

“Impact of Technology On Work Life Balance”- An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Technology is impacting us all, with devices becoming increasingly portable and fast, we can now access our work almost everywhere. The rapid spread of computer and telecommunication technologies throughout the work has forced us to consider the impact of these technologies on the people who use them directly and on the work force as a whole. This study focuses on the impact of technology such as personal computers, telecommunication technologies, and other aspects of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on employees' and leaders' work expectations and how these impact on work life balance, specifically within the multinational companies (MNC's). Therefore the study is to explore the impact of technology on the Work Life balance.

Keywords: *Quality of Work Life, Stress, Multinational Companies*

Introduction

The concept of “work life balance” was first used in the late 1970's to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. Work life balance can be defined as “the perfect integration between work and life both not interfering with each other. “According to Julie Morgenstern “Work life balance is not about the amount of time you spend working vs. not working”.

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) is not new but with the changing pace of life and increase in

stress levels, negatively affecting the quality of work, has made many organizations think about the strategies for maintaining a work life balance. A group of workforces that is greatly affected by the quality of work life as a result of dynamic changes in work life balance of employees is specifically women employees working in an organized sector.

WORK LIFE BALANCE

What is work?

“Work can be defined as the application of discretion within limits in order to produce a result”.

What is work life?

Work life does not merely means the facilities provided to the employees during office hours. It comprises of all the collective feelings, which reside in the mind of the employee while he works in the organization, he is in the office or away from it.

Meaning

According to Julie Morgenstern “Work life balance is not about the amount of time you spend working vs. not working. It's more about how you spend your time working and relaxing, recognizing that what you do in one fuels' your energy for the other.”

Definition

Work Life Balance is a person's control over the responsibilities between her/his workplace, family, friends and self. It is recognized that technology has an impact on the control an employee may or may not have with such responsibilities. Not all

employees use the same technology nor do they all their equivalent.

COMPANY PROFILE

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited commonly referred to as **Deloitte**, is a British multinational professional services firm headquartered in New York City in the United States.

Deloitte is one of the “Big Four” and the largest professional services network in the world by revenue in FY2014 and the largest by the number of professionals. Deloitte provides audit, tax, consulting, enterprise risk and financial advisory services with more than 225,400 professionals in over 150 countries. The company currently has a total of 46 global member firms and in FY 2015, earned a record \$35.2 billion USD in revenues.

CGI Group

CGI Group Inc., Conseillers en gestion et informatique more commonly known as **CGI**, is a global information technology (IT) consulting, systems integration, outsourcing, and solutions company headquartered in Montreal, Canada. Founded in 1976 by Serge Godin and André Imbeau as an IT consulting firm, the company soon began branching into new markets and acquiring other companies. CGI went public in 1986 with a primary listing on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Services provided by CGI as of 2015 include application services, business consulting, business process services, IT infrastructure services, IT outsourcing services, and systems integration services, among others.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the following:

- To know the impact of new technology on work-life balance
- To understand the link between work demands and levels of stress and

- To examine the boundaries between work and home

Definition of Work Life Balance

According to Julie Morgenstern “Work life balance is not about the amount of time you spend working vs. not working. It’s more about how you spend your time working and relaxing, recognizing that what you do in one fuels’ your energy for the other.”

Scope of the Study

The scope of the project was limited to the team members of the Multinational companies. This population was sampled with a response rate of 100%, although the sampling size of thirty participants was small. Nevertheless, data and information have provided important insights on how each are affected by technology. Limitations in the project included variances such as employees’ perception of work responsibilities, fluctuation of duties, and other influences. The data captured was only as accurate as the employees’ account of them as the author relied solely on self-reporting measures. Employees may feel somewhat apprehensive in sharing factual information for fear of divulging exactly how much time they spend on work-related issues, therefore the data can be either over-inflated or under-inflated.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of Research

This study is primarily a qualitative research study with the exception of questions based on the objectives. The questionnaires consisted of 15 questions and were distributed to the respondents. The two Multi National Companies was selected DELOITTE and CGI, where as respondents selected on random basis. The questionnaires were distributed through E-mail and a week time was given to them to revert back the form. And the collected data was analyzed and tabulated to find the responses given by the respondents.

Sampling size:

The sampling size consisted of employees of DELOITTE and CGI. The sample of 30 employees has been drawn working in different teams.

Sampling method

The study requires probability method therefore the sample was chosen at random. Hence this study was done with simple random tool which is one of the most popular methods of sampling.

Data Collection Procedure

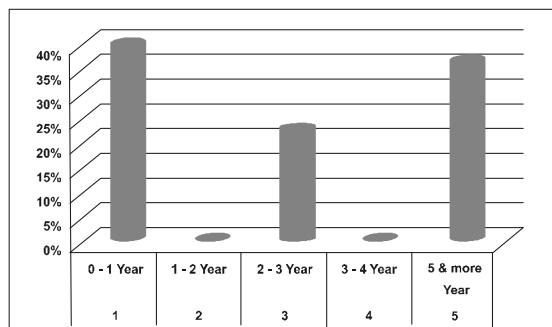
Primary data: Questionnaires were used to collect the primary data by mailing the questionnaire to the respondents of the organization. The data collected from the respondents were tabulated and interpreted to draw conclusion.

Data Analysis

Table showing the employee’s number of years of association with the company

Sl. No.	Particulars	% of Respondents
1	0-1 Year	40%
2	1-2 year	0
3	2-3 year	23%
4	3-4 year	0
5	5 & more years	36.3%
	Total	100%

Graph showing the employee’s number of years of association with the company

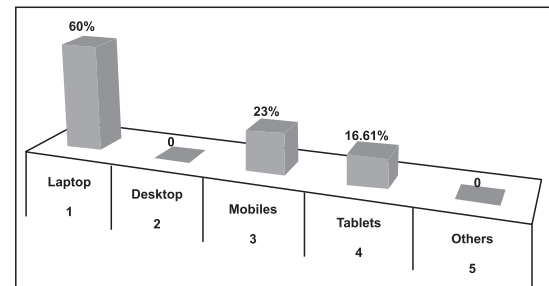


Interpretation: The above table shows that 40% of respondents are working from 1 year and 23% of them are working from 2 years and 36.3% of them are working from past 5 years.

Table showing the technological devices provided by the company to its workers

Sl. No.	Particulars	% of Respondents
1	Laptops	60%
2	Desktop	0
3	Mobile	23%
4	Tablets	16.6%
5	Others	0
	Total	100%

Graph Table showing the technological devices provided by the company to its workers

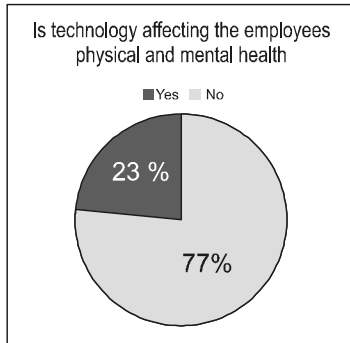


Interpretation: The maximum number of respondents are working in the organization by using Laptop.

Table showing the affect of use of technology on mental and physical health

Sl. No.	Particulars	% of Respondents
1	Yes	76.6%
2	No	23.3%
	Total	100%

Graph showing the affect of use of technology on mental and physical health

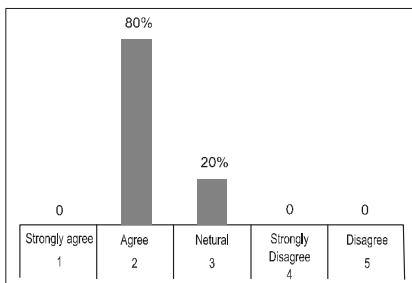


Interpretation: The above table shows that 77% of respondents feel that the mental and physical health of the respondents has been affected by using the technology at their work and 23% of them disagree with the above statement.

Table showing the response of the respondents towards the usage of technology and its contribution in reducing stress.

Sl. No.	Particulars	% of Respondents
1	Strongly agree	0
2	Agree	80%
3	Neutral	20%
4	Strongly disagree	0
5	Disagree	0
	TOTAL	100

Graph showing the response of the respondents towards the usage of technology and its contribution in reducing stress.



Interpretation: The employees undergo stress due to their work load. The technology they use in their work reduces the level of stresses.

Findings:

- Majority of the employees are working from 1 year and 23% of them are working from 2 years and 36.3% of them are working from past 5 years.
- Maximum number of employees agree that technology has a direct impact on work-life balance.
- The employees are of opinion that the usage of technology in their work life has affected their mental and physical life. They undergo with severe health issues like headache, viral infections, eye sight problems, back pain etc.,.
- Many companies now a days are depended on technology where the addiction has increased to that extent where now they cant even imagine their work without it. Most of the companies provide some of the technological devices like laptop, desktop, mobiles, tablets.
- Employees continue their work even after their working hours. There are some companies which expect the employees to work even after their working hours, to support this they use the modern technologies.
- Work from home benefit is utilized by many employees in the current scenario. Many employees, that are around 60% of them select this option because of self – illness or family member’s illness.
- 90% of respondents undergo stress because of their work demands from the organization.
- 83% of the respondents check their company mail on a daily basis after their working hours through the devices given by the companies. And any emergency work has to be completed by employees even after their working hours that make them more stress and here they fail to balance their work and personal life.

- Meditation, yoga, travelling are some of the strategies the employees follow to reduce their work stress.
- Majority (80%) of respondents find more advantages by using technology in work life.
- Many respondents agree that the organization or management ask them to review and respond to their e-mail and attachments send to them even after working hours.
- The employees agree that very often they browse some of the e-marketing sites and social networking sites during their work hours.
- The respondents are of view that they find both pros and cons of using technology in their work life.

Recommendations and Suggestions

The study speaks about the affect of employees by use of technology in their work life and identified both advantages and disadvantages of technology in work life balance.

Advantages

- The difference is that they now do not stay at work until 9 p.m. but continue working from home.
- Some individuals commented that they enjoy working.
- One commented that the Internet has supported a wave of work that did not exist 20 years ago. Much of the correspondence back and forth is not as effective. Rather than meeting face-to-face and dealing with issues, staff are often commenting in isolation which may not be the most productive method. There is a far greater expectation placed on employees to contribute to planning and providing feedback on documents which are not necessarily in their area of expertise.
- Technology allows for immediate and broader distribution of material for review which may not have been required in the past. Our audience must be taken into consideration.

Disadvantages

- Employees access their work e-mail account on their personal device and almost they respond to work e-mails outside of office hours.
- Employers expect employees to repeatedly check e-mails outside of office hours.
- Most say that the usage of technology in their work life has affected their mental and physical life. They undergo with severe health issues like headache, viral infections, eye sight problems, back pain etc.,.

Suggestions

- The employees find difficult to extend their working hours so it would be better if companies avoid assigning the work after their regular working hours.
- It would be better if companies organize programs that help the employees to reduce their stress level. Programs like yoga classes, meditation classes, games can be conducted that helps them to reduce their stress.
- The employees are finding difficult to carry their laptop every time from work to home it would be better if company follows any other alternative for it.

Conclusion

The research found that the use of mobile technology for both work and social purposes is widespread and pervasive, and for our sample at least, the use of technology, and the flexibility it offers, is generally viewed positively in terms of work/life balance and wellbeing. Social media use at work was perceived as a stress-reliever, particularly amongst the younger age group, and employers may benefit from considering this as a potential stress management tool, given that some respondents clearly have found the advent of technology to be a cause of stress in the past. It emerged from our research that a perception of having control over technology use is a potential mediator of whether it is viewed primarily as a positive or a negative.

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