A OVERVIEW OF THEORIES OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

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ABSTRACT

Work Life Balance describes the relationship between your work and the commitments in the rest of your life and how they impact one another."Employers, industry and government unanimously makes it clear that the need of the hour is maximising participation in the workplace which ultimately give rise to a bunch of struggling workforce trying to strike a balance between work and life. The intersection of work and life research is fundamentally challenged by a lack of commonly established basic language and key constructs; no single prevailing framework or perspective is universally established. The academic body of knowledge regarding work-life scholarship relies on a multiplicity of theoretical frameworks, which include spill-over, compensation, resource drain, enrichment, congruence, work-family conflict, segmentation, facilitation, integration, and ecology theories. Work life balance is a construct in itself explained by several experts through various authentic theories. Theories help us to understand the perspectives of the area of work life interface. This review paper throws light to various existing theories in this field of knowledge.

Keywords: Work ,Life, Balance, Theory, Family

Introduction

Work Life Balance describes the relationship between your work and the commitments in the rest of your life and how they impact one another."Employers, industry and government unanimously makes it clear that the need of the hour is *maximising participation in the workplace* which ultimately give rise to a bunch of struggling workforce trying to strike a balance between work and life.

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Components of work life balance

Self Management- It implies recognition of the fact that, effectively using the spaces in our lives, is vital and realising that resources, time and life are finite. Finding time for oneself is definitely an impracticable task but approach life as being the captain of our own ship.

Time Management- It focuses on bifurcating tasks as 'important and urgent' and 'important or urgent'. If a person can discern between what he can do best and when, then time can be effectively managed.

Stress Management- Tasks are getting complex day by day. Multitasking is the need of the hour. And this approach as against a single task at a time , elevates the possibilities of stress. Deliberate attempts to reduce stress should be practiced for maintaining tranquillity.

Change Management-Effective change management implies a situation wherein periodic and concerned efforts are made to make sure that the volume and rate of change has least impact on you.

Technology Management- Rapidly growing technology should end up as a boon and not a bane. You should rule technology and never let yourself becoming its slave.

Leisure Management- A right mix of leisure activities must be identified and adopted that can give you rest, relaxation, enjoyment as well as time off from work which is a vital component of human beings state of balance.

Theories of Work Life Balance

The intersection of work and life research is fundamentally challenged by a lack of commonly established basic language and key constructs; no single prevailing framework or perspective is universally established. The academic body of knowledge regarding work-life scholarship relies on a multiplicity of theoretical frameworks, which include spill-over, compensation, resource drain, enrichment, congruence, work-family conflict, segmentation, facilitation, integration, and ecology theories.

1 .Spill-over Theory

Spill-over is a process whereby experiences in one role affect experiences in the other, rendering the roles more alike. Research has examined the spill-over of mood, values, skills and behaviours from one role to another, although the most of this research has focused on

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mood spill-over. The experiences resulting from spill-over can manifest themselves as either positive or negative. In the literature, spill-over has also been termed as generalization, isomorphism, continuation, extension, familiarity, and similarity. There are two interpretations of spill-over : (a) the positive association between life and work satisfaction and life and work values and (b) transference in entirety of skills and behaviours between domains such as when fatigue from work is experienced at home or when family demands interfere with work demands. In a study of spill-over, used experience sampling methodology to examine mood-related spill-over on a daily basis, finding suggested that working parents in their sample were more likely to bring work-related emotions home than they were to transfer family-related emotions to the workplace.

2. Compensation Theory

Compensation theory refers to the efforts intended at countering negative experiences in one domain through increased efforts for positive experiences in another domain. An example would be a dissatisfied worker focusing more on family than work, thus reallocating human resources. Compensation can be viewed in two broad categories: supplemental and reactive. Supplemental compensation happens when positive experiences are insufficient at work and are therefore pursued at home. Reactive compensation occurs when negative work experiences are made up for in positive home experiences. In other words, according to compensation theory, there is an opposite relationship between work and life, so workers attempt to satisfy voids from one domain with satisfactions from the other also found a compensatory relationship between work and life roles for employed. Whereas women who experienced negative affect from family were more engaged with their work, consistent with a compensation story.

3. Resource drain Theory

Resource drain theory refers to the transfer of resources from one domain to another; because resources are limited (time, money, and attention), available resources in the original domain are reduced . Resources can also be shifted to other domains that are not work and family related, such as community or personal pursuits .

4. Enrichment Theory

Enrichment theory refers to the degree to which experiences from instrumental sources (skills, abilities, values) or affective sources (mood, satisfaction) improves the quality of the

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other domain. Enrichment can be defined as "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role" and reported that employees perceive that their work and life roles enrich each other.

5. Congruence Theory

Congruence theory refers to how additional variables that are not directly related to work or family influence the balance of multiple roles. While spill-over is a direct relation between work and family, congruence attributes similarity through a third variable, like personality traits, behavioural styles, genetic forces, and socio-cultural forces. Based on congruence theory, a third variable such as intelligence or level of education could positively affect both work and life domains.

6. Segmentation Theory

Segmentation theory refers to viewing work and life as separate domains that do not influence each other .Segmentation has been used to describe the separation of work and life, such that the two roles do not influence each other. Since the industrial revolution, work and life have been inherently separate by time, space, and function. This process can be explained as what occurs when people actively suppress work-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in the life domain, and vice versa. As this has been proven no longer to be true and conceivably never was, particularly for female workers, segmentation is now referred to as the active process that people use to form and maintain boundaries between work and family. The literature also suggests the usage of the terms compartmentalization, independence, separateness, disengagement and neutrality to describe this theory averts that some people may actively suppress work-related thoughts, feelings and behaviours while at home, and vice versa.

7. Facilitation Theory

Facilitation theory refers to what occurs when the participation in one domain cultivate and enhances the engagement in another domain. This portability of augmentation can comprise skills, experiences, resources, and knowledge facilitation occurs because social systems naturally utilize available means to improve situations without regard for domain limitations.

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8. Integration Theory

Integration theory refers to the holistic view that a healthy system of flexible and permeable boundaries can better facilitate and encourage work-life and community-life domains acknowledged that integration theory best portrays the incorporation of additional contextual elements, such as community, into the body of knowledge in regard to work and life. Integration calls for contemporary understandings that retool traditional work-life paradigms, making all stakeholders (employers, workers, and communities) active partners with equal voices in the formation of a holistic model of work-life balance. An approach to work and family that includes all parties and shared responsibility will yield better results in both domains than solutions shaped in isolation.

9. Ecology Theory

Ecological systems theory refers to the suggestion that work and life are a joint function of process, person, context, and time characteristics, and symptomatic of the fact that each and multiple characteristics yield an additive effect on the work life experience. Ecology theory was later developed into the person-in-environment theory with the common thread among diverse person environment variants as the recognition that individuals and groups have vibrant relationships with their social, physical, and natural environments.

10. Inter-role conflict Theory

Inter-role conflict theory refers to what occurs when meeting the demands in one domain makes it difficult to meet the demands in the other domain. In the literature, this has also been termed opposition or incompatibility theory. An individual encounters role conflict when the sent expectations or demands from one role interfere with the individual's capacity to meet the sent expectations or demands from another role. An example of role conflict is that of an employee who is at the same time pressured to work overtime while family members urge that employee to come home. Eight propositions where the constructs are in conflict in relation to time, role strain, and specific behaviour, as follow: pressures must come from both work and family; self-identification with roles is necessary; role salience moderates relationships and is positively related to conflict level; conflict is strongest when there are negatives associated with non-compliance; directionality is based on conflict source; conflict is related to career success and stage; external support is related to conflict.

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11.Structural functionalism

The roots of this theory can be traced back to the early 20th century, when industrial revolution was separating economic work from the family home. The 19th century's technological advancements in machinery and manufacturing initiated the separation of work from family. However, it was not until the early 20th century that the first view of work-family theories started to shape. Structural-functionalism as one of the dominant sociology theories of early 20th century was a natural candidate. The structural functionalism theory, which emerged following WWII, was largely influenced from the industrial revolution and the changes in the social role of men and women during this period. This theory implies that the life is concerned mainly with two separate spheres: productive life which happens in the workplace and affective life which is at home. Structural functionalism theory believes in the existence of radical separation between work (institution, workplace, or market) and families. According to this theory, these two (workplace and family) work best "when men and women specialize their activities in separate spheres, women at home doing expressive work and men in the workplace performing instrumental tasks" .

12. Role enhancement theory

According to this theory, the combination of certain roles has a positive, rather than a negative effect on well-being. This theory states that participation in one role is made better or easier by virtue of participation in the other role. Moreover, this theory acknowledges the negative effect of the work-family relationship, in which, only beyond a certain upper limit may overload and distress occur, however, the central focus of this perspective is mainly on the positive effects of work and family relationship, such as resource enhancement.

13.Work enrichment model

This theory is one of the recent models for explaining the relationship between work and family. According to this model, experience in one role (work or family) will enhance the quality of life in the other role. In other words, this model tries to explain the positive effects of the work-family relationship.

14.The Four Burners Theory

Imagine that life is represented by a stove with four burners on it. Each burner symbolizes one major quadrant of life.

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1. The first burner represents family.
2. The second burner is friends.
3. The third burner is health.
4. The fourth burner is work.

Theory says that "in order to be successful you have to cut off one of your burners. And in order to be *really* successful you have to cut off two."

Three Views of the Four Burners

Option 1: Outsource Burners

We outsource small aspects of our lives all the time. We buy fast food so we don't have to cook. We go to the dry cleaners to save time on laundry. We visit the car repair shop so we don't have to fix our own automobile. Outsourcing small portions of your life allows you to save time and spend it elsewhere. Can you apply the same idea to one quadrant of your life and free up time to focus on the other three burners?

Work is the best example. For many people, work is the hottest burner on the stove. It is where they spend the most time and it is the last burner to get turned off. In theory, entrepreneurs and business owners can outsource the work burner. They do it by hiring employees.

Parenting is another example. Working parents are often forced to "outsource" the family burner by dropping their children off at daycare or hiring a babysitter. Calling this outsourcing might seem unfair, but—like the work example above—parents are paying someone else to keep the burner running while they use their time elsewhere.

The advantage of outsourcing is that you can keep the burner running without spending your time on it. Unfortunately, removing yourself from the equation is also a disadvantage. Most entrepreneurs, artists, and creators I know would feel bored and without a sense of purpose if they had nothing to work on each day. Every parent I know would rather spend time with their children than drop them off at daycare.

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Option 2: Embrace Constraints

One of the most frustrating parts of The Four Burners Theory is that it shines a light on your untapped potential. It can be easy to think, "If only I had more time, I could make more money or get in shape or spend more time at home." One way to manage this problem is to shift your focus from wishing you had more time to maximizing the time you have. In other words, you embrace your limitations. The question to ask yourself is, "Assuming a particular set of constraints, how can I be as effective as possible?"

For example:

- Assuming I can only work from 9 AM to 5 PM, how can I make the most money possible?
- Assuming I can only write for 15 minutes each day, how can I finish my book as fast as possible?
- Assuming I can only exercise for 3 hours each week, how can I get in the best shape possible?

This line of questioning pulls your focus toward something positive (getting the most out of what you have available) rather than something negative (worrying about never having enough time). Furthermore, well-designed limitations can actually improve your performance.

Of course, there are disadvantages as well. Embracing constraints means accepting that you are operating at less than your full potential. Yes, there are plenty of ways to "work smarter, not harder" but it is difficult to avoid the fact that where you spend your time matters. If you invested more time into your health or your relationships or your career, you would likely see improved results in that area.

Option 3: The Seasons of Life

A third way to manage your four burners is by breaking your life into seasons. What if, instead of searching for perfect work-life balance at all times, you divided your life into seasons that focused on a particular area? The importance of your burners may change throughout life. When you are in your 20s or 30s and you don't have children, it can be easier to get to the gym and chase career ambitions. The health and work burners are on full blast. A few years later, you might start a family and suddenly the health burner dips down to a slow

simmer while your family burner gets more gas. Another decade passes and you might revive relationships with old friends or pursue that business idea you had been putting off.

15. Boundary Theory Of Work Life Balance

Flexible work schedules and an eye to work-life balance are good for business. A study last June by the White House Council of economic advisors showed a "significant positive relationship between work-life balance practices and total factor productivity" and recommended that "wider adoption of such policies and practices may well benefit more firms and workers, and the U.S. economy as a whole." It turns out that helping employees balancing work and life isn't as simple as offering flex time. And many of us lack the tools to be very good at that sort of balance. According to a 2013 survey by the Pew Research Center, 56% of working mothers said it was very or somewhat difficult to balance the responsibilities of their jobs and their families. And this is not only a problem for women. 50% of working fathers said the exact same thing.

This is because there is spillover. When things are rough at work, we take it home and snap at our spouses or children or roommates. When things are rough at home, we carry it into our working hours, where we are volatile, or on autopilot. In fact, study after study has shown that in this world where so many of us are tethered 24/7 to our work email –working from home, taking our work home, or sleeping with our phones—a lot of us are epically failing at maintaining a healthy work-life balance. And that isn't good for companies. A recent OECD study showed that people spend one-tenth to one-fifth of their time on unpaid work. And while at first glance that might seem to be a windfall for the company, when you dig a little deeper it can reveal issues like disillusionment, burnout and disengagement.

Psychologists are finding that mindfulness, or the "state of a state of being attentive to and non-judgmentally aware of momentary experiences" is a great way to help us balance those two worlds. A 2012 study from researchers at the University of South Florida found that that more mindful working parents reported better work–life balance, sleep quality, and vitality, and reduced family conflict. Another 2012 study on mindfulness in the work environment showed that mindfulness reduces emotional exhaustion and improves job satisfaction at work. And perhaps most significantly, in a recent article in the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Behavior*, researchers at the University of Heidelberg found that employees can "use mindfulness practice as a strategy for shaping the boundaries between life domains, for separating work from private life emotionally and cognitively, and for improving work–

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life balance."This is a huge win for companies, because the more we can incorporate a little mindfulness into our employees' world view, the more we can protect employees from burnout and stress and keep them focused and engaged in their work. In understanding how mindfulness helps with work/life balance, it helps to know a just a little about boundary theory, which organizational psychologists use to study the balance between our working roles and the demands of our personal lives. The boundary is usually a continuum from full integration on one side, to full segmentation (or separation) of life and work. As a rule, the more completely we integrate the two domains, the more blurred the boundaries are, so that you may be in one domain but still be psychologically or behaviourally engaged in your role from the other domain. This mindfulness is made up of two things, according to the researchers:

Self-regulation of attention: awareness, focus, full presence, and full perception of immediate experiences. Mindfulness exercises typically anchor participants' attention to the present by directing them to focus on objects such as pictures or somatic sensations such as breath.

Orientation to experience: the attitude the participant takes in approaching consciousness. Researchers chose four criteria: (1) not judging positivity or negativity in arising experiences; (2) not striving to change experiences to meet future goals or expectations; (3) accepting current conditions, not in resignation or unconditional approval, but rather avoiding the struggle against the unalterable; (4) letting go of cognitions, emotions, or sensations as they come.

Conclusion

Work life balance is a construct in itself explained by several experts through various authentic theories. Theories help us to understand the perspectives of the area of work life interface. This review paper throws light to various existing theories in this field of knowledge

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