisor by the manager to allocate work fairly(54%).

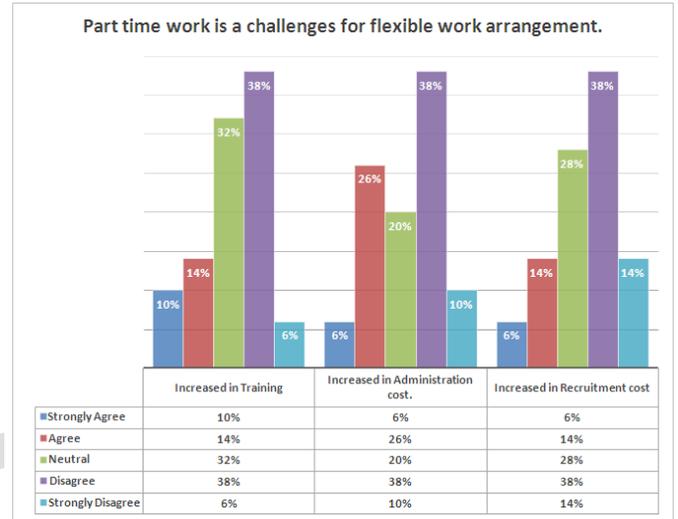
B. Flexi-time:



Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that the main challenges for introducing flexi-time are it can lead to long hours of work

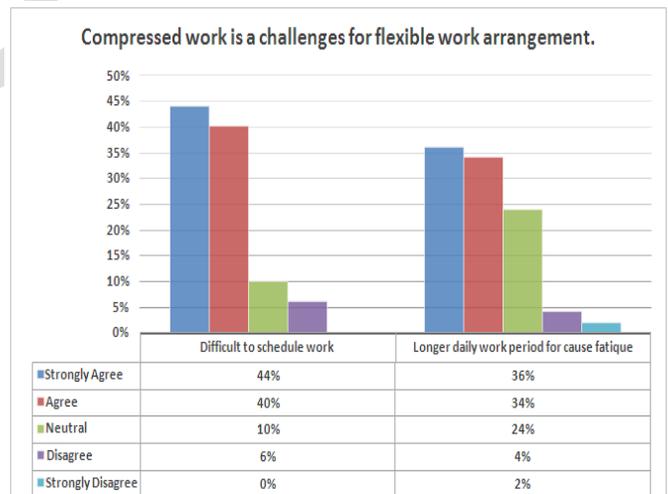
C. Part time:



Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that the main challenges are increased training (24%) and increased administration cost (32%).

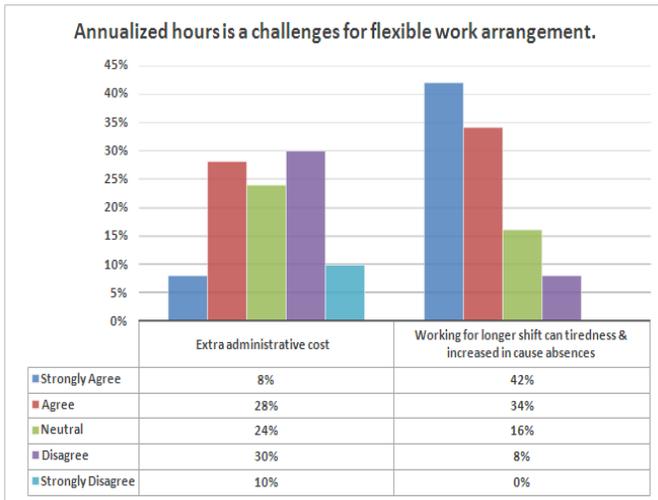
D. Compressed work:



Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that the main challenges are difficulty in scheduling the work (84%) and longer daily work causes fatigue (70%).

E Annualized hours:

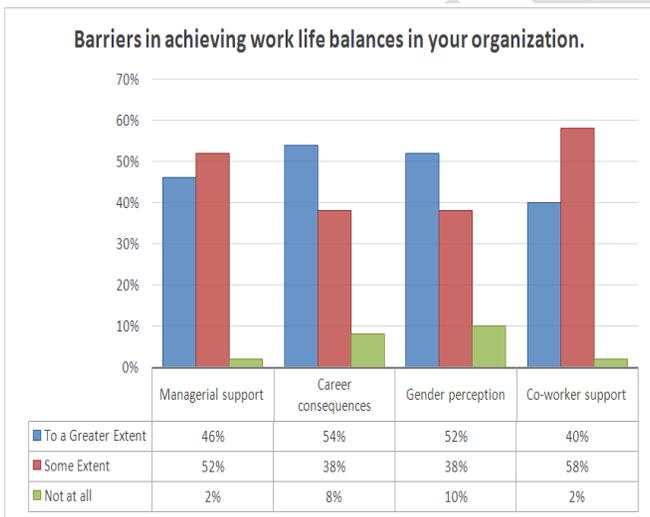


Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that the main challenges are extra administrative costs (36%) and working for long hours may lead to tiredness and increased absenteeism (70%).

Q No 5: What are the barriers in achieving work life balances in your organization?

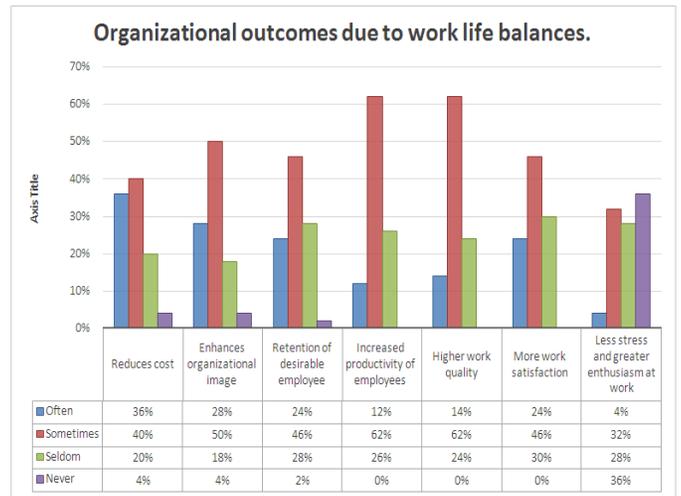
Barriers in achieving work-life balances in the organization.



Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that as told by most of the employees the barriers for achieving work-life balance are career consequences (54%), gender perception (52%), managerial support (46%) and coworkers support (40%).

Q No 6: What do you feel are the organizational outcomes due to work life balance?



Interpretation:

From the above graph it can be seen that the organizational outcome due to work-life balance it often leads to enhance organizational image (28%), retention of desirable employees (24%), more work satisfaction.

IV. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can be seen that work life balance practices benefits everyone, i.e the business, through easier recruitment, improved retention and easier service delivery, the economy as the labour market grows skilled and experienced people are available to work, parents and careers who can spend quality time at home, as well as providing financial support through work. This study basically made us to understand the different work life balance practices followed in the organization, also helped us to understand the importance of the different practices followed in the organization.

An overall conclusion of WLB practices are most effective when they enhance employees' autonomy and increase their capacity to perform well in work and in family situation. In summary a successful convergence between work and non-work aspects can be win-win situation for employees and employers alike.

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