



# Work Life Balance Of Flexpatriate In International Assignments

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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the impact of work-life balance on flexpatriates behavior. The flexpatriates are to be considered as flexible assignees the paper aims to know what are the work life balance factors which make flexpatriates to be called as flexible short-term Assignees. The study is been conducted using 50 flexpatriates working in the IT sector in Bangalore district Karnataka. The IT sector in Bangalore is one of the largest sector in Karnataka and has globally been recognized and more number of flexpatriates are flying frequently on the assignments. It is an empirical study, analysis is conducted by using IBM SPSS 23 tool. The result of the study insisted to come out with work-life balance programs, HR policies, commitments, and strategies for the Assignees. The study concluded by stating work-life balance has a strong impact on flexpatriates behavior in international assignees.

Keywords:- Flexpatriates , Work-life balance, Family separation, Spousal support, Flexible Behavior

## 1.Introduction

Globalization has brought new impact in the world the system of working, a huge range of changes taking place regarding the international assignment's and employees being allotted to these assignment's earlier expatriates were been allotted to international assignments and study is also been conducted on these expats, the study has also come with the result the failure of these expatriates, family adjustment to host country, cultural adjustment, huge cost incurred on them made to think on the new form of assignees called as short term assignees. Meyerhofer;2004: came up with a new set of employees who are been called as flexpatriates who go on assignment for 1 week to 3months on an average leaving their families behind in the home country and these assignees are been completely left on themselves to complete the assignments and no such Hr policies are been framed for them as it's been done to expatriates. The literature has come up with how there is a rise in flexpatriates from the corporate perspective as boundary spanners, effective cost, knowledge exchange, offer flexibility, and maintaining

a healthy relationship in global market (Myskens et al., 2009; Collings et al., 2007; Minbaeva & Michailova 2004; McKenna & Richardson, 2007; Nakamura & Mizoguchi, 2013; Schaper, Amann, Jaussaud)

Flexpatriates obscure the frontier between non-work and work domains (Ilies et al., 2009) they function as cross boundaries interaction more no of assignments means more no of the learning experience of cultural contexts and skill meanwhile it is also a burden on psychological and physical aspects tension in work-family, family separation, work-life issues, health stress, travel stress, relationship with children, international working pattern are most common problem cited (Harvey et al., 2010; Suutari, 2003, DeFrank et al., 2000; Kappelhoff et al., 2006; Welch and Worm, 2006).

The aim of this paper is to study the factors of work-life balance which influence the behavior of the flexpatriates their international assignments. It begins with the study of literature exploring what are the factors which influence work-life balance which impacts behavior than the research method, study and result are discussed coming up with the finding the suggestion with the final conclusion of the study.

**Helene Mayerhofer, Linley C. Hartmann, Gabriela Michelitsch-Riedl and Iris Kollinger:-** as global trade has increased the usage of expatriates are been more but it is only in large-sized but small and medium-sized are using short term, flexible who can have better coordination in HCN those are been named as flexpatriates. Flexpatriates are been mostly used in a small organization to avoid cost constraints, difficulties arise due to expatriates' difficulties like family separation, dual careers. The flexpatriates are been used for wide purposes like to assist in projects, to provide expert knowledge, to offer support in technical problems or stock audits (controlling), and to attend meetings, congresses, and conferences as well as training courses. This paper also stated that less involvement of HRM with flexpatriates compared to expatriates.

**Helene Mayerhofer ■ Linley C. Hartmann ■ Anne Herbert (2004):-** defined Flexpatriates “employees who travel abroad for business reasons, at short notice and over short periods, and maintain their family and personal lives in their nominated home country”, this article reported the involvement of men and women as two samples worked in different organization first major implication was that flexpatriates raise several issues which are not been addressed by the HRM department because these assignments are considered as operational issues rather than HR issues. The second implication in this study was about women are equally competent to men in handling flexpatriates work but at the same time women carry a greater burden of managing family issues this finding is common to be found even in general research, growing issues of dual careers has made flexpatriates to think on it and to be recognized and has to be worked on it and concern on this term has to be highlighted and also stated that instead of training program effective assistance can be given on career self-management and family relationship.

**Helene Mayerhofer, Barbara Müller, Angelika Schmidt:-** this paper has focused on flexpatriates called short term assignees who have a job at the home office but have a workload of other countries but residence does not change.

The paper highlights the characteristics of flexpats

The frequent alternation between the different locations of work including different national and regional cultural contexts.

A flexible schedule of time and/or time zones an unclear separation between leisure and work time and a few daily routines.

Changing social relations and contacts with co-workers and connecting and disconnecting relations with family and friends.

This paper has analyzed the lifestyle of flexpatriates based on the attributes used in the study they concluded four types of Flexi lifestyles ( flexpatriates)

Tough travelers take tasks effectively with full planning and dedication

Enjoyer who love to take assignments as convenient and comfortable travelers ( 5star hotels, good

**Felstead et al. (2002) define** “work-life balance as the relationship between the institutional and cultural times and spaces of work and non-work in societies where income is predominantly generated and distributed through labor markets”.

**Nancy R. Lockwood (2003):-** Global environment seems to be more challenging and companies are aiming to reduce the cost, it is important that HR department to look into the work-life balance of employees their issues relating to generation X and Y who are interested in valuing their personal time and couples struggling to manage dual-career issues and marriages if companies come up with better work-life programme then it would be win-win situation to both employees and employer.

**Olivier Wurtz, Vesa Suutari:-** work-life balance seems to be a critical aspect when it comes to international assignments especially expatriates most of the assignees are rejecting assignments due to family concern their adjustment abroad and most of the time because of dual career and in other international assignees the boundaries between professional and private lives seem to be weaker and face lot of stress as left their family behind.

**Mayerhofer, H., Schmidt, A., Hartmann, L. and Bendl, R. (2011):-** this paper explored on work life balance of Austrian flexpatriates stating work life balance is not unacceptable option to almost all employees ,a model been suggested of balance and imbalance as two option of organization here work life balance has taken to be revisited and work life imbalance has taken into consideration because there are many career aspirants for flexpatriates . The variables considered in worklife balance are work arrangements ,care provision, health, and others, from the combination of two prospective work-life balance and work-life imbalance they came to a conclusion of four types (type A) defines how flexpatriates maintain the WLB as they have a good administrative process and good health with better organizational support,(type B) states employees working for a long hour or travel hours less organizational support, (type C) with no organizational support for the employees as they are flexible enough to handle on there on the way of dealing with work-life imbalance,(type D) organization offer high work-life balance but flexpatriates are completely unaware of it.

**Research gap :-** Flexatriates are those employees who are neglected employees when it comes to international assignments there are no HR policies and strategies are framed for these employees there are left on themselves to cope with the situation in international assignments and no such work-life balance programs been framed for flexpats as more no of flexpatriates are being assigned to short term assignments and will also be increasing use of these employees in near future .As there are no research conducted on work life balance of flexpatriate and how flexible are they to cope when they are on assignments .

## **2.Objectives:-**

1. To explore the influence of spousal support on flexpatriates behaviour in an international assignment.
2. To study the impact of family separation on flexpatriates behaviour in international assignments.
3. To analyze the impact of health stress flexpatriates behaviour in an international assignment.

## **3.Data Collection**

Method Two types of data collection are done in this study primary data has been collected from Flexpatriates working in IT sector using multiple choices, Likert scale measured Questionnaire. Secondary data would be collected from articles, publications, periodicals, magazines which related to individual investing and practices in the globe and in India to date.

Statistical analysis was done using the statistical tool IBM SPSS Statistics 20. The analysis has been done in 4 levels. The test was conducted among flexpatriates to assess and evaluate the influences of family separation, spousal support, health stress, in IT companies in Bangalore District, Karnataka. The outcome of this paper would be an empirical model for Work-life balance and its impact on flexpatriate behavior in IT companies in Bangalore, Karnataka

## **4.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Population:** - The population considered for this Research is employees working in the IT Industry where it consists of IT software, IT Hardware and ITES companies.

**Sampling method:** - As the study observed different samples are collected from an employee working in IT companies who are flexpatriates, so snow ball sampling and Convenient sampling has been used to get the sample.

**Sampling Area:** - Employees are preferred from IT companies situated in different places in Bangalore

**Sampling Unit:** - Research mainly targets IT employees working in IT software, IT Hardware and ITES companies

**Sampling Size:** - 50 Respondents from various IT companies

**Research Approach:** - To collect the primary data from the respondents Survey method is used in the research

**Research Instrument:** -To collect the data Closed Ended-Questionnaires has been used . This data is collected using Google Forms and Mailed Questionnaires

**Research Territory:** - Different Regions of Bangalore

### **5.Hypothesis:-**

Based on the literature study the following hypothesis is considered for the present study

Ho:- there is no significant relation of spousal support on flexpatriate behavior in international assignment

H1:- there is significant relation of spousal support on flexpatriate behavior in international assignment

Ho:- There is no significant impact of family separation on flexpatriate behavior in an international assignment .

H1:- There is a significant impact of family separation on flexpatriate behavior in an international assignment.

Ho:- Health stress has no impact on flexpatriate behaviour in an international assignment.

H1:- Health stress has a impact on flexpatriate behaviour in an international assignment.

The study overall suggest new knowledge on work life balance In global context and how there is need of HR practices ,commitments and strategies in these flexpatriates assignments .

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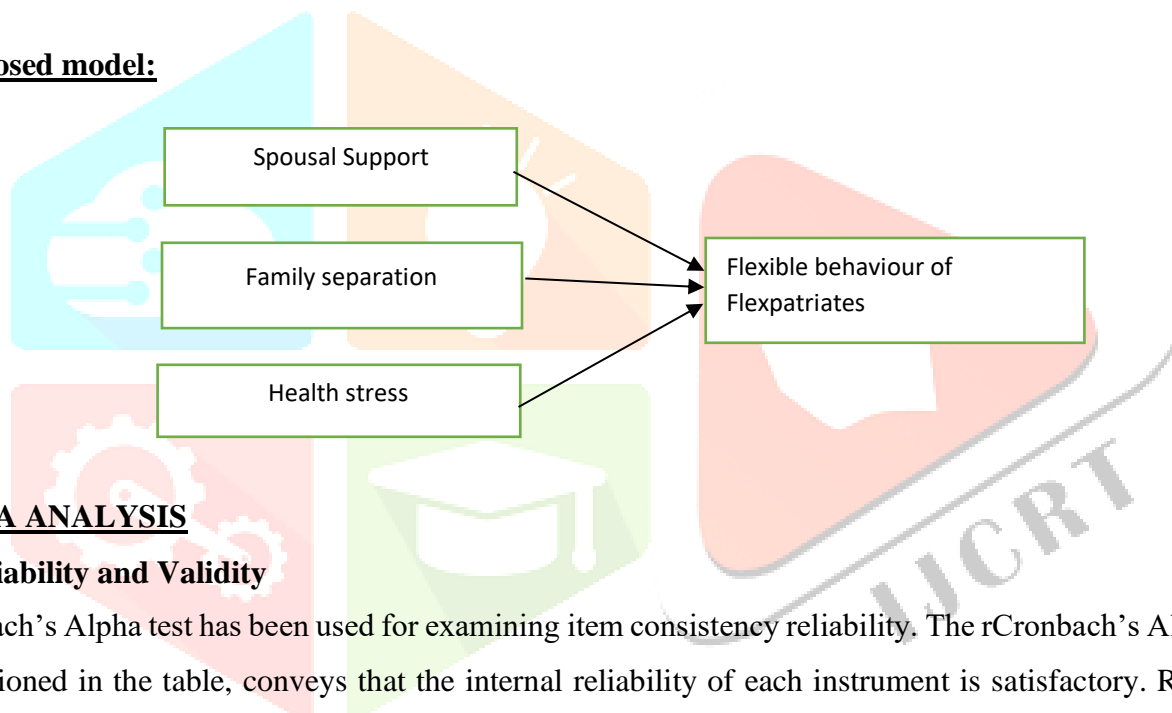
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### Figures and tables

#### 6. Proposed model:



#### 7. DATA ANALYSIS

##### 7.1 Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's Alpha test has been used for examining item consistency reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha test result is mentioned in the table, conveys that the internal reliability of each instrument is satisfactory. Reliability was met at the level of exceeding 0.600

**Table 7.1 : Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients**

Instrument	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Family separation	0.646	8
Spousal support	0.802	9
Health stress	0.694	3
Flexible behaviour	0.619	2

**Table 7.2: Multiple Regression Analysis**

<b>Model Summary</b>					
<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>	<b>Durbin-Watson</b>
1	.609	.371	.328	.49470	2.608
Predictors: (Constant), FAMILY SEPERATION, SPOUSAL SUPPORT, HEALTH STRESS					
Dependent Variable: FLEXIBLE BEHAVIOUR OF FLEXPATRIATE					

R-squared in the table measures the proportion of the variance in dependent variable explained by independent variables for a linear regression model. R-square or  $R^2$  explains the degree to which input variables explain the variation of output / predicted variable. Here R-square is 0.371, which means 37.1% of the variation in the output variable is explained by the input variables. For Multiple Regression analysis Adjusted R-square is widely used and tells what percent of the total variability is accounted by the model. The Adjusted R-square value is 0.328 and it can be inferred that this model accounts for 32.8% of the total variability.

**Table7.3:- Summary of ANOVA**

<b>ANOVA</b>						
<b>Model</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1	Regression	6.349	3	2.116	8.647	.000
	Residual	10.768	44	.245		
	Total	17.117	47			
Dependent Variable: FLEXIBLE BEHAVIOUR OF FLEXPATRIATES						

### **Hypothesis based analysis**

This section is to study and understand about the hypothesis

H1:- Ho:- there is significant relation of family separation on flexpatriate behavior in international assignment

**Table 7.4:-Relationship between Famliy separation and flexible behavior**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	<b>Value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</b>
Pearson Chi-Square	136.610 <sup>a</sup>	77	.000
Likelihood Ratio	104.368	77	.021
Linear-by-Linear Association	.766	1	.381
N of Valid Cases	50		
<sup>a</sup> .96 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.			

The test statistics shows the chi square value which is 136.610 and on the other hand there is a significance value which is lesser than 0.05, which proves that alternate hypotheses would be accepted. Further the flexpatriate behavior undertaking international assignments depends on family separation. So it is concluded that flexpatriation of IT employees are influenced by family separation.

**Table 7.5:-Relationship between spousal support and flexible behaviour**

H1:- Ho:- there is significant relation of Spousal support on flexpatriate behavior in international assignment

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	176.570 <sup>a</sup>	72	.000
Likelihood Ratio	106.666	72	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.133	1	.287
N of Valid Cases	48		

<sup>a</sup>91 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

The statistics test shows the chi square value which is 176.570 and on the other hand, there is a significance value which is lesser than 0.05, which proves that alternate hypotheses would be accepted. Further the flexpatriate undertaking international assignments depend on spousal support. So, it is concluded that the flexpatriation behavior of IT employees is impacted by spousal support.

**Table 7.6:-Relationship between health stress and flexible behavior of flexpatriate behavior**

H1:- Ho:- there is significant relation of family separation on flexpatriate behavior in international assignment

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	148.690 <sup>a</sup>	56	.000
Likelihood Ratio	88.513	56	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.038	1	.044
N of Valid Cases	50		

<sup>a</sup>71 cells (98.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

The statistics test shows the chi-square value which is 148.690 and on the other hand, there is a significance value that is lesser than 0.05, which proves that alternate hypotheses would be accepted. Further, the flexpatriate behavior undertaking international assignments depends on health stress. So, it is concluded that the flexpatriation behavior of IT employees is impacted by health stress.

**Table 7.7 : Summary of one sample t-Test**

**On-Sample Test**

Test Value = 0					
T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Interval Difference	Confidence of the

					Lower	Upper
Family Separation	24.028	49	.000	2.01429	1.8458	2.1828
Supposal Support	23.596	47	.000	2.27431	2.0804	2.4682
Health Stress	19.249	49	.000	2.21000	1.9793	2.4407
Flexible Behavior of flexpatriates	25.392	49	.000	2.16600	1.9946	2.3374

**Table 7.8: Summary of Independent Sample ANOVA**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.020	10	1.202	9.018	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5.198	39	.133		
	Total	17.218	49			
2	Regression	11.545	9	1.283	5.179	.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	9.413	38	.248		
	Total	20.958	47			
3	Regression	19.821	10	1.982	6.197	.000 <sup>d</sup>
	Residual	12.474	39	.320		
	Total	32.295	49			
4	Regression	5.770	4	1.443	18.090	.000 <sup>e</sup>
	Residual	11.563	145	.080		
	Total	17.333	149			

### Dependent Variable:- Flexible behaviour

From the above Tables it can be inferred that above mentioned independent factors are highly significant (as its Sig values are less than 0.05) and considerably impact on dependent variable (flexible behaviour of flexpatriates )

**TABLE 7.9:- DESCRIPTIVES ANALYSIS**

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std .Dev
Time to talk with family	50	1.00	5.00	1.9800	1.42127
Can give attention to family issues	50	1.00	4.00	2.0400	1.24417
Supportive family	50	1.00	4.00	2.0600	1.09563
Handle themselves in my absence	50	1.00	4.00	1.6200	0.94524



Miss many family function	50	1.00	5.00	2.3600	1.25779
Always in touch using telephone and emails with family	50	1.00	3.00	1.5200	.57994
Loneliness when away from family	46	1.00	4.00	2.0000	1.04978
Changes in children behavior after returning	46	1.00	4.00	2.5870	1.23964
<b><u>Spousal Support</u></b>					
Spouse motivation	48	1.00	4.00	2.3750	1.08422
Spouse takes care of family in flexpat absence	48	1.00	3.00	1.8542	.77156
Spouse manage professional and personal life ( working spouse )	48	1.00	4.00	2.1957	.98024
Spouse emotional stability	48	1.00	4.00	2.3750	1.26533
Disturbance in marriage life	48	1.00	5.00	3.1875	1.37850
Spouse responsibility	48	1.00	3.00	1.5833	.76724
Spouse feels lonely	48	1.00	5.00	2.2917	1.14777
Changes in fundamentals of marriage	48	1.00	4.00	1.8958	1.13437
Insecure feeling in absence of partner	48	1.00	4.00	2.6875	1.15143

**Flexible behavior of**

**TravelStress**

Travel planning	50	1.00	4.00	1.940	1.20221
Feeling fatigue and tired	50	1.00	4.00	1.800	1.03016
Immediate reporting to work after flight	50	1.00	5.00	2.800	1.37974

**Flexpatriate**

Flexible working on assignments	48	1.00	4.00	1.5800	1.08965
Cope with all situation	48	1.00	3.00	2.3400	1.31878

