THEORIES OF WORK LIFE BALANCE –A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW.

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ABSTRACT

Work–life balance is the harmonious and holistic integration of work and non-work of work and private life. There are various aspects of one's personal life that can intersect with work including family, career, leisure, and health. Work–life balance is multidirectional; for instance, work can impede with private life, and private life can with work similarly, work can interfere in family life and family life can interfere in work leading to disagreement. On the positive side personal life and family life may enrich work and work may have positive spill over on personal and family life. The work life interface can be adverse (e.g., work-life conflict) or can be beneficial (e.g., work-life enrichment) in nature. Several theories explain different aspects of the relationship between the work, personal life and family life. The two fundamental theories in work life balance are Boundary theory and border theory that researchers have used to study these role conflicts. Other theories are built on the foundations of these two theories.

Several dominant theories have been utilized to explain this relationship on the boundary-border spectrum; these theories are: Structural Functionalism Theory, Ecology Systems

Theory, Segmentation Theory, Resource Drain Theory, Spill over Theory, Work Enrichment Theory, Border Theory, Integration Theory, and Overall Appraisal Theory.

This paper attempts to compile and compare various theories of work life balance to understand different dimensions of work life.

Key words: Work life balance, Personal life, Work life, Role conflict.

INTRODUCTION

In the concept work life balance the term "work" is refer's to an activity, such as a job, that a person uses physical or mental effort to perform, usually for money or money's worth paid. The term "Work life balance" is a disputed term, with many alternative meanings suggested, such as "Work life coordination", Work life Interface", Work life Masonic", Work life Reconciliation", or" "Work life Integration". Work life balance is about the interaction between paid work and other life activities, including family responsibilities, community activities, health, leisure and personal development.

It is imperative to arrive at the conceptual understanding of the term, work life balance, its early beginning or evolution, transformations and advancement needs to be studied and analyzed. The concept of work life balance has been categorized into two parts; namely 'Evolution of Work Life Balance', work life balance theories and work life balance models are a necessity.

Objectives of the study

To analyse various work life balance theories to assesses various dimensions of conflict and enhancement between work-personal life-family life.

WORK LIFE BALANCE DEFINITIONS

Greenhans and Allen (2006) Work life balance is "the extent to which an individual's effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are compatible with the individual's life priorities.

Swamy (2007) defined work life balance as a practice that is concerned with providing scope for employees to balance their work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside work. It enables them to reconcile the competing claims of work and home by meeting their own needs as well as those of their employers.

Grzywacz and Carlson(2007).Work–family balance is defined "as accomplishment of role related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his or her role-related partners in the work and family domains".

Deery (2008) Defined the concept of WLB is a complex task, as it can be viewed from the meaning of 'work', 'life' and 'balance'.

Dundas (2008) argued that work-life balance is about effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and all other activities that are important to people such as family, community activities, voluntary work, personal development and leisure and recreation.

Kalliath and Brough (2008) proposed that "work-life balance is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual "current life priorities".

Emslie and Hunt (2009) argued that "work–life balance defined as 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict'.

Delecta.P (2011) states that "Work life balance is defined as an individual ability to meet their work commitments as well as other non-work and family commitment."

Work life balance theories.

Several theories have been propounded by various thinkers and experts to explain the work family linkage and the different aspects of the relationship between work, personal and family life. Boundary theory and border theory are the two fundamental theories that study role conflicts and its overall impact on work life balance. Various other theories are built on the foundation laid by these two theories.

Structural Functionalism Theory:

This theory can be traced back to the early 20th century, the era where industrial revolution leading way to separating economic work from the personal life. The 19th century's technological advancements in machinery and manufacturing contributed at the early stages to this separation of work from family. Structural-functionalism as one of the dominant sociology based theories of early 20th century. It emerged following World War II and was largely influenced from the industrial revolution and the changes in the social role of men and women during this said period. The theory implies that the every individual's life is concerned mainly with two separate spheres: productive life which according to this theory refers to that part of work life which helps one to produce a product or a service and emotional life which is at home which centre's around spending time for oneself, spouse, parents, child care, leisure, health care etc. Structural functionalism theory believes in the existence of fundamental parting between work and families.

According to structural functionalism theory, work and life aspect will work at tandem with each other "when men and women specialize their activities in separate spheres, women at home doing expressive work and relieving men of household chorus and men in the workplace performing instrumental tasks not worrying about house hold responsibilities" (Kingsbury and Scanzoni, 1993; as cited in MacDiarmid, 2005).

Ecology Systems Theory:

According to Ecological systems theory by Grzywacz and Marks, work and life are a joint function of methods, processes, person, situation, and time characteristics, and indicative of the fact that each multiple characteristics yield an additive effect on the work life experience (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000). Ecology theory of work life balance 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 in which they co exist (Pitt-Catsouphes et al., 2006).

Segmentation Theory:

The Segmentation theory propounded both the aspects of work and life as separate entities that do not influence or interfere with each other in what so ever manner. Segmentation theory explains the mutual departure of work and life with each other, such that the two roles do not influence each other and are separate entities (Edwards and Rothband, 2000; Staines, 1980; Zedeck, 1992). Ever since the industrial revolution, work sphere and personal life aspects have been inherently separate by time, space, and function. Piotrkowski (1979) articulated this process as what happens when people actively restrain work-related thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviours in the life domain, do the same at work by suppressing personal life thoughts, emotions and problems or pleasures. Facilitation: Facilitation theory refers to what occurs when the participation in one domain cultivate and enhances the engagement in another domain. Grzywacz (2002), the expert here feels facilitation between occurs because social systems naturally utilize available means to improve situations without regard for domain limitations.

Compensation Theory:

Compensation theory of work life balance describes the efforts intended at countering unconstructive experiences in one domain through increased efforts for optimistic experiences in another domain.

An example would be a dis-satisfied worker focusing more on family than work, or a satisfied worker focussed on work more but compromises on family life thus reallocating his

preferences for being happy in one accept difficulties in the other. (Edwards and Roth bard, 2000).

According to Zedeck and Mosier (1990), compensation can be viewed in two different Categories: supplemental and reactive. Supplemental compensation occurs when individuals change their pursuits for highly rewarding experiences from the dissatisfying role to a potentially more fulfilling one. It happens when positive experiences are insufficient at work and are therefore pursued at home For example, individuals with little autonomy at work seek more autonomy outside of their work role. Reactive compensation represents individuals' efforts to redress negative experiences in one role they are performing by pursuing positive experiences in the other role such as engaging in leisure activities after a tiring day at work. It occurs when negative work experiences are made up for in positive home experiences.

According to (Clark, 2000) compensation theory, there exit's a contradictory relationship between work and life, so individuals make an attempt to satisfy voids from one sphere with satisfactions from the other. Tenbrunsel et al., (1995) also found a compensatory relationship between work and life roles for employed.

Resource Drain Theory:

According to Resource drain theory individuals transfer limited resources available to seek balance between work and life from one domain to another to make use of resources that are available optimally (time, money, and attention). Individuals also move Resources to other domains that are not work and family related, such as community or personal pursuits (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000).

Spillover Theory:

The spill over theory proposes the most popular view of relationship between work and family. Several researchers suggested that workers carry the feelings, emotions, attitudes; skills and behaviours that they establish at work into their family life and vice versa (Belsky et al., 1985). Theoretically, spillover is perceived to be one of two types: positive or negative. Spillover considers multidimensional aspects of work and family relationship. Positive spillover refers to fact that satisfaction and achievement in one domain may bring along satisfaction and achievement in another domain. Negative spillover on the other hand refers to the fact that problems and despair in one domain may bring along the same emotion into another domain (Xu, 2009).

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

mood spill-over. The experiences coming out from spill-over can manifest themselves as either positive or negative (Morris and Madsen, 2007). In the literature, spill-over has also been termed as generalization, isomorphism, persistence, extension, acquaintance, and likeness (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000; Staines, 1980; Zedeck, 1992). There are two interpretations of spillover (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000): (a) the positive association between life and work satisfaction and life and work values (Zedeck, 1992) and (b) transference in entirety of skills and behaviours between domains (Repetti, 1987) such as when fatigue from work is experienced at home or when family demands interfere with work demands. In a study of spill-over, Williams and Alliger (1994) 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.

Work Enrichment Theory:

According to enrichment theory, experience in one role either 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. Enrichment theory thereby refers to the degree to which experiences from instrumental sources (skills, abilities, values) or affective sources (mood, satisfaction) improves the quality of the other domain (Morris and Madsen, 2005) . Greenhaus and Powell (2006) defined enrichment 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.

Zedeck and Mosier (1990) to describe enrichment theory used the term instrumental to characterize this notion, which states that good outcomes at work place lead to good personal life outcomes and vice versa.

Border Theory:

Clark (2000) presented a work/life border theory – a new dimensional theory about work life balance. Clark opines that each person's role takes place within a specific domain of life, and these domains are separated by borders that may be bodily, temporal, or emotional. The theory addresses the issue of "crossing borders "between domains of life, especially the domains of home and work. According to this theory, the flexibility and limit to switch over the boundaries between people's work and family lives will affect the level of integration, and determines the ease of transitions between the two spheres, and the level of conflict between these domains are closely related. Boundaries that are flexible facilitate integration between work and home domains. When domains are relatively integrated, mutual transition

is easier, but that may lead to work family conflict. Conversely, when these domains are segmented, transition is more effortful, but work family conflict is less likely (Bellavia and Frone, 2005).

Integration Theory:

Integration theory considers the comprehensive view that a healthy system of flexible boundaries between life and work can better facilitate and encourage work-life and community life domains (Clark, 2000). Mason (2002) 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 theory calls for contemporary understandings that redesign traditional work-life paradigms, making all stakeholders like employers, workers, and communities' active partners with equal voices in the formation of a holistic and attainable model of work-life balance. The famous writer Googins (1997) believed that holistic approach to work and family that includes all parties and shared responsibility will yield better results in both domains than solutions shaped in isolation.

Overall Appraisal Theory:

Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007 opine work-life balance can be classified into the overall appraisal approach and the components approach to work-life balance.

Overall appraisal refers to an individual's general appraisal concerning the entirety of his or her life situation. For example, work-family balance has been defined by 'Clark' as "satisfaction and good performance at work and home, with a least amount of role conflict" (Clark, 2000, p. 751), "equilibrium or maintaining overall sense of harmony in life" (Clarke et al., 2004, p. 121), and "an assessment that work and family resources are sufficient enough to meet work and family demands such that participation is effective in both domains" (Voydanoff, 2005, p. 825)[28]. When an overall appraisal approach theory is applied, work-life balance is typically assessed using questions (e.g., "All in all, how successful do you feel in balancing your work and personal/family life?" Clarke et al. 2004).

Conclusions

The work life balance theories under study propose different dimensions which are applicable though not universally but true with different people and situations Structural-functionalism is concerned mainly with two separate spheres: productive life and emotional life the former helps one to produce a product or a service and emotional life which is at home which centre's around spending time for oneself, spouse, parents, child care, leisure, health care etc. The theory concludes work and life balance can be kept when men work and women take

care of home related affairs. Ecology Systems Theory propounds that work and life are a joint function of methods, processes, person, situation, and time characteristics and indicative of the fact that each multiple characteristics yield an additive effect on the work life experience. The Segmentation theory propounded both the aspects of work and life as separate entities do not influence or interfere with each other as every person restrain work-related thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviours in the life domain, do the same at work by suppressing personal life thoughts, emotions and problems or pleasures at work. Compensation theory argues there exit's a contradictory relationship between work and life, so individuals make an attempt to satisfy voids from one sphere with satisfactions from the other. Spill over theory proposes the most popular view of relationship between work and family. Several researchers suggested that workers carry the feelings, emotions, attitudes; skills and behaviours that they establish at work into their family life and vice versa. Enrichment theory, experience in one role either work or family will enhance the quality of life in the other role. Hence each theory has unique dimension of work life balance.

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