Impact of Organizational Practices on Perceived Work-life Balance of Mid-level Employees at Garments Industry in Bangladesh: A Preliminary Study

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ABSTRACT

One of the most all-time contemporary issues of the RMG sector in Bangladesh is employee dissatisfaction due to the less scope of work-life balance of the workforce although the government and the foreign buyers are being focused on securing compliances regarding the issue in recent years to make the entire workforce's work-life smoothen. It is unfortunate that the organizations are focusing only on the low-cost employees such as workers and entry-level employees regarding this issue and are paying little attention to the mid-level workforce, who are playing the role as a pillar of managing the whole practices of the organization. As a result, job dissatisfaction among mid-level officials is heightening rapidly. The study worked on exploring this issue. The study has been conducted on 166 mid-level officials of the different RMG organizations from Dhaka, Gazipur, Savar, and Narayangonj. A close-ended questionnaire was prepared to collect the primary data and published journal articles and conference papers are the sources of secondary data collection. IBM SPSS 20.0 software has been used to analyze the collected data and standard multiple regression analysis has been done to pick the results. The results of this study highlight that physical & mental stress highly impacts the employee's personal satisfaction whilst organizational environment have high impact on employee's workplace satisfaction and physical & mental stress, work hour, and organizational environment is impacting significantly the employee's organizational commitment as

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well. Besides, the study also reflects those other organizational practices relating to continuous work after office hour, compressed weekend, work-family climate, and work from home also impact the employee's work-life balance whereas teleworking and leave and holiday consumption practices do not impact significantly.

INTRODUCTION

Although Ready-made Garments (RMG) has become a mammoth industry in Bangladesh over the last one and a half-decade and is incessantly contributing one of the largest portions to the GDP of Bangladesh, it may become one of the desired industries to work in if there was not an issue of employee dissatisfaction among the mid-level employees due to lack of work-life balance. Although the industry is responsible for the employment of 4 million people, labor dissatisfaction is an all-time remarkable issue since the beginning of the industry in this country. The issue becomes a hot cake to the world since the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013. Foreign buyers become more conscious to work here and focusing on compliance issues specifically, where the work-life balance of the employees is one of their main concerns. The employers of the organizations become aware of it and they are concentrating on this issue carefully. The workers of the RMG organizations are getting priority mainly in this case as they engage with the production directly and give their labor at a low cost. Buyers also investigate the workers to ensure compliance issues only during their visits to the factories. On the other hand, employers are very much conscious about the top-level management of the organization as they are the policymakers and initiators. The mid-level officials are in little consideration of this fact. Managers are undertaking initiatives to develop WLB policies and are putting their efforts to implement them into real practices, although they are having long working hours to do so (Maxwell, 2005). They are working more hours than other levels of individuals in the organizations and the rules regarding work schedule, stated in Labor Law-2006, are not following. They are not paid extra for that like the workers who get overtime pays for their extra work by the organization. Often they are required to put their efforts from home by using the technology even after their regular office schedule, which really thwarts their family life. This is the key concern of this study. Besides, a lot of researches have been performed on the garments industry of Bangladesh on several issues focusing on workers mainly. A few resources have been found on several aspects of the mid-level employees. This study focuses on the balance of working life and life outside the work of the mid-level employees who are responsible for implementing business strategies and policies. This research work stands with the key question to mid-level employees:

What is the impact of organizational practices on the Work-life balance of mid-level employees in the garments industry in Bangladesh?

The definition of work-life balance varies, although most of them mean the partition of work life and personal life. Work-life balance implies the perfect integration of workplace duties and outside workplace duties as per the individual's concern (Dissanayaka & Ali, 2013). Literature suggests lots of variables to measure WLB

practices, which may vary from country to country and industry to industry as well. Sánchez-Vidal et al. (2012) used 18 variables to measure WLB practices and in the same year, Cegarra-Leiva et al. (2012) studied with the consistent variables to find out available WLB practices. Ethics institutionalization impacts the managers' QWL (Quality of Work-life), which is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, and both the lower-order QWL and higher-order QWL affect their job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and team spirit within the organization as well (Koonmee et al., 2010). This study follows the measurable variables and impacts from their study partly to explore the scenario in Bangladeshi Garments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The "Work-life Balance" term was first coined in 1986 although a glance of the work-life balance program was seen before World War II in W.K. Kellogg Company in the U.S. The W.K. Kellogg Company replaced the traditional eight-hour workday with a six-hour workday which resulted in improved employee morale and efficiency (Lockwood, 2003). Many studies showed that in the 1970s work-life balance programs were initiated by providing childcare programs and offering increments along with other assistance programs to workers in order to improve efficiency and to create specialists (Harrington, 2007).

Different researchers defined the "work-life balance" term in different languages. The work-life balance results in the balancing methods that an individual utilizes to meet their work and home requests. In other words, work-life balance reflects such a unique technique with which individuals are able to satisfy their business and personal obligations without making any contradiction (Konrad & Mangel, 2000). Goodman (2012) defined work-life balance as an individual's ability to maintain among their work, family commitments, and other non-work responsibilities or activities as well.

Lockwood (2003) presented three factors such as global competitions, personal lives or family values, and an aging workforce, as the challenges for work-life balance and concluded that if the organization incorporates work-life balance programs, this will significantly improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism and retain organizational talents during economic difficulties which will be a win-win situation for both the employees and the employers. In the next year, Sturges & Guest, (2004) depicted a relationship among work-life balance, conflict issues, and organizational commitment where they stated that the employees often work long hours to secure their career growth and go through dissatisfactory conflicts between home and work. They also pointed out that organizational policies and practices may back employees only to preserve their work-life balance in this case. Working mothers, who are in their mid-careers, find challenges to prioritize one among their family issues, works, and self-equation. These working mothers prioritize their children and try to give importance to their works at the same time while seeking personal care (Grady & McCarthy, 2008). Another study in the same year showed that long and nonstandard work hours mainly cause a lower level of balance between work and life and this has a negative impact on social and personal life such as children well upbringing or

marital satisfaction (Albertsen et al., 2008). Goodman (2012) said that behavior stress may be witnessed because of any dissonancy or conflicts of work and out of work, which affects any of the other functions of an individual automatically. Lakshmi & Prasanth (2018) carried on a study on working women and observed that responsibilities at the workplace are uplifting along with technological advancement and creating stress on personal and professional fronts at the same time which is hampering a person's physical, emotional and social well-being. She also emphasized achieving work-life balance to have a quality of life to overcome the fact.

However, debates on the work-life balance of employees are continuing. Favorable work-life balance practices positively benefit the employees, their families, and society as well. Besides, the proper implementation of these practices causes the reduction of employee absenteeism, turnover, etc., and increase employee job engagement and overall productivity (Lazăr et al., 2010). But, Kim (2014) found that employee's work-life balance experiences have no direct impact on employee's performance rather it has a direct impact on the organizational commitment which positively affects the employee's performance. Ford & Collinson (2011) said that the initiatives to maintain the harmony between these two issues may cause managerial anxieties and pressures, which may negatively affect their functions and roles. In harmony, Haar et al., (2018) said that daily family-work conflicts impact negatively the individual's physical and emotional aspects, which is named job burnout, and vice versa. All these ultimately make complexion to balance their Work-family life. The study of Stavrou & Ierodiakonou (2016) revealed that employees usually have more entitled expectations of WLB than the management supports which impacts the organizational and personal outcomes ultimately. The study indicates that the organizations should support the WLB practices and more management and employee perceptions alignment to get the most positive organizational and personal outcomes.

Technological advancement, limited autonomy in the managerial functions, and flexible working initiatives in the organizations are the key impediments to the failure of the managerial efforts to keep a balance between work and life, and by getting organizational support in this managers can able to achieve organizational long-term goals (Parris et al., 2008). A similar scenario has shown in another study by Rafnsdottir and Stefansson in 2014. Most of the managers expressed that the virtual working causes for extending their workday and keeping the balance between family and work life are in complexity, which often becomes the reasons for their stress and exhaustion although the scenario has shown conversely in the study (Rafnsdóttir & Stefánsson, 2014).

Hossen et al., (2018) pointed out that most Bangladeshi organizations do not avail specific policies regarding work-life balance, although they follow some unstructured practices to give space to employees to deal with the issues and try to optimize their productivity. The foreign companies who are operating their joint venture in Bangladesh claim that they find less scope to incorporate new policies regarding WLB practices in Bangladesh and they are trying to be familiar with the local policies and practices to operate operations smoothly (Afroze, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

1. **Research Design**

   This study is survey-based quantitative research in nature, aimed to retrieve the opinions of the mid-level managers of the garments industry in Bangladesh on the subject matter of the study.

2. **Sampling**

   A simple random sample method was followed to collect the data from the participants for this study. Total numbers of 166 mid-level employees of different garments organizations from Dhaka (22.9%), Gazipur (39.8%), Narayangonj (26.5%), and Savar (10.8%), participated in the survey voluntarily. 150 of total numbers were male respondents whereas the female respondents were only 16. Among them, most of the respondents (99.4%) are married and only .6% are single although all of them have dependents in their family. More than half of the respondents have more than 3 dependents in their family. The highest 18.7% of respondents have at least 14 years of total experience and 36% have been working as mid-level employees for the last 5 years. More than half of the participants, 53.6%, have been working as a mid-level employee in their current organization for the last 1 year.

3. **Data Collection Procedure**

   This study is based on primary data, which was collected by following a survey method using a close-ended questionnaire. A questionnaire was established on google forms. The link of the google form questionnaire was sent to the selected respondents through e-mails and by social media personal communication system sometimes. The participants were able to fill the form and provide their opinion by clicking the link. About one and a half months was needed to collect the data from 166 respondents.

4. **Measure**

   To reach the aim of the study and to collect the data, I used a close-ended questionnaire, which was parted into three sections, demography, organizational work-life balance practices, and impacts on work-life balance dimensions. This study followed partially the eighteen variables of work-life balance which were used by Sánchez-Vidal et al. and Cegarra-Leiva et al. in their studies in 2012 to find out the available organizational practices related to work-life balance in the garments industry of Bangladesh. I used nine variables consisting of 20 questions of work-life balance practices that are available in Bangladesh, such as, work hours, continuous work after office hour, teleworking, compressed weekend, work from home, leave and holiday's consumption, work-family climate, physical and mental stress, organizational environment. To find out the impacts of these organizational practices on the employees I followed partially the scales of Koonmee et al.

(2010). In this study, the impacts of these organizational practices on the employees showed through personal satisfaction, workplace satisfaction, and organizational commitment by using 13 questions.

5. **Data Analysis**

Standard Multiple Regression was used to find the impacts of organizational practices on the work-life balance of the mid-level employees of the garments industry in Bangladesh. The regression was done 3 times for 3 dependent variables, i.e. personal satisfaction, workplace satisfaction, and organizational commitment, separately considering the 9 independent variables each time. The analyses were done by following 3 consecutive steps i.e. checking the assumptions of the model, evaluating the model, and evaluating the independent variables to find the most impacting variable.

At First, the assumptions of the model such as multicollinearity, outlier, and normality, were checked separately for each of the dependent variables. In the case of personal satisfaction, although the correlations among the independent variables often exceed the standard value of .7 that are not too high. Besides, the violation of multicollinearity was also checked by the values of Tolerance and VIF from the coefficient table. The tolerance values of any of the independent variables are not less than .10 and no VIF value is less than 10. The lowest tolerance value is .182 for leave and holiday consumption which is not less than .10 and the highest VIF value is 5.458 which does not exceed the cut-off value of 10. These represent that multicollinearity is not violated here. Same scenarios have been found for workplace satisfaction and organizational commitment as well. After checking multicollinearity, I inspected the Normal Probability Plot (P-P) to find out the normality of the data set. No significant deviations were not found in the three Normal P-P for each of the variables, which suggests that the data set is normally distributed. One of the major assumptions was outliers which are checked by inspecting the Mahalanobis Distances value from the maximum value column of the Residual Statistics Table. The maximum Mahalanobis distances value was 82.342 which is far higher than the critical value for df = 9 (at α=.001) of 27.88. 13 cases with higher values were found and removed them from the analysis as they were causing outliers and affecting the model significantly. After removing them, the maximum value is 26.80 which does not exceed the critical value. To find out more usual cases, I looked over the Casewise Diagnostics table and found one case having standardized residual values above 3.0. I checked out the Cook's Distance value from Residual Statistics to find out whether this one case is affecting the model negatively or not and found the maximum values of .312, .224, & .242 for the dependent variables respectively, which signifies no significant problems. After satisfying with the assumption checking, I started to evaluate our model by checking the Model Summary where I noticed the fact that whether the model was statistically significant or not and how much it explains the variance of the dependent variables. Finally, I checked which

independent variable is mostly affecting the dependent variables by comparing the beta values from the coefficient table.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The outputs of the analysis present the R Square value for Personal Satisfaction is .826, for Workplace Satisfaction is .817, and for Organizational Commitment is .829 individually which express that this model explains 82.6% of the variance in personal satisfaction, 81.7% in workplace satisfaction, 82.9% in organizational commitment. Besides, from the ANOVA table, this model is found statistically significant (p<.0005) for each of the dependent variables. Apart from that, I also searched for the most significant independent variables for each of the dependent variables. At the Coefficient table, I looked over the Beta values and after comparing the variables, I took into consideration those values which are less than .05, which signifies that the variable is uniquely contributing to the predictor of the dependent variable. The six independent variables, i.e. work hour, compressed weekend, work-family climate, physical & mental stress, and organizational environment, are uniquely contributing to the personal satisfaction variable where physical & mental stress has the highest contribution of 39.6% (beta=.396) and work-family climate contributes lightly (7.7%,beta=.077). The result shows that the organizational practices that are relating to these independent variables are impacting negatively the personal satisfaction of mid-level employee's personal satisfaction. Moreover, Work hour, continuous work after office hour, physical and mental stress, and organizational environment is contributing the workplace satisfaction variable reasonably by 16.1%, 10.1%, 40.8%, & 33.2% respectively, which express that these organizational practices affecting the workplace satisfaction negatively where physical & mental stress and organizational environment are causing for workplace dissatisfaction mainly. Apart from these, work hours, compressed week, work from home, work-family climate, physical and mental stress, and organizational environment is uniquely having significant contributions on the organizational commitment where physical and mental stress (39.6%), work hour (28.9%), and organizational environment (28.3%) are contributing the most, which signifies that these organizational practices are causing mainly for the less organizational commitment of the mid-level employees of the garments industry of Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

The study has been conducted to find out the effects of the organizational practices on mid-level employee's perceived work-life balance in garments industry of Bangladesh. The result of the study expresses that the organizational practices relating to work hour, continuous work after office hour, compressed weekend, work-family climate, work from home, physical & mental stress, and organizational environment have direct and significant impact on employee's personal satisfaction, workplace satisfaction and also become the major reasons for less organizational commitment. Others organizational practices which are related to teleworking and

leave and holiday consumption do not have significant impact mid-level employee's work-life balance. Thus, this study suggests that the organizations of this industry should concentrate on their current practices and should bring some changes in their general working practices and programs to develop and ensure a friendly organizational culture so that the mid-level employees can be satisfied in their personal life and at the workplace and become committed to the organization to make unique contribution to the growth and stability of the organization. Apart from this, the understandings of the study can be useful to the policymakers of others industry to set their organizational practices and more research can be conducted there on this issue. Besides, as there is found very little researches on mid-level officials in the RMG industry and their challenges, this study can be a wrathful resource to the literature.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was focused on finding out the key factors that affect the mid-level employees' work-life balance and which one influences the greater. The correlation among the variables can be shown in the further sequential study. Apart from this, mid-level employees of the garments industry of Bangladesh were the only scope of the study. Similar studies can be done in other manufacturing industries like food & beverage manufacturing industry and the leather industry.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Section: A Organizational Work-Life Balance Practices

	A. **Work Hours (WH)**
1	My working hours let me to complete my works in time.
2	I leave office work and go home just after finishing the office hours.
3	I need to spend extra hours to complete my work at the offices.
	B. **Continuous Work after Office Hour (CWAOH)**
4	I take and do office works after going home.
5	I think about office works at home.
	C. **Teleworking (TW)**
6	I need to attend official meetings over the phone after going home.
7	I need to attend clients over the phone after office hours.
	D. **Compressed Weekend (COMWEEK)**
8	I spend my weekend with my family.

9	I need to go to the office for work on the weekend.
10	I need to work continuously without having a weekend to complete my tasks.
E.	**Work from Home (WFH)**
11	My organization allows me to do work from home when I require it.
12	My organization provides all technological supports to work from home.
F.	**Leave and Holidays Consumption (LHC)**
13	I can consume the leaves when I require it.
14	The organization allows me to have non-paid extra holidays whenever necessary.
G.	**Work-family Climate (WFCL)**
15	I miss family programs often because of my work.
16	The organization arranges several recreational programs on several occasions like Eid, Puja, Bangla Noboborsho, yearly family day, yearly picnic, etc to entertain the employees and their family.
H.	**Physical and Mental Stress (PMS)**
17	I need to sacrifice my sleep to balance time for family and work.
18	My works pressure me mentally and physically.
I.	**Organizational Environment (OE)**
19	The organization focuses on creating employee-friendly working environment.
20	My organizational environment supports employee's work-life balance practices.

Section B– Impacts on Work-Life Balance Dimensions

Personal Satisfaction (PS)	
1	I am happy with the time I spend with my family after work.
2	I can take care of my family and my family and I are satisfied with that.
3	I am satisfied with the time that I get to connect with relatives and friends after work.
4	The recreational facilities of my organization support me to keep myself stress-free.
5	My organizational work-life balance practices help me to keep myself happy and healthy both mentally and physically.
Workplace Satisfaction (WS)	
6	I can concentrate fully on my work when I am stress free.
7	I can focus on initiating ideas for my organization when I am able to have a balance between my workplace and family.
8	WLB practices of this organization stimulate me to increase my productivity.

9	I am happy that I can utilize my full potential for this organization.
10	I am satisfied with my workplace cultural practices.
Organizational Commitment (OCOM)	
11	I love to do work in this organization.
12	I plan to work at my current organization for many years in the future.
13	I want to play a remarkable role to ensure the sustainability of this organization.