



Work-Life Balance of Labor in Plastic Industry of Pakistan

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Abstract

knowledge of the labor laws and its practices exercised in the local industry. Best design for this research could possibly be the quantitative analysis of the findings. The questionnaire is designed on a 5 point scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. All the qualitative information is decoded by the help of SPSS in order to run the statistical tests and techniques for having reliable findings. We conclude from the point of labor that there exists an imbalance in the work and social life in the specific industry and there exists the unwillingness of the labor to work at the current wages. Inability to meet the monthly expenses, overburden of work, per absent wage deduction is the main issues highlighted by the labor. And the practices like no annual increment, bonuses and compensations are also criticized by them. Geographical area appropriate to conduct this research was Gujranwala. Sample size of 8-10 firms was selected whose results can differ in case, the sample size is enhanced. Exception of human error exists. Cost is one of the limitations. This paper will help industry researchers and employers in a way to better understand the demands of the labor and focus their problems. Labor law associations can claim their rights by using our research findings as a base. Research was conducted by staying unbiased to uncover the ground realities happening in the specific industry. Information for the literature study of global plastic trends, Pakistani industry and practices is coated and referenced as well.

Keywords: Work-life imbalance, labor issues, plastic industry, Pakistan.

Introduction

This research paper has been assembled to explore the work-life balance and imbalance created due to irregularities in the working conditions by the employer. This certain topic of the Pakistani labor is very less touched and specifically in the plastic industry it's still grounded. The study also shows the facts and figures about the current global consumption of plastic as well as it reflects that how humongous will be the increase in the use of plastic. The conditions of the Pakistani plastic industry are interpreted by the study and which shows that there are a lot of irregularities which are against the labor laws.

This study has been carried out in the plastic industry of Gujranwala which contributes a large percentage in the total production of plastic in Pakistan. 8-10 large scale plastic manufacturing firms are visited and been questioned if they are able to maintain a balance between their personal and work life. And majority's answer was a no. So this gives a reason to find out that what the underlying facts and figures are which creates an imbalance in the work and personal lives of the labor working in the plastic industry.

Starting with the president of the plastic association in Gujranwala, Rana Naeem Ur Rehman¹ we questioned him about the labor laws and his practices and participation in the education of the labor laws in the industry. However his answers were not satisfactory. Moving on in his factory we interviewed the workers and asked them about the working environment in which they

have shown their complete confidence but as we rolled forward and questioned them about their working hours, monthly wage, annual increments and bonuses, management's flexibility for understanding the needs of their personal life, the workers responded negatively. They are bound to work more than the normal working hours, unannounced over time and over load of the work are the issues highlighted by the workers.

More than 500 workers have been interviewed from 8 different plastic factories and the results are: 49 % of the workers agreed that they are able to maintain a balance, whereas 51% of the total workers responded that they are unable to maintain the balance between their work life and personal life. Our interpretation and understanding of the responses gathered is that the managing level of the workers in the industry are satisfied and compensated well by the owners but on the other hand their biggest and the most useful resource, the labor working, and making plastic for the owners is still not treated and compensated in a reasonable way. However, a country like Pakistan is very rich in the natural, financial and human resources is still lacking the best practices to be implemented just due to the mismanagement, which results in the dissatisfaction of the people at every level.

Literature Review

Introduction to Plastic: 'A plastic is a type of synthetic or man-made polymer; similar in many ways to natural resins found in trees and other plants. Webster's Dictionary defines polymers as: "Any of various complex organic compounds produced by

polymerization, capable of being molded, extruded, cast into various shapes and films, or drawn into filaments and then used as textile fibers” (American Plastic Council, 2004)². Plastics can be used to imitate such diverse materials as metal, wood, glass, stone, cloth, rubber, cardboard and leather etc. It is used in manufacturing automobiles, television, refrigerators, electronics, wood ware, house-ware, weapons, etc.

Global Overview: According to the estimates global chemical industry will worth approximately \$3.70 trillion³. Plastic consumption is increasing every year globally in all types of products of use with the advancement in technology. Use of plastic has brought easiness and safety in our lives. It is used in making bottles, dyes, pharmaceuticals, packaging, fibers, fertilizers, cars, aero planes especially, in electronics advancements like (OLED) Monitors, e-paper, solar panels of plastic and cooling device electro caloric polymers and in many other things. On the other side campaigns against the use of plastic are also done in different countries in the world, ^{4,5}. According to the research facts in 2003 the global consumption of plastic has reached 180 million tons and increasing at a rate of 7.5 per cent per year. South East Asia is to register as the most consuming plastic region having a growth rate of 15% and higher rate of growth is expected in future. Production of major plastics raw materials like Polyethylene (PE), Polypropylene (PP), Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) and Polystyrene (PS) is a capital-intensive activity and is thus confined to large scale manufacturing sector. Small scale plastic manufacturers have a high labor to capital ratio which builds the downstream of the plastic processing industry, and these have much potential for creating employments. 10 tons of plastic requires at least 5 workers for its processing and the highest plastic consumers can be found in USA, Japan and Europe which accumulates to 75 percent. Plastic has trended towards China, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and India in recent years⁶.

San Francisco, Bangladesh and some other countries have banned the use of plastic bags because petrol reserves are drained by plastic and landfills are being topped up. While there is a ban in China on production of plastic bags lesser thick than 0.025mm and in 2002 a tax was imposed on plastic bags by Ireland⁷. In 2008, health concerns and environmental issues were the reason for plastic industry to face almost 400 legislations against the use of plastic in U.S., (The Boston Globe, 2008). According to the prediction of IDTechEx the value of plastic electronics industry by 2015 will be \$30 billion and by 2025 it will be increased to \$250 billion. The reason of this increase in industry is to manufacture plastic electronics at cheaper rates than other materials, (The Christian Science Monitor).

Trends in Pakistan: Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) have created the first research centre on plastic and polymer in Karachi. The price of plastic resin per pound just had an increase of 90 paisa in ten years. 1966- The first manufacturer of PVC pipes, Arkoy Chemical Industries was established. 1971 was the year when the local PVC pipes company named GALCO became famous. 1971- Government

started to take plastic industry to the next level and started its import which summed up to 30.7 million Pakistani rupees. 1980- Ministry of Commerce reformed Pakistan Plastics Manufacturers Association. 1982- At Lasbella, Karachi first cast acrylic and polystyrene sheet plant was formed. 1988- Plastics Technology Center PTC was established by FCCCL (The Federal Chemicals and Ceramics Cooperation Limited) which initiated polymer science education in Pakistan.

Industry Overview: Plastic manufacturers are divided as upstream and downstream on the basis of the level of investment made by the manufacturers. The downstream segment of plastic had grabbed most of the attention for investment and has numbered to 5,000 units and in addition to that there are also 700 organized plastic processing units all over Pakistan. Total investment of the downstream segment totals to 10 billion where as an investment of Rs. 5.677 billion in the upstream segment of the plastics industry. Plastics’ growing consumption and demand has brought Pakistan a huge Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of US\$ 260 billion. Automobile industry also evolved as a major plastic user for its parts manufacturing. Including custom duty, sales tax and income tax the plastic industry is contributing Rs. 7.5 billion in the national income. And the contribution to the GDP has increased up to 1.69 per cent⁶.

Pakistan Plastics Manufacturers Association: Pakistan Plastic Manufacturers Association, PPMA got into form in the year 1970 but government registered it later after twelve years in 1982 under the Trade Organization Ordinance 1961, and has also got authorization from the Ministry of Commerce. Zonal office of the association is in Lahore where the growing SME’s in the plastic processing industry are assisted. The association itself now comprises of the members who deals in raw material producers, processors, plastics machinery manufacturers, moulds/dies makers, traders and importers/exporters of plastics raw material, finished and semi-finished goods. PPMA cooperates with the technical institutes of polymer as well as with the organizers of the plastics exhibitions. In 1989, Plastics Technologies Centre was set up in Karachi. In 2003 the first international plastic exhibition was held in Karachi with the support of PPMA and also hosted other successful events for the promotion of plastics in Pakistan in Expo Centre, Karachi (Ministry of Commerce).

Work Life Balance: The term itself depicts that the employees should be able to balance their professional life with their family/personal life which include commitments with relatives, hobbies, events, celebrations and so forth. The trend instead is that they are not able to freely use flexible hours for maintain this balance. Employee satisfaction and an enhanced organizational performance can be resulted if work-life balance is maintained. Good work-life balance can be best defined if workers feel that they are made capable of balancing their work and non work engagements by the employer. Improved productivity, employee loyalty and job satisfaction are the gains from maintaining the balance.

Models for Work Life Balance: There are several types of conceptual models to explain the relationship between work and family or personal life have been proposed, and they represent different perspectives on how we fill both work and family roles.

Spillover Model: The spillover model asserts that there is similarity between what occurs in the work environment and what occurs in the family environment. It also proposes that a person's work experiences influence what he or she does away from work.

Compensation Model: The compensation model is most often contrasted with the spillover model. It proposes an inverse relationship between work and family. It further assumes that individuals make differential investments of themselves in the two settings so that what is provided by one makes up for what is missing in the other.

Segmentation Model: The segmentation model proposes that the work and non-work spheres are distant so that an individual can be successful in one without any influence on the other. The two spheres exist side by side and for all practical purposes are separated from each other. This separation, in type, space, or function, allows one to effectively compartmentalize one's life. The dominant view is that the family is the realm of intimacy and empathy, whereas the work world is impersonal and instrumental.

Results and Discussion

Discussion: The geographical area to conduct this research is Gujranwala. And the industry targeted is the plastics as a large proportion of plastic is manufactured there. The first point from where we started our research is the interview of the president of plastic association Rana Naeem Ur Rehman¹ Khan from which we asked questions regarding the industry, the trends and specifically his knowledge about the labor laws that are practiced. Afterwards we interviewed the labor working in his own factory and asked questions regarding their designation, experience, income, savings, and employer's behavior and most importantly are they able to maintain a balance between their work life and social life. Most of the labor working there is male of age less than 20 years and have salary below Rs. 5000. We visited 3 different departments that are coloring of raw material, injection molding and packaging. Female workers are also there working in the packaging department who answered that it is unable to meet the monthly expenses in the salary given by the employer and they are completely unable to create a balance between their work and social life. The employees are unwillingly forced to work for unpaid extra hours. We visited 8 different factories and interviewed the employees, and get the same answers. The employees are much satisfied by the working conditions and are compensated by the employer in case of any mishap. Need based holidays are offered but per holiday wage is deducted. The labor on the whole is unable to meet their monthly expenses with the current salary, don't have enough money for future needs and are not compensated by bonuses and annual increments.

Results and Analysis: Results show that 84% of the population is comprised of male and 16% females. Major portion of the labor is comprised of age ranging from 18-25 i.e. 33%. Workers less than 18 years of age are 22%. Workers ranging from 26-30 of age are 20%. Labor of age more than 35 years is 15%. The remaining 10% workers age range is from 31-35 years old. 72% of the sample consists of labor while other 28% includes foremen, supervisors and managers. Most of the workers have experience of less than 5 years that almost 48% and workers with 6-10 years and 11-15 years of experience have commutative percentage of 32% which comprises of 15% and 17 % respectively. Other 9% workers are working in this industry from 16-20 years. Final 11% consists of workers working in this industry from more than 20 years, mostly designated as managers. 42% workers working on less than Rs. 5,000/- monthly salary. Next category of pay scale ranges from Rs.6,000-Rs.10,000/- having 32% of the total employees. While other workers are being paid within Rs. 11,000-Rs. 21,000/- totaled as 26%. 72% of the total sample has a break time of 20-30 minutes during their duty timings. 10% of the workers have a break time of 10-20 minutes. Remaining 18% of the workers have a break time of more than 1 hour. 95% of the workers bring their food and remaining 5% gets it from the employer. 97% of the employees are paid to work for overtime. Remaining 3% are not paid for overtime work. 72% of the workers are entertained if they need holidays other than weekly holiday. Other 28% workers are not facilitated. 90% workers observe their duty timings very strictly, while 10% have relaxation for this issue. 60% of total sample size does not work on the weekly holidays while remaining 12% works on holidays if there is overburden of work. 28% workers work on weekly holidays. 50% of the workers agree that there is no work load from employer while 15% are neutral. Remaining 35% disagrees and says that there is much work load from the employer.

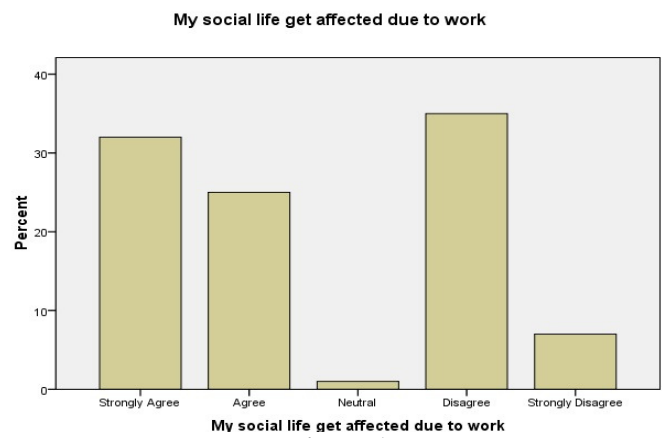


Figure-1
58% of the sample population agrees that their social life do get affected due to work. 2% are neutral and 40% says that their social life do not get affected by the work load

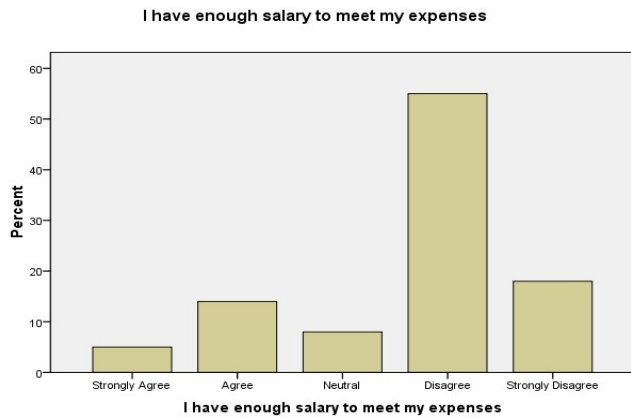


Figure-2

Graph represents that 20% of the total sample gets enough salary to meet their monthly expenses while 5% are neutral and 75% totally disagrees

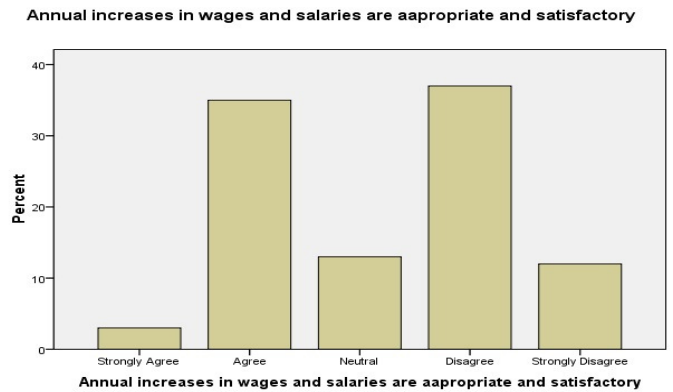


Figure-5

38% agree that annual increases in wages and salaries are appropriate and satisfactory but 13% show neutral response and 49% disagree

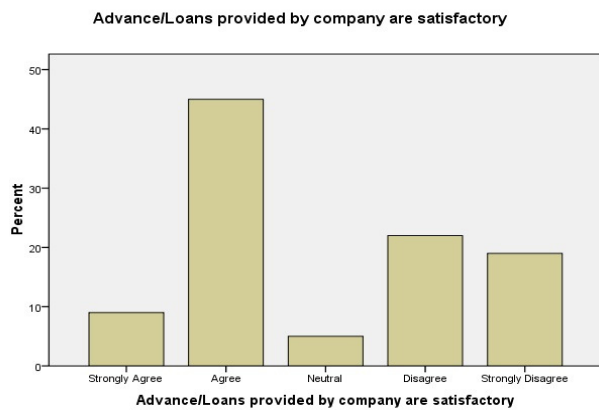


Figure-3

54% of the sample population agrees that the advances or loans provided by company are satisfactory while 5% are neutral and 41% disagree

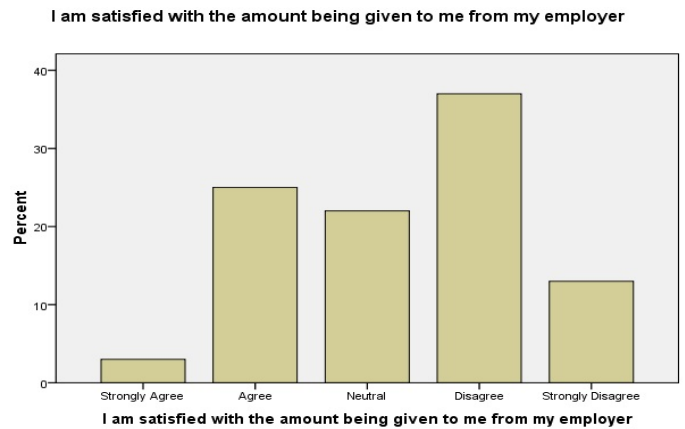


Figure-6

30% are satisfied with the amount given by the employer and 22% neutral but 48% disagree

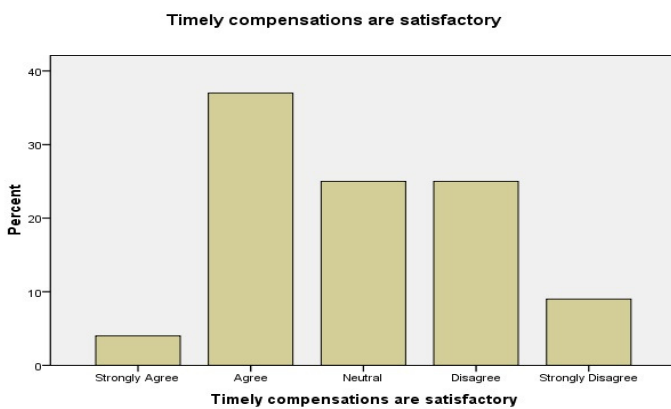


Figure-4

The graph shows that 41% are agree that compensations are timely and satisfactory while 25% are of neutral view and 34% disagree with that statement

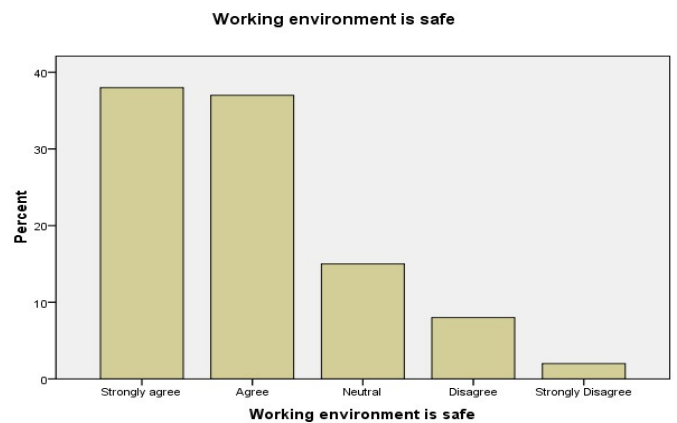


Figure-7

In graph 73% agree that working environment is safe while 15% neutral and 12% disagree

Management is flexible and understands the importance of balance in my work and personal life

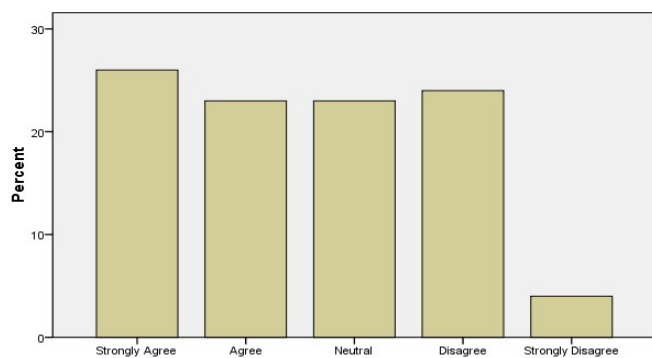


Figure-8

49% agree that the management is flexible and understands the importance of balance in work and personal life while 23% neutral and 28% disagree

Employer can make it easier to achieve work life balance

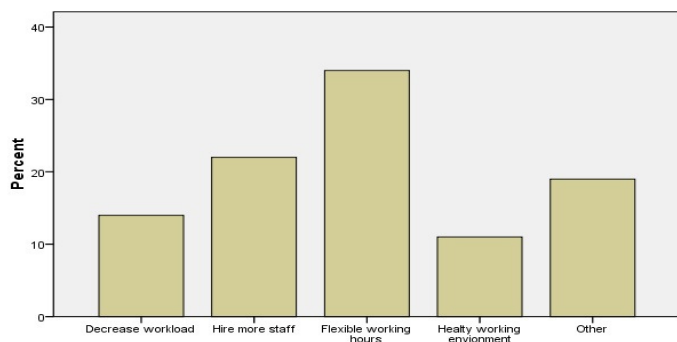


Figure-9

Graph represents that how employer can make it easier to achieve work life balance 14% said decrease workload, 22% said hire more staff, 34% said flexible working hours, 11% said healthy working environment, 19% said others.

It is possible to maintain work life and social life balance

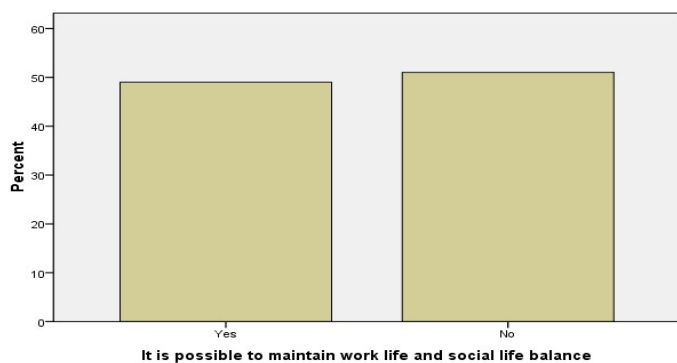


Figure-10

Graph represents that it is possible to maintain work and social life balance and it shows that 49% said yes, 51% said no.

Conclusion

As the results and analysis conclude the discussion very well that 51% of the worker or if I say human beings are unable to maintain a balance in their work and personal life. All the important graphs are attached and explained above. The interpretation of the results show that 32% of the workers say that their lives get affected from the irregular working hours, 55% of the workers are unable to meet their monthly expenses within the wage paid to them. 38% says that there is no satisfactory annual compensation. Another 38% of workers are not satisfied with their employer. The results and percentages are been discussed and concluded that the majority of the workers in the plastic industry is not satisfied with what they are doing and what they are getting.

Here are some of the recommendations put forward for the plastic giants who may help in the satisfaction of the workers which results in enhanced production as well as loyalty of the workers. Proper labor laws and acts should be implemented not in this specific industry as well in the complete production sectors in order to assure that there are no lives at risk during their work. Government should take steps to assure that no extra hours goes uncharged and no one is been bullied to do the overtime against his/her personal will. The proper presence and working of the association formed for the industry, in favor of the workers should be monitored. Wage rate of the workers should be increased and there should be an institute which works on providing loans and fulfilling the health needs in case of any severe illness. The above mentioned recommendations will definitely be useful for the workers which in return benefits the big giants as well as the government. The collaboration of the owners running different industries and the government will prove a remarkable success in the overall growth of economy as well it will help in implementing best practices in the industry.

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