

Triggers of Employee Life Cycle: An Empirical Study on Emotional Intelligence influencing Work Life Balance in IT Sector

Kalyani Sakalle¹,

Priyadarshini Dixit²,

Dr. Ravinder Kaur³,

Dr.Asha Nagendra⁴

ABSTRACT

Purpose – The corporate world today has been seeing various issues in maintaining work life balance. After having reviewed the available literature it is observed, several studies have been carried out regarding Work Life Balance and various aspects of Work Life Balance. One of such aspect which has been observed while reviewing academic literature and personal observation is Emotional Intelligence. Many organizations across sectors believe that Emotional Intelligence plays an essential role in maintaining Work Life balance of the employees. The researchers have attempted to make an effort to validate this belief. Therefore, the principle of this research was to find the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Work Life Balance of the employees working in IT Industry of the region Pune and Mumbai. The topic is selected after rigorous exercise of reading various Journals, Online Articles and News, response from HR Managers and Employees working in IT Industry.

Design/methodology/approach –The research was carried out with the help of Questionnaire for Employees working in IT Industry in Pune and Mumbai. The sample size of employees' for data collection was 170 from various organization of the age group 25-50 years. The technique used for carrying out the research was correlation.

Findings – The study depicts IT professional with more experience in IT sector has higher level of emotional intelligence. On the other hand, the study shows that IT professional with less experience in IT sector has lower level of emotional intelligence. Most of the respondents were aware of their capacities, strengths, weakness and emotions. IT organizations where flexible work life is provided, employees had a better work life balance.

Research limitations/implications – The study has been carried out with the point of view of relation between Emotional Intelligence and Work Life Balance and not from viewpoint of predictability.

Practical implications – Employers providing flexibility in work, employee engagement, motivation factors, etc. succeed in creating a healthy and balanced life for their employees.

Originality/value – A gap exists in both the empirical and intellectual literature regarding the development and evaluation of the organizational factors that foster work life balance. Moreover, no clear directive exists with the principle of helping employers create such an environment, while providing a structure to guide employees to maintain work life balance.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Work Life Balance, IT Industry

INTRODUCTION

Work-Life Balance

In this competitive World, managing the balance between personal and professional life is becoming more challenging. This trend is putting up a lot of pressure in many industries, especially the IT industry, where the norm is to come to the office and work from home when it is required. Imbalance in the work-life is increasing the count of dissatisfied and unproductive employees. One of the major reasons for attrition nowadays is because of the inability of the employee to have a work life balance.

There is a need for Organizations and employees to find new solutions that maximize productivity without damaging employee's personal life. These are certain groups whose lifestyle can often demand greater concentration to work-life balance like working mothers, mature workers and some minority groups. Work life balance, in a way can be said to be acceptable level of balance between numerous roles in a person's life.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence can be described as "the ability of individuals to understand their own and other people's emotions, distinguish between different feelings and tag them suitably to adjust to different environments or achieve target". As per famous Psychologist and Science Journalist Emotional Intelligence can be defined as the collection of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance.

Emotional Intelligence too can be developed like other Intelligence with time and age. It plays a important role in the professional life in the organization. Emotional intelligence is considered to play a essential role in the modern era. It helps in evaluating employee behaviour, management style, attitude, interpersonal skills and potential.

Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance

The work life balance and the relevance of emotional intelligence towards the work life balance is a difficult task in the IT sector especially. It has become the primary sector for any priority sector and involves fullest strength of manpower resources to the utmost possible extent. The quality of results for the projects/assignments undertaken by the Organization in the sector can be divulged only through team based projects that includes employees from cross functional areas. Emotion at various work related activities, relationship, work balance are in variably experience for changes in IT sector. The methodology of managing emotion at work places is the well-known factor for employees and success with reference to IT sector. Psychological studies have shown that accepting and domineering emotions play important role in rewarding one's life and work atmosphere. It is generally considered that employees with higher emotional intelligence will have higher work life balance. Employees with higher EI will be able to persuade the emotions of others in such a way that, they will be able maintain a satisfied personal and professional life.

Objectives

1. To find out relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work Life Balance.
2. To understand the role of flexibility in work life in IT Industry of the region Pune and Mumbai.

Limitations

1. The study will be restricted to IT Industry of the region Pune and Mumbai.
2. It is restricted to age group of 25-50 years for the employees of IT Industry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Emotional Intelligence

Sharma (2014) after doing the survey on 50 respondents from Academic Institutions in Sidhi, Madhya Pradesh; mentioned that Emotional Intelligence is a key factor for Employee's stability, talent retention and sustainable development. However, Bina and John (2014) mentioned based on theories by Scholars and Psychologists that highly emotional intelligent senior manager's handle work family conflict more carefully than the low emotional intelligent managers. Shylaja and Prasad (2017) after conducting survey on 55 respondents from an organisation mentioned that majority of them were completely unaware of their capacities and emotions. Ravikumar (2014) conducted his research on 383 Women Employees between the age group of 36-50+ years and mentioned that with age, the level of Emotional Intelligence of Women has increased irrespective of Job Profile. Gupta (2016) did descriptive statistical analysis and mentioned that employees with high on regulation of emotion in the self, followed by appraisal and acknowledgment of emotion in others to facilitate performance and appraisal. Nelis et al (2009) selected an experimental group and conducted a brief empirically-derived Emotional Intelligence training for their research and concluded that Emotional Intelligence can be improved using innovative methods. Panda and Moharana(2013) conducted a research on 100 bank employees(50 male and 50 female) in Bhubaneswar by using the EIT & PSS Test and concluded that stress has negative impact on Emotional Intelligence and the level of Emotional Intelligence varies for senior and junior bank employees. Radha and Prasad (2013) used questionnaires to collect data from 300 bank employees in Bangalore's CBD and have mentioned that Customer Orientation is one of the factors of varying Emotional Intelligence.

Work-Life Balance

Farni and Ibrahim (2011) after conducting qualitative method on four informants who are employees in Majlis Daerah Samarahan, Kota Samarahan have mentioned that Work-life balance is one of the most important areas of human resource management which employees must emphasize in their life. Rangreji(2010) conducted his research on 355 IT employees from 31 Indian, Indian multinational corporations and multinational IT companies having experience from 2-20+ years of experience in Bangalore concluded that intra correlation matrix between work – life Balance dimensions indicated that there was significant positive correlation between personal life with work with factors impacting work – life balance. Shylaja and Prasad(2017) wherein they used descriptive method on 55 employees from an organisation including both male and female were questioned have even mentioned that motivating oneself, self awareness and realization of one's goals and motivating oneself to achieve goals in terms of relationships at work and also at home. However Vanitha (2011) have mentioned that the employees in IT sector are more likely to be seen as participative, self-aware, poised and balanced. Srividhya and Sharmila (2014) mentioned that the demands and pressures of work make difficult to widen time for balancing both work life and personal life activities. Shin-yih et al. (2016) used paper-based questionnaires to collect data from 300 respondents working in R&D department of a science and technology institute in Taiwan and have concluded that Emotional Intelligence positively impacts job performance.

Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance

Rangreji (2010) (as mentioned earlier conducted research on 355 IT Employees in Bangalore) mentioned that the work - life magnitude risk in position with usage of work-life balance programs was maximally prejudiced by emotional intelligence. Sharma (2014) (survey on 50 respondents in Sidhi town, MP) mentioned that extremely high Emotional Intelligence bearing employees are having fully Work Life balance in their

respective department and offices. Gupta (2016) who did data analysis by descriptive method concluded that the three major behaviours of work that interfere with personal life were discontent with the amount of time for non – work activities followed by absent personal activities due to work. An article in Nairaproject.com concluded that managers of corporate organizations can tutor on the causes of job stress for the employee and how emotional intelligence can be used to preserve work life balance. Koubova and Buchko (2015) have used secondary data in the form of academic literature and theoretical concepts where they have stated that Emotional Intelligence as a primary factor to develop an individual's work-life balance and Work is considered as the major component of overall life satisfaction. Abendroth and Dulk(2011) conducted a survey on 7867 service-sector workers from eight European countries and concluded that there is a complementary relationship between emotional support and instrumental support in the workplace. However, only emotional family support has a positive impact on work-life balance satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The topic of this research is **Triggers of Employee Life Cycle: An Empirical Study on Emotional Intelligence influencing Work Life Balance in IT sector**. The topic is selected after rigorous exercise of reading various Journals, Online Articles and News, response from HR Managers and Employees working in IT Industry. There is a need for Organizations and employees to find flexible and new solution that make the most of productivity without damaging employee's personal life in managing the Work Life Balance of Employees in respective organizations. The key sector identified for this research was IT Industry. This research was conducted considering Mumbai and Pune as the target audience. The research was carried out with the help of **Questionnaire** for Employees working in IT Industry.

170 employees working in IT sector of **age 25- 50 years** (male and female both), of different income groups of junior and middle level management were selected as target audience.

Hypothesis

H0- There is no correlation between emotional intelligence and Work life balance of Employees.

H1- There is a correlation between emotional intelligence and Work life balance of Employees.

Dependent Variable: It is defined as the main variable for investigation. It is the primary interest for Researchers. For the chosen research, Work Life Balance is Dependent Variable.

Independent Variable: This is defined as the one which influences the dependent variable in either positive or negative way. Emotional Intelligence will be considered as the Independent Variable.

Primary- The data was collected from the employees working in IT Industry in the region Pune and Mumbai by a pre-designed Questionnaire.

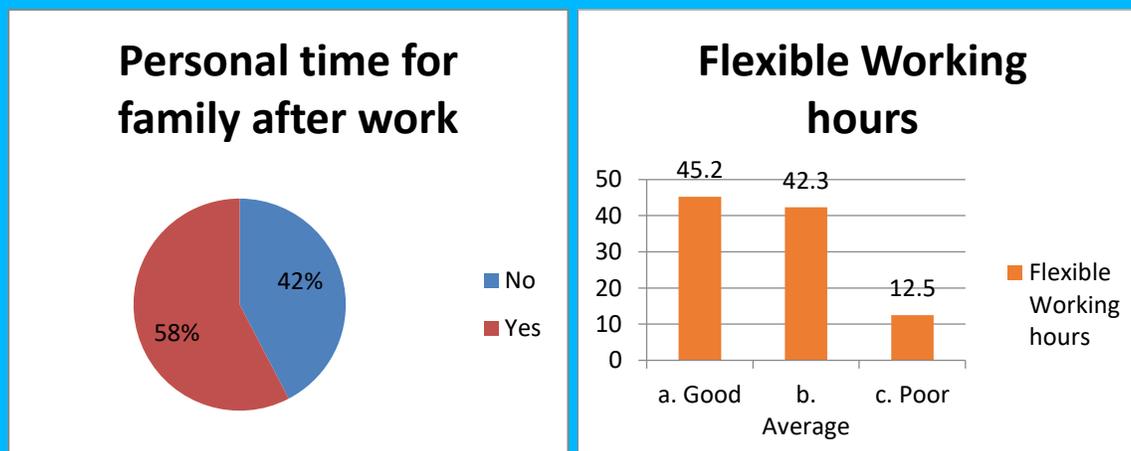
Secondary – The data was collected from Journals, Articles and online sources.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

The primary data has been tabulated and presented in the form of tables and graphs followed by discussion.

Table 1: Flexibility in Work-Life

SNo	Flexibility in Work-Life	N=170	Percentage
1	After working hours, enough time for Family		
	a. Yes	92	54.1
	b. No	78	45.9
2	Rate flexible working hours policy of the Organization	N=170	Percentage
	a. Good	77	45.2
	b. Average	72	42.3
	c. Poor	21	12.5



a. Personal Family Time b. Flexible Work hours

Figure 1: Flexibility in Work-Life

Discussion:

- a. **Personal time for Family**-58% of the respondents mentioned they had time after work for family whereas 42% of the respondents mentioned they did not had time for family.
- b. **Flexible Working Hours**-45.2% of the respondents mentioned the flexible working hours were good whereas 12.5% of the respondents mentioned they did not have flexible working hours.

Table 2: Self Awareness from Daniel Goleman’s Questionnaire on Emotional Intelligence

SNo	Self Awareness		
1	Awareness on strengths and weaknesses	N= 170	Percentage
	a.1	0	0
	b.2	3	1.7
	c.3	24	14.1
	d.4	60	35.2
	e.5	83	49
2	Self Valuation	N= 170	Percentage
	a.1	1	0.5
	b.2	2	1.1
	c.3	18	10.5
	d.4	63	37.05
	e.5	86	50.85

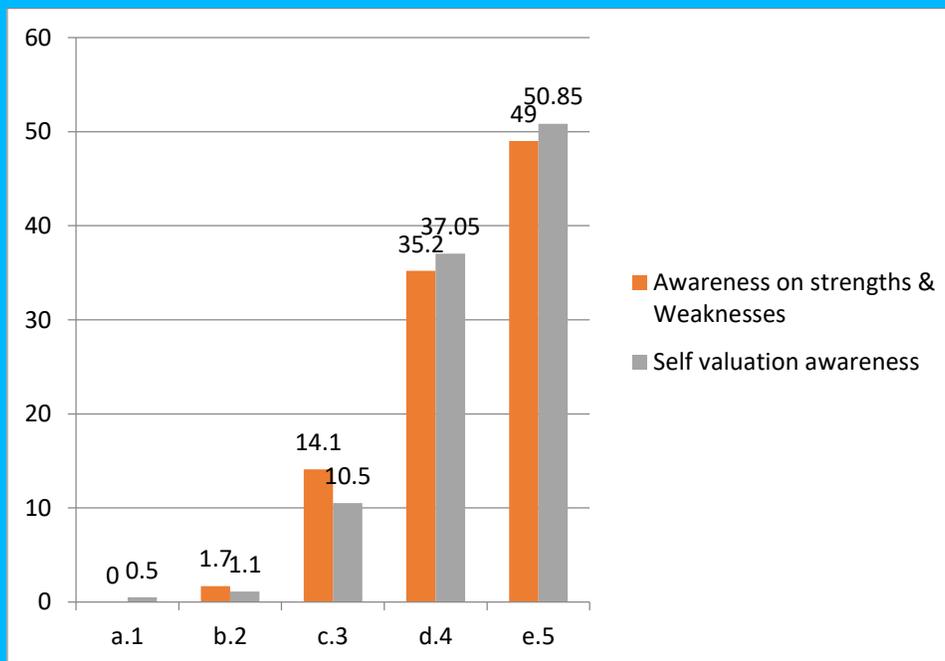


Figure 2: Self Awareness from Daniel Goleman’s Questionnaire on Emotional Intelligence

Discussion: Around 50% of respondents were strongly aware of their strengths, weaknesses and self value, around 36% of respondents were aware of their strengths, weaknesses and self value and 0.5% of respondents were least aware of their strengths, weaknesses and self value.

Table 3: Self-Management from Daniel Goleman’s Questionnaire on Emotional Intelligence

SNo	Self Management		
1	Managing for a break when energy is low	N= 170	Percentage
	a.1	7	4.1
	b.2	12	7.05
	c.3	33	19.4
	d.4	54	31.7
	e.5	64	37.75
2	Mood Management	N= 170	Percentage
	a.1	5	2.9
	b.2	17	10
	c.3	47	27.6
	d.4	57	33.5
	e.5	44	26

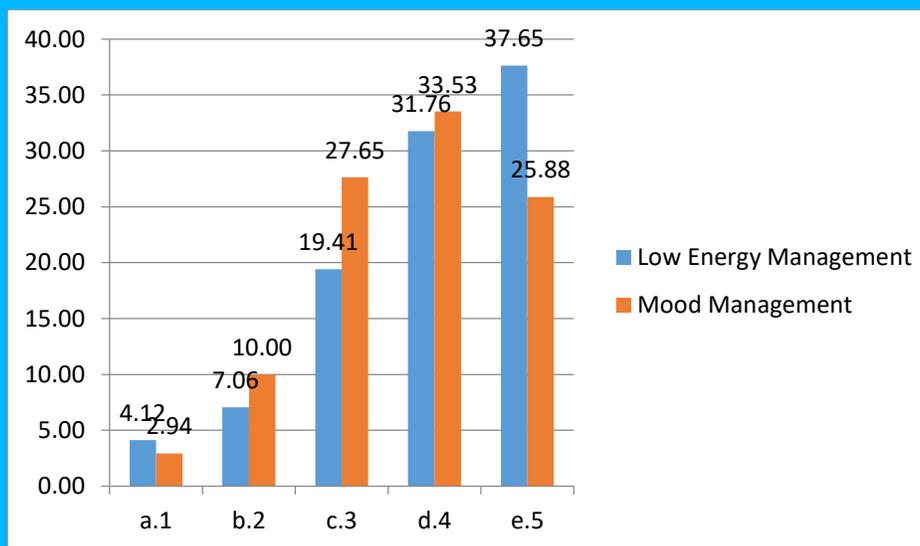


Figure 3: Self-Management from Daniel Goleman’s Questionnaire on Emotional Intelligence

Discussion: Around 31.76% of respondents were strongly aware of their low energy and mood changes, around 32.64% of respondents were aware of their low energy and mood changes and 3.53% of respondents were least aware of their low energy and mood changes.

Table 4: Social Awareness from Daniel Goleman’s Questionnaire on Emotional Intelligence

SNo	Social Awareness		
1	Awareness of Other’s perception of You	N= 170	Percentage
	a.1	4	2.3
	b.2	9	5.2
	c.3	54	31.7
	d.4	74	43.5
	e.5	29	17.3
2	Helpful behaviour for others	N=170	Percentage
	a.1	1	0.5
	b.2	4	2.3
	c.3	12	7.05
	d.4	51	30
	e.5	102	60.15

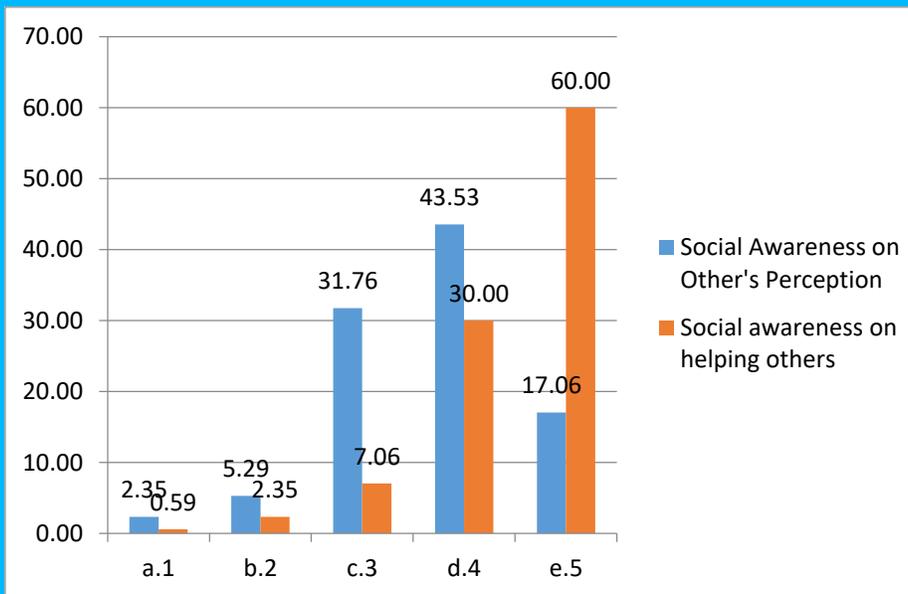


Figure 4: Social Awareness from Daniel Goleman’s Questionnaire on Emotional Intelligence

Discussion: Around 38.53% of respondents were strongly aware of their other’s perceptions and helping behaviour, around 36.76% of respondents were aware of their other’s perceptions and helping behaviour and 1.47% of respondents were least aware of their other’s perceptions and helping behaviour.

Table 5: Relationship Management from Daniel Goleman’s Questionnaire on Emotional Intelligence

SNo	Relationship Management		
1	Providing a comfortable environment to others	N= 170	Percentage
	a.1	2	1.1
	b.2	3	1.7
	c.3	29	17.05
	d.4	62	36.4
	e.5	74	43.75
2	Awareness on Listening skills	N=170	Percentage
	a.1	1	0.59
	b.2	5	2.9
	c.3	37	21.7
	d.4	78	45.8
	e.5	49	28.8

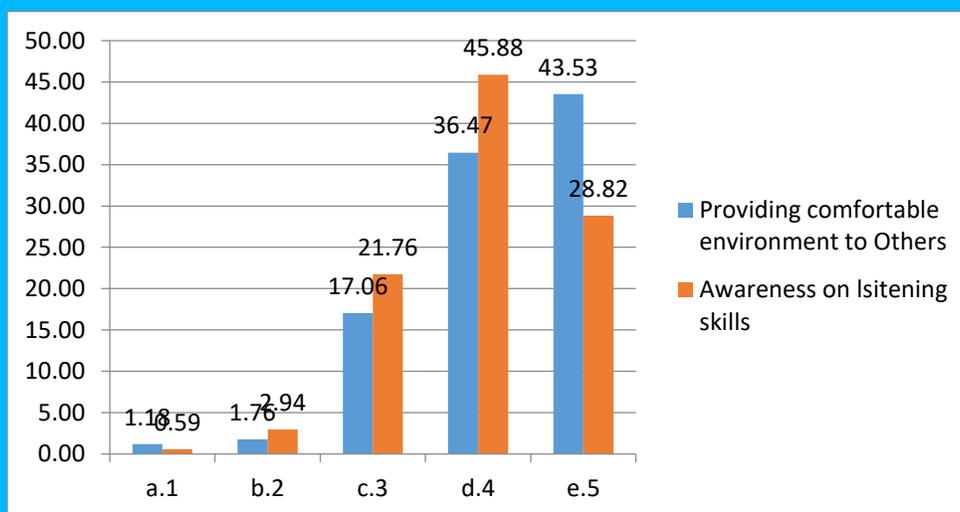


Figure 5: Relationship Management from Daniel Goleman’s Questionnaire on Emotional Intelligence

Discussion: Around 36.17% of respondents were strongly aware of providing comfortable environment to others and their listening skills, around 41.17% of respondents were aware of providing comfortable environment to others and their listening skills and 0.8% of respondents were least aware of providing comfortable environment to others and their listening skills.

Table 6: Karl Pearson's Correlation coefficient

SNo.	Variable1	Variable2	Karl Pearson's Correlation coefficient	Inference
1	Emotional Intelligence	Work-Life Balance	0.48	Moderate correlation

Relation between Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance:

The co-relation between Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance can be obtained by finding the correlation co-efficient between the responses of related questions. The Karl Pearson's correlation co-efficient for the responses been obtained using 'R', is $r = 0.48$.

This shows that the two variables – Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance are moderately correlated.

Hypothesis Testing:

The hypothesis testing for the alternative hypotheses can be done through p-values obtained for the responses of respective variables by assuming a degree of significance of 5% for the null hypotheses. The p-values, as obtained from 'R' are as follows, as summarised in Table – 7.

Table 7: p-values for hypotheses testing

SNo.	Hypothesis	Variable1	Variable2	p-value	Inference
1	Hypothesis – 1	Emotional Intelligence	Work-Life Balance	0.00213	Null hypothesis rejected

From the table 6, it can be seen that the Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance are moderately and positively correlated. Also, from the table 7, the p-value for the variables is 0.00213, which is much negligible compared to the degree of significance 5% set for our study. Thus the null hypothesis of hypothesis 1 stands rejected and the alternate hypothesis, 'There is correlation between emotional intelligence and Work life balance of Employees' is accepted.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**Conclusion**

Work-Life Balance of IT employees have involved the attention of many researchers, educationists and the leaders of the IT world. IT organizations need to make efforts to develop efficient work – life balance policies and encourage their employees to make use of the available policies. This will help increase in organizational dedication, improve productivity, efficiency, motivate the employees and retain best talent. This study confirms that both emotional intelligence and work-life balance collectively create organizational achievement and grow reasonable development for IT organizations.

Emotional Intelligence plays a crucial role in maintaining Work Life Balance. The data from the respondents shows flexible working hours as one of the prominent factors and shows a significant positive correlation

between personal lives and factors impacting work – life balance. Enhanced Emotional Intelligence will help an individual understand and administer the emotions of one and others better which will direct to high quality service delivery.

The results of the hypothesis testing suggest that employees with higher Emotional Intelligence have better Work Life Balance and thus it rejects our Null Hypothesis. Emotional Intelligence of the employees has been assessed with Daniel Goleman’s questionnaire and it was found that most of the respondents are aware of their capacities and emotions.

Employees with higher Emotional Quotient have been able to maintain work life balance. Emotional intelligence is an effective way to incorporate, improve and offer better work and family life.

Recommendations

IT organizations should come up with accommodating and well-organized work life balance policies and programs that will promote an organizational culture that supports work-life balance, hence reducing the work – life conflict for IT employees. The human resources team and the leadership team of IT organizations should take the initiative of improving the emotional intelligence of their employees. It is essential for IT administrators to strive to create an association between emotional intelligence and work-life balance in IT organizations.

Appreciating the potential and talent that the employees bring in and ensuring the expression of difference the employees bring to the work place and value them to make it an ingredient of the organizational success.

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