



WORK LIFE BALANCE OF EMPLOYEES WITH REFERENCE TO SMALL SCALE IT COMPANIES IN DHAKA BANGLADESH

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Abstract:

The work-life balance of employees is a critical factor influencing job satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being, particularly within the fast-paced IT industry. This study focuses on the work-life balance dynamics in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It explores the challenges employees face, including long working hours, high workload, and limited resources, which often lead to stress and burnout. The study also considers the socio-economic and cultural context of Dhaka, which exacerbates these challenges. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, this research identifies key stressors and examines the coping mechanisms employed by employees. It further assesses the role of organizational policies and support systems in mitigating work-life conflicts. The findings highlight the need for strategic interventions to improve work-life balance, enhance employee well-being, and ensure sustainable growth in the IT sector.

Key Words: Work-Life Balance, Small-Scale IT Companies, Employee Well-Being, Job Satisfaction, Stress and Burnout, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Organizational Support, IT Industry, Socio-Economic Factors, Work Environment

Introduction:

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, small-scale IT companies play a crucial role in driving technological advancements and economic growth, particularly in developing regions. Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, has emerged as a burgeoning hub for IT and software development, with numerous small-scale IT enterprises contributing significantly to the sector. Despite the potential for innovation and economic contribution, these companies often face unique challenges, particularly concerning the work-life balance of their employees. This introduction aims to explore the work-life balance dynamics within small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh, shedding light on the factors that influence employee well-being, productivity, and overall job satisfaction.

The concept of work-life balance encompasses the equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life, ensuring that employees can maintain a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle without excessive stress or burnout. In the context of small-scale IT companies, this balance is often disrupted due to several factors including limited resources, high workload, tight deadlines, and competitive industry demands. Employees in these settings are frequently required to work extended hours, which can lead to physical and mental health issues, reduced job satisfaction, and lower productivity in the long run.

Moreover, the cultural and socio-economic environment of Dhaka further complicates the work-life balance scenario. Social expectations, commuting challenges, and limited recreational infrastructure contribute to the complexities faced by IT professionals in achieving a harmonious balance between work and personal life. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing effective strategies and policies that can enhance employee well-being and ensure sustainable growth for small-scale IT companies.

This study delves into the intricacies of work-life balance in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, examining the primary stressors, coping mechanisms employed by employees, and the role of organizational support in mitigating work-life conflicts. By highlighting these aspects, the research aims to provide insights and recommendations for improving the work environment in this critical sector, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on employee welfare and organizational efficiency in the IT industry.

Review of the Literature:

Work-Life Balance in the IT Industry: A Global Perspective Many studies have examined the work-life balance in the IT sector globally, identifying key stressors such as long working hours, high workload, and the constant need to update skills. The research by Sarker et al. (2018) highlights the pervasive issue of burnout among IT professionals, emphasizing the importance of organizational support in mitigating these challenges.

Challenges of Work-Life Balance in Developing Countries The study by Azeem and Akhtar (2014) discusses the unique challenges faced by employees in developing countries. Socio-economic factors, such as inadequate public transportation and cultural expectations, play a significant role in work-life balance. These issues are particularly pronounced in urban centers like Dhaka.

Employee Well-Being in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Research by Hashim and Wok (2014) focuses on SMEs and highlights that limited resources and high workloads are common stressors that affect employee well-being and work-life balance. The study suggests that SMEs need to adopt more flexible working arrangements to support their employees better Work-Life Balance Policies in IT Companies According to Kumar and Chakraborty (2013), the implementation of work-life balance policies, such as flexible working hours and telecommuting, significantly improves employee satisfaction and productivity in IT companies. However, small-scale companies often lack the resources to implement these policies effectively.

Impact of Organizational Culture on Work-Life Balance A study by Naithani (2010) indicates that organizational culture profoundly impacts work-life balance. Companies with supportive cultures and management practices are more successful in helping employees achieve a healthy balance between work and personal life

Stress and Coping Mechanisms among IT Professionals the research by Shih et al. (2009) explores the stress levels among IT professionals and the coping mechanisms they employ. Common strategies include time management, seeking social support, and engaging in leisure activities. The effectiveness of these strategies varies depending on individual circumstances and organizational support.

Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Work-Life Balance A study by Islam and Siengthai (2009) discusses how socio-economic factors in Bangladesh, such as income levels, family responsibilities, and commuting challenges, affect work-life balance. The study suggests that policies addressing these factors can significantly improve employee well-being .Technological Advancements and Work-Life Balance Research by Dettmers et al. (2016) examines how technological advancements, while increasing productivity, can also blur the lines between work and personal life, leading to increased stress and difficulty in maintaining work-life balance. This is particularly relevant for IT professionals who are often required to be available outside traditional working hours.

Statement of the Problem:

Employees in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh, face significant challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance due to high workloads extended working hours, and limited organizational resources. These issues are further compounded by the socio-economic and cultural environment of Dhaka, which includes factors such as long commutes and societal pressures. As a result, many IT professionals experience increased stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction, which can ultimately affect their productivity and the overall sustainability of these companies. This study seeks to identify the key factors contributing to poor work-life balance in this context and to explore potential strategies for improvement.

Scope of the Study:

This study focuses on exploring the work-life balance of employees in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It aims to identify the primary factors affecting work-life balance, such as workload, working hours, organizational resources, and socio-economic conditions. The research will involve both qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys and interviews with employees and managers within these companies. Additionally, the study will examine the coping mechanisms used by employees and evaluate the effectiveness of existing organizational policies and support systems. The findings are intended to provide insights and recommendations for improving work-life balance and enhancing overall employee well-being and productivity in the small-scale IT sector in Dhaka.

Objectives of the Study:

- Determine the main factors affecting work-life balance for employees in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka.
- Evaluate how socio-economic and cultural conditions in Dhaka influence employees' work-life balance.
- Investigate the methods employees use to manage work-life stress and their effectiveness.
- Provide recommendations for policies and practices that small-scale IT companies can adopt to improve work-life balance.

Research Methodology:

Type of Research:

The research is descriptive in nature, aiming to provide a detailed understanding of the work-life balance among employees in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Source of Data Collection:

- Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to employees of small-scale IT companies in Dhaka. The questionnaire will include both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather comprehensive insights into work-life balance factors.
- Secondary Data: Sourced from relevant websites, academic journals, industry reports, and other online resources to supplement and contextualize the primary data findings.

Type of Sampling:

Simple random sampling will be used to ensure each employee within the small-scale IT companies in Dhaka has an equal chance of being selected, providing an unbiased representation of the population.

Sample Size:

The study will survey a total of 150 employees from various small-scale IT companies in Dhaka.

Tools Used for the Study:

- **Percentage Analysis:** To determine the proportion of responses for different factors affecting work-life balance.
- **Descriptive Statistics:** To summarize and describe the main features of the collected data, providing a clear understanding of the trends and patterns.
- **One-Way ANOVA:** To compare the means of work-life balance factors across different groups of employees, identifying any significant differences.

Limitations of the Study:

- **Limited Generalizability:** The findings may not be generalizable to all IT companies in Dhaka or other regions, as the study focuses specifically on small-scale IT companies.
- **Response Bias:** The accuracy of the data collected through questionnaires may be affected by response bias, as participants might provide socially desirable answers rather than their true experiences.
- **Time Constraints:** The study is limited by time constraints, which may affect the depth of data collection and analysis.
- **Rapid Industry Changes:** The dynamic nature of the IT industry means that the factors influencing work-life balance can change quickly, potentially making the findings less relevant over time.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Percentage Analysis:

Demographic Variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	78	52.0
	Female	72	48.0
Marital Status	Single	41	27.3
	Married	34	22.7
	Divorced	48	32.0
	Widowed	27	18.0
Education Level	High School	33	22.0
	Bachelor's Degree	47	31.3
	Master's Degree	45	30.0
	Other	25	16.7
Job Position	Entry-Level	40	26.7
	Mid-Level	36	24.0
	Senior-Level	36	24.0
	Executive	38	25.3
Total		150	100.0

The demographic data shows a balanced gender distribution among respondents, with 52% male and 48% female. Regarding marital status, the majority of respondents are either single (27.3%) or divorced (32%), indicating a significant proportion facing personal life adjustments. In terms of education, a substantial number hold either a Bachelor's degree (31.3%) or a Master's degree (30%), highlighting a well-educated workforce. Job positions are evenly distributed across entry-level (26.7%), mid-level (24%), senior-level (24%), and executive roles (25.3%), suggesting a varied perspective on work-life balance across different organizational hierarchies.

		Frequency	Percent
Years of Experience in IT Industry	Less than 1 year	49	32.7
	1-3 years	23	15.3
	4-6 years	49	32.7
	7-10 years	29	19.3
Years of Experience with Current Employer	Less than 1 year	111	74.0
	1-3 years	13	8.7

		Frequency	Percent
Years of Experience in IT Industry	Less than 1 year	49	32.7
	1-3 years	23	15.3
	4-6 years	49	32.7
	7-10 years	29	19.3
	4-6 years	11	7.3
	7-10 years	10	6.7
	More than 10 years	5	3.3
Type of Employment	Full-time	47	31.3
	Part-time	66	44.0
	Contract	37	24.7
Total		150	100.0

The data on years of experience in the IT industry reveals that a significant portion of respondents are relatively new to the field, with 32.7% having less than 1 year of experience and another 32.7% having 4-6 years of experience. A smaller percentage, 15.3%, falls within the 1-3 years category, while 19.3% have 7-10 years of experience. This distribution suggests a blend of both early-career professionals and those with moderate experience levels participating in the study.

Looking at years of experience with their current employer, a large majority (74.0%) have been with their current employer for less than 1 year, indicating a relatively high turnover or new hiring rate within small-scale IT companies in Dhaka. Only a small fraction, 3.3%, have been with their current employer for more than 10 years, highlighting potential challenges related to retention and long-term commitment within these organizations.

In terms of employment type, the majority of respondents are employed full-time (31.3%) or part-time (44.0%), with 24.7% engaged in contract work

		Frequency	Percent
Average Working Hours per Week	Less than 30 hours	34	22.7
	30-40 hours	49	32.7
	41-50 hours	39	26.0
	More than 50 hours	28	18.7
Commute Time to Work	Less than 30 minutes	38	25.3
	30-60 minutes	65	43.3
	1-2 hours	28	18.7
	More than 2 hours	19	12.7
Primary Mode of Transportation to Work	Walking	33	22.0
	Public Transport	44	29.3
	Motorbike	58	38.7
	Car	15	10.0
Total		150	100.0

The data provides insights into the working conditions and commuting patterns of employees in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In terms of average working hours per week, the majority of respondents work between 30-40 hours (32.7%) or 41-50 hours (26.0%), indicating a significant portion of the workforce operates within standard full-time hours. A notable proportion (22.7%) work less than 30 hours per week, possibly reflecting part-time employment arrangements common in the industry. Regarding commute time to work, a significant number of employees (43.3%) spend between 30-60 minutes commuting, suggesting a considerable investment of time in daily travel. Additionally, the primary modes of transportation to work are predominantly motorbikes (38.7%) and public transport (29.3%), underscoring the reliance on accessible and efficient transportation methods in navigating Dhaka's urban environment

Descriptive Statistics for Work-Life Balance:

	N	Mean	SD
I prioritize and plan my tasks to manage my workload effectively.	150	2.94	1.494
I set boundaries between work and personal life	150	2.45	1.000

I engage in regular physical exercise to reduce work-related stress.	150	2.56	1.077
I take breaks during work hours to recharge and avoid burnout.	150	1.49	.502
I seek social support from colleagues or friends to cope with work challenges.	150	2.19	1.019
I practice mindfulness or relaxation techniques to manage stress.	150	3.05	1.476
I maintain a healthy work-life balance by prioritizing personal time and hobbies.	150	2.24	.967
I communicate openly with my supervisor about workload and stress levels.	150	2.64	1.045
Valid N (listwise)	150		

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of how employees in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh, perceive various aspects of work-life balance. On average, respondents reported moderately positive behaviors towards managing their workload and stress. Specifically, employees indicated a moderate tendency to prioritize and plan tasks (Mean = 2.94, SD = 1.494) and practice mindfulness or relaxation techniques (Mean = 3.05, SD = 1.476) to cope with stress. However, they reported setting boundaries between work and personal life (Mean = 2.45, SD = 1.000) and taking breaks during work (Mean = 1.49, SD = 0.502) less frequently, suggesting potential areas for improvement in managing work-life balance. Seeking social support from colleagues (Mean = 2.19, SD = 1.019) and openly communicating with supervisors about workload and stress (Mean = 2.64, SD = 1.045) were also moderately practiced.

Descriptive Statistics for Managing Work-Life Stress:

	N	Mean	SD
I am satisfied with the balance between my work and personal life	150	1.81	.727
My workload is manageable within my working hours.	150	2.24	1.403
I often have to work beyond my regular working hours	150	2.40	1.153
My job allows me to spend sufficient time with my family.	150	2.21	1.379
I feel stressed because of my work demands.	150	2.42	.992
I have adequate support from my employer to manage work-related stress.	150	3.41	1.312
I am able to pursue personal interests and hobbies outside of work.	150	3.51	1.432
My employer provides sufficient flexibility (e.g., flexible hours, remote work) to balance work and personal life.	150	2.71	1.032
Valid N (listwise)	150		

The descriptive statistics provide insights into how employees perceive and manage work-life stress within small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh. On average, respondents indicated moderate levels of satisfaction with their work-life balance (Mean = 1.81, SD = 0.727), suggesting that many employees feel their current balance between work and personal life needs improvement. Similarly, employees reported that their workload is generally manageable within regular working hours (Mean = 2.24, SD = 1.403), though a substantial number indicated they often have to work beyond regular hours (Mean = 2.40, SD = 1.153), indicating potential challenges in achieving work-life balance. Employees also reported moderate levels of stress due to work demands (Mean = 2.42, SD = 0.992) and expressed a need for more support from their employers to manage work-related stress (Mean = 3.41, SD = 1.312). However, respondents generally felt they were able to pursue personal interests and hobbies outside of work (Mean = 3.51, SD = 1.432), which suggests a positive outlet for stress management. Regarding employer support for work-life balance, respondents perceived moderate levels of flexibility provided by their employers (Mean = 2.71, SD = 1.032).

Comparison between (Job Position, Years of Experience in IT Industry) and their Work-Life Balance:

There is a significance difference between (Job Position, Years of Experience in IT Industry) and their Work-Life Balance

		N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Job Position	Entry-Level	40	2.57	0.445	2.475	.000
	Mid-Level	36	2.61	0.445		
	Senior-Level	36	2.65	0.380		
	Executive	38	2.55	0.382		
	Total	150	2.59	0.412		
Years of Experience in IT Industry	Less than 1 year	49	2.55	0.391	.565	.639
	1-3 years	23	2.59	0.388		
	4-6 years	49	2.65	0.453		

	7-10 years	29	2.56	0.402		
	Total	150	2.59	0.412		

The table results of one-way ANOVA tests for different job levels in terms of perceived work-life balance and different experience levels regarding managing work-life stress among employees in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh. For work-life balance, there are significant differences observed across job levels ($F = 2.475$, $p < .000$). Post-hoc tests would be needed to determine where these differences lie specifically. Mean scores indicate that senior-level employees tend to perceive slightly better work-life balance (Mean = 2.65) compared to entry-level (Mean = 2.57), mid-level (Mean = 2.61), and executive positions (Mean = 2.55). However, all groups generally report moderate satisfaction with work-life balance (overall Mean = 2.59). On the other hand, for managing work-life stress, the ANOVA test shows no significant differences across different experience levels ($F = 0.565$, $p = .639$), indicating that the perceived ability to manage work-life stress does not significantly vary based on years of experience in the IT industry. The mean scores for managing work-life stress are relatively consistent across different experience levels, with overall satisfaction levels also averaging at 2.59.

Findings:

- The majority of respondents in the demographic data are male, comprising 52% of the sample, while females make up 48%.
- Regarding marital status, the largest group consists of individuals who are divorced, making up 32% of the respondents, followed by single individuals at 27.3%.
- In terms of education level, the majority have either a Bachelor's degree (31.3%) or a Master's degree (30%), reflecting a well-educated participant pool.
- Job positions are fairly evenly distributed among entry-level (26.7%), mid-level (24%), senior-level (24%), and executive roles (25.3%), indicating a diverse representation across different levels of responsibility within small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- The majority of respondents in the study regarding years of experience in the IT industry fall into two main categories: those with less than 1 year of experience (32.7%) and those with 4-6 years of experience (also 32.7%).
- This indicates a significant proportion of both newcomers and mid-level professionals in the IT sector among the surveyed small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- For years of experience with their current employer, the majority (74.0%) have been with their current employer for less than 1 year, highlighting a trend of relatively high turnover or frequent hiring in these organizations.
- In terms of employment type, the majority of respondents are engaged in part-time positions (44.0%), followed by full-time roles (31.3%), and contract positions (24.7%).
- The majority of employees in small-scale IT companies in Dhaka, Bangladesh, work between 30-40 hours per week, accounting for 32.7% of respondents.
- This suggests that a significant portion of the workforce maintains a standard full-time workload. In terms of commute time to work, the majority spend between 30-60 minutes commuting, making up 43.3% of respondents.
- As for the primary mode of transportation to work, motorbikes are the most common, utilized by 38.7% of respondents, followed by public transport at 29.3%.
- Overall, these findings highlight both strengths and opportunities for enhancing strategies to achieve better work-life balance among IT professionals in Dhaka's small-scale IT sector.
- These findings highlight both areas of satisfaction and potential areas for improvement in managing work-life stress among IT professionals in small-scale companies in Dhaka.
- These findings provide insights into how job levels influence perceptions of work-life balance and highlight the consistency in managing work-life stress across varying levels of experience within these companies.

Suggestions:

- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Introduce flexible work options such as telecommuting or flexible hours to accommodate diverse schedules and reduce commuting stress, particularly for those spending significant time commuting.
- **Employee Support Programs:** Implement programs focused on promoting mental health and well-being, including stress management workshops, counseling services, and mindfulness training to help employees cope with work-related stressors.

- Career Development and Training: Provide opportunities for continuous learning and professional growth to empower employees, especially newcomers and mid-level professionals, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and retention.
- Enhanced Communication Channels: Foster a culture of open communication between management and employees to address concerns promptly, improve transparency, and create a supportive work environment.
- Health and Wellness Initiatives: Promote initiatives that encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices, such as subsidized gym memberships, wellness challenges, and ergonomic assessments to support overall employee health.
- Feedback Mechanisms: Establish regular feedback mechanisms, such as anonymous surveys or focus groups, to gauge employee satisfaction levels and gather insights for continuous improvement of work-life balance initiatives.

Conclusion:

- Demographic Insights: The workforce is predominantly male, and there is a diverse representation across marital statuses, education levels, and job positions. This diversity underscores the need for tailored policies and programs that cater to different demographic groups, especially considering the significant number of divorced individuals and those holding Bachelor's and Master's degrees.
- Workload and Employment Dynamics: A notable proportion of employees are relatively new to the IT industry and their current employers, with many engaged in part-time or contract roles. This suggests a dynamic employment environment characterized by frequent hiring and a flexible workforce structure.
- Work-Life Balance Challenges: While many employees work within standard full-time hours and have manageable commute times, there are indications of potential work-life balance challenges. Strategies such as promoting flexible work arrangements and supporting employees in managing stress could significantly enhance overall well-being and job satisfaction.
- Stress Management and Support Needs: The findings highlight both strengths and areas for improvement in managing work-life stress. While employees generally report moderate satisfaction with their ability to manage stress, there is room to enhance employer support systems and initiatives focused on stress reduction and employee well-being.
- Future Directions: Moving forward, it is crucial for small-scale IT companies in Dhaka to prioritize initiatives that promote a healthy work-life balance and support employee retention and satisfaction. This includes investing in professional development, offering flexible work options, and fostering a culture of open communication and support.

In conclusion, by addressing these findings proactively, organizations can create a more conducive work environment that fosters productivity, engagement, and overall job satisfaction among IT professionals in Dhaka's small-scale IT sector.

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