Edited by
Toyin Ajibade Adisa · Gbolahan Gbadamosi

Work-Life Interface
Non-Western Perspectives

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Editors

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To my parents, family, colleagues, and all my students.

—Toyin Ajibade Adisa

To all the lovely students I have had the pleasure of teaching and/or supervising

—Gbolahan Gbadamosi

Contents

Notes on Contributors

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Mike Leat is now an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Plymouth Business School having recently retired from his positions as Director of Undergraduate Programmes, Deputy Director and Acting Head of School. He fulfilled a number of Senior Management roles in

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Part I

Introduction and Theory

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Introduction

Gbolahan Gbadamosi and Toyin Ajibade Adisa

Work-life Interface: Definition, Theory and Measurement

The challenges of work-life constructs including work-life interface (WLI), work-family conflict (WFC), work-family enrichment (WFE), work-life balance (WLB), is global and without geographical location preferences, yet much of what we know from the empirical and theoretical work-life literature is dominated by the Global North coming mainly from Europe and North America. Although, the literature from

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the Global South are rapidly evolving and being documented across a range of scholarly outlets yet much more work is required as the yawning gap is unsettling.

While the very idea of a work-life balance (WLB) probably goes as far back as the existence of paid work, its emergence in scholarly circles probably dates back to the late 1970s and early 1980s when the term WLB has been used to depict the coexistence and lack of opposition between one's life and their other non-work life roles.

Definition

The seminal work defining work-family conflict (WFC) and its dimensions can be traced to the work of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). Yet, some of the earliest works on work and family lives were dominated by a conflict perspective (Barling & Sorensen, 1997; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999) and the earliest theoretical models include work/family border theory (Clark, 2000), work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell 2006), and a comprehensive guide for future research directions on theoretical models (Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007).

A popular seminal definition of work-life balance states that it is "the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in—and equally satisfied with—his or her work and family role" (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003, p. 513). Another good landmark point for the definition of work-life dates to the work of Wayne et al. (2007, p. 64) who defined work-family facilitation as: "the extent to which an individual's engagement in one life domain (i.e., work/family) provides gains (i.e., developmental, affective, capital, or efficiency) which contribute to enhanced functioning of another life domain (i.e., family/work)". Yet, the concept remains unclear (Fleetwood 2007). Furthermore, both Özbilgin, Beauregard, Tatli, and Bell (2011) and Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, and Sparrow (2013) who were both credited with early comprehensive literature reviews also provides good start points for the collection of literatures on the definitions for WLB.

Some of the earliest and most credible literature reviews are attributed to the work of Özbilgin et al. (2011) who used the lens of diversity to

identify blind spots in WLB research focusing on both positivists and critical scholarships. Gatrell et al. (2013) also did a comprehensive investigation on the problems of definition and inequity on WLB within the fields of sociology, psychology and management studies demonstrating how the early narrow definitions have led to inequities within research also shows how the definitions had been problematic rather than enriching.

More recently is the comprehensive review of Bansal and Agarwal (2020) which reviewed different conceptualisations of WLC, WLE and WLB but also how they relate to each other. On the basis of their recent review, they provided four propositions to guide future research about the relationship among the various work-life constructs: (1) work-life conflict (WLC) reduces WLB; (2) work-life enrichment (WLE) enhances WLB; (3) work-life conflict and enrichment influence individual attitudes and behaviours; (4) WFC and WLE influence individual attitudes and behaviours through WLB.

Employers and academic writers are beginning to replace the word balance in work-life balance with interface, integration, and more recently harmony. One of the main arguments being that work-life harmony allows your work to be part of your life such that work and life are in sync and fun in both the home and work terrain.

However, the term work-life harmony has been more commonly used outside of scholarly works in blogs, commercial writings, consulting and other popular social media. Yet, the term work-life harmony has appeared in scholarly works such as McMillan, Morris, and Atchley (2011), Small, Harris, Wilson, and Ateljevic, (2011), Ong and Jeyaraj (2014), and Lloyd and McAchran (2019). As researchers continue to revisit the conceptualisation of the terms work-life balance (WLB), work-life interface (WLI) and work-life harmony (WLH) in the literature not much differences have been evidenced to validate any differences until Ong and Jeyaraj (2014) provided empirical support that participants in WLB condition elicit higher levels of cognitive dissonance compared with participants in the WLH condition. Notwithstanding, much of what we know about the concept is exploratory and in early days. Work-life harmony is defined as: "an individually pleasing, congruent arrangement

of work and life roles that is interwoven into a single narrative of life" (McMillan et al., 2011).

As future research continues to validate and examine the details of how we can measure the concept and evidence its clear distinction and discriminatory values from what we currently know about WLB, the concept—WLH—would still require cautious use and application.

Theory

On the theoretical front, a recent special topic forum of the Academy of Management Review (volume 44, number 1) produced several ground-breaking contemporary positions. As new academic work begin to emerge going forward, these new theories would continue to be tested and validated. Powell, Greenhaus, Allen, and Johnson (2019), the editors of the special forum, argued that work-life theory has not kept up with the explosion in research in the area. The special topic forum produced six articles (each proposing a new theory) and seeking to offer corrective course by developing new theory which will make sense of the research to date and guide future research. Four of the articles focus on work-life perspective (Bear, 2019; Bourdeau, Ollier-Malaterre, & Houlfort, 2019; Crawford, Thompson, & Ashforth, 2019; Leslie, King, & Clair, 2019) while two focus on work-family perspective (Hirschi, Hirschi, Shockley, & Zacher 2019; Ladge & Little, 2019).

Two examples from the work-life theory perspectives include Crawford et al. (2019) who proposed a model of dual-earner couples' and partners' sensemaking of work-life shock events and couples' resource investment decisions. Leslie et al. (2019) similarly proposed the construct of work-life ideologies, three independent types of work-life ideologies, and a model of their antecedents and consequences. On the other hand, from the work-family perspective Hirshi, Shockley and Zacher (2019) proposed a theoretical model that explains how people can jointly attain work and family goals by using four action strategies: allocating resources, changing resources and barriers, sequencing goals, and revising goals.

It is interesting that while these six theoretical propositions set us on the part of a new horizon as far as theoretical underpinning for work-life research in the future, it remains muddy waters as researchers continue to seek convergence of theory in the work-life research domain. Moreover, several research gaps remain uncovered by these new theories, for example, there are still gaps from careers perspective, societal or national culture perspective, the diversity perspective, and all others that go with the dichotomous "work-life" interface (Powell et al., 2019). What seems clear and incontrovertible is that work-life researchers have only just navigated into another maze of what we do not yet know rather than into a field of what we now know. The empirical validation of these new propositions through testing would be an appropriate way to engage in any new research in the work-life area. Future research will certainly become richer with the guidance provided by these new propositions yet new questions would only begin to emerge as these theories are tested in empirical investigations.

Measurement

Measurement of the construct WLB has also received considerable attention of scholars. Unlike many behavioural constructs, scale development in the work-life literature has not attracted much research attention in sociology, psychology or management studies. Yet, it is critical to be able to scientifically measure the WLB / WLI / WLH constructs since many early works adopted the positivist approach in their research. Perhaps the earliest credible measuring scale was attributed to Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, and Grzywacz (2006) who developed an 18-item multi-dimensional measure of work-family enrichment. Other measures widely documented include those of Greenhaus et al. (2003), Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, and Weitzman (2001), and Dex and Bond (2005). In addition to widely used and popular Carlson et al. (2006) scale, Bansal and Agarwal (2020) in their review organised other scales used to measure WFC, WLE and WLB into those mostly used (e.g. Carlson, Kacmar, & Wiliams, 2000; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996); those sparsely used (e.g. Brough et al., 2014; Fisher,

Bulger, & Smith, 2009; Haar, 2013; Hill, 2005) and those hardly used (e.g. Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009; Kacmar, Crawford, Carlson, Ferguson, & Whitten, 2014; Voydanoff 2004).

The Future of Work-Life Interface Research

There are massive qualitative and quantitative outputs on WLB / WLI, there are also significant numbers of theoretical and conceptual papers. There are important ways we should advance WLI studies, including introducing greater diversity early on in the research process from operationalization, to sampling and analysis (Özbilgin et al., 2011; Gatrell et al., 2013). More varying levels of analysis from individual, group, societal, institutional, relationships and contextual are all key to the future success of work-life research. Methodological pluralism which includes historical analysis would enable deeper and more reflective investigation than purist approaches embedded in the positivist or interpretivist tradition (Özbilgin et al., 2011). Transdisciplinarity as a means of addressing troubling themes of class, gender, difference and enrichment (Gatrell et al., 2013) comes handy. Very little progress has been made with regard to these specific and important aspects that could advance our knowledge and certainly much less so from the non-western outputs. It would, therefore, seem a lot more care needs to go into research design in these areas such that every little added research begins to matter.

Richert-Kaźmierska and Stankiewicz (2016) provided evidence in a survey in the Scandinavian that age does matter in WLB as older age groups are more likely to indicate the maintenance of WLB and more frequently do not agree that all workers have equal opportunities. Similarly, Sav (2019) investigated the role of religion in WLI. The findings support the proposition that religiosity can be beneficial for WLB, rather than competing with work and other non-work roles for time and energy. Religion can be important for WLB and needs to be included more in WLI research (Sav, 2019).

While these two studies pointed to the value to age and religion in WLB research, we could ask similarly whether the following also matter: gender, race, sexual orientation and sexuality, disability, belief systems

including superstitions, urban versus rural residence, full versus part-time work, paid versus self-employment, mothers versus fathers, use of technology, employers' commitment to corporate social responsibility, workplace flexibility, labour legislation, social class, among others. More recent studies suggest focusing on multiple time-period measurements in data collection and long-term cost-benefit analyses of work-life initiatives (Ong & Jeyaraj, 2014).

McNall, Nicklin, and Masuda (2010) advanced the value of important outcome variables such as burnout, alcohol/drug abuse, job stress as well as important moderator variables such as family characteristics, work hours, organisational tenure in future research. They also advocated multisource data to minimise the limiting impact of cross-sectional and self-report data. Future studies would also benefit from more cross-cultural studies, particularly using multiple countries in the West and other parts such as Asia, Africa or South America to allow more evidence-based comparisons (Le, Newman, Menzies, Zheng, & Fermelis, 2020), as well as deeper investigations into why economic, institutional and cultural differences may account for differences (Le et al., 2020). Cultural beliefs may specifically be and area whose impact on WLB may have been self-evident (Kelliher, Richardson, & Boiarintseva 2019). Furthermore, Kelliher et al. (2019) propose that we need to extend the concepts of both work and life to incorporate different life worlds and social groups and different working arrangements and employment relationships. They argue that "some employees, "life" involves things other than childcare responsibilities including activities that are important to them, such as hobbies, education, exercise, religious or community activities, and other types of caring" (Kelliher et al., 2019, p. 107).

These aforementioned enumerated areas continue to attract much less investigation and this is particularly more evident in non-western contexts. There are important decision researchers in work-life research have to make which would affect both their output and especially their contribution or indeed if they will be able to make a contribution. It is about the research design and process, sampling and data, outcome, predictor and moderating variables selection, context and culture. It is also about a more holistic and more nuanced appreciation and incorporation of these issues in future research.

Why Is the Non-Western Perspectives Important and How Does the Book Improve the Boundary of Knowledge?

Work-life balance is harmonious reconciliation of employees' work and private lives. Its importance whether implicit or explicit, to organisations and employees cannot therefore be ignored. Yet, the preponderance of work-life balance studies which have appeared in books and journal articles were undertaken and focus on western context. Much fewer authors have reported studies on the non-western perspectives of work-life balance in an ever-changing globalised world economy.

There have been a number of books that have focused on work-life balance (Clutterbuck, 2003; Crane & Hill, 2009; Poelmans, 2005); and more recently tangentially in a quality of life and well-being (Michalos, 2014). The pioneering books on the subject are all produced through the lens of the West. Very few books have been focused specifically on Africa (Mokomane, 2013) and Asia (Lu, & Cooper, 2015).

The book titled, "Work-family interface in Sub-Saharan Africa", edited by Z. Makomane in 2013 was a trailblazer on the subject in Africa. However, the book is constrained by two points. First, it focuses only on work-family balance, an aspect of work-life balance which represents a small aspect of a much bigger debate on work-life balance. Secondly, it is restricted to the African continent—indeed, sub-Saharan Africa. More recently, Lu and Cooper (2015) produced another book that focused on Asia titled "Handbook of Research on Work-Life Balance in Asia".

There is no book to date on work-life balance that focuses more broadly on the Global South, especially the three non-western continents. There are remarkable similarities in the way of life and levels of development across these continents and a synergy of a more global book might bring together a more coherent and holistic perspective. The current book therefore uniquely encompasses three continents (Africa, Asia and South America). The book thus fills this gap and gives a broader view of the concept. The book therefore adds to the growing literature from the Global South and non-western countries.

The book also offers a critical perspective and understanding of work-life balance, interface. It focuses on how employees in the non-western environments achieve balance between their work and private lives with a huge dissimilarity from western nations in terms of culture and institutional framework. Thereby improves our understanding of the impact of cultural and institutional framework on employees' ability to achieve balance and harmony between their work and private lives. Much of the extant studies from western literature may not be applicable in similar ways to these employees. Several studies have argued and evidenced that context always does matters in these organisational behaviour and management research (Bamberger, 2008; Johns, 2001; Le et al., 2020; Michailova, 2011).

The book also contributes to the academic debate by offering a non-western perspective providing a strong basis of comparative analysis of WLB/WLI more globally. It showcases a collection of conceptual and theoretical papers as well as rich set of global empirical studies that draws on qualitative and mixed methodologies. There is clearly room for more quantitative studies in work-life research in non-western contexts. Furthermore, the book is expected to be of significant value to academics, international and domestic business organisations, policy makers, and undergraduate and postgraduate students and researchers generally.

This Book and Its Structure: A Brief Overview of the Chapter Content

As a book of readings, this book will appeal to undergraduate and Masters students who require a comprehensive yet coherent and integrated coverage of debates on work-family conflict, work-life balance, and work-life interface from a non-western perspective. It includes both empirical and theoretical perspectives and current developments from various parts of the world. Doctoral students and other researchers will equally find this research book a good literature to cite providing a sound introduction to studies in the different countries covered in the book. While the academic underpinning is strong throughout, yet many of the chapters are very much applied in their findings and implications. It also

calls attentions to a lot of new research opportunities. Consequently, the book will be found accessible for practitioners looking for solutions to work-life balance challenges and international human resource management discourse from a non-western tilt.

There are several pillars and frameworks presented in many of the chapters that serve as useful guides in managing people. The aim of the book is to bring together for the first time a number of contributions from leading authorities around the world in a cooperative and cohesive manner to shed light on multiple views of work-life research in their domain as a way of extending knowledge within the human resource management context. We also hope readers will gain insight into some of the divergent viewpoints and controversies within selected countries.

Our intention is to contribute to both the wider HRM debate as well as the critical management literature and therefrom provoke more focused research and debate on the areas where gaps have been identified especially in non-western contexts. This would potentially create opportunities for more carefully designed future research that would guide work-life research, management thinking, research and probably some application in practice. We hope that you will enjoy reading this book as we look forward to increasing the global coverage and country focus in subsequent editions.

There were four chapters based on an empirical investigation (Ghana, South Africa, Malaysia and Pakistan). Another six chapters were conceptual or based on some form of literature review (Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, China, India and Argentina). The chapters on Nigeria and Saudi Arabia utilise some additional secondary data and extracts from extant empirical works. Another five chapters were focused on women or emphasises gender difference as it relates to women (Ghana, South Africa, Egypt, Pakistan and Argentina). The chapter on Saudi Arabia provides case study that focuses on higher education institutes and healthcare sector. While all the country based chapters touched on aspects of culture, the chapters on China, South Africa, India and Pakistan places a lot more emphasis and depth on aspects of culture especially the Chinese and Pakistani cultures.

The book is divided into four parts. In Part 1, "Introduction and Theory", there are two chapters that address the basic overview and

foundation of field. It also addresses a rethinking of the border theory presenting an implementable and control model that helps underpin future research. In Part 2, "Africa and the Arab world", there are six chapters covering, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. These are three strategic countries in Africa (Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya); and two key countries in the Arab world (Egypt and Saudi Arabia) with Egypt being of dual value being a dominant country in Africa yet a key player in the Arab world. We turn the questions in each country to how work-life research has progressed and what are the current practices. We explore the differences in these domains and showcase management implications as well as future research directions. In Part 3, "Asia", presented over four chapters we discuss four strategic countries of Asia: China, India, Malaysia and Pakistan. These were undertaken using both critical engagement and empirical data from these countries. Finally, in Part 4, "Latin America", we showcase recent research from Argentina and provides some insight from a much less discussed country in anglophone publications albeit important country in South America. Together the thirteen chapters provide a good spread across the world of the state of the arts regarding work-life research and practice.

Part1: Introduction and Theory

In Chapter 1, *Gbolahan Gbadamosi* and *Toyin Ajibade Adisa* in the Introduction provides an academic overview and background of the scholarly journey of work-life research. This chapter provides snapshots of various narratives regarding the conceptual definition through time identifying the key landmarks and contributions to the present time evolving from work-family conflict, work-life balance, work-life enrichment to the emerging work-life harmony. It also summarises the various key measurements of the construct, from the widely used and popular ones to the sparsely used ones and the rarely used measures. The chapter then examines current research as a prelude to proposing future research direction of work-life interface research. Furthermore, the chapter identify current research gaps and rationalises the need for more outputs from

a non-western perspectives. Thereafter, it evidences how the book pushes the boundary of knowledge by attempting to bridge the knowledge gap. In the final subsection, the book's structure is described; brief overview of each chapter content is also highlighted.

In Chapter 2, *Toyin Ajibade Adisa* and *Gbolahan Gbadamosi* outline a re-evaluation of the border model and border control with the presentation of the border theory. The border theory is mainly a work-family balance theory. The chapter draws on a critical review of the literature and contemporary research to present a work-life border control model which furthers our understanding of employees' movement across the border from the work to the non-work domain. This model provides a comprehensive and coherent theoretical framework to understand employees' movements from work to non-work domains, thus border flexibility and permeability. The chapter shows how the border theory is similar and yet distinct from other theories such as spill-over model (Staines, 1980), the conservation of resource model (Hobfoll, 1989), the compensation model (Lambert, 1990), the segmentation model (Young & Kleiner, 1992). The chapter makes five propositions to guide future research directions, drawing managerial applications that will inform decision making and policies. The chapter calls attention to new theoretical models. The border theory provides a theoretical basis for contemporary and future studies.

Part 2: Africa and the Arab World

In Chapter 3, *Kwame Adom*, in an empirical investigation using institutional theory examines the role of culture in the work-life border management. It provides an insight from the formal sector focusing on Ghanaian married female workers. The study found that married female employees in Ghana experienced role conflicts that were culturally embedded. The study adopted a qualitative approach with 15 in-depth interviews with Ghanaian women. The study finds that the Ghanaian culture has contributed to women's role-conflicts and that managing WLB is challenging for married working-class females as a result of lack of flexible work schedules and the exploitative nature of some employers.

Women therefore rely on support from family, hiring the services of non-family, and effective planning for success in balancing their work with their life roles. The role of culture in managing WLB in this context is therefore significant, not symbolic. The author offers important policy implications and future research direction.

In Chapter 4, *Gladys Muasya* and *Daniel Nzengya* conducted a systematic review of WLB related studies from Kenya during the period 2008 to 2020 presenting the current state of research. From an initial 65 hits on relevant materials, after clean up they ended up with 20 relevant and usable materials that formed the basis of the chapter. They argued that much of the publications were western leaning both in conceptualisation and operationalisation. However, some progress has been made in the formal sector but very little or no coverage of the informal sector. They identified significant research areas gaps and directed researchers and practitioners at valuable research opportunities for future research contribution.

In Chapter 5, *Toyin Ajibade Adisa, Gbolahan Gbadamosi* and *Olatunji David Adekoya* focus on the "Myth and the Reality of Work-life Balance in Nigeria". They provide a conceptual overview of work-life literature in Nigeria. The chapter extracts empirical evidence from almost exclusively Nigeria based studies. The chapter starts with a comprehensive synthesis of a more global and academic WLB conceptualisation of work, life and balance as it is situated within HRM practices. Some overarching factors such as individual/organisational differences and expectations, cultural attributes and the institutional forces regulate work-life patterns working time were identified. The chapter also outlines and discusses key factors relating to WLB in Nigeria to include: working conditions (broken down as work intensification, physical presence at work, and lack of supportive culture), gender complexities, and institutional policies and initiatives as they affect the WLB experiences. The contribution of each of these factors to enhancing WLB was discussed including broad-ranging future research ideas and managerial implications. In Nigeria, long working hours, irregular work schedules, and general lack of WLB policies such as flexi-time options characterised the culture of many organisations and as such many employees working under poor conditions, are less likely to achieve WLB. The chapter concludes by pointing in the direction of

recent global influences and consequent changes thus the need to adopt new and evolving business realities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors point to a massive opportunity for researchers to tap into the yawning gap of how business activities have changed in the management of WLB policies and initiatives and how all stakeholders have responded.

In Chapter 6, *Nasima M.H. Carrim* and *Eileen Koekemoer* focus on WLB of younger and older Indian women managers South Africa. They adopt a qualitative approach using the cultural identity theory as underpinning theory. They focused on the following research question: Do younger and older Indian women managers experience the same challenges in balancing their work and home lives? They found differences in how younger and older South African Indian women achieve WLB and the extent to which they engage in cultural identity work. Moreover, younger women managers are better able to achieve WLB and engage in lower levels of cultural identity work compared to their older counterparts mainly due to the changing social roles within the Indian community. Also, family size did not make a difference to how participants balanced work-family life and engaged in identity work. Another key finding is that workplaces do not do enough to ensure that women who are mothers can achieve high productivity levels by providing them with flexible work arrangements. They discussed policy implications as well as made useful recommendations for future research.

In Chapter 7, *Ghada El-Kot, Mike Leat* and *Sarah Fahmy*, provided another gender-based chapter which zero-in on women and focused on the connections between WLB and gender roles within the context of the Egyptian government strategy for sustainable development. First, they discussed the contextual influences on gender roles and WLB; then they reviewed the determinants, nature and consequences of WLB while identifying potential benefits for Egyptian women and organisations. Finally, they drew conclusions on the challenges and opportunities, as well as areas for further research to inform future policies and initiatives for achieving WLB in Egypt.

In Chapter 8, *Arun Vijay Subbarayalu, Sivasankar Prabaharan* and *Devalapalli Masthan* in a literature review discuss WLB in Saudi Arabia using extant studies and secondary data from higher education institutes

and healthcare organisations in the country. They examined work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict within the context of work-life debate. This chapter reports the challenges faced by higher education and health sector employees in Saudi Arabia in managing WLB and how it varies with different age groups, gender, ethnicity, marital status, organisation culture, job security, work autonomy and supportive work culture. The chapter is significantly policy focused and advances several recommendations for the improvement of both WLB both in the higher education and healthcare sectors. Some suggestions were also made for future research.

Part 3: Asia

In Chapter 9, *Sudong Shang*, *Xi Wen Chan* and *Xuchu Liu* analyse the role of culture in the work-life discourse focusing on work-life conflict (WLC) from a Confucian cultural perspective. The chapter is very detailed in providing information about the Chinese context and Confucian values. It holistically investigates the individual-, organisational- and societal-level factors that may influence employees' WLC in China from a Confucian cultural perspective. They traced the narrative of inconsistencies in recent literature between the evidence and the cultural values that are considered. They argued that work- and non-work-related values (culture) likely leads to some unique cultural occurrences of work-life conflict, and the strengths of the relationships vary between unique and universal occurrences (in other cultures) of work-life conflict. They provided a comprehensive review and synthesis of previous work-life research conducted within the context of the Confucian culture and inspect the unique and universal antecedents and outcomes of work-life conflict. The chapter also extends the discussion to "work–family" to "work-life" to acknowledge other non-work aspects such as community, education and after-work entertainment. Finally, they discuss why WLC has unique antecedents and outcomes in a Confucian culture and their relationships with universal antecedents and outcomes of WLC. The authors provided recommendations for future research that helps contextualise WLC research in specific Chinese cultural context.

In Chapter 10, *V. Chandra* discusses WLB policies and practices in India as well as look into the future of research in this area. This literature review chapter also utilises secondary data from Indian work practices. The chapter explores the WLB policies and practices within the changing institutional contexts while attempting to identify gaps between policies and practices, what causes such gaps and the consequences therefrom. The author discusses the causes and consequences of work-life imbalance along with the coping strategies. The chapter finally throws some light on how the gendered norms predominating the national culture interferes at the operational level thus often creating gaps between stated policy and actual practice. Significant policy recommendations were made.

In Chapter 11, Wee Chan Au examined the implicit and explicit influence of WLB in Malaysia. Using a qualitative approach, the author interviewed 25 Malaysian working adults exploring institutional factors at the national- and organisational-level shaping experience of WLB. The chapter reported that lack of WLB practices at the organisational level and passive role of employers in WLB (meso-environment) is evidenced by the lack of policies and legislation at the national level (macro-environment). There are no legislated policies that enforce employers to offer WLB benefits, consequently self-initiated WLB practices at the organisational level remain rare. The author concluded that the lack of government legislation contributes to slow adoption of WLB facilities in organisations. Moreover, Malaysian employees perceive MNCs much more favourably than local companies when selecting an employer, especially if WLB is a priority for the individual. A large number of Malaysian middle-class households depend on domestic help for household chores and childcare support, with the collectivist nature of Malaysian society also facilitating support from immediate families. The chapter further argues that there is a growing gap between employees' increasing awareness of the importance of WLB and the availability of work-life support from employers and government in Malaysia. Practical and theoretical implications were further discussed.

In Chapter 12, Ibrahim Noorani and Khurram Shakir focused on the role of Pakistani women and traditional values in WLB. The chapter provides a very comprehensive Pakistani contextual background exploring the impact of culture on the achievement of WLB among

Pakistani women. The empirical research found that culture plays a significant role in shaping the lives of Pakistani women thus influencing their ability to achieve WLB. The social caste system was also found to be a strong predictor of WLB within the confines of the Pakistani culture. The Pakistani caste system generates some contradictory outcomes among the working women across the three dominant social classes (upper, middle and lower). The chapter also reported that the inevitable need for women (particularly low-income earners) to combine work and home duties triggers a variety of coping skills and creativity which end up being useful in the workplace. Some policy implications and future research directions were highlighted.

Part 4: South America

In Chapter 13, Gisela Delfino and Camila Botero examine the challenges of finding a balance between work and private life among Argentine Workers. The authors argue that it is important, to analyse WLB based on gender because there are still significant differences and preferences in the job opportunities that men and women are exposed to. The chapter provides some detailed contextual background for the Argentine environment especially with respect to structural inequalities. The chapter provides useful narratives and discussion around some important issues within the Argentine work environment including: work-private life balance, teleworking, unemployment, and women and household work. They also discussed the psychosocial disturbances at work especially workaholism and burnout. The authors argue that a lack of balance between private life and work tend to be associated with people who have jobs and family obligations especially with young children. Education also plays a very positive role in this state of affairs.

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2

Work-Life Border Control Model: A Re-think of Border Theory

Toyin Ajibade Adisa and Gbolahan Gbadamosi

Introduction

Organisation restructuring of the twenty-first century has compelled many organisations to alter their internal and external operations (Sarfo, 2002). The burning desire of Generation X (workers born after 1963) for work-life balance (WLB) (Chao, 2005), the need for most organisations stay operational at all times (Tan & Klaasen, 2007; Torrington, Hall, & Taylor, 2008), the prevalence of dual-earner families and the rise of older employees in the workforce (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond,

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2009; Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006), demographic and social changes (Sharma & Mishra, 2013) that have resulted in an influx of women entering the labour force (Jones, Burke, & Westman, 2006), and the economic uncertainties (Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007) leading to the global economic downturn in 2008 (United Nations, 2011). These factors have collectively affected employees' movements from work domain to the non-work domain, consequently, creating a shift in the construct and application of border theory. These changes have driven many organisations to change their functions, strategies, and human resources management (HRM) policies to include policies that facilitate employees' unrestricted movement from work domain to non-work domain. Thus, it is necessary to re-think border theory in terms of its components and application.

Border theory is a work-family balance theory. It explains employees' movements from work domain to home/family domain. According to Clark (2000), employees are border crossers who travel between work and home domains. This article, however, takes Clark's study further by introducing the work-life border control model. This model describes employees as border crossers who journey between work and non-work domains. It draws a distinction from the spill-over model (Staines, 1980), the conservation of resource model (Hobfoll, 1989), the compensation model (Lambert, 1990), the segmentation model (Young & Kleiner, 1992), Clark's (2000) work/family border theory, and other studies on border theory (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996a, 1996b; Zerubavel, 1993), which only dealt with how employees construct, maintain, negotiate and cross the borders between work domain and home/family domain and ignored employees' other non-familial activities. This article also aims to build upon the aforementioned theories, especially border theory, in order to accommodate what has previously been omitted in these early studies.

In other words, the work-life border control model is not just about work and family/home but rather work and life domain domains. It is imperative to have a model that consider 'life' as an enclave for employees' non-work general activities. According to Osoian, Lazar, and Ratiu (2011), there are many other activities in the non-work domain that are equally as important as family responsibilities, depending on

each employee's status. For example, single employees who have no familial responsibilities to cater for may choose going to the gym, attending religious, social, or community activities, etc. as their non-work duties as opposed home/familial duties. Home or family is by no means the only activity in the 'life' domain that matter to employees. Rantanen, Kinnunen, Mauno, and Tillemann (2011) called for a WLB model that would capture that whole gamut of activities in 'life' domain. Furthermore, there is a need for a model that will explain factors that determine employees' movements across the border. This will illuminate our understanding of how employees' movements between work and life domains are bordered. Although Clark (2000) have argued that employees' movements depend on borders' strength and permeability. However, aside that Clark's (2000) border theory portrayed home/family as the only 'life' domain activity, the factors that determine the strength and weakness of the borders are also limited to spatial, temporal and psychological. This model attempts to expand work-family theory by discussing in-depth the five main factors that determine the strength or weakness of the borders. Ransome's (2007, p. 374) argued that 'it is rather important to use an established theory and concepts as a basis to develop a new one'. The current study is expected to broaden the scope of discussions on work-life border theory and enrich the literature in that aspect of study.

Historical Evolution of Border Theory

Boundary theory grew from a miscellany of studies about cognitive organisation of roles (Berg & Piszczek, 2012). Its development can be traced back to Zerubavel's (1993, 1996) lumping and splitting heuristic classification of organisational frames and Nippert-Eng's (1996a, 1996b) work on 'Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries through Everyday Life'. According to Zerubavel (1993, 1996), people use heuristic methods of classification to organise physical and mental constructs by either 'lumping' several categories into a single one or by 'splitting' one mental category into distinct, separate entities. Zerubavel argues that lumping and splitting classifications are socially

constructed and based on individual identification process. Berg and Piszczek (2012, p. 3) concluded that 'the mental categorisations at the heart of boundary theory are influenced by broader social factors, which cause individuals in the same social structures to create similar classification schemas'. Zerubavel (1993, 1996) posits that individual fashion 'islands of meaning' out of reality and potentially separate chunks of reality from the world and occurrences around them. 'The islands of meaning are not part of the nature; rather they are cluster of things which are similar to one another within their circle of classification' (Zerubavel 1991, pp. 70–80). Zerubavel, from a cognitive sociological perspective, further suggests that islands are outcomes of active construction, which complement the processes of lumping and splitting. These processes are at the heart of border theory and deal with cognitive processes that are neither personal nor logical (Zerubavel, 1997). He further identified the need for a comparative approach in social classification in order to clarify different classification schemas across thoughts communities (Zerubavel, 1996).

However, Nippert-Eng (1996a, 1996b) broadened the discussion by applying the notion of cognitive sociological classification to the work-family interface. Initially, she developed the concept of individual segmentation and integration of work and home mental categorisation into a theoretical cline. In 'boundary work', she classified employees as segmentors or integrators (Nippert-Eng, 1996a). Segmentation happens 'when the border between work and home is impregnable, while integration occurs when work and home are the same' (Nippert-Eng, 1996c, pp. 567–568). Warhurst, Eikhof, and Haunschild (2008, p. 10) stated that 'segmentors have two key rings, one for work, the other for the house and integrators affix all keys to one key ring'. However, despite the fact that integrating roles brings about less difficulties in role transition, yet it has been argued that less integrated roles lead to clearer and more easily maintained borders (Desrochers & Sergent, 2004). Literature is somewhat contradictory on this issue.

Nippert-Eng interpreted border theory beyond heuristic to include a strategic choice (Berg & Piszczek, 2012) in which employees' boundary management plans include those principles that they use to organise and separate role demands and expectations into particular spheres (Kossek,

Noe, & DeMarr, 1999). For Nippert-Eng (1996a, 1996b), employees who prefer and engage themselves in high overlapping between work and home domains are integrators while those who opt to keep work and home domain distinct are separators. Employees differ in their preferences, which often influence them in their decisions as to whether to separate or integrate work and family domains (Kossek et al., 1999). It is imperative to understand that the notion of strategy was incorporated into border theory by Nippert-Eng (1996c) in her conceptualisation of the border negotiation, in which she focused on employees as active role players. Consistent with Nippert-Eng's (1996c) position, mental categories of work and home can be managed by using three tools: internalised cultural images, socio-structural constraints, and personal practices within situational constraints. However, research has neglected the first two tools and embraced only the third one which consequently narrows the potential for understanding how and why employees segment or integrate their mental categorisation (Berg & Piszczek, 2012).

Nippert-Eng (1996c) underscored the importance of Zerubavel's social classification scheme in developing boundary theory. She argued that socio-structural forces act as constraints in boundary negotiation and influence the extent to which an employee is a separator or an integrator. Although she believes that employees cognitively construct the work and home domains, she maintained that individual thinking is nothing less than the embodiment of group thinking (Nippert-Eng, 1996c). She also posited that boundaries can be different in terms of the size of their conceptual territory and that their size can change from time to time as employees change in their thinking and behaviour. She identified permeability as an 'essential ease of transition from one mental category to another and part of boundary's structure profile' (Nippert-Eng, 1996c, p. 280). Undoubtedly, Nippert-Eng's (1996c) work made a significant contribution to border theory; however, she did not deal with 'how socio-structural forces are shaped by domestic institutions at higher and theoretical levels' (Berg & Piszczek, 2012, p. 5). Furthermore, Nippert-Eng's work focuses mainly on 'home' as the only aspect of employees' life, whereas, 'life' (or non-work domain) involves more than just family/home (Osoian, Ratiu, & Lazar, 2011; Warhurst et al., 2008). It is, however, essential to note that the term 'boundary theory' is often

attributed to Nippert-Eng (1996c). Even though her work was not the first theoretical examination of work and home boundaries, she was one of the first to examine them in a systematic and broad fashion (Berg & Piszczek, 2012).

The insightful work of Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, and Crouter (2000) and Bianchi and Milkie (2010) showed the interrelationship between work and home domains. They identified the structural factors that facilitate and impede employees' efforts to integrate their different responsibilities, but their studies ignored the boundaries that exist between these two domains (Desrochers, Sargent, & Hostetler, 2012). In the same vein, Ashforth et al. (2000) developed their study on the conceptualisation of the characteristics of boundaries, while Clark (2000) propounded work/family theory. Clark (2000) developed on the previous border theories based on the premise that they did not sufficiently explain, predict or solve the problems confronted by employees when balancing work and family responsibilities. However, Poelmans, O'Driscoll and Beham (2005) argued that previous border theories did not operate on the assumption that they are universally valid in all environments.

Clark's Work/Family Border Theory

Clark (2000) described the work and family domains as two asymmetric spheres with a penetrable or permeable boundary between them. She describes employees as border-crossers who make numerous trips across these two domains on a daily basis. The transition between the two domains may be easy or difficult, depending on the similarity of the variables within the two spheres. For example, in the domains in which the language and culture are similar, the transition is easier. However, in the domain in which language, culture and the expected behaviour are significantly different, transition is difficult (Kinnunen et al., 2005). According to Clark (2000, p. 747), 'border theory' addresses how domain integration and segmentation, border creation and management, border-crosser participation, and the relationship between border-crossers (employees) and others at work and home

influence work/family balance. Clark (2000) argued that the boundaries between work and family domains are temporally, spatially and psychologically permeable. Clark (2000) recognised changes which blur boundaries that separate work and family domains and the two domains interact.

The activities in the two domains occur at different time and in different places (Clark, 2001). The theory posits that the primary relationship between work and family systems is not emotional as previous theories claimed, it is human. The theory further posits that employees can shape their environment just as the environment can also shape them and 'it is these contradictions of determining and being determined by the two domains that make work/family balance a very challenging concept' (Clark, 2000, p. 748). According to Clark, an individual employee manages and negotiates between the two spheres. However, striking a balance between these two settings is somewhat varied among employees. It depends on the differences between their purposes, statuses and cultures. Border-crossers often 'modify their focus, goals and interpersonal style to fit the unique demands of each domain' (Clark, 2000, p. 751). As earlier mentioned, this article aims to expand on Clark's (2000) work/family border theory by developing a work-life border control model.

Characteristics of Borders

Clark (2000) argues that borders are demarcations between work and family domains and define benchmarks for acceptable behaviour. Ashforth (2001, p. 262) defined boundaries as 'mental fences used to simplify the environment'. Boundaries have been referred to as 'the physical, emotional, temporal, cognitive and/or relational limit that define entities as separate from one another' (Ashforth, et al., 2000, p. 474). It is 'a gateway into the functions of domains' (Mathews & Barnes-Farell, 2010, p. 330). The boundary separates domains from each other yet promotes and/or constrains how domains are connected and related (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006). Boundaries define the perimeter and the range of any domain (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009) and

they become institutionalised to the extent that they are hard to alter once they are socially shared (Zerubavel, 1991). Arguably, once employee activities are ritualised, it becomes difficult to change. Boundaries could be physical (seen or felt), temporal (scheduled work and family commitments) or psychological (thoughts and emotions) (Clark, 2000, p. 756). While weak boundaries allow a great deal of permeability and flexibility, strong boundaries are impermeable and highly inflexible (Clark, 2000; Kinnunen et al., 2005). Nippert-Eng (1996c) and Clark (2000) argue that flexibility and permeability are the two main characteristics of the boundaries.

Border Flexibility and Permeability

Border flexibility is the capacity of the border to be shifted (Berg & Piszczek, 2012). Flexibility can also be defined as the malleability of the border between two or more roles (Desrochers & Sargent, 2004) or the ability of the border to expand or contrast to accommodate the demands of another domain (e.g. an employee working from home takes the opportunity to pick children from school) (Desrochers et al., 2012). In fact, flexibility answers the question of when and where a role can be enacted (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008). Border permeability, however, refers to the extent to which a domain's border is easily penetrated by the thoughts or behaviour connected with another domain. For Ashforth et al. (2000, p. 474), 'permeability is the degree to which a role allows an employee to be physically located in the role's domain but psychologically and/or behaviourally involved in another role'. The permeability of any border determines the extent of integration or segmentation of the content of the bounded domains (Kreiner et al., 2009). For example, an employee who can switch easily from non-work-related responsibilities to deal with work related issues and vice-versa is said to have a highly permeable border (Glavin & Schieman, 2011). Permeability, according to Nipert-Eng (1996c, p. 280), is part of a boundary's 'structural profile'. Pleck (1984) refers permeability as the ability of one pre-defined role to encroach upon the physical and

temporal territory of another. Flexibility and permeability are, thus, central to employees' movements across the border.

Development of Work-Border Control Model

Practically, all of the studies undertaken on border theory centred on work and family/home domains (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000; Nipper-Eng, 1996c; Zerubavel, 1993, 1996). However, globalisation and organisational restructuring means non-work-related activities are no longer confined to home/family duties. This has necessitated the replacement of the term 'work-family balance' with 'work-life balance'. Furthermore, scholars have recognised the fact that work-life balance issues are not restricted to women and family issues alone (Chan, 2008; Osoian et al., 2011). There are many other activities in the non-work domain that are equally important to employees as familial duties, depending on the individual employees' personal circumstances (Osoian et al., 2011) (Fig. 2.1).
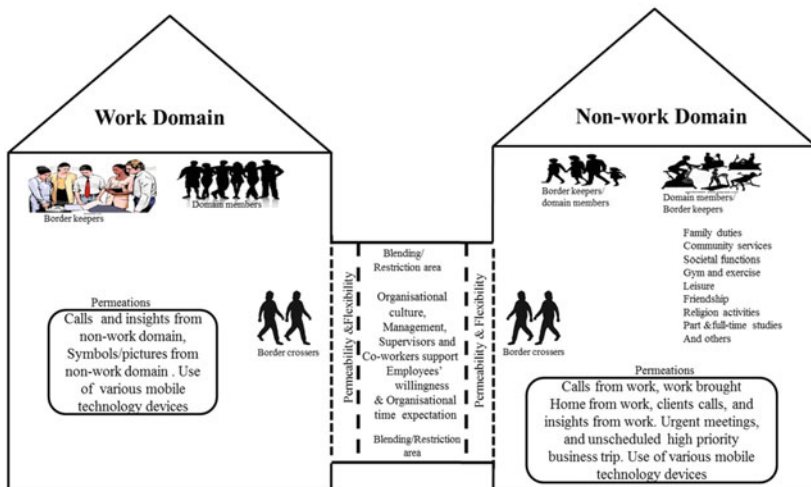

Fig. 2.1 Pictorial Representation of Work–Life Border Control Model

This model is a theoretical extension which seeks to identify essential constituents of border theory to offer a fresh perspective on work-life balance. The work-life border control model is divided into two domains. The work domain (daily work activities) provides an employee with income and a sense of accomplishment (Clark & Farmer, 1998) and the non-work domain which provides an employee with fulfilment and personal happiness (Clark & Farmer, 1998). Work activities fully engage domain members throughout their working hours. Non-work-related activities include but not limited to family duties, community services, societal functions, gym/exercise, leisure, friendship, religious activities, part-time or full-time studies. The main crust of this model is that employees' movement between work and non-work domains are determined by organisational culture, management support, supervisors' support, co-workers' support, employees' willingness to cross the border and organisational time expectation. Clark (2000, p. 757) stated that 'when a great deal of permeability and flexibility occurs around the border, blending occurs'. However, the work-life border control model proposes that restriction occurs in the border area when all or any of these forces are present.

Determinant Factors

Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is one of the factors in the work-life border control model which determines employees' movements across the border. In an organisation, culture represents the written and the unwritten rules and norms about the organisation. The spoken and unspoken widely shared assumptions unobtrusively manipulate organisational members (Schein, 1992). Most of the time, culture is invisible (Stinchcomb & Ordaz, 2007). Schein (2010) explains the three levels of culture, which range from the visible and tangible manifestations to the deeply embedded, unconscious and basic assumptions which is 'the essence of culture' (Schein, 2010, p. 23).

According to Schein, the basic underlying assumptions are the core of an organisation's culture with espoused beliefs and values forming the next level and artefacts forming the surface aspect of the organisational culture (Schein, 1985). In Schein's model of culture, there is a hierarchy between these levels which distinguishes between observable and unobservable elements of culture (Dauber, Fink, & Yolles, 2012). The mere existence of WLB policies in an organisation without duly implementation may be considered as organisational artefacts. Ramachandran, Chong and Ismail (2011) observe that artefacts are easy to recognise but related meanings are often ambiguous to people outside the organisation. Only members of the organisation would know whether WLB policies actually are available or not. A firm parading itself to the public as WLB supportive organisation may not be in practice. The employees may understand this paradox, but would not openly discuss the issue with outsiders. To support Schein's (1985) model of culture, Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness (1999, p. 394) define work-family culture as 'the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organisation supports and value the integration of employees work and private lives'. Employees will view a supportive organisational culture as one that takes care of the well-being of its employees and a non-supportive culture as one that cares less about the well-being of its employees (Peeters, Wattez, Demerouti, & de Regt, 2009). However, there are organisations whose culture and system of operations such as commitments to effectiveness and efficiency may restrict employees from using WLB policies. For example, the medical profession has a culture that prevents employees (especially doctors) from using WLB policies and practices (see Adisa, Mordi, & Osabutey, 2017). This profession has a culture of visibility (required physical presence in the hospital at all time of the doctors' shifts) which is equal to productivity (Adisa et al., 2017). Furthermore, the culture of long hours and shift work patterns is prominent among doctors and nurses in order to monitor safety and promote continuity of patient care (Wise, Smith, Valsecchi, Mueller, & Gabe, 2007). Unfortunately, this culture restricts the employees' movements between work and non-work domains, which affects their WLB (Timmins, 2002). Organisational culture, therefore, is a critical factor in determining employees' movements across the border area. This is

because a supportive work-life organisational culture will facilitate easy and frequent movements of employees across the border while an unsupportive culture will restrict employees' movement which may lead to work-life conflict (WLC) (Burke, 2006).

Proposition 1: *An organisational culture supportive of work-life balance would enhance frequency and ease of employees' movements across the border, while an unsupportive culture would tighten border and restrict employees' movements across the border.*

Management or Supervisor Support

Management and supervisor play a prominent role in whether an employee uses WLB policies or not. The work-life border control model proposes that, if management is unsupportive of work-life balance policies employees' movements across the border will be restricted. Management support is the degree to which employees believe their organisation cares about their well-being and values their contributions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Formal and informal management support is required for achieving WLB (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). In this context, supportiveness refers to the extent to which an organisation's management and its supervisors at all levels support and allow employees to use of WLB policies. Thompson et al. (1999) assert that management support is critical for the success of WLB practices because of power they wield. Management support promotes positive outcomes, facilitates employees' general well-being, and enhances a positive spill-over from work to family which is particularly useful in promoting employees' confidence (Ayman & Antani, 2008; Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hanson, 2009). The work-life border control model perceives that the responsibility of formulating WLB policies lies in the hands of the organisation's management. Therefore, an organisation whose leadership or management are unsupportive of WLB policies and practices will tighten the border that exists between its employees' work and non-work domains thus making movements between the domains almost impossible.

Support from supervisors is the extent to which employees perceive that their supervisors care about them and values their contributions (Eisenberger, Singlhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Simosi, 2012). It is essential to note that support from supervisors is not the same as management support. Supervisors represent management by overseeing and directing employees' performance and general behaviour (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Supervisors are, often, responsible for operational decisions at work and they are responsible for the decisions about who uses what policies at what time (Maxwell & McDougall, 2004) and their decisions are regarded by employees as reflective of an organisation's views (Simosi, 2012). The work-life border control model proposes that supervisors can make the border weak or strong by allowing or preventing employees' use of WLB policies. The model argues that support from supervisors remains a strong determinant of employees' movement across the border. This is because even if management provides WLB policies for its workforce, supervisors may still prevent the use of those policies. Supervisors can restrict or prevent employees from using the policies (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott, & Pettit, 2005). The disinclination of supervisors to sanction the use of WLB policies could be personal or a reflection of the organisation's embedded culture. Sakazume (2009) argued that some supervisors reject WLB initiatives because they assume that allowing WLB policies and practices would negatively influence employee morale and efficiency. It is important to note that the management/supervisor actions are often guided by unwritten rules deeply ingrained in organisational culture, thus making employees' movement across the border easy or difficult.

Proposition 2: *The more supportive an organisation's management/supervisors are towards allowing employees use work-life balance policies, the weaker the borders between work and non-work domains and vice versa.*

Co-Workers' Support

Support from co-workers determines employees' movements across the border. Co-workers' support is the extent to which employees perceive that their colleagues respect their contributions and care about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Simosi, 2012). Adisa (2015) highlighted the importance of co-workers' support to achieving employees' WLB. Adisa et al. (2017) found that co-workers sometimes complain and pass insinuations on employees who often use WLB policies. This often dissuades employees from using them or makes the organisation or supervisors to altogether stop employees from using them. Therefore, the support an employee receives from his/her colleagues to use WLB policies has an impact on border flexibility and permeability such that it determines movements across the border. In other words, co-workers could determine how strong or weak a border would be. This assertion is supported by Marks' (1977) argument that having supportive colleagues can lead to positive results. Additionally, research has revealed that support from co-workers is a potential predictor of good WLB and its absence could lead to WLC (Ferguson, Carlson, Zivnuska, & Whitten, 2012; Lu, Siu, Spector, & Shi, 2009; Ng & Sorensen, 2008). The work-life border control model thus postulates that lack of support from co-workers will restrict employees from using WLB policies, which will then prevent or slow down employees' movements across the border. White, Hill, McGovern, Mills, and Smeaton (2003) expounded that fear of alienation and resentment from co-workers often forms a significant concern for many workers. Kirby and Krone (2002) argued that resentment from co-workers often discourages employees from using WLB policies. The work-life border control model proposes that support from co-workers determine employees' movements across the border and vice-versa.

Proposition 3: *The more employees support each other in using WLB policies, the more flexible and permeable the border becomes and the more freely and frequently employees move across the border.*

Employees' Willingness to Cross the Border

It is one thing to be supported by management, supervisors, and colleagues to use WLB policies and practices and quite another for an individual employee to be willing to use the policies. Employees' willingness to cross the border means their willingness to use the various WLB available to them. Employees' willingness to use WLB policies often hangs on some overarching factors such as marital status, non-work responsibilities, perceived impact of using WLB policies on career, and support from the organisation and supervisors (Adisa, 2015). For example, an unmarried employee with no care responsibilities will make less or no use of WLB policies. Studies have shown that single employees who have no care responsibilities often perceive colleagues with family and care responsibilities as lazy and less committed (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; CIPD, 2007; Eikhof et al., 2007). Consequently, employees who need to use WLB policies may be reluctant or unwilling to them (McDonald, Townsend, & Wharton, 2013). In the same vein, some employers consider employees who make use of WLB policies as less productive (Osoian et al., 2011) and uncommitted (Wharton, Chivers, & Blair-Loy, 2008). Furthermore, employees' willingness to use WLB policies could be determined by fear of lack of career progression (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Some professions (such as the medical profession) place serious importance on employees' physical presence at work. For medical doctors, a requirement of physical presence at work at all times of the shift is a core tenet of medical profession (Adisa, 2015). This is required to care for and monitor the patients and also for doctors' career advancement (Adisa et al., 2017). McDonald, Bradley, and Brown (2008) and Wu, Uen, Wu, and Chang (2011) argued that employees' willingness to use WLB policies will be limited dramatically if using the policies will have negative consequences on their career. Similarly, a report of the American Bar Association stipulated that 95% of law firms in the US offer WLB policies but only 3% of lawyers subscribe to them due to the fear of the negative consequences it will have on their career advancement (Cunningham, 2001). Hence, work-life border control model posits that a greater unwillingness to cross the border prevails in a situation in which there is a circulated perception among

the employees that crossing the border would have damaging consequences on their career progression or their images and reputations. In other words, employees' perceived negative consequences of using WLB policies on their career progression could mitigate its use.

Proposition 4: *The greater the employees' preparedness and willingness to cross the border, the more flexible and permeable the border and the more frequent the employees' movements and vice-versa.*

Organisational Time Expectations

The issue of organisational time expectations (OTE) is concerned with the number of hours which employees are required to devote to work-related activities (Bailyn, 1997; Lobel & Kossek, 1996). This invariably influences employees' movements from the work domain to non-work domain. For instance, if an organisation link long working hours to commitment, loyalty, productivity, and promotion then its employees will be inclined to put in longer hour at work, which is antithetical to the principle of WLB (Bailyn, 1997; Joyce, Pabayo, Critchley, & Bambra, 2010; Pocock, Van Wanrooy, Strazzari, & Bridge, 2001). In such organisation, employees who often use WLB policies and eschew working for long hours are perceived as lazy and less committed (Lewis, 1997). For example, Adisa (2015) found that medical profession (in Nigerian context) have a high OTE. This is because in medicine, long working hours is attached to patients' care and doctors' training. This consistently keeps doctors in the hospital for unbelievably longer hours. Based on this, work-life border control model suggests that organisations in which OTE is high, employees' movements from work domain to non-work domain would be greatly restricted. This is because the number of hours worked will be high and this will invariably affect employees' activities in the non-work domain.

Proposition 5: *The lower the OTE, the flexible and permeable the border that exists between work and non-work domains, and the frequent the employees' movements across the border, and vice-versa.*

Implications

The work-life border control model is essential in the contemporary application and understanding of the border theory. It is important for WLB researchers because it provides a comprehensive and coherent understanding of a framework within which employees' movements from work to non-work domains (border flexibility and permeability) can be studied. The work-life border control model provides the theoretical framework which has been missing in WLB studies. In order to embrace and absorb WLB as a leverage point for practice, organisations should make informed decisions about, and alter their culture, attitudes and policies to accommodate WLB policies and practices, which will enhance the border flexibility and permeability, and facilitate employees' free movement from work domain to non-work domain. In this way, organisations will be able to keep their skilled and talented employees (Sholarios & Marks, 2004). Furthermore, employees flourish when their organisations and their various entities help them on what matter most at work and in the non-work aspects of their lives (Whittington, Maellaro, & Galpin, 2011). This contribution is theoretically appealing particularly now that the study of WLB is attracting serious attention. It also provides a theoretical basis for the contemporary and future studies.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study presented work-life border control model. A model that extend our thinking and understanding on work-life border theory. This model builds on previous studies on border theory (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996c; Zerubavel, 1993, etc.) that describe home/family as the only non-work activities. Work-life border control model has two important elemental divisions.

Firstly, this model recognises other life activities, which are equally important to employee in the non-work domain as opposed to just home/family proposed by previous studies border theory. According to Osoian et al. (2011) and Chan (2008), WLB issues are not restricted

to women and/or family matters alone. The model incorporates familial duties, community services, societal functions, gym/exercise, leisure, friendship, religious activities, part-time or full-time studies in the non-work domain's activities. Boyar, Maertz, and Keough (2003) highlighted the importance of achieving a balance between social and work life. Dean (2007) also averred that achieving a balance between religious/spiritual life and work-life is increasingly becoming important among employees. These studies further attest that non-work activities go beyond the family/home duties. We posit that whatever is important to an employee (depending on employee's status, taste, needs/wants and preferences) besides work-related activities becomes his/her non-work activities. This means that what constitutes non-work domain's activities differ from one employee to another.

Secondly, the model outlined factors that determine the flexibility and permeability of the border (employees' movement across the border). The work-life border control model, based on Adisa's (2015) and Adisa et al.'s (2017) identified five factors that determine how strong or weak the border: organisational culture, management/supervisors' support, co-workers' support, employees' willingness to cross the border, and organisational time expectations. These factors determine the flexibility and permeability of the border. The model proposes that a WLB supportive organisational culture will enhance employees' easy and frequent movements across the border and vice-versa. For example, Adisa et al. (2017) found that medical organisational culture (in Nigerian context) is unsupportive of WLB policies, which then make achievement of WLB for the Nigeria doctors difficult. Unsupportive organisational culture allows for little or no flexibility and permeability in the border area. However, as stated in Proposition 1, organisational culture must be supportive of WLB policies and practices in order for employees to be able to move freely and frequently across the border.

In addition, management and supervisors' support play a prominent role in border flexibility and permeability. The management creates WLB policies and supervisors may enhance or prevent their usage. For example, Rodgers and Rodgers (1989) argued that the well-being of American families primarily lies in the hands of first-line supervisors. Clark (2000) argues that supervisors can bend the rules to accommodate

employees' family commitments or they can choose to be less-flexible. In recognition of the importance of supervisors' support in border flexibility and permeability, some organisations require their supervisors to undergo employees' WLB training programmes (Galinsky & Stein, 1990). This would help the supervisors to be able to recognise the need for WLB and help their employees to achieve it. Proposition 2 thus state that the more supportive the management of an organisation and its supervisors are towards allowing employees to use WLB policies, the more flexible and permeable the borders between work and non-work domains and vice versa.

The work-life border control model's third proposition bothers on co-workers' support. This is the support that employees receive from their co-workers in using WLB policies and practices. According to Marks (1977), having supportive colleagues can be very helpful and often lead to positive results. This assertion is also supported by Kirby and Krone (2002). Resentment from co-workers towards a particular employee or group of employees for using WLB policies can compel the management or supervisors to prevent employees from using WLB policies. Additionally, employees' preparedness to use WLB policies and OTE were also identified as determinants of employees' movement across the border. The perceived consequences of using WLB policies and practices on employees' image and career progression often dissuade from using the policies (Cunningham, 2001). While OTE (the number of hours an employee is required to devote to work related activities) keeps employees at work for longer hours, which is anti-WLB. Adisa et al. (2017) found that medical organisations (in Nigeria) have a high OTE, which keep medical doctors in the hospital for longer hours, thereby negatively impacting the flexibility and permeability of the border between the work domain and non-work domain.

It is important to note that border must not be too flexible and too permeable. This is because if either of the extremities occurs, it may affect employees' performance and organisational success. However, organisations must find a balance between the two extremist. As mentioned, the development of the work-life border control model is in strict acquiescence with Ransome's (2007, p. 374) argument that 'it is rather

important to use an established theory and concepts as a basis to develop a new one'.

The need for more carefully contrived scholarly guidance to theory building especially in work-life studies has recently dominated sociology, psychology and management studies. Powell, Greenhaus, Allen, and Johnson (2019) argues that the explosion in work-life research stems from several social trends, such as the changing nature of gender roles, families, work, and careers. A special issue of the Academy of Management Review was recently devoted to theory building and development in work-life literature. There were six papers in all, each proposing a new theoretical argument. While four of the articles focused on a work-life perspective (Bear, 2019; Bourdeau, Ollier-Malaterre, & Houlfort, 2019; Crawford, Thompson, & Ashforth, 2019; Leslie, King, & Clair, 2019), it is the two papers that focus on the work-family perspective (Hirschi, Shockley, & Zacher, 2019; Ladge & Little, 2019) that are of preeminent interest to this chapter.

In the first paper, Ladge & Little (2019) suggest that work-family images influence the assessment of individuals both at work and their personal lives which can invariably have important consequences for working parents' identities. They introduced a work-family image construct suggesting that individuals are often evaluated on their competence in both their family and work roles. From a psychology background work, they linked the debate of work-family to impression management (Gardner & Martinko, 1988). The theory they present captures the dynamic interplay between image and identity. It illuminates on how work-family norms influence work-family image discrepancies and impression management strategies and lead to identity adaptation.

In the second paper, Hirschi et al.'s (2019) theoretical model was interested in how people can attain work-family balance that are useful for designing practical interventions. They presented a novel theoretical model that showcases a sound understanding of the work-family interface. They proposed the types of action strategies that could be used and under which circumstances to proactively achieve goals in both work and family domains.

Powell et al. (2019), the editors of the special forum, provided a rationale for the development of these new theories arguing that work-life

theory has not kept up with the explosion in research in the area, thus a need for a re-evaluation of the theoretical advancement, theory testing and practice implications. Essentially, they argue that such new theories will advance the course of future research by provided deeper reflection of research design and contribution.

This chapter essentially joins these recent contributions to work-life theory by offering yet another novel guidance for future research. We thus offer guidance for employees, couples, HR practitioners and all supervisors/managers, organisations and policy makers. The work-life border control model recasts contemporary understanding by bringing to light a new idea in the application of the border theory. It is hoped that the model will be useful to academics, WLB researchers, and organisational practitioners in theorising their works. The model can be used descriptively and prescriptively, and it can be used in all environments. Future studies can develop propositions from the model before data collection in order to eliminate the use of theory post-hoc.

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Part II

Africa and the Arab World

3

The Role of Culture in the Work-Life Border Management: An Insight from Ghanaian Married Female Workers in the Formal Sector

Kwame Adom

Introduction

The need for dual-income families has increased significantly in recent times due to economic pressures. In recent times, families, considering the economic pressures, require more than one breadwinner to meet rising cost of living (Carrim, 2017; Munn & Chaudhuri, 2016; White & Rogers, 2000). There have also been some structural changes that have made discourse on work-life balance relevant. These include the shift from full-time jobs to part-time, contract, and casual jobs, a rise in more irregular and unstable working hours, more females taking up paid jobs, among others (Feldman & Bolino, 2000; Yamaguchi, 2018). One thing that has characterized the lives of several working-class people, especially females, is "role conflict". "Role conflict" arises mainly due

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to the combination of personal, domestic, and societal demands and expectations (Nambisan & Baron, 2019; Posig & Kickul, 2004). The participation in work roles has the potential to make it cumbersome for females to partake in projected family roles. Likewise, the carrying out of family roles can make it difficult for females to participate in work roles (Hundera, Duijsters, & Naudé, 2019; James-Hawkins, Qutteina, & Yount, 2017). This communicates an interplay of work and family roles, requiring the effective management of these varying roles, hence work-life balance. Work-life balance is considered as one of the tough issues families in contemporary times face. In this study, work-life balance is about the "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict" (Clark, 2000, p. 751).

The participation of females in paid workforce is one of the most momentous social changes of the twenty-first century (Glauber & Day, 2018; Straub, 2007). Scholars postulate that work-life balance is a herculean task for women than men due to cultural and societal norms which expect women to concentrate on providing care for the family, whilst men focus on career (Biggs & Brough, 2005; Buttner & Moore, 1997; Haar & O'Driscoll, 2005). This expectation is not different in Ghana and other African countries.

Despite the widespread attention given to the study of work-life balance, the subject is still at an incipient stage in developing countries (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). As such, work-life balance in the Ghanaian context has been understudied. According to Adisa, Mordi, and Osabutey (2017, p. 454), countries in the sub-Saharan African region constitute "a neglected and little understood area of inquiry". This presents a research gap considering the differences in the institutional systems that have probable effect on careers and work-life balance (Ituma, Simpson, Ovadje, Cornelius, & Mordi, 2011). Again, scholars have made calls for "country-specific career studies" as termed by Ituma et al. (2011, p. 3639) in non-Western nations and Africa. The essence of this is to broaden perspectives regarding the issues employees face when it comes to balancing work and non-work-related matters (Perrons, 2003). Going by this call, researchers are likely to contribute or provide guidelines to the "development of career management theory and practice in these regions" (Ituma et al., 2011, p. 3638), as well as provide

different conceptualizations of work-life balance that is different from the Anglo-Saxon perspective(s) (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). A study by Darko-Asumadu, Sika-Bright, and Osei-Tutu (2018) conducted in the Ghanaian context finds that married employees have a harder time balancing work-life, and most importantly, women employees experience more role conflicts than their male counterparts. Edwards and Oteng (2019) state that one of the causes of role conflicts among females in Ghana is cultural or gendered assumptions and societal expectations. One thing these studies failed to espouse is how these females try to manage work-life balance considering the cultural setting they find themselves. Goel (2017), as an editor of the International Journal of Manpower, calls for studies on work-life balance that focus on females. These gaps identified in the literature provide justification for this study. Therefore, the key aim of this study is to fill the prevailing research gaps by exploring the impact of culture on the work-life balance management of married women in the formal work setting, framed by the unique institutional structures in Ghana. This study employs the institutional theory (IT) which deals with several frameworks within which societal and work-related issues occur with respect to cultural, societal, and regulatory factors (Mayrhofer et al., 2004). Drawing on the cultural aspect of the institutional theory, this study examines how the Ghanaian culture impacts on females in their effort to manage their work-life. Hence, the research question the study seeks to answer is:

> RQ1. How is the Ghanaian culture shaping the work-life balance management of married female employees in the formal sector of Ghana?

To answer the above research question, the study assumes an institutional theory approach in examining the role of institutional dynamics (specifically, culture) on the work-life balance management of married females in Ghana. The study adopts abductive reasoning to create meaning that entailed the researcher going back and forth data and theory to make sense out of the study (Robson, 2002). The study also uses interpretivist and phenomenologist approaches.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows: extant literature is reviewed with focus on work-life balance and the context of Ghana;

explaining culture; an overview of the Ghanaian culture and the institutional theory. Next, the methodology of the research is highlighted by reconnoitring data source, method, and analytical tools adopted. This is successively followed by the findings of the study and discussions. The final part of the study presents the conclusions made from the study, the implications, and future research directions.

Understanding Work-Life Balance and the Ghanaian Context

Generally, females in sub-Saharan Africa and hence, Ghana have a protracted history in the participation in income-generating activities albeit in the informal sector (Aryee, 2005; Asongu & Odhiambo, 2019). But in recent times, the involvement of females in the formal sector has witnessed a surcharge due to better education and economic opportunities, and urbanization and industrialization (Aryee, 2005; Bay, 2019). The increasing participation of females in the Ghanaian labour force, in recent times, cannot be overemphasized. The remarkable progress of females in the Ghanaian labour space can be linked to improved access to education, equity legislations, and the resilient propagation of feminist perspectives (Abraham, Ohemeng, & Ohemeng, 2017). Irrespective of this, the advancement with respect to gender transformation and equity in the Ghanaian workplace is still unsatisfactory (Asongu & Odhiambo, 2019).

The challenges females encounter in efforts to successfully enter and persevere in working environments originate from traditional gender hierarchies and norms that prevail in the family and society. Despite gender equality and empowerment, the household unit had a traditional structure—and still has—that makes males the dominant gender (Hegewisch, Liepmann, Hayes, & Hartmann, 2010). These traditional stereotyped role expectations (Adom & Anambane, 2019) spill over to organizational policies and practices to maintain women's marginalized work roles (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011) and become entrenched in a gender-biased organizational culture (Prescott & Bogg, 2011), making work-life balance to become an issue of interest in the context.

The concept of work-life balance, although modern (Edwards & Oteng, 2019), represents a rather old notion (Chandra, 2012). Scholars like Felstead, Gallie, and Green (2002) state that there is no definite definition for work-life balance. According to Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003), work-life balance describes the extent to which individuals are satisfied with work and family roles, without neglecting the other. Clark (2000) expresses similar view on the relatedness of work-life balance and satisfaction by defining it as the state at which people gain the desired satisfaction from functioning well at both workplace and home, without facing enormous role conflicts. The idea of work-life balance emerged to mitigate role conflict (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015; Sirgy & Lee, 2016). Work-life balance has been posited as a choice that employees have the freedom to make (Clutterbuck, 2003). This assertion is not applicable in all contexts as studies show there are usually paradoxes to the idea about "choice" (Karatepe, 2010).

Several decades ago, work-life balance was perceived as a Western idea (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapport, 2007). However, in recent times, the concept has witnessed integration into the African context as several African females are constantly getting involved in paid jobs for economic empowerment and the ability to contribute to family needs. In line with this, Mushfiqur et al. (2018) basing on the Nigerian context conceptualized work-life balance as the "interface of work and family and the consequences of these two variables on commitment to work, job satisfaction, family roles and social related themes" (p. 870).

Typical traditional African societies and institutions make it difficult for females engaged in paid employment to cater for family and work at the same time, given the persisting patriarchal and cultural dynamics (Anambane & Adom, 2018; Ituma et al., 2011). Patriarchy in the Ghanaian society places women in a situation where their roles in family conflict their occupational lives. This has made work-life balance a herculean task for females (Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018). In traditional Ghanaian society, and in common practice, the division of labour is firm in homes. Whereas males are expected to be breadwinners, females are saddled with the duties of taking care of the home (Waterhouse, Hill, & Hinde, 2017). In other words, economic responsibility is the jurisdiction of males, and domestic chores and childcare are the preserve of

females. This presents a challenge to females in dual-career relationships especially. The Ghanaian society, however, in recent times is changing. Whereas some sections subscribe to feminist perspectives, making gender roles blur (Frempong, 2019), others still hold onto perspectives that are rooted in traditions, thereby still holding unto gender demarcated roles (Adom & Anambane, 2019). The truth, however, is that, no matter the liberations in the Ghanaian society that promote the blurring of gender-specific roles, females are still viewed as the ones responsible for childcare and domestic duties; just that males that subscribe to feminist perspectives decide to offer some "help" unlike their counterparts who would watch females do their "duties". In the midst of these prevailing issues in the Ghanaian society, females are increasingly picking up paid jobs, advancing in their careers, and may need to work for extended periods or travel out of town for work purposes (Ahmed & Carrim, 2016). Discussions on work-life balance become complicated when it involves females in traditional societies (Ahmed, Saleem, & Kaneez, 2019) such as Ghana. In such societies, time management, family responsibilities, mental and physical issues, care for dependents, multiple roles, among others, have been the major factors affecting the work-life balance of females (ibid.).

In effort to support work-life balance in the Ghanaian working environment, some companies or businesses have developed work-life balance policies, albeit most of these policies do not enhance employee commitment (Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018; Markwei, Kubi, Quao, & Attiogbe, 2019). Obimpeh (2018) opines that the work-life balance policies in organizations in Ghana are often too general and hence, do not suit the needs of female employees. Darko-Asumadu et al. (2018) suggest that study leave, paternity leave, and part-time working schedules are incentives that could enhance work-life balance in the Ghanaian banking sector. Aryeetey, Yeboah, and Sanda (2012) reveal that role conflict, the imbalance between work roles and home roles, is a source of stress to females and has the potential to push professional female employees to vacate jobs. The most preferred initiatives that can enhance women work-life balance are telecommuting and compressed work-weeks. Although several women employees are aware of work flexible initiatives like work arrangements that enhance work-life balance, these initiatives are hardly practised in organizations in Ghana (ibid.). This

suggests that work-life balance is a critical issue in the Ghanaian working environment, especially in the private sector where employers burden employees with longer working hours without concern for the other aspects of their lives (family) (Asiedu-Appiah, Dufie-Marfo, & Frempong, 2016). Adom, Asare-Yeboa, Quaye, and Ampomah (2018) find that although work-life balance is desired by female entrepreneurs in Ghana, most of them consider family life as the utmost and can sacrifice work life for family life. The rising rate of unemployment is not making the situation any better as employers tend to take advantage of employees (Sarpong, 2019). Over the years, female employees have adopted strategies such as asking for family support and hiring nannies to perform home tasks, with family support being the most effective (Obimpeh, 2018).

Explaining Culture

The definition of culture is a herculean task considering that culture is a complex phenomenon (Hofstede, 2015). As such, Yaganeh (2013) maintains that the idea of culture cannot be fully comprehended on the surface. Despite these notions, several scholars have presented diverse definitions of culture. One of the earliest definitions of culture is given by Tylor (1871). According to the author, culture is the multifarious and interrelated sets of elements, encompassing beliefs, arts, values, knowledge, beliefs, manners and morals, and all other kinds of skills and habits learned by a human as a member of a particular society. Whereas Tylor (1871) links culture to the learning of certain skills and habits by human beings in society, Kluckhohn (1951) views culture to be more of emotions than learning by relating it to thinking, feeling, and reacting. Kluckhohn (1951) avers that culture is the patterned way of thinking, feeling, and reacting which is obtained and predominantly transferred via symbols. The definition of culture by Kroeber and Parsons (1958) seems to be an amalgamation of the previous definitions. The authors define culture as the transmission and creation of content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems that shape human behaviour and the artefacts produced through behaviour.

In the 2010s, other scholars defined culture. These definitions are not so variant from the aforementioned ones. For instance, Beugelsdijk and Maseland (2010) state that culture is the collective identity of communities. Duman, Beduk, Koyluoglu, and Ay (2015) delineate culture as the common features of a group of people that is transferred from generation to generation. Hofstede (2015) maintains that culture means shared and transferable perceptions, values, or practices. Last but not the least, Woodside, Bernal, and Coduras (2016) aver that culture signifies a complex whole of attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviour. An analysis of the various definitions of culture suggests that there is a unified ideology of what culture is; it is the way a group of people behave; and it is learned and transferred—hence, lingers within a particular society over a period of time.

Although a complex concept, culture can be observed using language, values, religions, country, ethics, among others as points of reference (Hofstede, 2015). Similarly, Usunier and Lee (2005) present several sources of culture: language, education, gender, religion, family, profession, nationality, and social class. These views embody the ideology of sub-cultures. Whereas there could be a national culture for people in a certain country, females in that same country, people from an ethnic group, people of same profession, among others, could have their own way of life (culture). In Ghana, for instance, although the nation has a culture, the different ethnic groups have unique cultures; but these together define the national culture. An analysis of the sources of culture as opined by Hofstede (2015) and Usunier and Lee (2005) suggests that every aspect of human life constitutes culture and is influenced by culture. The influence of culture on human life, however, could be direct or indirect and/or lasting or temporary (Craig & Douglas, 2005). Culture is very much interwoven in all spheres of human life to an extent that it is usually challenging to determine the level at which it affects human life (ibid.). For this reason, Barber and Badre (1998) describe culture as a complex and problematic phenomenon. Aside these, culture is labelled as an abstract notion which is not static but changes over time and its influences also vary with time (Usunier, Lee & Lee, 2005), signifying the dynamism of culture. The changing nature of culture is, however, not an event that occurs overnight but is enduring

(Braidford, Stone, & Tesfaye, 2013). This change in culture or cultural dynamism is often caused by cultural contamination; cultural hybridization; and cultural pluralism, that is, the penetration of elements from other cultures. This has contributed to culture being a more difficult issue to examine (Craig & Douglas, 2005).

As an all-encompassing concept, culture influences on the working lives of humans (Steers, & Sánchez-Runde, 2017). It plays a role in what is expected of individuals both at the formal working environment and at the home. It can be argued that work (paid work) in itself is part of culture. An individual's disposition towards taking up a paid work is highly influenced by culture. Culture also determines who is engaged in paid work. Whereas some cultures consider paid work as the preserve of men, others consider it as an activity that should not be based on gender. As such, examining culture's role in the work-life balance of females is imperative.

An Overview of the Ghanaian Culture

The Ghanaian culture is considered to be rich and vibrant with diverse positive rudiments like respect and consideration for others regardless of age and status, diversity, and a disposition towards cooperation than conflict (Anambane, 2017; Salm & Falola, 2002). These positive rudiments, however, do not include gender dynamics. The Ghanaian national culture rates 80% on power distance, 70% on indulgence, 65% on uncertainty avoidance, 40% on masculinity, 15% on individualism, and 4% on long-term orientation, in line with Hofstede's (1980, 1984) dimensions of national culture. Even though, originally, Ghana was not captured in Hofstede's (1980, 1984) study, rankings were developed for Ghana based on the rankings of similar countries. This was done through the 6D model of national culture (Hofstede, n.d.).

The Ghanaian culture is generally patriarchal (see Adom & Anambane, 2019; Fenrich & Higgins, 2001). This patriarchy is exhibited in the gender stereotyping (Adom & Anambane, 2019) and in the distribution of resources in society (Anambane, 2017; Fenrich & Higgins, 2002). As indicated by Fenrich and Higgins (2002), the cultural setting

of Ghana makes it difficult for females to own lands and have control over them, as well as enjoy from the proceeds of the land. Anambane (2017) confirms this by echoing the difficulty females within the Nabdam district face in land inheritance due to cultural issues. This struggle of females to own and manage land is evident in Ewe (an ethnic group in Ghana) saying that "Palm fruits in the land of a woman can never ripen". This is because of the ideology that the land should not be hers, and thus, she cannot keep others away from the palm tree nor benefit from the proceeds of the land alone.

There is also a clear demarcation of gender roles within the Ghanaian culture. Whereas females are responsible for childcare, homecare, and all other nurturing duties, males are to provide for the family (Clark, 1999; Tolhurst & Nyonator, 2006). However, the rising levels of formal education and feminist perspectives, which is blurring gender roles globally, have only placed extra duties on females as they are now expected to contribute to the economic well-being of their families, pushing more females into paid work.

Theoretical Underpinning: The Institutional Theory

The tenets of the institutional theory are that in every society, there are codified rules and regulations that delineate what is acceptable (North, 1990; Webb, Ireland, & Ketchen, 2014). The theory avers that institutions, in other words, long-term systems, shape the actions of individuals and firms (Clemens & Cook, 1999). Conventionally, the institutional theory is used to demonstrate how groups and organizations are able to maintain positions of legitimacy in society or within certain contexts, by adhering to the rules and norms of the environment where they find themselves (Meyer & Rowan, 1991; Scott, 2007). Roy (1997) positions that the institutional theory is concerned with the regulatory, social, and cultural effects that promote the survival and legitimacy of an organization rather than exclusively concentrating on efficiency-seeking behaviour.

The institutional theory hinges on the conceptualization of "institutions". According to North (1990, p. 3), institutions are "the humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction". Kostova and Roth (2002) describe institutions as the instruments that allow economic players in society to engage in efficient interactions and exchanges. Institutions are also the less prescribed shared interaction systems (Jepperson, 1991) and ex ante agreements (Bonchek & Shepsle, 1996) that organizations and individuals in specified environments have to follow. North (1990) proposes that institutions are in two forms: formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions refer to laws, regulations, and their supporting tools such as law enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies that guide behaviour in a context (North 1990; Webb et al., 2014). Also, informal institutions signify the norms, values, and beliefs which determine socially acceptable behaviour within specific contexts (North, 1990). In summary, institutions can then be defined as the formal and informal instruments that govern environmental, social, and economic exchanges (North, 1990).

The focus of this study is on informal institutions; specifically, how norms, values, and beliefs (which form culture) impact the work-life balance efforts of married working females in Ghana. In traditional African society like Ghana, informal institutions make it perplexing for females in paid working environments to double as caretakers of the family, in line with the region's patriarchal issues that emanate from culture (Ituma et al., 2011), hence the application of this theory. Patriarchy in Ghana positions females such that their roles in occupational life conflict with that of family life. Further, there is increasing pressure for Ghanaian females to support their families economically given the economic situations in the country. They have since taken up paid jobs that have impact on roles at home. The job demands of these females conflict with the expected demands at home, and vice versa. These are issues relating to the informal institutions. The usage of the institutional theory in this study is thereby justified.

Over the years, several studies have applied the institutional theory in examining work-life balance of women. To begin with, Mushfiqur et al. (2018), apply it to examine the challenges female doctors in Nigeria encounter in work-life balance efforts and its impact on social

sustainability. Stavrou and Ierodiakonou (2018) advance the discourse of work-life balance to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees through the lens of the institutional theory. The institutional theory was again used by Cuéllar-Molina, García-Cabrera, and Lucia-Casademunt, (2018) to study the well-being of female managers in Europe. No study was found to have applied this theory in the area of culture and work-life balance of females.

Methodology

Work-life balance has been underexplored in the Ghanaian context. For this reason, the study adopts a qualitative approach to collecting and analysing data. One strength of the qualitative research approach is its ability to provide deeper insights into research phenomena (Cassell Bishop, Symon, Johnson, & Buehring, 2009). The qualitative approach also enhances interaction between literature and evidence; this is useful in understanding the representativeness across a broader range of issues (Ciao, 2011). The study further draws on the interpretivist and phenomenologist traditions which focus on individual experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), to make its argument. This methodological locus gave the researcher an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny (Creswell, 2008). It finally led to the unearthing of opulent detailed accounts of individual experiences (Fassinger, 2001). The interpretivist and phenomenologist tradition to qualitative enquiry has been embraced by different scholars in different environments (Ituma et al., 2011). Additionally, the case study approach was adopted by this study. It gave the researcher the opportunity to explore the daily live activities, experiences, and views on the issue under enquiry (Creswell, 2008).

Primary data were collected from fifteen (15) female employees in private and public organizations. The age of the respondents ranged from twenty-eight (28) to fifty-four (54) years. The data collection was done through semi-structured interviews, with the aid of an interview guide. Semi-structured interviews were preferred because of its forte in disinterring relevant and hidden facts regarding organizational

behaviour and human life (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Participants were solicited through administrators or managers of various organizations. Convenience sampling technique was then used in selecting the respondents; that is, working married females who were available and willing to participate in the study were interviewed. The respondents were asked the same questions although the interviews were done on individual basis at different times and locations to reduce the chance of bias. All the respondents met the criteria for selection, married and working class. Specifically, some of the questions asked were: What is work-life balance? How do you manage your work life and family? How does the Ghanaian culture affect your working and family life? How do you manage your working life considering how the Ghanaian culture views females with respect to being career oriented? These questions are, however, not exhaustive as follow-up questions were asked based on the responses of the participants.

Pseudonyms have been used in place of the original names of the respondents to satisfy the promise of confidentiality made to the participants. At the start of each interview, participants were presented consent forms which indicated the purpose of the study. Participants were also educated about their right to partake in the study or withdraw from the study at any stage of the interview process. All interview sessions were conducted in the English language as it is the official language of Ghana and used in the workplace. Interview sessions lasted between twenty (20) minutes to thirty-two (32) minutes. The interview sessions were recorded electronically with the permission of the respondents. This was to enable the study to capture the words of the participants verbatim in order to arrive at nuanced and logical findings (Bryman & Becker, 2012). The essence of the recording was to also aid identify if any relevant issues had been missed during the interview so that supplemental interviews could be carried out afterwards. After interviewing 12 respondents, it was noticed that the themes that emerged were recurrent, meaning the data had reached a point of saturation. It was therefore unlikely that further data collection would yield new themes. However, to enhance data reliability and ensure that relevant themes had not been relegated, three (3) more interviews were conducted, bringing the total number of interviews to fifteen (15). The additional three (3) interviews confirmed

the previous emerging themes. At this point, the data collection had reached a "theoretical saturation" as illustrated by Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 61).

The collected data were transcribed verbatim. After the data were transcribed, the researcher meticulously went through all the recordings to ensure that the transcribed data exactly matched the recorded version. After the transcription, open coding was done. The purpose of the coding was to identify the key points that were significant in the data (Boeije, 2005). At this juncture, the focus was on the ability of the researcher to interrogate the meaning of certain words or phrases and carefully think about what they mean (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The first set of codes was grouped according to common codes. Afterwards, the codes that had similar underlying ideas were combined. Three dominant themes and eight sub-themes emerged. The coding categories were not preconceived by the researcher. The researcher was open-minded and allowed the themes or categories to emerge from the data so that important themes will not be missed. The labelling of the categories are considered precise and reflect the meaning of the feelings of the respondents regarding their work-life balance, albeit the researcher is aware that it is an inherently subjective issue, considering that one "cannot escape background preconceptions embedded in the language and life of their authors" (Gill & Johnson, 2010, p. 144).

The coding categories were marked with different colours for easy identification to expedite data analysis. The key categories were fine-tuned through recurrent assessments until a full picture was created. Thematic textual analysis (TTA) was adopted based on the recommendation of Corbin and Strauss (2014) and done based on the guide proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). TTA is "a research strategy for identifying and reporting patterns (themes) within a data set or text corpus" (Mushfiqur et al., 2018, p. 875). The themes that emerged were the categories for the analysis and the researcher applied investigator triangulation (Polit & Beck, 2004). The study is situated in Accra (the capital of Ghana). Data were collected in December 2019 and lasted for three (3) weeks. The data were collected by the researcher.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The data were analysed using thematic textual analysis as indicated earlier. The emerging themes of the study and some illustrative extracts are presented in Table 3.3. Role conflict among married females in Ghana, work-life balance in the face of the Ghanaian culture, and mitigating the impact of culture on work-life balance management are the three main themes that emerged from the data.

The study, however, presents the profile of the respondents before diving to discuss the main issues of the study. This enhances the reliability of the study and also provides better understanding of the lived experiences of the respondents.

Profile of Respondents

A total of fifteen (15) respondents were covered by the study. All respondents were working-class females and married. Married females were the interest of the study since they have multiple families to take care of (nuclear family, family of birth, and family of marriage), increasing their roles in families. The profile of the respondents the study took interest in is age, occupation, educational level, number of years in paid employment, and number of children the respondents had. With respect to age, majority of the respondents (46.7%) fall within the age group of 25–34 years. The youngest participant was aged twenty-eight (28) and the oldest was fifty-four (54) years. This age group distribution is a good representation of married working-class women. A greater portion of the respondents (73.3%) worked with privately-owned institutions. This has some implications for the study as several private institutions either do not have or do not adhere to human resource policies that seek to enhance the work-life balance of females in the workplace. The participants generally worked in corporate bodies. As such, the study had no representation of nurses, teachers, and security services. The respondents came from several sectors such as hospitality, insurance, financial services, consultancy, and education, among others. This enabled the study to present a broader perspective on the subject. Over 86.7% of

Table 3.1 Profile of respondents

Profile	Measurement	Frequency (%)
Age	25–34	46.7
	35–44	33.3
	45–54	20.0
Occupation	Government employee	26.7
	Private employee	73.3
Level of education	Tertiary	86.7
	Secondary	13.3
Number of years as an employee	1–5	26.7
	6–10	40.0
	11–15	20.0
	16–20	13.3

Source Researcher's Findings (2020)

the participants had tertiary education. In Ghana, tertiary education refers to any educational level beyond secondary school education, that is, polytechnic, training colleges, and universities. With respect to the number of years the respondents had been in paid employment, majority (40%) had worked between six (6) and ten (10) years. This implies that the participants were experienced and knowledgeable enough to participate in this study. No participant had worked beyond twenty (20) years. All except one respondent was mother with the least and highest number of children being one (1) and four (4) respectively. Information on the number of children the respondent had helped understand their experiences (Table 3.1).

The chapter also presents details of the respondents using pseudonyms. This is to enhance transparency of the research. The details are presented in Table 3.2.

A summary of the major and sub-themes as well as some illustrative extracts is presented in the Table 3.3.

Role Conflicts Among Women in Ghana

An emerging theme of the study was factors contributing to role conflicts among women in Ghana. All the respondents had an understanding of the meaning of "role conflicts" and work-life balance. There was a

Table 3.2 Details of respondents

Name	Age	Occupation	Sector	No of children
Susan	35	Finance Officer	Port Management	1
Muniratu	30	Administrative Assistant	Consultancy	2
Abena	42	Secretary	Education	4
Linda	33	Customer Service Personnel	Financial Services	2
Marayam	37	Gender Activist	Civil Service	3
Karen	29	Administrator	Education	1
Lamisi	54	Manager	Consultancy	3
Kumiwaa	34	Marketer	Food and Beverage	2
Gifty	49	Underwriter	Insurance	3
Cindy	36	Accounts Clerk	Automobile	1
Adelaide	33	Accountant	Health and Beauty	3
Ayorkor	33	Trainer	Oil and Gas	3
Senam	38	Banker	Financial Services	2
Nasara	28	Receptionist	Hospitality	None
Vivian	50	Manager	Hospitality	4

Source Researcher's Findings (2020)

general consensus that females, especially the married ones, experience staid levels of role conflicts (Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018). Often the role one has to play at the workplace is affected by family duties (Waterhouse et al., 2017). The reverse is also true. There are times that working married females had to attend to unscheduled family duties that crop up at periods when one was at one. The respondents agree that role conflict is a prevalent issue among working-class married females in Ghana (Asiedu-Appiah et al., 2016). As expressed by Suzan, a thirty-five (35)-year-old finance officer in government-owned establishment:

> Role conflicts is an issue that affects us a lot. Most at times, we do not even know how and when to separate work from family duties. Because sometimes, while at work, they call you that your child at school is sick, meaning you have to seek permission and leave to take care of that.

Table 3.3 Emerging themes and illustrative extracts

Main theme	Sub-theme	Excerpts
Role conflicts among women in Ghana	Societal expectations	*"Now, women are expected to bring money home and at the same time care for the home. That has been a positive change though but has an impact on women."*—**Abena**
	Lack of good employment policies	*"Some workplaces are hell. You work with them without any proper contract. They do not even state what you are entitled to. Even going on annual leave is a problem."*—**Kumiwaa**
	Lack of planning	*"I think it is all about planning. If you plan your daily activities well that this is what I am going to do at his time errrr, I do not think something should take you off schedule."*—**Karen**
Work-life balance in the face of the Ghanaian culture	Lack of flexible working schedules	*"Our situation is like we have rigid schedules everywhere, especially at work. Yes! The work timing is not flexible for us. It is just one. No variety you can pick from to ease things up for you."*—**Linda**

Main theme	Sub-theme	Excerpts
	Exploitative nature of some employers	"My work makes it difficult for me to balance both duties well. My work starts as early as 7:30am and I can never close before 8:00 pm. Meanwhile, I have three kids, boys. But I need to work."—**Adelaide**
Ghanaian women and work-life Balance management	Family and spousal support	"I get support from my family. Sometimes when work is taking me out of town, I take my kids to my sister. She has been of great support."—**Ayorkor**
	Help away from the family	"I have hired a house-help. I have a son of three years. I can't leave work to take him from school. I don't also like him hanging around at school till after 5:00 pm. So, the help does that."—**Karen**
	Effective Planning	"Like I said earlier on, it is mostly about planning and sticking to it. I for one, I plan what I am to do at each hour of the day. [...]."—**Lamisi**

Source Researcher's Findings (2020)

However, it is not only the duties at the workplace that suffer when role conflicts arise. The roles one has to play at home sometimes do also suffer. For instance, Muniratu, a thirty (30)-year-old administrative officer with a private entity, avers that "*[…] It is not always that our official duties suffer because of the duties we owe our families. It is a two-sided issue*". When probed further about the reasoning behind such a comment, she added "*My work is such that you could be called upon even on a weekend. Sometimes, depending on the projects at hand, I need to come to work on Saturdays; a day I could use to do my work at home and also bond with my family*". The severity of the issue of role conflicts is declared by Senam, a 38-year-old banker in a private institution as she opines thus:

> It is never easy taking care of your kids, work, family, and husband. Each of them want attention from you, but no one gives it to you. Women are like captain planet. Hahahahaaaa. We just have to make everything happen…. In fact, it is stress 'ankasa' (indeed). May God give us strength.

At this point, the study ascertains that role conflict is a dominant issue affecting married working-class females in Ghana. This validates the need for work-life management for these women.

Moving forward to the causes of role conflicts in the lives of working-class women, three sub-themes emerged: societal expectations; lack of good employment policies; and lack of planning. It must be highlighted that some respondents mentioned more than one factor. As such, the frequency of each factor is against the total sample size of fifteen (15).

To begin with, societal expectations of women which emanate from culture have been a key cause of role conflicts in the Ghanaian context as highlighted by 86.7 of the respondents. A lot is expected of a woman in the Ghanaian society: from childcare, caring for other adults in the family, and having to be involved in the economic contribution for the family. As culture is dynamic, women in the contemporary Ghanaian society are expected to take up paid work unlike women in past generations. No longer are women expected to play only the role of caregivers at home but contribute to the economic situations of families by engaging in paid work. This means that in contemporary times, women are expected to carry out paid work duties and family duties. They are

expected to combine these perfectly without failing in any as women who have failed to raise responsible children or keep a "good" home because of their focus on career goals are criticized severely. In the times of old where culturally, financial contributions to families were not expected of women, the topic of role conflicts and work-life balance was irrelevant in such societies. With the change in the Ghanaian national culture where females have been fairly educated at the same levels as males and expected to engage in paid work, the duties of women in society have increased. In support of the forgone discussion, Abena, a forty-two (42)-year-old secretary in a government-owned organization, says "*Now, women are expected to bring money home and at the same time care for the home. That has been a positive change though but has an impact on women*". Similarly, Linda, a 33-year-old customer service person with a private company, said "*Times have really changed when it comes to the role of women in economic issues. But when it comes to the role of women in homes, that one 'diiier'* (in particular) *it has not changed*".

It is evident that irrespective of changes in the Ghanaian culture creating the space and the chance for women to be engaged in paid work, women are still the sole caretakers of the home, which worsens the role conflicts that women face. An illustration of this assertion, excerpt from the interview with Maryam, a 37-year-old gender activist within a government organization, is presented below:

> How society managed to make women the sole owners of care work still perplexes me. I recently was admitted at the hospital at Tema (a suburb in Accra, the capital of Ghana). While there, I witnessed a young woman cry because she had exhausted her leave days and her child was still on admission. My question was: where is the father of the child? Busy, I guess. Meanwhile, he has leave days as well ooooo.

Additionally, lack of planning on the part of the women involved was found as a cause of role conflict in the lives of women. A little over 26% of the respondents maintained that women faced role conflicts because they do not plan their activities well. They hold that having a detailed plan of how one was going to go about her daily activities was helpful and could eliminate role conflicts. The proponents of this idea were, however,

quick to add that this only worked in situations where one worked in a well-organized firm. Even with that, it was indicated that there were times impromptu family duties come up during working hours, but it is still helpful to have a well laid own plan of daily activities. In support of this, Karen, a 29-year-old administrator of a senior high school, states "*I think it is all about planning. If you plan your daily activities well that this is what I am going to do at his time errrr, I do not think something should take you off schedule*". Muniratu contributes to this by saying:

> To me, planning counts. You can plan your duties well. This is perfect when you work in a good organization where if they say you are closing at 5pm, you are closing at 5pm. No, stay back because of another thing. That way, you are able to manage your life well. But it is not so with some of us.

In an indication of the idea of impromptu activities being a bane to effective planning, Lamisi, a 54-year-old manager of a small and medium-scale enterprise, avows:

> What I do is that I plan. So, I know I am doing this at this time and I try to stick to it. But the truth is that there could be impromptu family duties coming up at the time you are at work. But for me…., my children are grown. So, I don't have issues of one is sick at school so come pick him; this one has swallowed a coin …hahahahahaaha… so come pick him. So, when I plan, it works sometimes. Sometimes too it doesn't, I must be frank. So, I am not totally free from role conflicts, just that I think it is better for me than the younger ones we have around here.

A third cause of role conflicts that emerged is the lack of well-written work contracts as stated by 40% of the participants. In recent times where finding jobs has become a herculean task, some employers have taken advantage of employees (Sarpong, 2019) by even employing staff without giving out well-written job contract that speculates the expectation of the employee as well as benefits due to the employee. This has caused a lot of role conflicts for the women involved. Some women have had to work without having the opportunity to paid annual leave and maternity leave. In the study context, there have been reports in

the media circles about women that are seeking legal actions against firms they worked with that had dismissed them from work because they needed maternity leave. The culprits have mainly been privately-owned firms that tend to disobey the country's labour laws. Working in such environments is stressful for women, increased their role conflicts, and decreased their ability to manage their work and personal life. This is illustrated by Kumiwaa, a 34-year-old marketer with a private firm assert:

> "Some workplaces are hell. You work with them without any proper contract. They do not even state what you are entitled to. Even going on annual leave is a problem". *When asked why women subscribe to such jobs, she states* "The unemployment situation in this country is glaring. And we need to work. So, in the absence of a proper work, you take what is offered whilst praying for the best".

A similar view is raised by Linda:

> Unless you have a government work or work with a well-established business, there are a lot of things that would go on to make your duties at work and home crisscross. Imagine, due to a lack of well laid down human resource policies, your boss can call to work even on holidays and weekdays. Some too annual leave is denied. It is a very difficult situation.

From the abovementioned discussion, it can be deduced that it is increasingly becoming a norm and a culture for individuals in Ghana to work without explicit contracts. This is rather an unfortunate situation and suggests that unemployment in Ghana has reached a crisis level. Without the improvement of the unemployment situation in Ghana, role conflicts for women are not likely to reduce, and thus, the work-life balance for women would be a near non-existent phenomenon.

In this section, culture has been identified as a strong root cause of role conflicts among married working-class females in Ghana. It is therefore imperative for the researcher to consider how culture plays a role in the work-life balance management of married working women in Ghana. This is discussed in the next section.

Work-Life Balance in the Face of the Ghanaian Culture

Deeper insights gained about issues surrounding the work-life balance of married working women in the Ghanaian cultural context are espoused under this section. The study firstly explores the understanding of culture by the respondents. There was a general understanding that culture was the way of life of a group of people (Dumanet al., 2015). It is manifested in norms, values, traditions, taboos, language, and others. For instance, Lamisi says "*I know culture to be the way we do things in this country or in our various hometowns*". Similarly, Gifty maintains that "*Culture relates to our norms, traditions, and the likes among people in a wider country or ethnic groups; or even work culture*". It is clear that the respondents understand what culture is and the existence of national culture and sub-cultures. It was necessary to know what culture meant to them as it would be the basis for answering subsequent questions.

The study ascertained that work-life balance management is not an easy thing to do in Ghana though possible. The study found that the Ghanaian culture and therefore the culture with which several organizations in Ghana operate make the ideology of work-life balance for females very difficult. There was a general consensus among the respondents. Suzan answers thus "*very difficult*" when asked how work-life balance was to her as a Ghanaian married working-class female.

It was evident that the lack of flexible working arrangements and the exploitative nature of some Ghanaian employers, especially private ones, have contributed to worsening effective work-life balance among women.

About 60% of the respondents held that the Ghanaian corporate working environment did not have flexible working hours that allow women to sometimes schedule work shifts that favour them (Aryeetey et al., 2012). The work culture in the corporate world in Ghana is that individuals work from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm; the work schedules are rigid. Therefore, people and in this case married females do not have the chance to select work schedules that suit their needs. For instance, a woman may need to attend to some critical childcare duties during the daytime on a particular day. By so doing, she could opt for another shift within that day that suits her. Gifty, forty-nine (49) years old, who works

as an underwriter in a government-owned insurance firm, denotes "*Our work schedules are kind of rigid. There are no even shifts whereby you can sometimes lobby for a particular shift because you need to attend to something critical*". To buttress the preceding notion, Linda asserts "*Our situation is like we have rigid schedules everywhere, especially at work. Yes! The work timing is not flexible for us. It is just one. No variety you can pick from to ease things up for you*". Also, in modern times, emerging flexible work schedules have emerged. For example, due to technological advancement, some employees are able to work from home. This changing trend has, however, failed to be effective or yet to be effective in Ghana (Ayeerty et al., 2012). A reason for this could be that the Ghanaian culture is highly risk avoiding (see Hofstede, 1984). Hence, subscribing to new trends such as these could take a very long time. The inculcation of these modern working practices would be beneficial to Ghanaian females and support them balance their work lives and personal lives. This ideology is expressed by Cindy, a 36-year-old accounts clerk in an automobile company:

> In this country, we have to be physically present at the workplace to show we are working. But times are changing elsewhere. People are beginning to work from home and it doesn't spoil anything. But we are different, still depending on same working methods which make it difficult for women......I know men also have their personal stuff to do though, but it is always worse for the married women.

Again, 46.7% of the respondents indicate that one's ability to balance her working life and personal life is challenging considering that several of the organizations in Ghana, especially the privately held ones, exploit their workers. A similar view was expressed in previous sections as the cause of role conflicts. It is therefore not surprising that it arises in this section as a bane to the efforts married females make to balance their work and personal lives. One factor that has encouraged such practices of most privately-owned entities is the culture of not complaining because "half a loaf is better than none". The Ghanaian would rather work under exploitative conditions than be without work. Also, the Ghanaian national culture which does not encourage people to complain

or stand up for better treatment has been a contributing factor. Ranking low on long-term orientation as a dimension of culture (Hofstede, n.d.), the Ghanaian culture focuses more on the present and past than the future. Hence, employees in bad situations resolve to making do with what they have than considering the future effects of their present situation. Somehow, the ideology of the existence of a supreme being that would later deal with the people that treat others bad is also lingering. With the belief that the employers who mistreat employees would "reap what they sow", most Ghanaians would rather not complain or demand a better treatment. These acts have made it possible for some private businesses to hire people and flaunt the Ghanaian labour laws that seek to aid females to manage their work and personal lives like maternity leave and annual leave. If these situations are not curbed and if the right authorities do not ensure that the labour laws of the country are adhered to, it would soon become a Ghanaian culture for one to work a whole year without an annual leave, or to be delivered of a child without enjoying the compulsory three (3)-month paid leave since the private sector dominates the economy. In view of these, Suzan mentions:

> I had worked with a private firm before getting this my current job. It was hell for me. Can you imagine I had no annual leave? Eiiiiiiiiii. What broke the camel's back was that I was due for delivery and my supervisors wanted me to return to work after two weeks of delivery. So, after I delivered, I spent time to nurse my baby and forget of them. That was like in 2013.

Muniratu echoes the views of Suzan by saying "*I know people, I mean women who work without annual leave. No rest, nothing. Always on the run*".

Another way employers exploit employees in Ghana is overburdening them with tasks and extending the working hours beyond the normal 8:00am to 5:00 pm working time. Some employers, especially privately-owned firms, demand that their employees work more than eight (8) hours a day (Asiedu-Appiah et al., 2016). Aside this, some are still required to show up at work during weekends. This is so stressful and makes it difficult for women to achieve work-life balance. Adelaide, a

thirty-three (33)-year-old accountant in privately-owned spa avers "*My work makes it difficult for me to balance both duties well. My work starts as early as 7:30am and I can never close before 8:00pm. Meanwhile, I have three kids, boys. But I need to work*".

The researcher again probed further why women picked up such exploitative jobs or continued to work there and why they did not fight for what was right. The respondents revealed that the increasing unemployment in Ghana does not give one the luxury to quit a job you have been fortunate to secure. If one left such a job, there are a thousand people who will be willing to fill that post. Hence, the employers feel they do not lose in anyway. The respondents also failed to request for the right thing to be done for fear of being laid off and also for the belief that the employers will one day pay for every wrong done. Adelaide says "*well, I haven't complained because one, I need to keep this job, and two, even if I leave another person will take it so the right thing will never be done*". Muniratu also states "*Where are you going to if you leave? You may have to still spend years looking for one work. But what goes around comes around. 'e go beee'* (it shall be well) *one day*".

It is therefore evident that the Ghanaian culture makes work-life balance management very difficult for married females who are in paid employment.

Ghanaian Women and Work-Life Balance Management

It was imperative to ascertain how Ghanaian working-class married females managed their working lives and personal lives. This helps to understand the role of informal institutions (culture) in work-life management of women in the study context. Three emerging sub-themes emerged under this discussion. They are: getting family support, getting external help, and proper planning.

To begin with, 53.3% of the respondents affirm that with support from family, they are making progress when it comes to work-life balance (Obimpeh, 2018). Over the years, married females in the Ghanaian context have relied on family members for support when it comes to

managing their duties at home. This has been made possible because of the reverence for the extended family system as Ghana ranks high on collectivism (Hofstede, n.d.). Thus, most people have large families and are able to draw support from them. The situation is even better for married females; they have their own families to rely on, as well as that of their husbands. Some married women therefore make arrangements for some family members to stay with them in order to help them out with home duties. The thoughts of Susan reflect this as she professes:

> To keep off all the stress of my work life and personal one, I depend on family for support. Like when I gave birth, my mom, …….well not my real mom but my aunty who brought me up……came to help me out for like two months. She was really helpful. After she left, I brought my husband's niece to stay with me. Now, with her presence, I stay peaceful at work knowing that when my children close form school, there is an older person at home to take care of home till I get back.

Ayorkor, thirty-three (33) years old, who works with a private oil and gas firm, adds that "*I get support from my family. Sometimes when work is taking me out of town, I take my kids to my sister. She has been of great support*".

However, this act is fast becoming a difficult thing to do as it is not easy living with extended family members, especially younger ones due to family interferences. Family support also comes from spouses. In recent times, a lot of husbands are beginning to have a different perspective on how they were raised. They are beginning to see household chores as a duty for all. They therefore participate in undertaking some of these duties to relieve wives of some of them. This is depicted in the assertions of Adelaide: "*My husband helps at home sometimes. By the time I get home, he feeds the kids and supervise their bathing. I then do the remaining chores*". This comment suggests that even with the involvement of the men, there are still duties to be carried out by wives as it appears the men cannot or do not do it all.

Further, 40% of the participants also depend on getting help away from the family. Some hire house-helps to carry out some home or family duties on their behalf (Obimpeh, 2018). As a result, there has been an

upspring of businesses that train house-helps and nannies and outsource them to homes who seek these services. These house-helps mostly undertake the household chores so that their employers can concentrate on work duties. Linked to the help rendered by family members, house-helps are usually home to attend to the children of the employers whilst they are away at work. This enhances full concentration at work knowing that one's dependents are safe at home. To this, Karen states "*I have hired a house-help. I have a son of three years. I can't leave work to take him from school. I don't also like him hanging around at school till after 5:00pm. So, the help does that*". This is echoed by Senam when she says:

> Over the years, I have depended on house-helps. But that one too is another issue on its own as finding a good one is a challenge. That is why some mothers keep changing them every now and then. Others think you don't have character, but it is not so. Now, I have resorted to getting them from agencies, so that our relationship become strictly formal.

Lastly, 20% of the respondents indicate that balancing work and personal life is being made possible by proper planning. These respondents believe that if one is able to plan her activities well, roles conflict will reduce and hence, work-life balance will be achieved. However, it is not just about planning, but also being disciplined enough to go by the plans made. Lamisi who holds this view utters:

> Like I said earlier on, it is mostly about planning and sticking to it. I for one, I plan what I am to do at each hour of the day. I plan I am cooking at 6:00 pm and going to bed by 9:00pm and that is that. No matter the movie they are showing on TV, I will never watch but go to bed so that I can wake up at the planned time the next day to begin my day.

From the above discourse, it is apparent that several married working-class females in Ghana depend on the help of either family or non-family. The act of receiving this help is rooted in the Ghanaian culture where large extended families are considered as one and people within families are ready to offer support to one another (collectivism). It is based on these strong family ties that the idea of people from different families servicing others in the capacity of house-helps emerged. Traditionally,

house-helps were not paid. Their hosts only ensured they catered for their current and future needs. In recent times, however, the phenomenon that is rooted in culture and traditions has been commercialized due to the rising need for females to have a balanced working and family life.

Discussion of Findings

This chapter sought to explore how married working-class females in Ghana manage their work life and personal life in view of the prevailing cultural issues in Ghana. Focusing on fifteen (15) married women who worked in corporate organizations, some relevant findings emerged. Basing on thematic textual analysis (TTA), meanings were deduced from the interviews with the respondents. At the end of the analysis of the collected data, the study finds that the Ghanaian culture and therefore informal institutions have been a fertile ground for role conflicts among married working females in Ghana. The position of women in society as caretakers of the home and at the same time the expectation of society that women contribute economically to the well-being of families placed extra burdens and duties on them. Fulfilling all these duties is stressful as duties of the home keep obstructing that of the workplace and vice versa. Also, Ghanaians in general, rooted in culture and traditions, are not confrontational and do not protest when being exploited at the workplace. This has given several operators of private enterprises the chance to place extra demands on employees, knowing that they will not be confronted nor taken on. These actions have made role conflicts common among females in Ghana. It can thence be said in short that culture is a root cause of role conflicts. This finding echoes the findings of Edwards and Oteng (2019) which opine that one of the causes of role conflicts among females in Ghana is culture, which breeds gendered assumptions and societal expectations. However, this current study moves forward to indicate how culture causes role conflicts among women; this Edwards and Oteng (2019) do not present.

Further, married Ghanaian females find work-life balance difficult to attain. This confirms the findings of Darko-Asumadu et al. (2018). This is because of the lack of flexible working arrangement as Aryeetey et al.

(2012) find and the exploitative nature of some organizations, especially privately-owned ones. The work schedule in corporate Ghana is rigid and that limits females in fixing work schedules that suit their needs. Further, the nature of work in the Ghanaian private sector especially is mostly exploitative which makes it extra difficult for married females to have a balanced working and personal life. The issue of having to work extra hours and denial of annual and maternity leave depict the exploitative nature of such jobs. This features in the works of Asiedu-Appiah et al. (2016). The Ghanaian labour laws require that all employees receive paid annual leave and maternity leave (GIPC, n.d.). However, these rules are not adhered to by several enterprises. These issues have so far been a bane to effective work-life balance of married women in Ghana.

Again, the study reveals that married Ghanaian females work towards having a balanced work and family life by gaining support from others as well as effective planning. The former corroborates Obimpeh (2018). In the Ghanaian cultural setting, the extended family system has always been a system of support. The veneration for the extended family system has offered females the opportunity to have people to rely on in times where work and family roles become overwhelming. Women have therefore used this support system to help reduce the overwhelming duties that are expected of them. Aside this, support is also obtained from hiring the services of house-helps and nannies, creating a new and booming business sector. The ideology of house-help which finds itself in the Ghanaian traditions has witnessed commercialization in the effort of women to achieve a balanced working and family life balance.

From the above discussions of the findings of the research, it is shown that in relation to work-life balance management of married women in Ghana, culture is seen to be playing a tripartite role—that is, culture as a breeding grounds for role conflicts, culture as a bane to work-life balance, and culture as a tool for mitigating the effects of work-life balance. This study thus terms this scenario as the "tripartite role of culture in work-life balance of women".

Conclusions, Implications, and Future Research

Work has become part of life and culture. Recent decades have witnessed a surge in the participation of women in paid employment. Despite the increasing numbers of this participation, studies that explore the role of culture in the work-life border management of females are scant, necessitating this study. This study hence explores the work-life balance of married working-class females in the Ghanaian cultural context through the lens of the institutional theory. The study focused on married females due to the assertions of scholars like Darko-Asumadu et al. (2018) that work-life balance is difficult for married females than all others. A qualitative research methodology was adopted since the phenomenon has been underexplored in the Ghanaian context. Specifically, the interpretivist and phenomenologist research approaches were used to examine the research issue from the lived experiences of the study participants.

Basing on thematic contextual analysis from in-depth interviews with fifteen (15) married females, the study finds that the Ghanaian culture has largely contributed to role conflicts in the lives of married females. The study also reveals that work-life balance management is challenging for married working-class females in the study context as a result of the lack of flexible work schedules and the exploitative nature of some employers. Females in the corporate environment in Ghana make efforts to balance their work and personal lives through gaining support from family, hiring the services of non-family, and effective planning. The study thus concludes that culture has a tripartite role on the work-life balance of married females in Ghana. The study contributes new knowledge to the research phenomenon of work-life border management of married females.

The findings of this study have some policy implications. Firstly, the findings of the study are a wake-up call for authorities to ensure that the Ghanaian labour laws are adhered to irrespective of the firm involved: whether privately-owned or government-owned. Annual leave, maternity leave, and uninterrupted time of one hour each working period for nursing mothers to nurse their babies as stipulated by the Labour Act 2003 should be strictly implemented. The adherence of these laws

would to a larger extent aid females to have a better working and personal/family life. Secondly, collective agreements could be reached and firms, especially the larger ones, provide conducive places where nursing mothers could nurse their children within the one-hour nursing break they are entitled to during the day. This study is, however, limited. In view of the methodological framework of the study, generalizing the findings to Africa, developing countries, or Ghana is unachievable. There is therefore the need for a study of such nature that can permit generalizability. As such, the study recommends that future research works can adopt quantitative research methods to make generalizability possible.

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4

Work-Life Balance in Kenya: A Systematic Review of Literature

Gladys Muasya and Daniel Nzengya

Introduction

Background to the Study

Worldwide, work-life balance has continued to gain prominence as a topical issue today. This has been attributed to the changing nature of the working landscape that most families have found themselves in. There is an increase in dual-career families implying that mothers are taking full-time demanding jobs (Abele & Volmer, 2011). The cost of living in most sub-Saharan Africa towns and cities is among the highest in the world (Adegoke, 2018). Also, the region has continued to experience one of the world's highest trends in rural-urban migration, attributed to hardships in the rural livelihoods due to prevalent droughts and climate change (Nickanor, Crush & Pendleton, 2016). Urban life and associated economic costs exert strain on traditional childcare systems, with

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many families switching to the market for childcare services (Mokomane, 2014). Compared to life in the rural areas, the schedules in both informal urban work and formal employment tend to be overwhelmingly quite demanding and intense. A recently completed research by one of the authors has examined issues related to parenting guilt due to less time devoted to parenting children (Muasya, in press). There is a growing body of scholars advocating for work-life balance.

Kenya's economy has not been spared by the rising work-life balance challenges confronting employees and employers. There is increasing advocacy that organizations consider the work-life balance (WLB) issues encountered by their employees. Work-life balance is defined as "the individual perception that works and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities" (Kalliath & Brough, 2008, p. 326). Another closely related term is the work-life conflict which is defined as, "the degree to which participation in the non-work or life role is made more difficult by participation in the work role (work-to-life conflict) and the degree to which participation in the work role is made more difficult by participation in the non-work or life role (life-to-work conflict)" (Michel, Clark, & May, 2013, p. 59). Several studies have looked at the different aspects of WLB issues in Kenya such as WLB on employee performance (Mwangi, Boinett, Tumwet, & Bowen, 2016), turnover (Chemirmir, Musebe, & Nassimua, 2018), work-life balance practices (Muindi, Nzulwa, & Muinde Anne, 2015), and childcare centres (Clark, De Almada, Kabiru, Muthuri, & Wanjohi, 2018). However, no study has sought to systematically review the state of WLB research in Kenya and give perspectives and gaps in the Kenyan literature. This necessitated this study. This chapter is organized as follows: first, it gives a historical background to the history of work-life balance in Kenya. Second, the methodology; third the results; fourth, the discussion; and finally, a conclusion.

Historical Background of Work-Life Balance in Kenya

Kenya was colonized by Britain and attained her independence in 1963. Before independence, many of the workers were absorbed in the blue economy (artisans) and worked in white farms. Most of the people who worked in towns or white farms left their families in the village. The education system of the colonial government aimed to equip the Africans with artisan skills and religious skills, while managerial leadership was for the Europeans (Bagonko 1992; Otiende, Wamahiu, & Karuga, 1992). After independence, the Kenyan government sought to develop a worker force to fill the positions originally occupied by the white managers (Bagonko, 1992; Godia, 1987). Efforts to fill up vacant positions targeted males predominantly positions within the public sector. Many of these government offices were in urban centres. This implies that immediately after independence many of the formal workers were men. Consequently, the working-class experienced none or very marginal forms of work-balance challenges because their spouses were largely still in the rural homes managing and taking care of the family. During the 1970s, there was increased advocacy of girl-child education to increase women's participation in the economy. This resulted in increased enrolment of women in schools, thus more women joining the formal sector. By 2009, there were 83,025 females (42%) and 115,094 males (58%) at the university level (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Most of these graduates seek employment in the formal sector mostly found in urban settings. Consequently, more women now work far from home and away from their extended families.

In Kenya, formal employment in the public and private sector is predominantly office-related work. This sector mirrors the Western models of organizing work schedules, 8 am–5 pm. The informal sector may allow a level of flexibility in working hours and schedules. Most low-income workers and artisan-related workers are found in the informal sector. In 2016, the percentage of the informal sector workers were 83% (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2016). A high percentage of women work in the informal sector—92.8% of women and 74.8% of men work in the informal sector (Donovan & Zhu, 2020). In the informal sector, women may go with their children to work. Thus, it is

not a surprise to see women selling their wares in the market along with their young children.

The first seminal work in work-life balance in Kenya and sub-Saharan Africa started with the works of scholars such as Poelmans, O'Driscoll, and Behan (2005) who questioned whether the work-life balance studies carried in the Western contexts had validity to be generalized in other cultures and contexts where cultures differ. One scholar who followed this line of argument is Aryee (2005), who argued that since most sub-Saharan countries are collectivistic in nature, they may have different theorizing of what family and work means compared to that in the West. According to Aryee, in the West, working middle-class women with young children could be regarded as working for selfish reasons. Women, especially from the middle class who sought work outside their homes faced the criticism of sacrificing the family for personal gains. This discourse has led to the mommy wars between working women and stay-at-home mothers (Williams, 1999). However, Aryee (2005) asserts that in sub-Saharan Africa, work is *for* the family, and this could make it easy for women to seek work outside their homes.

Another seminal work around work and life is that of Mokomane and Chilwane (2014). Their review study of sub-Saharan Africa found that there was a paucity of research on work-life/family balance. Within the same time frame, Strathmore School of Business as cited by Muasya (2014), found that there were very few firms in Kenya which had family-friendly practices. This was against the backdrop of declining extended family support. Due to the high cost of living, many families in the urban tend to stay with fewer extended family members, with the majority of the people in formal employment relying on house-helps (Muasya, 2014). Most workers in towns, especially Nairobi, take long hours to commute to and from work. These workers leave home early and return extremely late due to traffic congestions, implying there must be someone to look after the children when the parents are away. However, not all employees can afford domestic help as they must be paid a minimum salary which many families cannot afford (ILO, 2011: Muasya, 2014).

It is not just women who aspire to experience a balance in their work and life dimensions, increasing scholarly work confirms that men share

the same aspirations. Because of the increasing intensification of work, it appears workers spend more time at work, especially those at higher levels of management. The lack of a work-life balance is often cited as one of the disincentives why the majority of women shy away from ascending to high managerial positions in Kenya (Ombati 2003; Wangui, 2012). In addition, there is a concern of poor parenting in Kenya where both parents are absent from their children and children are being raised by nannies. The fathers are absent to mentor their sons as well (Muasya, in press). To respond to the need for work-life balance, after 2014, there has been a surge in the number of studies that focus on work-life balance and related issues in Kenya, necessitating the need for a systematic review of the literature to explore new trends in research and how work-life balance issue have been addressed.

Methodology

Research Design

Design: This is a systematic review of literature which incorporates all types of studies on work-life balance—qualitative and quantitative sources.

Search Method

The team searched for all studies that have been published between 2008 and 2020 using English database found in the library: AJOL, Google Scholar, Sage, Emerald, ISI Web of Science, Wiley Online, and JSTOR and added some sources manually through searching the references to increase the breadth of the papers. The very first work-life balance research in Kenya began around 2008 with the study of Wang, Lawler, Shi, Walumbwa, and Piao (2008) who did a comparative study of work and family-friendly practices among banks in Kenya, India, and China. The team specifically sought work-life balance articles that specifically had Kenya as their focus or included Kenya as one of the

study areas. The study used these keywords: work-life balance, work-family balance, work-family conflict, work-life conflict, work-life balance practices, work-family friendly, among others, which the team combined with the word Kenya.

Search Outcome

After narrowing the search and eliminating the irrelevant journals, the team had 65 articles. The team removed: ten duplicates of the same paper; 16 dissertations and theses of masters and Ph.D. work; 15 papers which sparingly discussed work-life balance issues but did not measure any work-life balance related constructs; and four papers that the authors did not focus on Kenya and it remained with 20 articles (see Table 4.1). The team used the literature review matrix to synthesize the papers. The next section is the results section.

Table 4.1 Sector/organizations of studied populations

Sector/Organization	Tally	Percentage
Sub-Saharan general	2	10
Slums	1	5
General: women related	2	10
Institutions of learning: school and colleges	4	20
Banks	4	20
Health sector—e.g. public hospitals, health NGOs	1	5
Power Utility	1	5
Farming—e.g. horticulture farms	2	10
Police force	1	5
Media	1	5
Gig economy	1	5
Total	**20**	**100**

Source Authors 2020

Results

The results section is organized as follows: first, the chapter gives an overview of the nature of journals selected; second, the methodologies and sample sizes used; third, the conceptualization of work-life balance and work-life balance practices; fourth, the conceptualization of work-life balance in the Kenyan media; fifth, work-life balance and job turnover; sixth, work-life balance practices and supervisor support; seventh, work-life balance practices and organizational performance; eighth, work-life balance practices and employee job satisfaction; ninth, work-life balance practices and employee commitment; tenth, family-oriented work-life balance practices; eleventh, work-life balance practices of women in the informal sector; and twelfth, work-life balance practices in the horticultural farms.

The Nature of the Journal Articles Selected

The most studied areas were institutions such as for learning, banks, hospitals, power utility, and police force (see Table 4.1).

Most studies' independent variables were centred on work-life balance practices, choices, or policies. One study focused on supervisor support, two examined the role of domestic help as a strategy from the family side. Five studies focused on the general work-life balance issues such as childcare and drivers of work-family conflict (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Independent variables studied

Category	Tally	%
Work-life balance practices/choices; family-friendly programmes/policies	11	55
Domestic help	2	10
Stressors/work/childcare	5	25
General work-life balance issues	1	5
Supervisor Support	1	5
Total	**20**	**100**

Source Authors 2020

Table 4.3 Dependent variables studied

Category	Tally	%
Turnover, intent to quit, retention	3	15
Theoretical/general papers	4	20
Job performance/organizational performance/job satisfaction	5	25
Work-life/family balance issues Work-family conflict	8	40
Total	**20**	**100**

Source Authors 2020

Most studies' dependent variables focused on the work side of work-life balance, and how work-life balance practices influenced work outcomes: job performance, organizational performance, job satisfaction, how to reduce staff turnover, and general work-life balance issues within the organization. Very few papers focused on the family side, that is, how work affected the family at home (see Table 4.3). Only three studies were from non-business perspective: two from sociology and one from communication, and 17 from the human resource perspective.

Methodologies and Sample Size Used

Most Kenyan studies were cross-sectional studies that used mainly descriptive study designs and self-reported questionnaires with Likert type of questions; to measure the extent to which work-life balance issues were experienced in the organizations. A number of authors triangulated the questionnaires with interviews. The samples were drawn using stratified sampling and census sampling methods. Many of the studies used descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, mean, standard deviation, and correlation. The multivariate analysis was predominantly regression analysis (enter method) to test the regression models/ and, a few studies used chi-square. Very few studies controlled for socio-economic status (SES) or examined the mediating or moderating factors in their analysis. Two studies examined work-life balance issues in sub-Saharan Africa, and only one study (Wang, Lawler, & Shi, 2011) was a comparative study between India, China, and Kenya. Most studies covered one organization, e.g. Kenya Power and Lighting Company, or a sector such as banking. The lack of multi-sectorial studies leads to

an organization or sector-specific work-life balance recommendations. Several studies were from students' Masters' dissertations and a few from students' doctoral theses. Few studies used qualitative analyses, and none of the studies sampled used critical analysis. Several theories were used to study work-life balance practices. These are: Abraham Maslow hierarchy of needs, role theory, the theory of work-family enrichment, component theory, job characteristics model, border theory, the spillover theory, and conservation of resources theory, among others. These theories were developed in the Western context; there is a need to develop a work-life balance theory from a Kenyan/ sub-Saharan perspective.

Conceptualization and Operationalization of Work-Life Balance and Work-Life Balance Practices

Many studies were concerned with measures to mitigate work-life balance effects—through work-life balance practices, rather than exploring the antecedents of the work-life balance. Moreover, there was no consensus on the operationalization of WLB balance and WLB practices. Though studies quoted definition of work-life balance to be the ability to have time for family, work, and non-work activities, different authors used different measures for WLB (agreed on the concept but not how it was operationalized).

For instance, the measures for work-life balance practices varied with the study and the organization being studied. For some authors, work-life balance practices included: employee welfare support (health facilities, transport, housing, and recreation facilities), employee dependent support (flexibility, infant, or site services,), employee leave programmes (annual leave, maternal, and sick leave), and flexible working arrangements (part-time, flexitime, job sharing) (Munyiva & Wainaina, 2018). The study by Chemirmir, Musebe, and Nassiuma (2018) conceptualized the WLB practices in flower farms to include a conducive work environment which included: protective clothing, e.g. protection from chemicals.

In another horticulture sector-oriented study (Muindi et al., 2015), the authors incorporated work-life balance practices to do with the place (teleworking), practices relating to the job (orientation, job sharing, work autonomy, protective clothing, training in the use of equipment, performance feedback), and practices related to benefits (staff-leave, day-care facilities, family fun day, low-interest loans, tuition for staff and their children, work canteen, transport to work, employee assistance programmes, and subsidized meals).

Kegoro, Otieno, and Akoyo (2020) study on WLB and performance of national police service in Kenya: operationalized WLB practices as permission to attend family issues, being able to delegate duties to others when the officer was overwhelmed, able to consult counsellors, control on ways to manage leisure, time to relax after work with family, visit family upcountry, use leave days effectively, ways to manage stress, being motivated when assigned duties outside their workplace, and feeling relaxed after completing their leave days. Why is this so? The Kenyan Police force tends to be posted in remote stations away from their hometowns and areas. Furthermore, the police leave their families behind and work in difficult conditions and poor pay. The police force is known of high suicidal cases and one of the cause is work-related stress (Otieno, 2019).

In the health sector, Kinyili (2019) conceptualized work-life balance practices to include: leaves, flexible time and work arrangements, childcare services, mental relaxation programmes, and medical and education schemes for self and family. This implies work-life balance practices were understood to include other human resource benefits that employees expect in an organization. For example, the participants even requested things such as support for children's education, volunteer work, and phased retirement.

Conceptualization of Work-Life Balance in the Kenyan Media

The media is a key player in addressing work-life balance issues that Kenyans face. Muasya (in press) did a study using the framing theory

to explore how the media framed and defined the causes and solutions for work-life balance issues. The study focused on two print media: The *Daily Nation* and The *Standard Media*. The media narratives were gendered, with men 22.3% of all the 114 stories. The study period was from 2009 to 2016. In the media, work-life balance was considered a myth or an illusion something difficult for professionals to attain. The causes of work-life balance were: nature of work which had fixed reporting time, employers preference of employees working within the work premises—face time than in remote locations, traffic jams in the big cities, the technology—tethered life that most professional found themselves in, and for women, they were blamed for the desire to "have it all in life"—a successful career and being fully engaged at home. Anne-Marie Slaughter's article, "Why *women can't have it all*" circulated in the *Atlantic* magazine in 2012, fuelled a heated discussion in the local media whether women could have it all.

These authors reported media reframing of work-life balance discourse. While being a stay at home mother is cherished among middle-class women in the West, in Kenya women who chose to stay at home and be full-time mothers were regarded to have wasted their brains. The professional women resisted the notion that good parenting necessarily entailed the quantity of hours parents spent with the children, and instead reframed the idea of good parenting to entail the quality of time mothers spent with their children. The media too seemed to reframe traditional role of women as full-time mothers and wives: that women may always not be at home, so the husbands were expected to step in and make their own food and take care of children when the wives were away at work. The media further seemed to reframe a good husband as someone who assisted in household chores and childcare. The media tended to carry the position of middle-class women and their work-life balance struggles. The media articulated domestic help to be a work-life balance strategy but failed to highlight the work-life balance issues that house-helps encounter. Childcare was framed as an individual family issue and not a societal issue. According to the sample of media stories analysed, the author noted that mothers largely relied on hired house-helps for childcare and house chores, exhibiting limited or no reliance on extended family as hypothesized by Aryee (2005).

Work-Life Balance and Job Turnover

Several studies reviewed hypothesized a relationship between work-life balance and job turnover. To start with, Chemirmir et al. (2018) sought to investigate the role of WLB on employee turnover in flower farms in Kenya. The researchers indeed found that workers experienced work-life balance challenges. Most participants agreed that they were relaxed when they felt stable and secure at their workplace. In addition, more than half of the workers felt relaxed and stable in their lives when their work hours fitted in well with their personal lives. For the participants, their work conditions mattered, and they raised the need for protective clothing as they worked with chemicals which to them was an aspect of a conducive environment. A significant number of workers experienced a conflict between work and family life and felt stressed due to challenges of childcare which affected their performance. Other causes of the disagreement noted included the long daily and working hours, role conflict, and demands of working in a flower farm. Flower firms typically do not offer facilities to work from home due to the nature of their work. The main concerns of the participants were: exposure to chemicals and lack of adequate maternity leave. In this study, the work-life balance had a weak correlation with all the indices of turnover (attribution, resignation, and dismissal). According to the authors, the participants rated themselves as more stable and there was a weak negative correlation between WLB and employee turnover, implying WLB could not be the only factor that determined employee turnover.

The work of Kinyili (2019) explored work-life balance practices and staff retention in public health institutions in Machakos County. The author used mixed research design, with a sample size of 227 healthcare practitioners from 156 public health institutions. The author reported a positive relationship between work-life balance practices and staff retention. Only 7% of turnover could be explained through work-life balance practices. The health sector in Kenya has witnessed a high staff turnover due to many factors including the brain-drain. Most of work practices' scales focused on the work side but not the family side. The work-life balance practices included practices to do with time management, leaves, work benefits such as medical cover, and children's education

services. In the public health sector, the critical WLB concerns were related to a lack of childcare facility on-site, flexible work schedules, and time for social and family ties. The health sector offered leaves (maternity, paternity, sick offs, annual leaves, and compassion leaves).

The researcher reported that employees requested for comprehensive medical cover to be allowed to access free medical services, childcare services, maternity leave to be extended to six months to encourage breastfeeding, increase paternity leave, increase in the number of off days, provide flexitime, flex week, time to go for mourning in case they lost a loved one, mental and relaxation programmes. In addition, another study by Muasya (2017) explored the relationship between work-family conflict, support, and intention to quit among female teachers working in public schools. The author sampled 375 female teachers with young children from Nairobi city and three other urban towns. The study reported that there was a higher *intent to quit* among teachers in secondary schools compared to primary schools. Similarly, there was a high intent to quit of teachers in Nairobi city compared to teachers working in smaller towns. The study further reported a positive relationship between work-family conflicts with intent to quit. In addition, the authors reported a statistically insignificant relationship between support from co-workers and work-family conflict the teachers experienced. However, there was a negative relationship between the supervisor's support and intent to quit. The study found that supervisor support did not moderate the relationship between work-family conflict and intent to quit. Kenya is among the countries in the world with high turnover among teachers and high levels of stress following the introduction of free primary education in 2000. The workload for many schoolteachers particularly in public schools is overwhelming. To add on, apart from staff-leave which is a statutory requirement, the Ministry of Education does not provide schoolteachers with other forms of work-life/family support; teachers have to rely largely on individual arrangements between the supervisor and the teacher.

Work-Life Balance Practices, and Supervisor Support

Several studies reviewed contend that the immediate supervisor support is required to enable employees to balance work and life demands. To add on the study of Muasya (2017), already discussed in the preceding section, Karani and Paul (2018) did study on how project supervisors enabled employees to achieve work-life balance in Kenya Power and Lighting Co. a public company. The authors hypothesized on aspects of supervisor support to include technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills. Karani and Paul conceptualized technical skills to include the technical knowhow, conceptual skills to include strategizing skills, and managerial skills, and lastly interpersonal to include people skills.

The authors noted that despite the company having work-life balance policies, employees still worked long hours more than 16 hours a day. These employees had a backlog of leave days left which they had not consumed, and some of the employees had up to 60% of their salaries from overtime work. This led to low productivity and less time for family. The author found a significant relationship between interpersonal skills and WLB policies, conceptual skills, and WLB policies; however, the authors did not report a significant relationship between technical skills and WLB policies. The authors suggested the need to interrogate whether economic hardships were the motivation behind employees working for long hours. The authors opined that managers need more training in interpersonal and conceptual skills because they were responsible for ensuring compliance with the implementation of organizations' policies aimed to achieve work-life balance. This study shows the presence of work-life balance policies does not imply the employees are using them, thus the need to sensitize the immediate supervisors.

Work-Life Balance Practices and Organizational Performance

Several studies have explored the relationship between work-life balance practices and organizational performance. Interestingly, the Kenyan banking sector is the most studied sector, and employees in the banking

sector are perceived to work for long hours. This made the banking sector to be ranked 3/24 (ILO, 2010) among the most affected by work-life imbalance. For instance, Mungania, Waiganjo, and Kihoro (2016) did a study on the influence of wellness programmes on organizational performance, among 43 different registered banks in the Nairobi metropolitan area. Mungania et al. conceptualized wellness to constitute: the need to promote preventive care, train, and educate workers on the importance of good health practices, and have supportive managers who support health-related programmes in the organization.

Mungania and colleagues used a questionnaire that sought ratings on items such as subsidized gymnasium membership fees, subsidized balanced meals at work, regular employee health and counselling programmes, and rest between work sessions. Organizational performance was conceptualized to include customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, and the company meeting its target standards. The results showed that a small per cent—3.2%—of the variation in the regression model in organizational performance could be attributed to wellness programmes. This study enforces the need for preventive health programmes which could increase employee satisfaction and productivity. This would further reduce the medical costs that employers face. Due to working for long hours, employees in the banking sector would require programmes that enable them to relax. Similarly, Mokaya and Gitari (2012) in their survey study found that recreation services in Utalii College—a hospitality institution—enabled the staff to relax and lower their stress levels, improve concentration, and improve confidence and self-esteem. Recreation services at the workplace have a positive impact on employee performance. The author noted that recreation increased employee commitment, bonding, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and productivity.

Work-Life Balance Practices and Employee Job Satisfaction

Besides studies focusing on organizational performance, other studies just focused on employee job satisfaction. Muema, Nzioki, and Kinyili

([2018](#)) sought to find out whether there was a relationship between time-related work-life balance practices and employee job satisfaction among employees in commercial banks in Machakos County. The study conceptualized work-life balance practices relating to time to consist of: flexitime, part-time working arrangements, and job sharing; 134 participants filled a survey. Flexitime was operationalized to include: enough time for family and personal issues, part-time work arrangements for employees on the study, time to relax, among others. Flexible working time would enable the employees to manage their schedules, engage in family activities, and improve their output. The study reported that banks had not adopted part-time work staff arrangements.

Overall, the study found that most of the workers were satisfied with the bank's work-life balance practices. There was a positive correlation between work-life balance practices with employee job satisfaction. Thus, the presence of work-life practices could increase employee job satisfaction.

Work-Life Balance Practices and Employee Commitment

Employee commitment was another organizational aspect studied. Wang et al. ([2011](#)) did a comparative study on the effects of perceived availability of childcare and work flexibility family-friendly programmes/policies, and their effects on organizational commitment and work-family conflict. The authors studied 36 domestic banks in four cities in collectivistic countries Nairobi, Kenya (13); New Delhi, India (7); Beijing, China (7); and Bang Kong, Thailand (9). Wang et al. sought to investigate the influence of family-friendly programmes on employee behaviours and attitudes in a developing economy context. In Kenya and Thailand, there was a positive relationship between childcare-related family-friendly programmes and organizational commitment and a negative relationship with work-family conflict.

The authors hypothesized that the perceived importance of childcare programmes and work flexible programmes would moderate the

effects of perceived availability of family-friendly programmes (childcare and work flexible programme) with organizational commitment and work-family conflict. The "authors" report found that childcare-related family-friendly policy had a differentiated effect on employees with a different perception of the policy importance. Employees who highly regarded the childcare policy also showed more organizational commitment and lower work-family conflict. This is unlike those who had low regard for the policy which was true for Kenya and Thailand. The study concluded that the more employees perceived that the work environment supported them by providing family-friendly policies, the more they would be committed to the organization, which would further lower their perception of work-family conflict. This study indicates that the importance employees attach to work and family-friendly policies can eventually influence their perception of the level of balance they have between work and non-work life. The next two sections will focus on work-life practices from the family side.

Family-Oriented Work-Life Practices—Family Practices

A few studies have attempted to explore family-based work-life balance practices. Most women in formal employment in Kenya and with young children tend to hire domestic help (Muasya 2014). However, this strategy comes with its own challenges. Muasya and Martin (2016) sought to find the extent to which professional women used domestic workers as a work-life balance strategy and the conflicts that arose among the employer-employee relationships within the home sphere. The authors sought to look at work-life balance issues from an organizational communication perspective. The study focused on professional women working in private and public universities and their domestic workers using both interviews and in-depth interviews. Most of these women sought domestic workers to assist with house chores and childcare.

Most of the work-related conflicts came from the unsatisfying work, integrity concerns of the domestic workers, and outside or inter-personal influence on the working relationship between professional women and their employees. The most common strategy to resolve employer-employee conflicts was terminating their employees' contracts while seeking assistance from third parties to resolve conflicts. The use of dialogue, threats, and reprimands, were moderately used as a conflict resolution strategy. A few employers opted to do nothing, and a handful of employees sought to improve how they super-vised domestic tasks. Though professional women use domestic helps, this strategy comes with its own set of challenges, especially in interper-sonal communication challenges. This observation agrees with Muasya (2020) where the female teachers cited unreliable domestic help as one of their major stressors.

Work-Life Balance Practices of Women in the Informal Sector

Childcare Centres

A second work-life balance strategy that this study explored is the use of centre-based childcare. Clark et al. (2018) investigated the gendered economic strategies employed and unemployed mothers use to combine work and childcare. The authors focused on childcare centres in a Nairobi slum. Clark et al. used a mixed study design where 1200 women filled a survey and 13 of the women further participated in in-depth interviews. These centres are early learning centres where pre-schoolers can attend at age of 3 years. These centres offer some form of learning at a fee, and they are either subsidized by donor organizations, some are faith-based institutions, and the government operates only a few. The women in slum areas tend to have three options for childcare: (1) combine work and childcare roles, (2) rely on kin and neighbours, and (3) use centre-based childcare. In the villages, children accompany their mothers to agricultural activities, but this may not be possible if the

mother is working in a more dangerous worksite such as collecting metals for recycling.

Moreover, some employers may not encourage their workers to come with the baby to work as it will lead to divided attention and poor quality of work performed. So, these women must seek some form of childcare. Culturally, women left their children in the hands of other women folk in the family, especially grandmothers. However, as people move to town, they leave their relatives in the village, or it is too expensive to stay with them. In addition, relying on relatives for childcare can lead to strained relations. In this sample, only 7% reported using grandmothers and 3% using other relatives. This implies the use of relatives is limited. Neighbours can assist but to a limited degree. A good number of slum women earn meagre income mostly from vending, cleaning, and washing jobs and cannot afford domestic help so they result in using centre-based childcare centres for a fee. This mode of childcare can be more prevalent in informal settlements if the costs of the centres are subsidized. However, the study does not shed light on what happens if you have a much younger child who is not yet ready to join the centre-based care.

Work-Life Balance Practices and Choices of Women in the Gig Economy

Besides, women from the urban slums who work predominantly in the informal sector, there are the gig workers. Workers in the gig economy get their work through digital platforms that connect them with the market. Services such as cleaning and domestic work can be arranged through these platforms.

Workers in the informal sector may experience financial insecurity and thus engage in a patchwork of income activities to make ends meet. Hunt et al. (2019) carried out a longitudinal study to explore the gendered experiences of women working in the gig economy; to understand the nature of their work and how they managed to combine it with domestic work and care responsibilities in Kenya and South Africa. Gig work may offer some flexibility to when to work. However, job opportunities may not come at the time and quantity to enable these workers to have a

decent wage. Workers in these platforms are not privileged to collective action. Due to the low incomes, the women in the gig economy face challenges of taking care of children and the elderly. Women tend to carry a big portion of care work, and they must search for ways to take care of their children. Childcare was their biggest obstacle to their economic opportunities and work-life balance. These women relied on informal childcare, such as using family members, neighbours, and friends; when this option failed, they could leave the children alone or in the care of slightly older children.

The gig platforms can develop supporting modalities such as training, certification, enabling workers to access more social protection and develop partnerships with other service providers such as financial institutions, transport, and childcare services. There is also the need for the government to provide infrastructure for childcare for workers in the informal sector. From this discussion, it is apparent a person's financial standing may influence the type of work-life balance options that they may enjoy.

Work-Life Balance Practices in Horticultural Farms

Horticultural farms tend to be located away from towns, and the assumption is that employees predominantly come from neighbourhoods situated adjacent to horticulture firms. Muindi et al. (2015) investigated the work-life practices employed in flower farms in Kenya. The horticulture sector contributes significantly to the livelihoods of people living along the Lake Naivasha region. The region has up to 55 flower farms that employ close to 55,000 workers. Earlier studies by Dwasi (2006) and Tsimbiri, Moturi Sawe, Henry, and Bend (2015) had indicated that the horticultural sector had challenges of poor labour practices and non-environmentally friendly production processes. There were allegations some work-life balance practices were not extended to causal workers, for instance, maternity leave, dependent care provision, and transport. To add on, workers worked for long hours, with low pay, and there was a challenge of adhering to safe work practices. Moreover, there was a high prevalence of respiratory, skin, nervous, joints, and bone sicknesses

among the employees working in flower farms. This was attributed to poor work and safety measures in these farms, and exposure to pesticides. The study of Muindi et al (2015) used a cross-sectional survey with a sample of 22 farms. The authors had the human resource managers of these farms fill a survey on the nature and level of work-life practices that their organizations practised. The authors reported that the sampled farm managers acknowledged their organizations had a work-life balance policy and asked several questions regarding work-life balance practices. Muindi et al. reported these programmes were minimally enforced: practices to do with flexible reporting time and flexible working hours, teleworking, teleworking resources, flexible work pay, study leave, paid tuition for children and staff education, day-care centres, family fun day, low-interest loans, no-interest loans, free company products, workplace transport, employee assistance programmes, and free subsidized meals. These programmes were moderately enforced: exchange of working shifts, job sharing, and performance feedback practices. On the other hand, these programmes were more entrenched in the horticulture sector: flexible working days, days off for overtime, restricted overtime, time off to meet family emergencies, optional weekend, and job rotation. Furthermore, statutory leaves were also provided such as maternity, paternity, and compassionate leave. The sector also provided regular plant maintenance, regular training on the use of equipment, and protective clothing. This study differs from that of Tsimbiri et al. (2015) which alleged poor health and work safety standards. Besides statutory leaves, the sector provided health programmes and workplace shops.

The nature of work-life balance practices that workers enjoyed depended on the nature of work and industry, which differed from sector to sector, or even the calibre of workers whether permanent or temporal. For example, free meals or subsidized meals, could cater to the low-income bracket—blue collar workers. The perspective of the employees themselves on the work-life practices was also lacking.

Discussion

Study Implications

First, a recap of the main findings reveals that in most studies, they tended to use definitions and theories already used before in Western scholarship. This is apart from Aryee (2005) who sought to theorize that work-life/family balance may show some collectivistic tendencies. To Aryee, work should not be framed as a choice, especially for the middle-class women as it is perceived in some Western literature, but a necessity for family survival. This conceptualization of work will result in different opinions; people will attach to work—work will be *for* the family.

Second, the conceptualization of work-life balance from the academic studies showed that work-life balance is something that can be attained and measured. However, the print media portrayed work-life balance as something that was not easy to be attained, a myth, and an illusion. In both media and academia, the two spheres of work and non-work life remain bifurcated, though some media stories suggested the need for weaving work and life together.

Third, the 20 work-life balance journals reviewed that focus on Kenya tended to focus on the effects of work-life balance or work-life/family conflict, rather than on the antecedents of work-life balance itself. This shows the area of antecedents of work-life balance is not yet explored in detail. Moreover, most studies from the human resource perspective tended to look at work-life balance from the work perspective, i.e., organization performance, job commitment, job satisfaction, and job turnover. There is a need to explore how work-life balance affects the family side as well such as in marriage satisfaction and parenting. Since Kenya is a collectivistic country, the bigger extended family can also be explored. In addition, how work-life balance affects health and well-being.

The conceptualization of work-life practices tended to differ from sector to sector or across different organizations. Leaves such as maternity leave, paternity leave, sick leave, and compassionate leave are well established across the formal sector. However, from the study, it cannot be ascertained whether all employees such as casual workers and contract

workers in the organizations enjoyed these leaves. Likewise, it cannot be established if workers in the informal economy enjoy these leaves. Leaves such as study leave are not yet widely practised, maybe with some exceptions of those in the university sector, where training is highly encouraged. Flexible reporting time and leaving time deferred from sector to sector. Flexible working days were a practice in the horticultural sector (Muindi et al., 2015); working from home was not well entrenched in the flower industry due to the nature of work. The practice of part-time working and flexible payday was not entrenched in the organizations studied. Very few organizations reported the provision of day-care centres at their work place. Generally, very few organizations have day-care centres for their workers. The findings also revealed that though organizations could have enacted work-life balance policies, they could not have been enforced and supervisor support was necessary to enforce these policies (Karani & Paul, 2018).

Finally, the informal sector seems to experience work-life balance differently, from the formal sector. The women with low income in gig economy (Hunt et al., 2019) and slums (Clark et al., 2018) may not afford domestic help, or enjoy the work-life balance benefits given at the workplace. The nature of their work makes them more adversely affected by work-life balance challenges. Thus, sectorial solutions may not suffice for all working employees facing work-life balance challenges, and this may require government policy to resolve it. Below is the section of suggestions for further research.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Indeed, firms in Kenya experience work-life conflict and some effort has been put in place to address work-life balance issues that differ from firm to firm. Among the 20 Kenyan studies reviewed, most studies treated the Kenyan employees as a homogeneous group and failed to control for social economic and demographic factors, with the exception of Wang et al. (2011), and those that studied one gender such as Clark et al. (2018), and Muasya(2016, 2017, 2020). This implies there could be gendered differences on the level of work-life balance experienced and

the work-life practices that mattered to them the most. Furthermore, these Kenyan results could differ according to age, marital status, income, years of experience, number of children and their ages, and level of supervisor support as suggested in work-life/family meta-analyses such as that done in the West (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002); in addition, the perceived importance of work-life balance and their availability could vary with someone's seniority in the organization, if they could appropriate it, or able to negotiate about it as other non-Kenyan studies have established (Lambert & Waxman, 2005).

Along the same lines, there is a need for longitudinal studies, with larger samples and which crosscut the different Kenyan sectors, using a variety of methods of analyses (e.g., such as structural equation modelling), and methods of inquiry (e.g., critical theory). There are also Kenyan populations not yet studied (e.g., students, different classes of people working in the informal sector—taxi and truck drivers, quarry workers, and religious organizations). There is a need in Kenya to study work-life balance from other perspectives too, e.g. health, development, sustainability, etc., to get a more nuanced position as most of the current studies are from a human resource perspective. Finally, there is a need for theory building from a Kenyan perspective.

In addition, the majority of Kenya's population resides in rural settings, where their main sources of livelihood is small-scale subsistence agriculture and informal mining activities. The majority of the labourers in these settings are women; thus, WLB experienced in a rural context is needed. Also, close to 70% of Kenya is arid- and semi-arid land and hosts huge populations of nomadic pastoral communities. Further research is needed to shed light on WLB experienced by pastoral nomadic communities. Most work on WLB in Kenya has been informed by Eurocentric theoretical perspectives; future work would need to tease out the relevance of afro-centric theories in understanding WLB in Kenya. The work-from-home arrangements necessitated by the COVD-19 government lockdowns are likely to persist during the post-COVID-19 era; thus, there is an opportunity for further research related to WLB challenges and opportunities associated with the work-from-home arrangements, particularly for young women with dependents.

Such research will be critical for exploring previous hypotheses related to questions of flexibility offered by work-from-home arrangements.

Conclusion

Research on work-life balance is in the nascent stage in Kenya. This is shown by the level of conceptualization already carried out. The studies seem to concentrate on the work sphere and less on the non-work sphere, and more attention should be directed to the non-studied areas. Kenyan firms have made some progress in enacting work-life balance practices, especially those that are statutory in nature, though more can still be achieved to make their employees able to balance the demands of work and life and remain healthy and productive.

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5

The Myth and the Reality of Work-Life Balance in Nigeria

Toyin Ajibade Adisa, Gbolahan Gbadamosi, and Olatunji David Adekoya

Introduction

As with most emerging and industrialised economies, Nigeria is confronted with the changing nature of paid work, and the realities of managing work with other non-work responsibilities persist with looming consequences (Amazue & Onyishi, 2016). The ability to balance work demand and non-work responsibilities, commonly referred to as work-life balance (WLB) (see Adisa et al., 2017; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Bird, 2006), continues to stimulate research and trigger

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debate among academics and policymakers for implementable WLB policies that will improve employees' well-being. The clear need for workplace flexibility (i.e. employee's ability to decide when, how, and where work is to be undertaken) has propelled many organisations to initiate various WLB policies, which is beneficial to both the employer and the employees (Guest, 2002).

This chapter articulates some conceptual issues associated with the relationship between work and non-work life, specifically in Nigeria. At first, we explore the concepts around work-life, to establish a foundation in the context of WLB. The chapter examines the realities and experiences of WLB in Nigeria. In order to achieve these objectives, we analyse the working time among Nigerian employees; second and the working conditions prevalent in Nigeria. We also analyse the issue of gender as it affects WLB and, lastly, we consider the influence of the WLB policies and initiatives in Nigeria. The chapter surveys a variety of materials for the review of the realities of work-life balance in Nigeria and presents data in the form of interview extracts and data sets used in the analysis. We then draw conclusion based on our analysis.

A Brief Outlook of WLB

The concept of WLB is not novel. The issue of WLB has been around for many decades and still continue to attract attention and generate debate till date. This may be due to an increase in interest in how employees manage to balance work-related obligations and non-work-related responsibilities (Wheatley, 2012); especially, in the present time when the value of work is changing and there continues to be room for personal interests, environment and family obligations aside from work commitments. Furthermore, many organisations, due to economic uncertainty and organisational restructuring, now demand unalloyed commitment and higher productivity from their employees (Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007; Naithani, 2010a, 2010b). Consequently, many people now feel more pressured in their jobs and at home—making work and non-work aspects of their lives to collide and become difficult to maintain.

The concept of WLB is problematic. However, it is crucial to understand the fundamental elements that constitute the term 'WLB' in order to have a clear understanding of the concept. Over the years, researchers have come up with various subjective and objective interpretations of what 'work', 'life', and 'balance' mean. For example, Warhurst, Eikhof, and Haunschild (2008, p. 2) define work as 'a sphere of physical and mental demands that steals time and energy from employees' real lives. This definition of work draws an argument that employees engage in multiple roles that uses their time, effort, and energy for paid and unpaid work (Drew & Daverth, 2007). Paid work is when an individual is compensated through remuneration for a particular job or series of tasks undertaken over a period of time (Mitsakis & Talampekos, 2014). While unpaid work comprises of work that does not attract any form of monetary or contractual payments, such as voluntary and unpaid domestic work (Rapoport Bailyn, Fletcher, & Pruitt, 2002).

Conversely, 'life' means employees' non-work duties and responsibilities, which promote self-fulfilment, love, and social belongingness (Neequaye, 2016). Depending on several demographic factors (such as age, marital status, gender, and social, political and religious affiliations); 'life' can also be divided into personal life and family life (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Personal life refers to an individual's dedicated time and energy to self-development, happiness and leisure. This could include activities such as education, hobbies, cultural interests and social or religious activities that contribute to personal identity. While family life refers to an individual's roles and responsibilities that contribute to familial interests, including embracing house chores and caring duties (Warhurst et al., 2008).

There is a mythical connotation associated with the meaning of balance (Guest, 2002) given that the 'balance' in WLB is almost impossible. The common definition of 'balance' refers to an equal allotment of time, efforts, and energy towards an individual's work and personal lives (Ranjan & Prasad, 2013). However, Clark (2000, p. 751) disagrees by defining 'balance' as 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and home, with a minimum of role conflict'. Balance, therefore, does not mean a total absence of conflict between an individual's work and non-work roles; rather it means the degree to which such conflicts are

managed to produce desirable outcomes in both work and personal life. More so, the concept of balance arises from the notion that work and life are inseparable domains (Guest, 2002). However, this is contrary to the assumption of the segmentation theory of WLB (see Young & Kleiner, 1992). The theory assumes that an individual's work and personal lives are two separate segments; hence, they act independently of each other (Warhurst et al.,2008). Many other theories of WLB have critiqued the segmentation theory by attempting to emphasise the relationship between the work-related and non-work-related roles of an employee. Some of these theories include the border theory (Clark, 2000), compensation theory (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990), boundary theory (Nippert-Eng, 1996), spillover theory (Staines, 1980), and enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

The concept of WLB is broad. It recognises employees' multiple roles, which often affect each other (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). WLB means an employee's ability to successfully negotiate work-related and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities (Kesting and Harris, 2009; Parkes & Langford, 2008; Wheatley, 2012). It means an effective management of the interaction between an individual's work demand and non-work obligations (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). WLB is 'associated with numerous aligned socio-cultural goals and organisational programs such as the provision of flexible work arrangements, equity and diversity policies and health and well-being outcomes' (McDonald, Townsend, & Wharton, 2013, p. 207). Contrastingly, Fleetwood (2007) argues that despite the various policies implemented by the government and organisations, the social consensus of WLB is disconnected with the realities and experiences of employees. We, therefore, argue that the numerous existing WLB initiatives neither sufficiently reflect its goals in achieving work-life integration nor drastically reduce the occurrence of work-life conflict (WLC), which is the opposite of WLB.

Nizam and Kam (2018) opined that WLB is rooted in five critical elements, which include working hours, workload, leave policies, work arrangements and reward schemes. An effective WLB is expected to benefit both employees and employers, family members, and the community at large (Mishra et al., 2014). Employees are motivated

and tend to perform better when they are able to exercise some degree of control over when and where their work is undertaken. Research has also confirmed that creating a balance between work and personal life enhances factors surrounding an individual's functionality outside of work and improves work productivity and organisational performance (Pradhan, 2016; Rao, 2017). Oktosatrio (2018) supports this argument and aver that WLB ensures job satisfaction and acts as a catalyst for improving employees' motivation. Findings from various studies (Muchiti & Gachunga, 2015; Okpara & Wynn, 2007) also indicate that work flexibility and job satisfaction could not be undermined in pursuit of organisation performance. This brief outlook evinces the concept of WLB as an important area of human resource management (HRM).

Realities of WLB in Nigeria

Nigeria is a West African country with a population of over 200 million people and more than 250 ethnic groups across its six geo-political zones (Central Intelligence World Factbook, 2019; Worldometer, 2020). Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa and the twenty-seventh largest in the world (World Population Review, 2020) with oil as its major revenue source (Central Intelligence World Factbook, 2019). Nigeria workforce is estimated at about 60 million people with an unemployment estimated rate of 16.5% (Central Intelligence World Factbook, 2019). Nigeria, as a developing nation, has its peculiarities which makes it an interesting context for research in WLB. In the last ten years, WLB has gained a significant academic attention in Nigeria with studies examining WLB of different categories of workers (Adisa, 2015; Adisa et al., 2016; Adisa, Mordi, & Mordi, 2014; Akanji, 2012; Mordi et al., 2013; Ojo Salau, & Falola, 2014). However, more research is still needed in order to capture the realities of WLB in Nigeria and to increase not just the quantity but the quality and reach of WLB research undertaken in the country. Therefore, the reality of WLB in Nigeria is presumed to hinge on some overarching factors such as individual/organisational differences and expectations, cultural attributes and the institutional forces that regulate work-life patterns. While considering these factors, we consider

working time, working conditions, gender complexities, and institutional policies as they affect the WLB experiences of the Nigerian workforce in determining the myth and reality of WLB in Nigeria.

Working Time

Issues associated with the number of working hours are similar across nations, regardless of their levels of economic growth and development (International Labour Organization—ILO, 2005). According to Lee, McCann, and Messenger (2007), working time around the world has often been regulated by the ILO to ensure that organisations prioritise the well-being of their workers. This is because the number of hours worked is one of the determinants of employee WLB (see Adisa, Abdul-raheem, & Osabutey, 2016). The ILO has proposed a standard working time of 8 hours a day or 40 hours per week in order to enhance the employees' standard of living (ILO, 2020). However, in reality, a significant number of employees work beyond the standard working time globally (ILO, 2019; Messenger, 2018).

In Nigeria, the reality of working time is bedevilled predominantly by the long working hours culture prevalent in many organisations (Adisa, Mordi, & Osabutey, 2017; Mmakwe & Ojiabo, 2018). The vagueness in the usage and implementation of flexible working options among Nigerian workers and employers respectively is undoubtedly the primary impediment to the achievement of WLB (Adisa et al., 2014; Akinyele, Peters, & Akinyele, 2016; Epie & Ituma, 2014). Over time, studies have revealed that while no sector of the Nigerian economy is expunged from long working hours, there are marginal differences across the diverse sectors (Epie & Ituma, 2014). The medical profession is one of the many professions burdened with long working hours considering the shortage of doctors and other medical practitioners across the country (Adisa et al., 2017; Mushfiqur et al., 2018). The shortage, consequently, engenders the medical staff to work beyond their regular working hours and embrace anti-social working hours, which often leads to a high rate of staff turnover and occupational migration (Adisa et al., 2017). Adisa et al.'s study establishes that a culture of long working hours is inherent

in the medical profession (medical doctor) in Nigeria—exacerbating work-life imbalance among medical doctors in Nigeria.

Similarly, the Nigerian banking, telecommunications and insurance industries present another reflection of long working hours coupled with the use of overtime, which is deemed as a norm within these industries (Akanji, 2012; Ugwu, Amazue, & Onyedire, 2017). Furthermore, Ukaegbu (2000) revealed the precarious working condition in the Nigerian manufacturing industry subject employees to work beyond the standard hours. In the same vein, Adekoya, Ajonbadi, and Mordi (2019) reveal an excessive working hours culture in the Nigerian Army, which is detrimental to their achieving WLB.

The informal sector is no exception, it also presents working time challenges to the workers who struggle to achieve WLB. The fact that the informal sector is unregulated, and consist of workers who are predominantly unskilled, exposes the labour force within it to unregulated working hours (Tamunomiebi & Ukachukwu, 2018). This sector is characterised by low level of pay (often below the national minimum wage), which subjects the workers to take up more hours at work or look for a second job to meet their basic needs (Fajana, 2008).

Although many Nigerian workers may not work beyond the standard closing time, however, many take work home, which interferes with the limited time available to attend to other non-work roles (Olaoye, 2012). Nevertheless, employees have different reasons for working longer hours. A central assumption is that employees working for longer hours are either workaholics that have taken their jobs as their 'first love' and prioritise their careers over their personal lives; or they work longer hours to show their level of commitment and loyalty to their employers in favour of personal gains; or do so to earn more money (Adisa et al., 2017; Epie & Ituma, 2014). It is evident from the above studies that many employees in Nigeria find it challenging to balance their work-life and non-work work life, despite the various coping strategies available to them (see Adisa, Gbadamosi, and Osabutey [2016] for the review of the coping strategies available to the Nigerian workers). We, therefore, argue that the inability of the Nigerian workers to achieve WLB is an active stressor for WLC. This is because their experiences of long working hours generate a negative spillover from their work domain to non-work

domain (see Adisa, Gbadamosi, & Osabutey, 2016). Undoubtedly, long working hours have arduous implications on the Nigerian workers' lives and pose a huge barrier to their achieving WLB.

Working Conditions

Working conditions are presumably one of the determinants of WLB (McGinnity & Russell, 2015). Working conditions comprise a variety of factors which are critical to employee wellbeing and WLB (Nordenmark, Vinberg, & Strandh, 2012; Wilkinson, 1999). Employees tend to perform better in an enabling atmosphere where they are able to make independent and collective decisions regarding their choice of work engagement and participation (McGinnity & Russell, 2015). According to Akinyele (2010), the Nigerian working environment is less supportive. This may be attributed to poverty, corruption, and bad leadership (Nzewi, Augustine, Mohammed, & Godson, 2018). The working conditions of the Nigerian workers have been negatively affected by work intensification, required physical presence at work, and a lack of supportive culture.

Work Intensification

Work intensification, also known as work overload, remains one of the widespread issues associated with working conditions globally (Lewis Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007; Skinner & Pocock, 2008). The increase in organisational efforts to meet set targets resulting from demand and supply pressures and the effort to balance the books subject employees to the danger of work overload, which breeds stress, burnout and has debilitating effects on employees' general well-being (Fein, Skinner, & Machin, 2017; Yu, 2014). Work-overload has been identified as one of the strongest predictors of work-life imbalance in that employees exerted extra energy or time (long working hours) to achieve organisational objectives (Boxall & Macky, 2014).

As reported by Epie and Ituma (2014), the presence of work intensification in the Nigerian labour market coupled with institutional failures has resulted in WLC for the Nigerian workers. Similarly, Adisa, Osabutey, and Gbadamosi (2016) found work pressure/overload to be one of the primary sources of WLC, hence, affirming the presence of negative spillover from work domain to non-work domain. In a similar study, work pressure is mirrored as a dominant factor that impedes the achievement of WLB among Nigerian employees (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). This study aligns with the empirical evidence on the impact of work intensification on WLB achievement among Nigerian workers. We suggest that organisational expectations through work intensifications often engender a negative spillover from work domain to the non-work domain of many employees across the country.

Required Physical Presence at Work

Research has also suggested that the prevailing requirement of physical presence at work in the Nigerian work environment mirrors the low level or lack of usage of WLB policies such as telework and other flexible work arrangements across the country (Adekoya et al., 2019; Adisa et al., 2017). While accepting that not all jobs can be undertaken offsite, we however argue that jobs that require employee's physical presence at work at all times may lead to strict supervision, which could distract employees and lead to underperformance or errors. Such performance reports could demoralise employees who are likely to transfer their emotions to their non-work domain. More so, there is a dichotomy that a manager's close supervision, which is obtainable in the workplace, induces improved performance (Andrade, Westover, & Kupka, 2019). However, we argue that employees are likely to perform better when offered flexible working options, which include getting work done outside the confines of the workplace. The absence of adequate flexibility options in Nigeria deprives workers the ability to balance their work demands and non-work responsibilities.

It is evident from the literature that many workers in Nigeria find it challenging to manage their work and personal lives due to the culture

of required physical presence at work (see Adekoya et al., 2019; Adisa, Mordy, et al., 2017). For some professions, physical presence at work is an obligation and not a choice on the premise that it bespeaks the level of the employee's commitment and seriousness on the job (Adisa, Mordy, et al., 2017). Having employees present at work at all times is found to encroach into their personal space and time—thus causing work-life imbalance (Adekoya et al., 2019). Just like in many other countries, the time taken to travel to places of work, particularly in Nigerian cities, exposes employees to prolonged traffic stress, which may result in fatigue and other associated medical issues—thus affecting productivity (Mushfiqur et al., 2018). The risks associated with plying Nigerian roads and the employees' aspirations to achieve WLB makes sufficient business case for employers to reduce the need for the regular onsite presence of employees and embrace WLB policies such as telework and other flexible work arrangements.

Supportive Culture

The degree of support received by employees is critical to their achievement of WLB (Allen, 2001). According to Abendroth and den Dulk (2011), the supportive roles of organisations, family, and government are essential to the attainment of WLB among workers worldwide. The study further discusses the impact of emotional and instrumental support both in the workplace and within the family as a crucial tool for reducing work stress and burnout. Within the Nigerian context, we also found evidence that reinforces the claim that organisational and family support are predictors of WLB (Amazue & Onyishi, 2016). On the one hand, organisational support is represented mainly by support from supervisors and colleagues (Adisa et al. 2017); on the other hand, support from spouse, parents and other close relatives are regarded as family support (Agba, Nwosu, & Innah, 2015).

Adisa, Mordi, and Osabutey (2017) found that unsupportive culture resulting from a lack of support from managers, supervisors and colleagues are prevalent in Nigerian organisations. This thus exacerbates the challenges that the Nigerian workers face in coping with work

demands and non-work-related responsibilities. Even though the Nigerian family system, which comprises of spouses and close relatives (mostly grandparents, uncles, aunties and cousins) play an important role in providing support to one another; many organisations in Nigeria do not have WLB policies in place to support their employees in their efforts to achieve WLB. Family support is important, but it is not enough. Employees need all the support (organisational, supervisor, colleagues and government supports) to achieve desired WLB.

Gender Complexities

Until recently, gender issues in the WLB debate have been ignored as concentration was mainly on the physical, political, social and cultural factors as they affect employees' work and non-work life (Emslie & Hunt, 2009). However, the incessant influx and participation of women in paid employment have increased interests in how work and life are managed among men and women (Lewis et al., 2007). In today's work environment, the role of gender in WLB cannot be overemphasised due to various factors associated with the differences between men and women. The issue of gender is central to the discussion of WLB. This is because the level of involvement in work and non-work roles (e.g. family role) is different across borders, and it depends on traditional gender role expectations. For instance, women's involvement in family roles in patriarchal societies in SSA (such as Nigeria) is high compared to the situation in relatively egalitarian countries such as the UK and the US (Adisa, Osabutey, & Gbadamosi, 2017). This, arguably, means that Nigerian women will experience more work-family conflict than their counterparts in the UK and the US (Adisa et al., 2014).

Typically, Nigeria is a less egalitarian society ingrained in a patriarchal hegemonic social system, in which women are subordinated and dominated by men both at work and home (Adisa, Abdulraheem, & Isiaka, 2019). This dichotomic-gendered nature of the Nigerian society has institutionalised the roles of men and women. Men are meant to be 'breadwinners' and not participate in domestic duties, and women are supposed to be 'homemakers' and shoulder all domestic duties, even if

that woman is engaged in a full-time paid job. These belief, culture and norms often make it difficult for women to find dignifying jobs but are instead engaged in low paid jobs or dirty work (Aderinto, 2001). As the Nigerian society struggles to detach itself from patriarchal hegemonic culture, which breeds gender inequality, women, influenced by the feminist movements and the need to become independent, are increasingly taking up more jobs both in the private and public sectors (Makama, 2013). This increase participation of the women in the labour force is continually pushing forward a case for WLB and family-friendly policies in the country (Nigeria) where women constitute about half of the 200 million population (Makama, 2013). Additionally, the huge task of combining work demands and non-work responsibilities continues to burden employed women (Aderinto, 2001). This may be the reason why women in this part of the world are unable to achieve socially sustainable work as they find it difficult to cope with their multiple roles (Mushfiqur et al., 2018).

Akanji, Mordi, Simpson, Adisa, and Oruh (2020) argued that the concept of WLB to many childless single employees, which is also gendered, is worth researching. This is because many employers categorise unmarried employees as individuals without familial responsibilities based on the presumption that they have no childcare responsibilities. These assumptions clearly disregard their obligations to other family members. This stereotypical prejudice engenders an increase in the workload of unmarried employees—thus making balancing their work and non-work demands difficult. Undoubtedly, a gendered WLB is challenging for both genders. However, women find it more challenging to cope with their multiple roles as a result of prevalent patriarchy in Nigeria. The Nigerian society portrays a family-collectivistic orientation that offers more informal support as couples or single parents can solicit the help of close relatives to fulfil some domestic and caring responsibilities as a mechanism for improving WLB. However, this form of support given its peculiarities and limitations also present some challenges within the WLB debate; one of such is the lack of parental care experienced by the children affected (Aderinto, 2001). Nevertheless, as the Nigerian employees continue their struggles to achieve WLB, it is essential to

understand the institutional roles of organisations and the government in alleviating the current deplorable situation.

WLB Policies and Initiatives in Nigeria

Even though WLB policies and initiatives are similar in countries and organisations around the world, implementations and uptakes are different. The pursuit of improving employee well-being has since propelled organisations, government and labour unions to initiate policies that facilitate labour flexibility. Contextually, one of the challenges facing the Nigerian organisations is the sustained deficiency in formulating and implementing policies that promote employee well-being (Bolaji, Gray, & Campbell-Evans, 2015). The government as the primary economic regulator has not lived up to its responsibilities in terms of WLB campaign. The Nigerian government has also not been able to protect employees from labour market exploitation. This is evident in the 'Decent Work Country Programme II' report presented by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2018). The report mirrors the undue complacency of the Nigerian government regarding the prevailing labour market conditions which has further exacerbated the poor living and wellbeing conditions of employees in the country. The report further revealed that the Nigerian government has failed to alleviate the deficits in the labour market through its negligence to the labour standards proposed by the ILO. The Nigerian Labour Act was introduced in 1979 and reviewed in 2004 (ILO, 2018). Apparently, there have been several positive developmental changes in the workplace over the years since the Labour Act was last reviewed. Furthermore, the complex nature of work and the need for WLB policies such as flexible working arrangement evince the urgent need for a new Labour Act in Nigeria (KPMG, 2019).

The Nigerian Labour Act (2004) states that the daily working hours are to be fixed by mutual agreement or collective bargaining. This loophole is often exploited by employers to increase an employee's working hours, which often leads to work-life conflict (WLC). The few WLB policies contained in the Act are maternity leave, sick leave, and annual

leave; most of which are outdated and inconsistent with the current practices and realities of work and working conditions. Organisational roles in facilitating WLB policies are crucial to the well-being of employees. Despite the many existing WLB practices and initiatives introduced in recent years globally, Nigerian employees are still not enjoying the full benefits of various WLB policies. Flexible working initiatives that are provided by Nigerian organisations are often limited to 'adjusted working hours, shortened workweek, job sharing and casual leave allowance' (Akanji et al., 2020). The availability and awareness of WLB initiatives across the country have been deemed to be worrisome, given that the Nigerian employees are either ignorant or lack the institutional support to use these initiatives (Adisa et al., 2014). Table 5.1 mirrors the level of awareness, availability and usage of WLB initiatives among a section of Nigerian employees.

As shown in Table 5.1, the availability of WLB policies in the Nigerian medical profession is minimal, likewise its awareness among the professionals. The data reveals that the commonly used WLB policy is the maternity leave and study leave, while casual leave is sparsely used. The data also suggests that employees are not aware of many WLB policies such as school holiday cover, nanny share, reduced and compressed working hours, annualised hours, teleworking, shift swapping, and staggered working hours. Unsurprisingly, 100% of the medical professionals engaged in full-time employment with an almost zero availability and usage of part-time employment. This could be a result of the shortage of medical personnel in the industry (see Adebulu, 2019). Similarly, another study undertaken by Ojo et al. (2014) in three different sectors (Banking, education, and power—see Table 5.2) revealed the availability and usage of WLB initiatives in these sectors.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 reveal the WLB initiatives in four different sectors (medical, banking, educational and power) of the Nigerian economy. It is evident in these studies that Nigerian employees, besides the limited availability of WLB initiatives and policies, are very reluctant to use those initiatives. Ojo et al. (2014, p. 12) argued that long working hours, work intensification, unsupportive managerial and organisational culture, ineffective implementation strategy, lack of communication and failure to evaluate the impact of the initiatives are some of the barriers that stand

Table 5.1 Work-life balance policies awareness, availability, and uptake among nigerian female doctors and nurses

WLB policies	Awareness among doctors		Awareness among nurses		Availability among doctors		Availability among nurses		Uptake among doctors		Uptake among nurses	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Full-time	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–
Part time	80.0	20.0	76.4	23.6	1.9	98.1	2.2	97.8	–	100	–	100
Family medical leave	–	95	–	98.4	–	100	–	100	–	–	–	–
Maternity leave	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–
Paternity leave	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Casual leave	98.2	–	94.0	–	23.0	77.0	21.8	78.2	15.0	85.0	17.0	83.0
On-site childcare	45	55	58.2	41.8	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Emergency childcare	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Backup adult & eldercare	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
School holiday cover	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
On-site WLB expert	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Nanny share	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Reduced working hours	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Compressed working hrs	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

WLB policies	Awareness among doctors		Awareness among nurses		Availability among doctors		Availability among nurses		Uptake among doctors		Uptake among nurses	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Annualised hours	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Teleworking	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Crèche	88.0	12.0	97.0	3.0	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Career break	82.0	18.0	85.5	14.5	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Term time working	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Sabbatical leave	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Flexi-time schemes	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Study leave	97.1	2.9	95.7	4.3	68.5	31.5	47.0	53.0	58	42	39	61
Shift swapping	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Self-rostering	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Working from home	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Cultural/religious leave	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100
Staggered working hours	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100	–	100

Source Adapted from Adisa et al. (2014, p. 29)

Table 5.2 WLB initiatives availability and usage across three sectors in Nigeria

WLB Initiatives	Banking sector (availability)	Banking sector (usage %)	Educational sector (availability)	Educational sector (usage %)	Power sector (availability)	Power sector (usage %)
Full time	✓	100	✓	91	✓	93
Part time	X	0	✓	9	✓	7
Flexitime	✓	6	✓	35	X	0
Term time	X	0	✓	37	X	0
Home working	✓	4	✓	17	X	0
Study leave	✓	31	✓	59	✓	26
Parental leave	✓	41	✓	32	✓	29
Maternity leave	✓	27	✓	26	✓	19
Paternity leave	✓	2	X	0	X	0
Childcare arrangements	✓	42	✓	34	✓	42

Source Adapted from Ojo et al. (2014, p. 10)

between the Nigerian workers and WLB initiatives. As noted by Bond (2004), an employee's reluctance to use WLB initiatives is largely dependent on a lack of supportive culture within the organisation. Adisa et al. (2017) argued that a supportive culture is an important factor in employees' ability to function well both at work and as good members of their families.

The role of the labour and trade unions as advocates for employees is crucial to facilitating employee well-being across the world (Webster & Forrest, 2019). However, the weak bargaining power of labour and trade union has been negatively affecting the implementation of welfare policies (including WLB policies) in public and private companies, both in the industrialised and developing countries (Visser, 2019). Like in many other societies, the Nigerian labour and trade unions are plagued with a deficient bargaining power, which has resulted in the deplorable state of employees' welfare (Ngwama, 2016). The Nigerian labour market faces several labour challenges as a result of the weakened power of autonomy among its unions. Consequently, members of the unions remain despondent in the exploitative hands of their employers. The lingering issues in

these unions thus have negative implications for WLB policies formulation and implementation. We argue that WLB in Nigeria will have to be supported by human resource management (HRM) policies and practices, supportive organisational, cultural and institutional forces to be effective.

Discussion and Conclusions

Reconciling work demands and non-work responsibilities, like every other worker around the world, matters to the Nigeria workers. However, there has been little or no effort from the Nigerian government, private and public organisations and other institutions to make WLB a reality for the teeming Nigerian workers. In examining the myth and reality of WLB in Nigeria, we explored the interpretations of the perception of work, life and balance. We also disentangled the concept of allotting equal amount of time, energy, and effort to work and non-work domains as the meaning of WLB is generally misconstrued by some people. This chapter supports defining WLB as a satisfactory balance between work and non-work domains with a minimum role conflict. This definition means that WLB does not mean a total absence of conflict; rather, the ability to manage foreseeable conflicts to promote desirable outcomes in both work and life spheres (see Clark, 2000).

This chapter identifies the realities of working time as it affects WLB in Nigeria. We ascertained that the prevailing working hours across the country was fundamental to achieving WLB. Long working hours prevailed as the main predictor of work-life imbalance given that employees directly or indirectly allocated more working time, which interfered with their non-work-related roles and obligations. In Nigeria, long working hours, irregular work schedules, and general lack of WLB policies such as flexi-time options characterised the culture of many organisations. It is, therefore, safe to say that unregulated working time is a major barrier to achieving WLB for many Nigeria workers. Working conditions were also recognised as another factor responsible for work-life imbalance among Nigeria workers. The working condition, influenced by work intensification, required physical presence at work,

and supportive culture plays a significant role in the attainment of WLB. We postulate that work intensification or work overload, among others, have a compelling influence on the achievement of WLB. The Nigerian workers typically are overloaded with work, which often results in lack of energy to function well in the non-work domain. The intensification of work often results in negative spillover from work to non-work domain—thus causing displeasure and conflict. More recent studies, Nwagbara (2020) confirms not much progress has been made regarding working conditions and policies as the study confirms entrenched work inflexibility, normalised unequal engagement, unsupportive workplace, and legitimised instrumentalist workload. The study underscores how national institutions shape and legitimise managerialist employment relations, resulting in WLB challenges for employees. The chapter also identified the required physical presence at work at all time as a barrier to achieving WLB. We thus argue that the more employees are exposed to poor working conditions, the less likely they will achieve WLB.

Although WLB affects both men and women, however, gender complexities portrayed a significant relationship within the WLB debate. The chapter emphasises the impact of gender on the achievement of WLB. More so, the prevailing patriarchal hegemonic Nigerian culture enervates women's efforts to WLB (see Adisa et al., 2019). The chapter establishes that the institutional bodies (government, organisations and labour/trade unions) have failed in their respective responsibilities to boost the welfare of employees across the country. This is mirrored by the insignificant level of the availability, awareness, and usage of WLB initiatives in Nigerian organisations and industries. In conclusion, it is vivid from the review conducted in this chapter that WLB is still miles away in Nigeria when compared to WLB initiatives and implementation in the western-developed world. As a matter of pertinence, employees must be supported through the implementation of adequate WLB initiatives to reduce the occurrence of role conflicts and enhance individual well-being, organisational productivity and societal gratification. Furthermore, there should be a re-think of patriarchal hegemonic culture that heaps bulky domestic duties on women. This will enable them to have time and energy to non-work activities that matter to them. There is also a need for government and organisations to take the

issue of WLB seriously by initiating practicable WLB policies, which will enhance employees' well-being, productivity and societal gratification.

Recent business growth and developments within the formal sector on the Nigerian economy especially as it relates to financial services industries, oil and gas sector, and aspects of manufacturing and telecommunications sectors have all recently witnessed influx of mergers and takeovers, and some foreign direct investments. These changes have brought about international and expatriate staff as well as the transfer of managerial practices from western countries. Consequently, many such businesses have had to effectively adopt several global best practices that already exist in their home offices/global headquarters which includes but not limited to home and teleworking, and other flexible work practices in their Nigerian offices. Nigeria is a very dynamic business environment and open to new technology uptakes. There is, therefore, need for more updated and well-guided research to update recent practices in Nigeria the business environment. Mainstream publications on WLB in Nigeria have been dominated by qualitative studies, there is room for more positivist quantitative approaches to be adopted in future research. This will reduce the overreliance on extant studies that may be reporting pre-2019 realities and HRM business practices outside of the fast pace developments in bigger cities in Nigeria's business environment. This is, particularly, important given the impact COVID-19 has had on the work culture and how many Nigerian businesses have responded with adjustments. There is a massive opportunity for researchers to tap into these yawning gap.

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6

The Work-Life Balance of Younger and Older Indian Women Managers in Corporate South Africa

Nasima M. H. Carrim and Eileen Koekemoer

Introduction

A considerable amount of literature has been published on how individuals attempt to combine work and family responsibilities and how employees attempt to obtain some degree of balance between these domains (commonly referred to as work-life balance [WLB] or work-family balance). From the outset, studies of WLB have focused on the challenges faced by parents, particularly mothers, and more recently by dual-career couples with dependent children (Kelliher, Richardson, & Boiarintseva, 2018). Although various researchers agree that contemporary societal changes necessitate a more encompassing and dynamic understanding of how individuals experience WLB, research on the subject has been mostly restricted to how employees pursue WLB and the various strategies that work for a specific group of people (in most cases

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this excludes minority groups). Already in 2008, work-life research had been criticised for only focusing on the experiences of middle and upper class, younger, white, western and heterosexual women (Aycan, 2008). According to Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, and Sparrow (2013), WLB is often viewed as a problem for middle-class dual-earner parents, which would mean that extant research and theory only provide a partial view of the work-life needs and experiences of the workforce. This chapter therefore aims to examine how younger and older Indian women (a minority group in South Africa) managers balance their work and home lives and how they succeed in reaching senior and top management posts in the process.

Kelliher et al. (2018) suggested that existing knowledge is mainly concerned with life (meaning caring for dependent children) and work which is based on a traditional model of full-time, permanent employment. However, recently Ryan and Briggs (2019) observed that work-life literature is expanding to incorporate samples that are more diverse and research is increasingly documenting the unique experiences of multiply marginalised individuals. Furthermore, they advocate that by focusing on various identities would mean bringing attention to unidentified needs, respecting ignored values, increasing awareness of unacknowledged conflicts and providing more supportive advice. This can provide a more explicit recognition of the social structures that contribute to challenging contexts for work-life integration and balance for those who are multiply stigmatised (Ryan & Briggs, 2019).

Concerning minority groups, investigating WLB is a continuing concern for researchers and organisations in Africa. According to Ugwu, Orjiakor, Enwereuzor, Onyedibe, and Ugwu (2016), intensifying research in Africa is crucial especially given the unique social system, the culture, and the lifestyle which is distinct from the Western form (where most work-life research originate). WLB research from the African continent include mostly studies among South African Indian women (Bharathi & Mala, 2016; Carrim, 2017; Jaga & Bagraim, 2017; Saxena & Bhatnagar, 2018; Shanmugam, 2017; Valk, Van der Velde, Van Engen, & Godbole, 2014), women working in African contexts (Ajayi, Ojo, & Mordi, 2015; Bahiru & Mengistu, 2018; Carrim, 2017; Jaga, Arabandi, Bagraim, & Mdlongwa, 2018; Mkhize & Msomi, 2016; Muasya, 2016)

or women of colour (Dillard, 2018; Hamidullah & Riccucci, 2017; Kachchaf, Ko, Hodari, & Ong, 2015). Overall, these studies provide important insights into the challenges and struggles minority women in Africa experience during their attempt to balance work and family life.

Remarkably, Jean (2007) argues that as the number of women increases in the workforce and in leadership roles, it is important to understand gender and leadership identities. Although women's leadership significantly contributes to building high-performing organisations, Bahiru and Mengistu (2018) are of the opinion that the challenges that these women in leadership positions experience with regard to balancing work and family responsibilities are inhibiting them from exerting their fullest potential towards either their career or home life. According to Beckwith, Carter, and Peters (2016), although African American women have overcome challenges such as race and gender bias in the workplace, barriers to promotion and obstacles for career growth; these women are still very much underrepresented in executive leadership positions. In addition, the study of Bhirugnath-Bhookhun and Kitada (2017) highlights that to be successful in their careers, women managers tend to live a work-led life rather than one that is work-life balanced.

On the other hand, Bobat, Mshololo, and Reuben (2012) found in their study (a study exploring women managers' WLB over the life course), that generally, women experienced the positive impact of WLB. However, they do acknowledge that there are challenges to WLB in all occupations, but that these challenges should be considered in relation to their contexts and perhaps differences according to class, age and race. They advocate that these differences need to be recognised in any search of a holistic in-depth understanding of WLB.

Given the rise of interest in South African Indian women in leadership positions (Carrim, 2017), the goal of this chapter is to illustrate how Indian women (as a minority group in South Africa) managers balance their work and home lives and how they succeed in reaching senior and top management posts in the process. The examination of the WLB of Indian Women in South Africa is relevant because despite operating in western organisational contexts these women still hold on to certain cultural values, especially related to taking care of their families

and homes. The next section focuses on the literature related to work-life balance of women managers, followed by the theoretical perspective. The methodology, analysis and discussion sections follow and the chapter ends with a conclusion and recommendations for future studies.

Literature Review

WLB research topics from the African continent cover a variety of work-family aspects, most of which are related to challenges women from diverse cultural or minority groups face.

WLB Among African Women

In terms of understanding the WLB as experienced for African women, some insightful studies are available. For example, the study of Mkhize and Msomi (2016) explains how African single mothers are confronted with systemic issues, such as under-employment, poverty, and economic marginalisation. Furthermore, the study explains how the traditional model of the family (i.e. comprising a mother, a father, siblings, and a supportive extended family) is declining, and how that makes it more difficult for these women to find the time to balance their family, work or career aspirations.

In addition, for black women professionals, negotiating gender, race, work and family in post-apartheid South Africa, remains challenging (Jaga et al., 2018). Jaga et al. (2018), found that for black professional women, the persistence of gender and racial discrimination are remaining, despite their education and skill set. Consequently, the perception of discrimination leads to preoccupation and loss of energy hindering women's performance in the family domain. Similarly, women leaders in Ethiopia, are experiencing workplace challenges such as work overload, cultural and social norms, family responsibilities, and upbringing related behaviours, which all hinder their WLB (Bahiru & Mengistu, 2018). The struggle of balancing work and family life remains prominent for Ethiopian women leaders as it seems that organisations

in their country are demanding more outcomes than the resources they provide, and demand extra hours of work (Bahiru & Mengistu, 2018).

A different WLB aspect often being examined is the use of domestic workers to alleviate the pressure in balancing work and family. In the study of Muasya (2016), it was found that due to the increase in costs of domestic workers, Kenyan women are shifting their work–family practices by only using domestic workers as-needed or only on weekends and taking their older children to day-care centres (although such facilities are not always present in Kenyan organisations).

Interestingly, Ajayi et al. (2015) found a negative relationship with the ability to balance work-family roles and those women falling in the age brackets between 30–39 and 40–49. Furthermore, the results show that the majority of the women in this study, marital status notwithstanding, across all the work categories experience a level of work-family imbalance.

Overall, these African-based studies seem to point to various contributing organisational, societal, and individual factors that inhibit the contribution that African women can make in building high performing organisations and how these women struggle with their work-family needs.

WLB Among Indian Women

Investigating WLB among Indian women working in IT has recently been on the increase. In the study of Bharati and Mala (2016), specific challenges and enhancers as determinants of WLB were identified. For those women working in IT organisations in India, personal challenges included inadequate self-attention, insufficient time spent on elders and children, feelings of depression or suffering with hypertension alongside the professional challenge of extended or odd working time. According to Shanmugam (2017) although women in India seem to have embraced the benefits and availability of employment, they are continuously caught between the growing pressure to pursue a career and the primacy of motherhood over other life roles. This reflects the notion of familial roles over professional roles for Indian women.

This is also evident in the study among Hindu mothers in South Africa (Jaga & Bagraim, 2017), where the findings suggest that despite the mothers having careers, in most instances they prioritised their family role over their work role. This is in line with the cultural norms of Indian mothers, and the importance of family and maintaining such strong relationships, (Agarwal, 2007; Carrim, 2017).

On the other hand, in the recent study of Saxena and Bhatnagar (2018), findings indicate that this same traditional society, (which at times restrains the professional growth of women through its heavily gendered expectations to take care of the family first), also acts as facilitator for these Indian women to pursue further studies which require them to stay away from their families for a substantial period of time. Motives for these women to take career breaks and pursue further rigorous educational programs are mostly related to the dissatisfaction with their work situation, their need for skill enhancement, and an urge to develop their own identity. This is in line with the study of Valk et al. (2014), who found that in their contemporary careers, Indian women wanted to fulfil their potential and have a deeper sense of meaningfulness for themselves and for others by contributing to issues that are of economic and social concern.

Rising against the underrepresentation of African women in leadership positions (Beckwith et al., 2016), the findings of Das (2006) suggests that work-life practices can have a positive impact on women's representation in management. Her study highlights the important role of context in impacting work-life practices on women's progress into management.

Even though the concept of WLB has attracted extensive research in a local, industry and national settings, there is limited evidence of minority groupings of migrants operating in Western settings, in particular (Ali, Malik, Pereira, & Ariss, 2017). The challenge of WLB is further compounded in the case of minority migrant groups such as Asian Indian women living and working in Western contexts. Asian Indian migrant workers might face additional challenges owing to their strong patriarchal cultural, economic, familial and WLB pressures as well as due to ethnic discrimination at work in Western nations. For example, Ali and Kramar (2015) describe how in Pakistan (an Asian Indian majority

country), women are being restricted to the 'inside' space of home and household. This restricts these women's access to education, employment, training opportunities and social services. Thus, when such Asian Indian women migrate to Western countries and choose to work, they experience WLB issues due to the strong expectations of their households to focus on family needs.

Furthermore, Asian Indian migrant workers have been noted to lack confidence and skills needed in several Western settings. However, Ali et al. (2017) argue that through higher education Asian Indian migrant women can acquire new skills, competence and confidence that will allow them to develop their social networks and consequently develop a better cultural understanding of their work domain. Understanding how minority groups experience WLB is significant as this has specific implications for people who face multiple disadvantages due to two or more layers of identities even more so as research suggests that culture and ethnicity influence WLB.

According to Syed (2015), many issues stemming from intersecting and multiple identities are being ignored within WLB policies. This results in many workers not fully benefitting from the governmental and organisational WLB initiatives. Furthermore, Syed (2015) argue that while Asian Indian female modesty occurs as a value in many cultures, it is particularly explicit and the influence of such cultural practices is huge on working women's lives. Particularly when Asian Indian women are working in western countries, the practice of modesty and inhibition may lead to discomfort and uneasiness of both Asian Indian women and their colleagues. For instance, the lack of socialising due to religious reasons may hinder the process of networking at the workplace, which leads to other consequences affecting performance and career development (Ali & Kramar, 2015).

Cultural Identity Work

According to Hall (1990), there are two ways of defining cultural identity. First, cultural identity is regarded as representing a shared culture that is entrenched in a shared ancestry and history that one has in

common with other people. Thus, an individual's cultural identity is a demonstration of the cultural codes and shared historical experiences that provide an individual a fixed, established and uninterrupted frame of orientation underpinned by the fluctuating partitions of one's authentic history. Second, cultural identity comprises numerous points of similarity as well as difference, reproducing what we have become due to the intervention of history. Hence, cultural identity belongs both to the past and the future. Cultural identities have a history but are also constantly transformed and are therefore fluid (Hall, 1990). A person's family, community, peers and religious institutions play a role in the development of one's cultural identity (Erikson, 1968). Thus, a person's cultural identity develops based on the beliefs, values, attitudes and norms of one's cultural group (Campbell, 2000).

Nevertheless, this socially constructed definition of cultural identity does not include the likelihood that people may identify with their cultures to different intensities, especially when these are communicated across generations or when political and socio-economic contexts change (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009) as these two aspects may affect social arrangements within homes. People also follow group customs and aspects that mirror their own prototypical personalities, thereby bolstering the group's practices, prestige and values. Thus, Indian women will adopt traditional cultural roles as long as others enforce these in their environment; the reason being that within Indian society, socio-cultural influences play a vital role and social acceptance is regarded above individual decision-making as individuals want to feel protected and recognised within society (Banerjee, 2008).

Thus, the question of 'who are we?' takes primacy over the question 'who am I?' Nevertheless, when traditional gender roles begin to change or weaken due to outside influences the result is that members of that society start to work and rework their cultural identities to acclimatise to new identities and roles, resulting in cultural identity work. Hence, cultural identity work concerns the extent to which group members from traditional cultures work and rework their identities to decrease the anxiety they feel in negating prescribed social gender norms (Carrim, 2018).

Studies conducted in India show that the number of dual-career households has increased but that men in these households still adhere to their traditional cultural values and identities. For instance, Saraff and Srivastava's (2010) study in India found that husbands were anxious when wives worked outside the home as it went against their cultural identities of being the sole breadwinners. Husbands achieved cultural identity congruence by taking unilateral decisions in their homes and not providing wives with support in household chores in their homes. In patriarchal and hierarchical societies, such as the Indian community, cultural identities of individuals are rigid (Coltrane, 2000). Men's cultural identities are centred on their roles as breadwinners, their participation in pursuits outside the home and their absence of involvement in household chores. Within such societies, men's status is higher, they are accorded more privileges compared to women, and are less involved than women in household chores and childcare (Saraff & Srivastava, 2010). Considering gender roles are rigid in such societies, men provide limited social support to wives (Carrim, 2016), and therefore wives engage in minimal cultural identity work.

Gender norms within the Indian society are traditional and men have power. In this type of cultural setting, where traditional gender roles do not enable professional women to have any bargaining power regardless of their earnings. Thus, wives cannot negotiate household chores with spouses (Schneider, 2011) as men take decisions and wives are responsible for childcare and domestic labour (Saraff & Srivastava, 2010). Hence, traditionally Indian women engage in minimal cultural identity work as they adhere to prescribed roles. For example, Rajadhyaksha and Velgach (2009) discovered in their study of 160 dual-earner couples in India that wives wanted their spouses to assist them in household chores and childcare. But wives in the study were unable to sway husbands from traditional cultural roles as these are slow to change in India as husbands hold on to traditional cultural identities.

Carrim (2017) posits that, furthermore to cultural prescripts, norms and values within the macro-environment influences the mindsets of individuals towards gender roles and the division of domestic labour and childcare. Studies reveal that men's share of domestic labour and participation vary across nations (Kan, Sullivan, & Gershuny, 2011;

Ruppanner, 2010). These differences are ascribed to varying social policies related to women's labour force participation and childcare (Cooke, 2007). Men who live in countries that have liberal social policies shoulder a larger portion of domestic duties compared to men who live in countries that have traditionalist policies. Conservative policies promote traditional gender roles and follow the model of the male being the breadwinner and the female being the caregiver (Cooke, 2007; Kan et al., 2011; Ruppanner, 2010). However, a drawback of studies such as these is that they cannot account for all variables, such as the cultures of individuals.

Next, the attention turns to the South African context related to gender roles.

The South African Context Regarding Gender Roles

During the colonial and apartheid eras, men held power in South African society and this status quo has not changed during the post-apartheid era (Carrim & Senne, 2019). In the past, whites had the most power and Africans the least, whereas Indians had somewhat more power than the latter group (Vangarajaloo, 2011). In the democratic era, Indians have less power compared to whites and Africans (Carrim, 2016). In the past, South Africa was based on a patriarchal system where men dominated in the workplace and the home and these arrangements still persist in homes where traditional cultures are practised (Carrim, 2019).

In Indian homes, men were the breadwinners as women were not allowed to enter the job market due to a lack of job opportunities during the apartheid era and they were expected to uphold the respectability of their families (Vangarajaloo, 2011). These days South African Indian women do indeed work but men remain the head of households (Carrim, 2017, 2018). This type of home arrangements has resulted in Indians strictly following traditional gender roles where sons and daughters are raised and socialised to regard appropriate gender roles as vitally important to upholding cultural beliefs and values (Vangarajaloo, 2011).

The 1994 elections ushered in a democratic era that allowed Indian women to enter the workplace, which resulted in an increase in dual-career couples (Vangarajaloo, 2011). Within the South African workplace, Indian women face discrimination and stereotyping as a result of their racial and gender identities (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). During the apartheid era, Indian women were relegated to lower-level posts, while white males dominated management posts. However, after democracy an increasing number of Indian women entered corporate South Africa and were promoted to management posts as a result of labour legislation promulgated to promote previously disadvantaged groups (one such group being Indians) in the workplace (Carrim, 2019). However, Indian women within the workplace face many challenges such as their work being challenged by white male colleagues, facing micro-aggressive behaviour from white colleagues, experiencing overt and subtle forms of racism and patriarchy (Carrim, 2018).

Within the workplace, Indian women have the skills required to reach higher-level positions but due to high levels of racism and discrimination, they face many challenges to their upward mobility (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). Patriarchy is also practised in Indian homes where parents maintain Indian cultural norms and values related to gender roles (Carrim, 2018). However, the study by Carrim (2017) indicates that some Indian women managers who live in nuclear family units have managed to negotiate egalitarian relationships with husbands as far as household chores and childcare are concerned, but that others have not been able to do so. Nevertheless, Carrim's study does not focus on whether there are differences in how younger and older Indian women managers negotiate their gender roles related to housework and childcare within their respective homes.

It is against this backdrop that this chapter aims to examine how younger and older Indian women (a minority group in South Africa) managers balance their work and home lives and how they succeed in reaching senior and top management posts in the process. With this aim in mind, the following research question emerged:

Do younger and older Indian women managers experience the same challenges in balancing their work and home lives?

Methodology

Research Participants

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of how the participants progressed towards senior and top managerial positions, a qualitative, interpretivist approach was used that allowed the participating women to share their life experiences (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Also, considering that much is not known about the WLB of Indian women within the South African context we opted for a qualitative approach. One of the researchers interviewed 13 older women, ages ranging from 35 to 60 years old and 11 younger[1] women ages ranging from 25 to 34 years old in middle, senior and top managerial positions in various South African organisations. Participants were selected using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The participants were all provided with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

With purposive sampling, the aim was to only target younger and older Indian women who occupied management positions. Snowball sampling was achieved by asking participants to recommend peers and family members and friends who would be interested in participating in the study. After interviewing 11 older participants and 8 younger participants, we realised that we had reached data saturation. We therefore interviewed two additional older and three younger participants to ensure no new data emerged from the interviews. Considering new information emerged from the data we concluded our interviews. The outcome was that 13 older and 11 younger participants were interviewed.

The participants were in managerial positions across various functional titles, ranging from operations manager to human resource director. They all completed first (three-year) degrees (Bachelor's degrees), and 18 of them had postgraduate degrees. Older participants were born and raised in the apartheid era and grew up in demarcated Indian townships where they were educated in designated Indian schools. Indian

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[1]The National Youth Commission Act of 1996 defines younger employees being between the ages of 17–35 years (South Africa, 1996).

schools were not as well equipped as white schools and had a narrow choice of subjects (Carrim, 2012). Indian townships were situated in racially segregated suburbs that were located on the outskirts of the city, where the Indian community resided and were schooled, and from where they would operate their businesses. Municipal offices, banks and cinemas were also erected in these townships so that Indians did not have any need to venture outside these areas (Bhana, 2008). Most of the contact they had with other race groups were with African house helps and gardeners in their homes or with African and white customers in their family businesses. The participants lived in environments that were socially isolated and insulated from other race groups and they were prevented from establishing lasting relationships across racial barriers due to structural segregation (Carrim, 2012).

Younger participants on the other hand lived in multiracial and multicultural communities where they had contact with people from other race groups.

For older participants, the segregation of amenities was enforced by the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, No. 49 of 1953, which aimed at reducing contact between white and black people, as beaches and public utilities were racially segregated (Marais, 2011). Older participants were educated in designated Indian universities, which were located in KwaZulu-Natal, the province with the highest Indian population in South Africa. Five attended white universities, while four studied through the University of South Africa (UNISA), a correspondence university. Younger participants attended multiracial universities. At the time of the interviews, nineteen of the women were married, one was divorced and four were single (Table 6.1).

Interview Procedure

Interviews were chosen as a method of obtaining information from participants. The reason interviews were chosen was because we wanted to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' WLB issues. This type of data would not have been adequately captured with other methods. One of the researchers conducted in-depth, semi-structured

Table 6.1 Biographical data of participants

Pseudonym	Age range	Educational level	Position	No of children/marital status
Shamila Rumi	44	Postgraduate	Business Application Manager	2-married
Saira Rahman	36	Postgraduate	Chief Financial Officer	0-single
Waheeda Banu	37	Postgraduate	Senior Public Prosecutor	4-married
Shabana Mahal	46	Postgraduate	Chief Financial Officer	2-married
Firdous Azmi	47	Postgraduate	Executive Director Operations	4-married
Zeenat Khan	42	Postgraduate	Chief Communications Officer	3-married
Bipasha Chaudry	37	Postgraduate	Operations Manager	3-married
Mahima Basu	38	Postgraduate	Legal Manager	0-single
Preity Sen	36	Undergraduate	Project Manager	0-single
Sushmita Zinta	49	Postgraduate	Human Resource Director	1-married
Rani Kapoor	36	Postgraduate	Human Resource Director	2-married
Karina Mukerjee	45	Undergraduate	Senior Marketing Manager	3-married
Shilpa Chopra	43	Postgraduate	Human Resource Director	0-divorced
Deepika Sharma	25	Undergraduate	IT manager	2-married
Anushka Sinha	33	Postgraduate	Finance Manager	2-married
Alia Kapoor	27	Undergraduate	IT Manager	1-married
Sonam Bhatt	32	Postgraduate	Engineering Manager	2-married
Kangana Dixit	30	Postgraduate	Human Resource Manager	4-married

Table 6.1 (continued)

Pseudonym	Age range	Educational level	Position	No of children/marital status
Karishma Balan	31	Postgraduate	Manager (Industrial Psychologist)	0-single
Madhuri Kolhapuri	29	Postgraduate	Marketing Manager	3-married
Vidya Dutt	32	Undergraduate	Project Manager	4-married
Malaika Fakhri	25	Undergraduate	IT Manager	2-married
Sonakshi Chawla	32	Postgraduate	Finance Manager	3-married
Nargis Tagore	26	Postgraduate	Finance Manager	2-married

interviews with the participants. Her semi-structured interview protocol probed the work-life balance of Indian women managers in the South African context. The questions invited the women to reflect on their experiences in their current situations. Examples of questions included 'Tell me, how did you manage with children, a home and your career?'; 'What are your support structures?'; 'What made you successful compared to other women managers?'.

One of the author's used probing in order to obtain clarity and to gain a deeper understanding of important aspects relating to the participants' work-life balance (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study formed a part of a larger study. The interviews were audiotaped so that it was easy to retrieve and review information and to sustain the validity of the study. Follow-up interviews were conducted with each participant in order to probe deeper and to clarify themes extracted from the data collected in the first round of interviews.

Analysis of Stories

The data obtained from the interviews were analysed in an iterative manner. Specific focus was given to understanding whether there were differences in how younger and older participants achieved work-life

balance. Such an analysis requires a close, line-by-line reading of the text compiled based on the interviews. Our analysis moved from first-order coding of statements relating to specific categories to identification of theoretical categories and dimensions and ultimately to relationships among these dimensions (Pratt, 2009). Our goal was to derive a collection of themes that had enough particularity to be grounded and enough abstraction to be conceptualised. Our discussion and analysis of the findings are anchored on the identity tensions experienced by participants. We ensured that we were thoroughly conversant with each participant's life story. In analysing the stories, we used Social Identity theory, specifically cultural identity work and analysed the data in terms of the participants' experiences in corporate South Africa.

Research Findings

Balancing Life During Early Career

The majority of older participants were raised in nuclear homes and some in joint family structures. Younger participants were raised in nuclear homes. The majority of participants indicated that their mothers were housewives, and before marriage they would not be expected to go home, cook and get involved in housework. Participants from joint family structures pointed out that there were many women in the family to handle the chores and they were expected to assist minimally. A few younger and older participants did however indicate that their mothers worked full time and they were expected to assist with cooking and housework. In the latter case, participants indicated that living in homes where moms worked was not a major challenge to participants as they were still able to focus on their careers as household chores were distributed among siblings and parents, thus decreasing workloads. Shamila, an older Business Applications Manager indicated:

> My mom was working as a teacher. She would come home after school and prepare the food and clean the kitchen. She was a super woman. Between my brother and me, we would clean up after supper. During

weekends my brother and I would clean the house on Saturday mornings and then we would be free for the rest of the weekend with just the kitchen to clean up after meals. We had a three-bedroom house so the household chores could be completed fairly quickly. Since there were only adults living in the house, we did not have a major mess as we all cleaned up after ourselves. So, I had time for my career as well.

Nargis, a younger Finance Manager was on the other hand, raised with a stay-at-home mom commented as follows:

Before I was married, my mom did everything for me. I didn't lift a finger. At that time, I had lots of free time and did not even worry about balancing work and family.

The majority of older and younger participants indicated that they flourished in their careers during their early years. Not being married and in most cases having the support of their mothers assisted them to focus and build their careers. Shilpa, an older Human Resource Director mentioned that growing up in a joint family structure gave her time to build her career:

I was very blessed growing up in a joint family. As an aspiring manager, the older females in our family took care of the household and they gave me plenty of time to build my career.

Sonakshi echoed the same sentiments:

I didn't even think about managing work commitments before marriage. I was able to handle my work responsibilities and lead a full life- going out with friends, completing my studies, doing my job. There was no rush and hurry for anything.

Balancing Lives After Marriage

The majority of older and younger participants indicated that after marriage life became taxing. Although the majority of participants lived in nuclear homes, older participants and some younger women indicated

that they could not escape the responsibilities towards their in-laws. The reasons participants provided were that the responsibility of taking care of in-laws within the Indian cultural traditions falls on daughters-in-law. Daughters-in-law are expected to take part in family functions and to take care of in-laws when the need arises. In some cases, in-laws came from large families and tend to entertain regularly and the onus falls on the daughter-in-law to be part of the social functions and to lend a helping hand. Waheeda, an older Senior Public Prosecutor indicated that life became challenging after she got married:

> After marriage I have to cook every day, not only for my husband and children but for his parents as well. Once a month during weekends there are functions as my in-laws have a large extended family. So, I have to cook and take food to these function. Life becomes hectic as I find it difficult to cope with work demands and in-law demands.

According to many younger participants, the roles of daughters-in-law in the Indian community are changing, especially for those who are pursuing careers. Younger participants indicated that they do not take on the responsibilities of taking care of their in-laws. They further indicated that their involvement in social functions is to a minimal extent. Alia, like the younger participants commented that it in families that are more traditional, that younger daughters-in-law tend to carry a major burden of the work. Alia, a younger IT manager like some of the younger participants pointed out that:

> I made it clear to my husband that I will not be able to cope with seeing to my in-laws and my own family, as I'm a career 'woman'. My friends too do not have time for taking care of in-laws- they assist occasionally when there is a wedding in the family. Even when I attend family functions I will prepare a dessert or bake a cake or make some salads but I refused to take on the majority responsibility of the function- I leave all the major work for my sisters-in-law (husband's sisters).

Older participants and some of the younger participants pointed out that their challenges within their homes increased when they started having

children. Sonam, a younger Engineering Manager indicated that her life became even more demanding after having children:

> In the Indian culture, the responsibility of taking care of the home and children falls on the mother. It was difficult for me to juggle the various roles in my life, especially after I had children. This was especially difficult for me when the children were dependent on me- I would say in at least the first six years of my children's lives I was very actively involved in nurturing them.

Overcoming Challenges

Participants were asked how they overcame some of the challenges they experienced in balancing their work and careers. We were also interested in exploring how these women advanced in their careers and reached middle, senior and top management posts. The majority of participants indicated that they used various methods of balancing their work and home lives. These ranged from obtaining the assistance of au pairs, household help, and assistance from extended family members and husbands and in a few cases, participants also outsourced cooking. Participants indicated that au pairs and household help are abundant in South Africa. Some participants indicated that they could not afford the services of au pairs and household help. In some cases, participants were reluctant to hire such assistance. The reasons provided by some participants were the high cost of such assistance and the high crime rates resulting from such arrangements. Karina, an older Senior Marketing Manager remarked on hiring au pairs and household assistance:

> I get up at 4 am every morning and prepare food for the day. My husband and children assist with the breakfast and making lunch packages for us to take to work and school. Fortunately, the school is across the street from our house. After school my children see to themselves for lunch and clean up the kitchen. My husband and I do not hire any household help as there have been quite a number of incidences in our area where they were involved in crime, to the extent that they have killed their employers just for money. We cannot therefore compromise our safety. Besides, the

kids are teenagers now, they are responsible and we have raised them to clean up after themselves. When the children were younger, we had sent them to a full-time day-care centre. We used to fetch them every evening.

Younger participants indicated that they received more assistance from husbands compared to older participants. For example, younger participants indicated that their husbands assisted them in changing diapers, cooking, washing laundry as well as mopping floors and cleaning windows. In the case of older participants, very few obtained assistance around the home from husbands. The results indicate that participants who obtained assistance from husbands in the home and with children made much more strides in moving up the career ladder than those who did not. Firdous, an older Executive Director for operations revealed how she reached a top management post:

> I was criticised by my in-laws, especially by my mother-in-law who feels that I'm not paying enough attention to my children, husband and home. Since marriage, my husband, children and I have not done a stitch of housework or cooking. I have outsourced these chores as we don't have the time to focus on the house.

Madhuri, a younger Marketing Manager obtained the assistance of her husband:

> My husband and I take turns in cooking, taking care of the children and if need be the housework. We have a full-time house help and au pair. When the au pair and house help are not around, he even changes the baby's diapers. My husband is also a great cook and when I'm studying, he takes over the responsibility of childcare and cooking. In this way I can focus on my job and studies without any worries.

Rani, an older Human Resource Director says she got ahead in her career through having good time management:

> In my family, I would never outsource the cooking. I usually cook in the weekend for the entire week and freeze the food. In the mornings, I ensure I pack my children's lunch for school. The au pair warms the meal

that I had cooked for the children during the afternoons. In the evenings, I warm food for supper for my family which gives me some bonding time with my children.

Anushka, a younger Finance Manager revealed how she got ahead in her career and achieved work-life balance:

I got the assistance of my aunts and even my mother. I arranged for my children to be fetched from school, fed and taken care of by my aunt. When my aunt is ill, then my mom and sometimes my mother-in-law takes care of the children. In the evenings, my husband and I are very busy with our careers and we leave the children to take care of their own homework. I must say this type of arrangement has made my children become very independent and they really do well at school.

Unmarried participants indicated that they focused on their work and for them it was much easier to achieve work-life balance, as they were only responsible for their own needs. Saira, an older Chief Financial Officer mentioned that she had reached her position quickly as she had a lot of time on her hands:

All I do is focus on my career, sleep till late over the weekends and visit my friends. Being single has an added advantage as I can work till late at the office and I have time to rest over the weekends as well. It helps when you are building your career.

Married participants were asked if they felt guilty for not being able to pay more attention to their homes and children. In the majority of cases, both younger and older participants indicated that from a young age they were more inclined towards their studies and working and becoming wives and mothers was not their primary aim in life. A few participants with a more traditional outlook indicated that they did indeed feel guilty for not spending more time at home with their children and families. Malaika, a younger an IT manager who was born and raised in a traditional family commented:

I grew up in a home where my mom was always at home and we would come home from school and get hot food. We would eat elaborate meals every day. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide the same attention for my children as I got when I was a child and I feel so sorry for my kids.

Sushmita, an older Human Resource Director was not inclined towards housework and childcare:

The reason I only have one child is that I was never one for housework and taking care of children. I came from an extended family setup and my mother and aunts did everything for me. When I got married, I found it difficult to cook and clean. I got my aunt to cook for me and to take care of my home while I pursued my career. My aunt raised my daughter while I focused on my career.

Workplace Support

Younger and older participants indicated that they realised during their upward career mobility that organisations do not want to promote women who are not working till late in the evenings and placing their families ahead of their careers. Organisations according to the participants focus on productivity and there are no concessions for those who want to achieve work-life balance. Shabana, an older Chief Financial Officer commented as follows:

When you give birth to your first child, the males raise their eyebrows. When you have your second child, they do not see you as management material as they feel you will be more focused on your family. Women find it difficult to achieve a balance between their personal lives and their professional lives. They are so afraid of not being promoted that they cut their maternity leaves short just so that they can be back at work and not be negatively impacted.

Participants indicated that maternity, paternity and family responsibility leave is not enough to achieve work-life balance. Vidya, a younger Project

Manager finds limited support from her organisation in achieving work-life balance:

> I find that although we have all these pieces of legislation to assist us in achieving some balance between our work and personal lives, it's just not enough. My husband and I are so busy building our careers that we cannot even utilise our 'special' leave days adequately. So, our companies try very hard but the culture of work is such that one cannot afford to be away from the office.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations for Future Research

The current chapter focuses on the experiences of younger and older women managers achieving work-life balance in their careers and how they engage in cultural identity work. The results of the study indicate that younger women managers are better able to achieve work-life balance and engage in lower levels of cultural identity work compared to their older counterparts. One of the major factors that resulted in younger participants achieving work-life balance and engaging in lower levels of identity work was due to the changing social roles within the Indian community. With more women from traditional societies entering the workforce and being exposed to western cultural values, younger males and females are also adopting egalitarian values within such societies, an observation which is also highlighted by Carrim (2017) and Vangarajaloo (2011). Older participants are however more steeped in patriarchal relationships with husbands as their generational values are based on traditional norms as indicated in the current study (Adisa, Abdulraheem, & Isiaka, 2019). The result is that more cultural identity work on the part of older participants in balancing their work and home lives occurs. Egalitarian roles within homes for the majority of participants has resulted in women having more time to pursue their careers and studies as indicated in the current study.

Furthermore, the results of the study indicate that family size did not make a difference to how participants balanced work-family life

and engaged in identity work. This finding is in contrast to the study conducted by Ajayi et al. (2015) based on women in Nigerian banks where the authors concluded that those who had bigger families found it more difficult to balance their work and home lives.

Also, in the majority of cases participants did not feel guilty nor did they work and rework their cultural identities to reach a sense of coherence for not being able to fulfil their gender roles within their respective homes. This stemmed from their inclination from a tender age in becoming successful in their studies and careers and not paying much attention to household chores even when growing up. This type of mindset manifested in their marriages, where they manifested behaviour which was not prototypical of women who are raised and socialised in traditional homes and communities. This finding is in contrast to the outcome of Bahiru and Mengistu's (2018) study where they found that women leaders in Ethiopia who come from traditional home settings feel guilty for not being able to fulfil their duties towards their families.

Unlike in other western countries where Indian women take time off to take care of their young children (Reitz, Phan, & Banerjee, 2015) within the South African context, the participants did not have to engage in such arrangements. The reason being that household assistance in the form of au pairs and domestic labour are in abundance. Where such assistance was not sought, various strategies such as day-care centre help, extended family member assistance and husbands assisting women with household chores and childcare were opted for by participants. Akhtar (2014) indicates that Indian women within western countries do not make use of formal childcare and this results in them leaving work in order to take care of their families.

Organisational expectations have however not changed over the years. Women are still expected to work longer hours and to prove themselves. The results of this study indicate that not enough is done by the workplaces to ensure that women who are mothers can achieve high productivity levels by having flexible work arrangements. Burke (2009) opines that women would prefer working shorter hours so that they can achieve some level of work-life balance. The results of the current study further indicate that there are not enough policies within organisations in assisting women in achieving work-life balance. In instances where

participants are unable to negate their cultural duties towards their families, such arrangements make it difficult to fulfil their traditional roles. The result is a conflict between their organisational and cultural commitments leading to greater levels of negotiating and renegotiating their cultural identities.

In conclusion, if women managers are to make a significant contribution to their careers then government, the family, the workplace and women themselves have to actively engage in changing their approach in assisting working women to achieve work-life balance. Government and workplaces can co-create even more policies to enable women greater flexibility and shorter working hours in the workplace without compromising their future career prospects. Organisations can obtain the input of women employees in structuring policies geared towards them achieving a more balanced work-life arrangement.

Traditional societies should also raise their sons with more egalitarian values as more women are entering the workforce. Society can make arrangement within communities to establish affordable day-care centres where working mothers can leave their children and, in this way, also create jobs for unemployed women in the community.

Women themselves can become more assertive and insist that husbands and sons assist in household chores. Women managers can also employ strategies in their homes to decrease their workloads by investing in smart devices.

Future research can focus on the attitudes of younger and older Indian males related to household chores and childcare. Future research can also focus on the use of digital technology and how this aspect can assist women in achieving work-life balance. Future research can focus on the role of government in developing economies in assisting women to achieve work-life balance.

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7

The Nexus Between Work-Life Balance and Gender Role in Egypt

Ghada El-Kot, Mike Leat, and Sarah Fahmy

Introduction

The Egyptian government's 2030 Vision and Sustainable Development Strategy aims to build a just society emphasises the country's need for increased women's empowerment and their active participation in all aspects of national work. The strategy is comprised of four pillars: women's political empowerment and leadership; women's economic empowerment; women's social empowerment; and women's protection

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(National Council for Women, 2017). This plan indicates the government's newfound focus on women's education and work opportunities and the intention is to increase rates of female participation in the workforce to reach 35% by 2030 (National Council for Women, 2017). Achieving this objective would have significant beneficial effects for Egypt's sustainable economic development and in the plan there is reference (p. 35) to estimate that raising female rates of engagement in the workforce to that of men would yield an increase in GDP of 34%.

The 2030 Strategic Plan is consistent with the aims of the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development as expressed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) "*to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value*" and "*to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*" (ILO, 2018, p. 5). To achieve the UN agenda, it is vital to guarantee the quality of jobs for women; reduce gender stereotypes and discrimination in both the educational systems and the workplace; and redistribute the family responsibilities between men and women in the society (ILO, 2018).

Currently; Egypt ranks low in gender equity compared to other countries worldwide on a range of indices; for example, the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2020, Gender Gap Index (WEF, 2020) ranks Egypt at 134 out of 153 countries worldwide and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Gender Development Index 2019 (UNDP, 2019); which measures gender gaps in human development achievements by accounting for disparities between women and men in three basic dimensions of human development—health, knowledge and living standards, ranks Egypt in the lowest group. As we discuss later, Egypt is a patriarchal society and women are expected to prioritise their family and caring roles and achieving the circumstances for sustainable development is likely to require a transformation of Egyptian work-life culture.

In order for the Egyptian Government to achieve the 2030 strategic plan for sustainable development, more women need to be encouraged and able to participate in the paid for work labour market and in order to enable them to do this; it is important that they are able to achieve Work-Life Balance (WLB) including their family responsibilities. Effective WLB programmes should enable more women to find appropriate

work opportunities, they will not need to compromise their pursuit of a career for their family life and children and they will achieve greater economic empowerment and financial independence and be able to contribute more effectively to society.

It is also necessary to focus on vocally empowering women from a young age in order to facilitate their sense of agency, self-authorship and vocal efficacy necessary for taking their place in the labour market and for economic and political empowerment. One of the pillars of the 2030 Strategic Plan is women's political empowerment and both voice and participation in the formal economy (paid workforce) should contribute to this. The more women are able to secure their own economic empowerment and financial independence, the more likely they are to be able to run for political office.

This chapter highlights the critical need to address work-life balance issues for women in Egypt in order to facilitate the achievement of a sustainable economy and the economic and social empowerment of women in a country where gender roles are clearly differentiated, there is a gendered imbalance of power, and gender segregation and discrimination exists in society and in the workplace. The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, we highlight elements of the social, religious, cultural, legal, economic, labour market and educational context in Egypt in order to understand current gender roles and identify issues that need to be addressed. In the second part, we examine literature on WLB in order to establish determinants, the potential benefits for organisations and individuals, the obstacles to achievement, the consequences of not doing so and how WLB for women may be enhanced. In the third part, we present our conclusions on gender roles and WLB for women in Egypt. We outline the nature of the prescribed gender roles and then focus on the initiatives that seem appropriate to enabling a more satisfactory WLB for women and the benefits that may accrue. In this final part, we also comment on the need for research to inform future policies and initiatives. There is unfortunately very little published evidence available on the issues of gender roles, WLB and management approaches in Egyptian organisations, and this has inevitably limited our ability to address some of the issues.

Egyptian National Context

Work, family and life domains in Egypt, as in any country, exist and operate within an environment that can be subdivided into a number of areas that influence the role expectations and demands, the stereotypes, and the opportunities for individuals in the society, at work, in their families and their other life domains. Research on gender, work and WLB in the Middle East (ME) region has variously identified the significance of religious, patriarchal, socio-cultural, socio-economic, demographic, institutional, labour market and legal elements of national contexts (Karam & Afiouni, 2014; Karam, Afiouni, & Nasr, 2013; Metcalfe, 2008; Mehdizadeh, 2011; Offenhauer, 2005; Sidani & Thornberry, 2009). In the following sections, we discuss the relevance of these elements of the environment for women and work and for their WLB in Egypt. We start with the elements of that context that arguably have the greatest influence in determining prescribed gender roles.

Determinants of Gender Role

Religion and culture are intertwined in Egyptian society. The patriarchal system that enforces gender-based discrimination has, due to centuries of stereotypical media representation, been associated with Islam, the predominate religion in Egypt (El- Safty, 2004). Within Islam, women have significant legal rights for money and inheritance, equal education opportunities in comparison with men, and they are encouraged to work. There are no constraints against women holding positions of power, and leadership within the workforce; however, patriarchal interpretations of Islam, as noted by Karam and Afiouni (2014) are what create limitation and prohibits choice for women. As Sidani and Thornberry (2009) suggest, Islam has been used by patriarchal society to legitimise discrimination against women. Women are assumed to be the "weaker sex" and thus are socialised to be homemakers, and mothers first. They are assumed to be incapable of handing money or being the primary breadwinners (El-Safty, 2004). These patriarchal binaries, exasperated in low income and impoverished communities, debilitate

women's advancement, desire to engage in the workforce, and ability to speak up. Inadequate representation of women in politics, economics and the workforce result in economic and educational inequalities that reduce women's bargaining power in their private and public lives (OECD, 2018).

Patriarchal societal expectations assert that men are the head of the household and must be respected and prioritised in economic, political and private matters. Metcalfe (2008) notes that the QURAN is explicit in identifying the different but complementary roles of men and women and this is reflected in a recurring theme that men and women have equal but different identities. Metcalfe (2008) also notes the ongoing debate among feminist and Islamic scholars about the empowering and disempowering effects of the Islamic philosophy for women. Burke and El-Kot (2011) confirmed that in Egypt there are definitive and separate gender roles, work being perceived as a male activity undertaken in order to perform his role as the breadwinner, whereas women's responsibility is primarily for the home and the family.

There is no doubt that Islam, as the dominant religion in Egypt, has a strong influence on day-to-day lives and the family domain. It is also clear that it has implications for work-related values, the expectations of employees, the behaviour and approach of management (Leat and El-Kot, 2008) and by implication on the achievement of WLB. El-Kot and Burke (2014) argue that the "Islamic Work Ethic" (IWE) emphasises and encourages hard work, engagement in economic activity and is perceived as an obligation. It stresses honesty and justice, an equitable and fair distribution of wealth in society, and it encourages the acquisition of skills and technology. The IWE also emphasises cooperation in work and consultation, the latter being seen as a way of overcoming obstacles or avoiding mistakes. Social relations are important at work to create healthy relationships with both equals and superiors.

It is difficult to separate religion and culture and as Tayeb (1997) suggested religion is one of the many factors that can contribute to the formation of national culture. Leat and El-Kot (2007) in their review of the Egyptian cultural and religious context noted that Arab countries demonstrated moderate masculinity according to Hofstede (1980). However, he concluded that the segregated nature of the labour market

and low participation rates of women commonly associated with masculine values was more a product of religion in the Arab Middle East than of Masculine values. Mousa (2018) also notes that in Egyptian society the Masculinity stems to a certain extent from Islamic religious values. Hofstede also characterised Arab countries as demonstrating a preference towards the feminine continuum which focuses on relationships, working conditions and a "work to live" culture.

The GLOBE study (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004) identified a Middle Eastern cluster which showed high scores on in-group collectivism with low scores on future orientation, gender egalitarianism and uncertainty avoidance. This combination reflects societies that are fatalistic, believing in the will of Allah (God), and in which the family forms insurance against the future and male members of society are looked to for protection and support.

Lyness and Judiesch (2014) undertook a cross-national study of gender egalitarianism and its effect upon self-rating of WLB. Egypt was one of the countries included in the study and along with others in the Middle East was categorised as a low gender egalitarian society. In this context, gender egalitarianism is the dimension of national culture that reflects the degree of differentiation in the prescribed gender roles for men and women and which shapes behaviours, stereotypes of male and female attributes and men and women's abilities to achieve WLB. In low gender-egalitarian cultures, men are expected to prioritise work over family whereas women are expected to do the opposite. For men, high involvement with work and long work hours are congruent with their responsibilities as breadwinners, and it is argued that it is easier for men to balance the requirements of their work and family roles. Women in low egalitarian cultures are expected to focus on family responsibilities and not work and the achievement of WLB therefore becomes more difficult.

Khedr (2017) confirmed the importance of cultural values and norms embedded in Egyptian society as contextual explanations for the perceptions of both genders and for their extension into definitive and separate work roles. Women are expected to marry early, have children early, not work after marriage, respect their husband as the breadwinner and authority in the family. Therefore, women who do not marry do not have

children and pursue a career and women who do marry have children, work and pursue a career are not conforming to the stereotype. Because of the prescribed gender roles, workplaces tend to be male dominated, institutionally male and employers and managers may find it difficult to think in terms of, and apply, gender equal policies and to accommodate the needs of women in regard to fulfilling and managing their family and childcare responsibilities and achieving a satisfactory WLB. The Egyptian 2030 Vision and Sustainable Development Strategy recognises the importance of social culture and norms as limiting influences on women's participation and acknowledges the need to change them.

Demographic Context

Population

According to the official data source Egypt in Figures (March 2020); at the beginning of 2020 the total population of Egypt was 99.85 million. The annual growth rate has averaged 2% over the last 20 years and fertility rates have remained steady between 3.0 and 3.5 since 2000. Of the total population 48.5% were female and 51.5% male. Egypt has a young and rapidly growing population, 51.5% are in the age group 0–24 years and of these 34% are in the 0–14-year category whereas the proportion over 64-year olds is 4.6%. This translates into a high age dependency ratio of 63% (young, 0–14, and old, 65 and over, as the proportion of total aged 15–64). This dependency on a relatively small proportion of the population of working age (61.4%) is exacerbated by the low female labour participation rates.

Egyptian Labour Market and Education

Labour Market

Empowering women and integrating them as active participants in the economy is essential to promoting economic growth in Egypt. We noted

earlier the government's intentions regarding raising female participation rates. Data for 2019 (World Bank 2020) indicates that while there has been relative stability in the labour force participation rates since 2000, the rate for women in the 15–64 age group has increased from 21.6% in 2000 to 23.8% in 2019. However, there are significant gender differentials, these have narrowed but not significantly, the 15–64 female participation rate at 23.8% is less than a third that for males of 74.7%. For the 15–24 age group, the participation rates for females and males were 18.9 and 38.6%, respectively, in 2019. Since 2000, the gender differential for the 15–64 age group has narrowed from 54.3 to 51% and in the 15–24 age group the differential has narrowed from 24.5 to 19.7%, largely due to a decline in the male participation rate from 43.6 to 38.6%. Unemployment in 2019 was high among the young aged 15–24 at 31.1%, comprised of 41% for females and 26.4% for males.

The low female participation rates would appear to be consistent with and a product of religious and cultural influences on gender roles and the appropriateness of work Mehdizadeh (2011) and Hofstede (1980). Though Offenhauer (2005) contrasts low female participation rates in oil-rich economies in MENA countries with those in some other Muslim states that were pursuing a development strategy based on labour-intensive industrial production and suggests an economies development strategy also plays a role.

The sectoral distribution of those in employment in Egypt also varies by gender. The majority of female employment is in agriculture (35.5%) and the service sector (57.5%) and only a small percentage (7%) work in industry. Male employment respectively is 20.8 and 46.2% with 20.8% in industry (World Bank 2020).

Karam and Afiouni (2014) noted that labour markets in the ME region tend to demonstrate both horizontal and vertical segregation on the basis of gender. Women work in particular sectors that are deemed appropriate in the context of stereotypical male and female traits, which are themselves a product of cultural and religious contexts, as Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou (Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou 2017) asserted that men and women are concentrated in different occupations that ascribe to their gender. Metcalfe (2008) suggests that the segregation within the labour market is often interpreted as respecting the

different but not lesser skills and characteristics of women. Traditionally, women work in the public sector (e.g. health, education and social care), and they tend to be occupied in lower-level roles with leadership positions normally reserved for men. Barsoum (2016) has noted that in Egypt while the public service is attractive to both genders, women are attracted by the more family-friendly working conditions. Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou (2017, p. 208) noted that "in the Arab context women are blocked from leadership roles because of the predominant view that leadership is a male's quality".

Education

Egypt has made considerable progress in implementing equal opportunities for girls and boys in the public educational system and this has had a positive impact on enrolment and literacy rates. Enrolment rates in 2017 for girls and boys were almost equal at all levels of education with girls just marginally higher for all levels, and completion rates at primary level being equal at 95% with a greater percentage of girls completing the lower secondary stage, 87.5% compared with 81.7% for boys at the same level (UNESCO, 2020; WEF, 2020).

In 2018, Egypt's Ministry of Local Development announced its intention to eliminate illiteracy in Egypt in the next three years. The adult (15 plus) literacy rates show a significant gender differential and in 2017 the rate for males was 76.5% but only 65.5% for women. Nevertheless, at the lower age groups the improvements in participation are demonstrating improved literacy outcomes and significant reduction of the gender differentials. The literacy rates for the 15–24 age group in 2017 were 89.5% for boys and 87% for girls compared with rates in 2006 of 88 and 82% respectively up from 1986 when the rates were 71 and 54% (UNESCO, 2020).

Egypt is focusing on providing an inclusive and quality education for anyone who seeks it, regardless of gender. The reform focuses on primary and secondary schooling and the focus is to be on teaching real-world knowledge and self-understanding and the development of important life skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving abilities

and self-reflection. The reforms address some of the criticisms made of the educational systems in Patriarchal and Islamic societies (Sidani & Thornberry, 2009), acknowledged the need to ensure that the knowledge and skills required in the labour market are provided by the education system and are a reflection of the belief that investing in women's education will promote greater participation of women in the labour force and thereby rapid development in Egypt (USAID, 2020). Khedr (2017) noted that in Egypt education is a strong determinant of labour force participation by women. However, there is also evidence of high levels of female educational attainment being associated with unemployment, which may reflect a lack of congruence between expectations and job opportunities available, inappropriate guidance in what is still a segregated labour market, and the difficulties of achieving satisfactory WLB. It may be as Kemp and Madsen (2014) suggested for Oman that colleges and universities should develop partnerships and programmes which facilitate the exposure of women to workplaces and the working environment and the potential challenges and opportunities in various types of companies and outside the public sector.

Legal Framework in Egypt

The legal framework in any country is likely to play an important role in either supporting or undermining women's access to and participation in employment, their treatment in employment and their ability to manage their respective work and family responsibilities and achieve a satisfactory WLB. Where there is a supportive legal framework effort needs to be exerted in order to ensure that the law is applied otherwise it will not be effective.

The Egyptian labour law No. 12 of 2003 gives women the right to work and prohibits discrimination in wages on the basis of gender but there is no provision for equal pay for work of equal value. The Labour law also prohibits employers from dismissing a woman because of her pregnancy and also offers women up to 90 days of paid maternity leave in the private sector and 120 days of paid maternity leave in the public sector. However, the Labour Code does not apply to domestic workers

or to women in agriculture, a sector in which some 35% of women in employment are occupied. Ministerial decrees also restrict women from working in certain occupations, including construction and mining, some types of night work, and roles deemed morally inappropriate.

The 2014 Constitution (Egyptian Constitution, 2014) includes more than 20 articles addressing the rights of women in order to ensure; equal opportunities and prevent discrimination, protection against all forms of violence, and women's empowerment. Article 11 commits the State to ensuring that women are able to reconcile work and family obligations. There are paid Maternity leave provisions, 90 days paid leave for each of up to 3 children for women working in the private sector providing that the women have worked for the employer for more than 10 months. Social security funds 75% of the payments with additional amounts paid by the employer. A woman preserves all her rights and benefits upon return to workplace from maternity leave. Moreover, women employed in establishments with more than 50 employees are entitled to up to two years of unpaid childbearing leave per child. Women are also entitled to two half-hour nursing breaks per day, or alternatively one combined an hour-long break, for 24 months after the date of birth of each child. For establishments employing 100 employees or more, the employer is obliged to provide for an in-house nursery, or alternatively, to take charge of placing employee's children (until the age of schooling is reached) in adequate nurseries. Some of these provisions are enhanced for women working in the Public sector. The Law does not provide provisions for paternity leave and does not mandate employers to allow employees with dependents to care for to work flexible hours.

OECD (2017) noted that there are various ways in which employers may frustrate the intentions of the legal provisions, this may, for example, be due to the costs of the maternity or childcare provisions or because of ingrained stereotypes and organisational cultures and the OECD report asserts this is often not applied. The OECD (2018) reported also encourages the government to adopt a number of ILO conventions in the field of employment and social security that would assist the process of economic empowerment of women.

We conclude that there are a number of issues arising from this contextual analysis which need to be addressed in order to further the opportunity for women to achieve WLB and participate in the labour force. It is clear that Egypt is a patriarchal, low egalitarian society with definitive and separate gender roles. It is a male-dominated society with an imbalance of power and women are expected to give priority to their family responsibilities. Egypt has a rapidly growing and young population with high age dependency ratios, low female labour force participation rates and large gender-based inequalities. The labour market is segregated both horizontally and vertically. In combination, these place critical importance on increasing female labour force participation but also make it difficult to do so.

Equality has been largely achieved in terms of student enrolment and completion rates in the public education system, but the curriculum needs to be refocused in order to prepare students, and particularly to empower women, for the world of work. The legal framework offers some protections to women in terms of discrimination and harassment, and some provisions facilitating women continuing to work after childbirth; however, there are apparent issues relating to implementation and enforcement, a large percentage of the female labour force would appear to not be covered by the legislation and there is room for further initiatives to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value and to mandate organisations to implement flexibilities to support women in work.

WLB—The Concept

Put very simply WLB refers to the "balance between work and the rest of life" (Guest 2002, p. 263). Guest also referred to it as the ability to allow "sufficient time to meet commitments at both work and home". Lyness and Judiesch (2014) used a measure which defines WLB as the balance between work priorities and personal life so that neither is neglected. Initially, the focus was work and the family or work and home but, more recently there has been recognition that individuals have other non-work roles and responsibilities and that as indicated by Lyness and Judiesch the individuals' personal life needs to be incorporated. WLB is the more

inclusive term which encompasses work, family and personal roles and responsibilities. However, it must be recognised that the terms WLB and Work-Family Balance (WFB) are used interchangeably, in this chapter we use the term WLB.

WLB has also been defined in terms of an absence of conflict; Clark (2000, p. 751) defining it as "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict". This definition also introduces the notion that people occupy multiple roles and that the demands of and in one may conflict with those in another. Emslie and Hunt (2009) point out that much of the research in the field has focused on role conflict and role strain. The most common forms of conflict researched have been family-work and work-family (see the definitions of Guest and Clark above). Adame, Caplliure, and Miquel (2016) note while there is potential for conflict for both genders, the potential for work-family/family-work conflicts are greater for women than men because of the greater number of roles they are expected to perform, wife, mother, daughter and the majority of the research has focused on women and their experiences in trying to balance work and family roles and responsibilities.

Another concept commonly used in the literature is that of domains, with, for example, work being one domain and family another. Eshak et al. (2018) point out that work-family conflict refers to the expectations and demands associated with one domain affecting the other and the term conflict implying that the two domains compete for a person's time and energy in an inverse relationship, so that, for example, work-family conflict arises where fulfilling the demands of the work domain interferes with family life and the opportunities to fulfil obligations as parent or spouse.

In this context, Clark (2000) developed a border theory in which domains are characterised as having borders which can be strong or weak and which people cross as they move between domains, for example, work and family. It is also suggested that domains may have different cultures and values. Emslie and Hunt (2009) note that this theory while useful for conceptualising work-life balance is largely gender blind and in this respect is like many contemporary studies of work-life balance that either ignore gender or take it for granted. Greenhaus et al. (2003,

p. 513) viewed "work-family balance as a matter of degree, a continuum anchored at one end by extensive imbalance in favour of a particular role (e.g. family) through some relatively balanced state to extensive imbalance in favour of the other role (e.g. work) as the other anchor point".

Greenhaus and Allen (2011) noted three common conceptualisations of work-family balance which are equally appropriate for WLB and these were: (1) the absence of work-family conflict, (2) high involvement across multiple roles and (3) high effectiveness and satisfaction across multiple roles. The authors developed an encompassing and overall conceptualisation of WFB as "an overall appraisal of the extent to which individuals' effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are consistent with their life values at a given point in time" Greenhaus and Allen (2011, p. 174). The overall appraisal approach focusses on assessing the general feelings of the individual in balancing between work issues and life/family issues, but also alludes to objective measures of effectiveness.

Greenhaus and Allen's (2011) definition encompasses another of the debates that has been ongoing concerning whether WLB is a subjective and psychological construct (satisfaction and perceived effectiveness and fulfilment) and/or whether it is also a social construct with balance shaped by contextual factors and perhaps particularly the socio-cultural context, and for the purposes of this chapter in particular the gendered nature of social and family roles and the labour market. Individual perceptions of balance take place within the framework of gendered work, social and family role expectations, demands and power relationships, educational and labour market opportunities and experiences, and a legislative context.

Another issue that has been the subject of debate relates to the measurement of WLB or Imbalance. A distinction can be drawn between objective and subjective indicators or measures of balance. Guest (2002) identified a number of possible objective indicators including working hours, the amount of free time available to individuals, the allocation of family roles, behaviour and performance at work and at home, and also assessments of impact on others, again both at work and home. Subjective indicators include individual perceptions of balance between work, home, and life, perceptions of spillover and interference one with the

other, assessments of job, career and life satisfaction, mental and physical health and wellbeing and stress.

As noted, the majority of research has been on work-family conflict/balance and another useful development by Carlson et al. (2000) has been the development of a measure encompassing different forms or dimensions of conflict or balance. These have been popular among researchers as a means of analysing and measuring degrees and types of conflict. In particular, three forms have been identified: these being time, strain and behaviour. Time-based imbalance or conflict occurs when the time requirements of one role make it more difficult to participate in the other. Strain-based imbalance refers to the extent to which stress may result from the person's attempts to reconcile the demands of the various roles, and behaviour-based imbalance is where there is an incompatibility between the behavioural expectations and demands in the respective roles.

Determinants, Consequences, Opportunities, Cost and Benefits

Interest in WLB is primarily the product of the impact it can have on personal, organisational, and national, social and economic outcomes. Research initially focused on personal outcomes and performance but more recently the impact on organisational performance has become more widely researched and acknowledged. In terms of national social and economic outcomes, the focus of this chapter is on the part that WLB can have in facilitating the empowerment of women, female participation in the labour force, and thereby, for the economic development and sustainability of the nation. We noted in the introduction the importance the Egyptian government has placed on these national outcomes. In the remainder of this section, we focus on WLB for both individuals and organisations.

WLB and the Individual

Determinants

Guest's (2002) model of the Determinants, Nature and Consequences of WLB included a number of individual factors that were thought might influence an individual's WLB. These include work orientation and commitment to work or life outside work, personality, energy, personal control, gender, age and career stage. Additionally, the individuals' personal family and home life arrangements and demands will have a bearing on WLB and this includes the presence of children and extent and nature of the help and support available.

Emslie and Hunt (2009) reviewed studies on gender and levels of WLB and found the results mixed, but also concluded that although the presence of children in the family was associated with a lack of WLB for both genders the effects were longer lasting for women. Lyness and Judiesch (2014) concluded that men and women tend to report similar levels of WLB, but in low egalitarian countries (Egypt) women did report lower levels of WLB. Burke and El-Kot (2011) found among a sample of Egyptian managers and professionals that women did report higher levels of work-family behaviour-based conflict.

Burke and El-Kot (2010) in their study of Egyptian managers found weak relationships between personal characteristics and Work-Family Conflict (WFC) but stable personality characteristics such as the need for achievement and workaholic job behaviours both increased levels of WFC. In their study of Egyptian Women; El-Kot et al. (2019) found a number of personal demographic characteristics had significant relationships with higher levels of work-family conflict, and these included educational attainment level, more and longer career breaks, working full time, and women at higher organisational levels. Family-Work Conflict (FWC) was positively associated with organisational tenure and educational attainment level. Kargwell (2008); Uppalury and Bhaskar (2014); Metcalfe (2007) and Abalkhail (2019) have identified the significance of the extended family, family support and networks in facilitating childcare and enabling women to pursue careers and to cope with the traditional role demands of Arab Middle Eastern (AME) societies and achieve WLB.

Consequences

The consequences of WLB imbalance for the individuals concerned, and this applies to both genders, can be many in terms of both psychological and work well-being, work outcomes (Lyness and Judiesch, 2014) and performance (Adame-Sánchez, González-Cruz, & Martínez-Fuentes, 2016) who note that these may include: family and life satisfaction, stress, depression, and excessive alcohol consumption. Eshak et al. (2018) noted a positive relationship between WL conflict and poor health and Uppalury and Bhaskar (2014) noted the high emotional costs when careers are not compatible with family and child-rearing and identifies working mothers' feelings of guilt in relationship to the performance of their family responsibilities. Adame et al. (2016) noted research has found support for WLB having implications for personal stress, marital satisfaction, healthier family relationships, higher self-esteem and greater career satisfaction. Uppalury and Bhaskar (2014) also cite research confirming that WLB or imbalance can result in decisions to work or not to work, or to work part time or more flexibly, or to work in a less demanding role. Adame-Sánchez et al. (2016) and Mousa (2018) referred to research confirming WLB can also have significant consequences for an individual's job satisfaction, commitment, intention to remain in the organisation and their performance in their work role. Burke and El-Kot (2010) found that WFC generally had negative relationships with indicators of psychological wellbeing and work outcomes, the latter including job and career satisfaction, job stress and intent to quit.

Coping Strategies and Opportunities

Much of the work that has addressed the coping strategies adopted by women in AME countries has focused on career and career success. However, it is likely that these strategies are also relevant to dealing with Work-Family (WF) and Work-Life (WL) conflict. Central to the issue of individual coping strategies is the capacity for exercising individual choice and agency, Chandra (2012) argued that WLB is a choice and it

is a personal responsibility to manage the fulfilment of personal, family and work roles. Abalkhail (2019) identified the significant role that self-empowerment and resistance might play as strategies for women in enabling their career advancement in an AME (including Egypt) context where the institutionally mandated stereotype is that woman will give primacy to the role of wife and mother and give up work after marriage. Women who do not conform to this stereotype, who do not marry and have children, or who do but also work and pursue a career are to some extent exercising their agency and modifying their role. They are exercising choice and taking control, what Abalkhail (2019) referred to as self-empowerment, and central to this is the ability to affirm their own voice and power.

Vocal empowerment can be defined as the belief that what you say is worthwhile, your voice belongs to you, and that you have the right for self-authorship (Osnes and Hackett, 2017) and they argued that it is essential for young women's education. Fahmy (2019) reporting on studies with young women in Egypt argues that instilling this sense of empowerment in women from a young age, increases their likelihood of effectively participating in the workforce when they're older, becoming successful women in leading managerial and professional positions, and capable of advocating for their WLB and actively pursuing WLB initiatives. In male-dominated societies such as Egypt achieving WLB may depend upon women developing and exercising this self-empowerment, the ability to exercise their agency and to use their voice to advocate for their WLB and appropriate WLB initiatives. Karam et al. (2013) and Tlaiss (2015) also noted that individuals can and do through their individual choices and actions conform to and fulfil, moderate or reject the role demands and responsibilities that are mandated by the institutional environment.

Uppalury and Bhaskar (2014) caution that cultures differ in the importance given to individuals and groups and thereby to the importance given to individual choice and agency and as noted in the section on the cultural context in Egypt Arab Middle Eastern cultures tend to focus more on the importance of the family and collectivism. D'Enbeau, Villamil, and Helens-Hart (2015) contrast the prescribed role of women in the Middle East with those in the West, which they suggest are

informed by assumptions favouring individual rights, personal responsibility and gender equality. Uppalury (2014) noted research that the pressures and stresses associated with climbing the career ladder, work-life conflict and organisational insensitivity to their problems has led to many women opting out and taking less demanding positions. Other coping strategies include stress relief, time management and the development and use of support networks.

WLB and the Organisation

Determinants

We need to bear in mind that organisations work within national contexts and cultures and as we have already noted these will influence employer attitudes, organisational culture, and the policies and practices pursued as well as employee values, expectations and role requirements. The attitudes, policies and practices of the organisation will impact the individual's ability to manage the work and non-work domains and limit the potential for conflict between their respective demands and achieve WLB.

In his model, Guest (2002) identified two sets of organisational factors as determinants of WLB, the demands and culture of work. Demands he identifies as encompassing working hours, and the intensity of work, and culture and climate he suggests encompass issues of temporal and operational flexibility and capacity for control, along with supportive supervision. Burke and El-Kot (2009) and (2010) found that Egyptian managers working longer hours and in more intense jobs indicated higher levels of WFC and the relationship between hours and intensity and WFC was both strong and consistent, but with intensity being the stronger. Doble (2010) cautions about the potential impact on working hours and intensity of technological developments such as the Internet, e-mail and mobile phones all of which enable organisations to be in contact with employees at any time and which can further the intensification of work demands.

Adame-Sánchez et al. (2016) in their discussion of barriers, drivers and enablers of the implementation of WLB policies note that organisational culture is the internal element that scholars most commonly study. They identify cultural change, hostile work environments, attitudes of managers, poor support services, and a lack of education and training in WLB strategies as negative influences on implementation and highlight managers attitudes as seemingly the most important.

Consequences, Benefits and Costs

For the organisation, there are many potential benefits and costs of facilitating or not WLB for their employees. Adame et al. (2016) and Adame-Sánchez et al. (2016) noted that benefits which may facilitate improving financial performance have been found to include; enhanced ability to attract and retain talent within the firm, improved employee satisfaction, engagement, commitment and motivation, and both lower levels of absenteeism and lower levels of desire to leave. Research conducted by Kim (2014) suggested that affective commitment increases as a result of the positive WLB experience of an employee, which in turn, has a positive influence on his/her in-role performance. This finding affirms the mediating role of affective commitment in the relationship between WLB and organisational performance. Burke and El-Kot (2010) found that higher levels of WFC were associated with less favourable individual wellbeing and work outcomes.

Talukder et al. (2018) developed this theme and suggest that research supports organisational efforts to invest in improving positive links between work and life domains, in helping employees balance the domains of work and life, as it will result in positive work attitudes which will benefit organisational performance. Adame-Sánchez, Gonzalez-Cruz and Martinez-Fuentes (2016) emphasises that the outcome of their research stresses the importance of perceived market-based outcomes as the main factor determining whether firms implement employment and HR policies and practices which facilitate their employees' achievement of WLB.

Opportunities

If there is this potential for benefits to organisations the question, then arises as to how this might be achieved. Prior research has identified a number of policies, practices and approaches that would appear to have potential for enabling women to achieve a more satisfactory balance between their work and non-work roles and responsibilities. At the organisational and pragmatic level, D'Enbeau et al. (2015) emphasises the need in Middle Eastern countries to develop work-life policies that are culturally specific, which recognise the importance of family and religion and the underpinning belief in gender complementarity, a different but equal mentality. Metcalfe (2008); Karam and Afiouni (2014); Afiouni et al. (2013); Marmenout and Liriob (2014) and D'Enbeau et al. (2015) have all emphasised the importance of developing HR models which are indigenously and culturally relevant, which take account of the importance of religion and family and which put women, their needs for flexibility, opportunity and empowerment at centre stage.

Adame et al. (2016) in reviewing the literature have identified the crucial role played by organisational support in the form of management commitment to achieving WLB for their workers, a theme noted repeatedly in research studies, and that managers play a crucial role in putting family-friendly policies into practice. There needs to be a culture of commitment to WLB and responsibility to families and they also suggest that driving and delivering these policies should be the responsibility of the Human Resource department. Karam and Afiouni (2014) also identified the pivotal role HR practitioners can play in mainstreaming gender equality and determining how HR policies respect the different but equal rationale. Interestingly, Adame et al. (2016) research did not support the hypothesis that the presence of women in the labour force would determine the level of implementation of WLB policies; however, the absence of women does seem to determine the absence of such policies.

The crucial role played by organisational culture and supervisory support and commitment, identified as determinants of WLB by Guest (2002) in his model, is also acknowledged by Talukdar et al. (2018). Lapierre and Allen (2006) noted a number of ways in which supervisors can signal support, they can inquire about employees' family needs

and circumstances, they can express support, they can be flexible in terms of work schedules and enabling employees deal with non-work commitments and emergencies. Talukder et al.'s research specifically examined the role of supervisory support on employees WLB, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, life satisfaction and performance and reports that supervisory support can enhance all of these. El-Kot et al. (2019) also noted that supervisor employee empowerment behaviours can reduce work-family conflict and they refer to behaviours and approaches including greater delegation, facilitating employee participation in decision making, coaching and mentoring. Marmenout and Liriob (2014) advocated a holistic approach encompassing flexible approaches towards the needs of women, empowering them through mentoring, social support systems and training and further education.

The forms of flexibility identified by Guest as potentially important to perceptions of WLB are reaffirmed as relevant to enabling women achieve WLB, enter and remain in the labour force. Temporal flexibility in terms of support for flexible working hours or part-time working have been advocated by many including (Doble & Supria, 2010; Kemp and Madsen, 2014; Khedr, 2017; Metcalfe, 2007; Marmenout and Liriob, 2014) and we have noted above support for the potential of operational flexibility via delegation and participation in decision making and the flexibility enabled through supportive supervision.

Other suggestions in the literature for policies and practices that are advocated as enabling a better WLB for women include teleworking, and work at home interventions (Doble & Supria, 2010; Kemp and Madsen, 2014) the provision of childcare facilities in the workplace (Doble & Supria, 2010; Marmenout and Liriob, 2014) and maternity leave and pay and parental leave (Khedr, 2017; Metcalfe, 2007). Another focus is on ensuring that gender diversity and equality of opportunity help to frame policies on recruitment and talent retention and on training, development and promotion (Karam and Afiouni, 2014; Kemp and Madsen, 2014).

While WLB may be influenced by a range of personal and family characteristics and circumstances including self-empowerment and orientation to work, it seems feasible that organisations can promote a more satisfactory WLB for women through commitment to WLB culture,

enabling the crucial supportive role of supervisors, and adopting more flexible and gender equal approaches to their employment. The potential benefits for women employees are that they will be less likely to suffer from stress, depression and other forms of psychological and physical ill health and more likely to be satisfied with work, marriage, family and life. Organisations should be able to gain from more motivated, committed, productive employees who are less likely to be absent and leave and they are likely to find it easier to attract and retain talented employees and their financial performance should benefit.

Conclusions and Further Research

The purpose of this section is to present our emergent conclusions on gender roles and WLB for women in Egypt. Our focus is on the initiatives that seem appropriate to enabling a more satisfactory WLB for women and the benefits that may accrue from them. It is important to note that the Egyptian government has accepted the need to change, they support full female empowerment and participation in the social and work spheres and this provides a framework conducive to the adoption of initiatives that lead to genuine improvement and empowerment. It is difficult to envisage significant improvement in female empowerment, their participation in society and the labour force without government, religious leaders, business leaders and women's groups in Egypt all agreeing on the need to transform the social and cultural norms that currently prescribe gender roles.

Government and educational leaders must encourage, facilitate and implement developments in the public education sector facilitating the acquisition by women of relevant workplace skills, greater awareness of a wider range of employment opportunities and the empowerment of women through the development of their own voice. Government, political and religious leaders also need to provide a more proactive legislative framework promoting the effective implementation of gender equal policies in employment, recruitment, promotion and development, and flexibility to enable women manage their work and family responsibilities.

Egyptian women have an important role to play in these developments, they will need to advocate change, they need to acquire and use their self-empowerment, their voice, to argue for their rights and aspirations, argue for the changes to workplace culture and flexibilities that will enable them to achieve a satisfactory WLB and manage both work and family responsibilities.

Business leaders, HR practitioners and managers must secure change in the institutionally male workplace culture. They must implement more proactive, flexible and supportive approaches and policies, paying explicit attention to the needs, interests and development of Egyptian women in work, and thereby enabling them to manage effectively their work and non-work responsibilities and make a significant contribution to organisational performance.

Finally, we need to address the importance of further research; as there is a marked lack of a research base of evidence to inform the development of national policy agendas on promoting and enabling cultural change, gender equality, satisfactory WLB for women, and developing an appropriate HRM model for organisations in Egypt that is culturally relevant as well as facilitating the achievement of a sustainable economy. There is clearly a need for further research to be commissioned into a range of issues and relationships.

We know little about current practice in Egyptian organisations regarding a culture of commitment to WLB and gender equality and opportunity, temporal and operational flexibilities and supportive supervision, attitudes of management towards the implementation of appropriate policies and practices and their motivations and expectations in terms of work outcomes and performance. There is also a need for much more evidence on the expectations, aspirations and needs of Egyptian women who want to work and those at work in relation both to work and family responsibilities and roles. Evidence is needed on their experiences of direct discrimination and in the application of policies on recruitment, development, and promotion. What are the work-based policies that would enable more satisfactory WLB, and how do they feel the education system prepares them for work and the advocacy of their interests?

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8

Work-Life Balance Outlook in Saudi Arabia

Arun Vijay Subbarayalu, **Sivasankar Prabaharan, and Masthan Devalapalli**

Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) reflects the degree to which people can exert control over when, where, and how they work, with an unsaid motive to attain physical and mental harmony along with career success (Collier, 2016). It is a term usually used to describe the balance that a working employee needs between time allocated for work and other aspects of life. It is one of the major problems faced by human resource development (HRD) since work and family domains are mutually dependent and actively impact each other (Odle-dusseau, Britt, & Bobko, 2012). Moreover, the emotions, behaviours, and actions from one domain would be moved to the other domain (Staines, 1980). Maintaining optimal WLB is the essential aspect of a healthy work environment, and it helps to

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reduce stress and prevents burnout in the workplace (Kohll, 2018). It is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments that enable employees to have a balance between work and personal responsibilities in such a way to strengthen employee loyalty and productivity (Dhas, 2015). WLB is concerned with all aspects of the work and private life of an individual, irrespective of family responsibilities, care, and dependency. It demands both physical (e.g. temporal, and spatial commitment, family size) and cognitive (job/life contentment, pressures, general health, and well-being) involvement (Greenblatt, 2002).

Globalisation, along with the expansion of the service industry and technological advancement, has contributed to the changing nature of work, and its repercussions lead to the higher permeability of work into the family domain, thereby affects WLB (Major & Germano, 2006). Due to globalisation and the changing nature of work, modern-day employees have several competing responsibilities to balance work and other familial responsibilities such as housework, volunteering, taking care of children, spouse, and elderly parental care. All these dual responsibilities place more stress on individuals, families, and the communities in which they live, leading to the work-life conflict (WLC), which is a severe problem that impacts workers, their employers, and communities (Mungania, 2016).

Overview of Workforce in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, the total number of employees was reported as 12.928 million, of whom about 10.596 million were male, and 2.332 million were female. Out of this total, 3.101 million were Saudi, and 9.827 million were Non-Saudis or expatriates. It is understood that 76% of expatriates occupied the jobs in the Saudi labour market (General Authority for Statistics, 2019). Besides, Saudi Vision 2030 aimed to raise the participation of Saudi Women in the labour market from 22 to 30%, thereby this would aid in reducing the unemployment rate by 33% among Saudi women (Al-Ghalayini, 2018). Accordingly, the percentage of Saudi women working in the public sector has increased from 39

to 40.3% during the past two years (Saudi Gazette Report, 2019). As of 2017, the private sector showed a 130% rise in the count of Saudi women in the workplace (Al-Ghalayini, 2018).

Though the workforce has expanded across various sectors in Saudi Arabia, this chapter focused explicitly on the workforce in the higher education and healthcare sector. Here, the higher education sector gained its importance since it aimed to meet the world-class standards of education by developing quality, innovative programmes, and initiatives that confirm the students' success and create them as a successful individual in the society (Shafai, 2018). Higher education institutions (HEIs) are essential to prepare a highly skilled workforce and also aid in creating new ideas and businesses (Almahdi, 2019). The Saudi government also established the King Abdullah Scholarship Program, which aimed to aid the students in studying abroad, thereby fulfil the needs of the labour market (Taylor & Albarsi, 2014). Besides, Saudi Vision 2030 focused on aligning the higher education outputs with the needs of the labour market. It also directed the Saudi government to work together with the private sector to guarantee higher education outcomes are in accord with the needs of the labour market (Patalong, 2016).

Another workforce focused in this chapter is the healthcare sector since it plays a vital role in meeting the demands of the growing population, altering demographics, and raising the burden of chronic diseases in Saudi Arabia (Bell, 2018a). In Saudi Arabia, there is a need for a significant rise in the supply of the healthcare workforce to meet the rising demand for its growing and ageing population. By 2030, it is roughly estimated that the Saudi government will require 710,000 healthcare professionals (HCPs) that exert an additional demand of 360,000 HCPs to what it has currently employed. At the same time, a large number of Saudi nationals have to be recruited in the healthcare sector to fulfil the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 and the national transformation programme (NTP) 2020 (Al-Hanawi, Khan, & Al-Borie, 2019).

Hence, this chapter focused on these two sectors of Saudi Arabia though they differ in their working environment. As the role of the workforce is found to be important in these sectors, this chapter addresses the challenges faced by the higher education and health sector employees in managing their WLB and how it varies with regard to different

age groups, gender, ethnicity, marital status, organisation culture, job security, the autonomy of work, and supportive work culture.

Higher Education Sector

In Saudi Arabia, thirty-five universities with a network of 770 affiliated institutions are offering various academic programmes in twenty-six disciplines (Muramalla & Alotaibi, 2019). Further, 1.7 million students are studying in various Saudi universities as of 2016 (ICEF Monitor, 2018). The data indicate that not only the number of Saudi universities is increasing, but the challenges for optimal functioning of these universities are also growing to combat the requirements of the large volume of students. However, the number of faculty members at universities increased to become 73,817 in the year 2014. Due to the rapid increase in students' enrolment in HEIs, there has been a substantial increase in the workload of the faculty members employed at these universities, thus compromising their WLB (Al Kuwaiti & Subbarayalu, 2019).

To add fuel this issue, a substantial drift of the nation's best academics to high paying industry positions because of inadequate incentive and reward systems within the Saudi universities (Al Ankari, 2013). As a result, Saudi universities are challenged by the shortage of highly skilled faculty members to perform the teaching roles (Groccia, Alsudairi, & Buskist, 2012).

The above scenario necessitates the HEIs to implement 'Saudization' policies and replace expatriate faculty members with Saudis (Saudi Gazette, 2016). As a measure to combat this, the Saudi government is heavily investing in education for establishing more universities and colleges and improving the quality of education, thereby improving the skills and employability of Saudi nationals. (Kono, 2013). In conformance with the facts reports, an earlier empirical study conducted by Al-Munajjed (2010) stated that 85% of Saudi working women are observed in the education sector. Another recent survey by Subbarayalu and Al Kuwaiti (2019) found that most of the faculty members (65%) expressed their opinion that they could able to maintain a healthy WLB.

Healthcare Sector

Saudi Arabia owns 487 total hospitals offering 72,981 beds, indicating 22.42 beds per 1000 population in the country. The total count of physicians (including the dentists) was 98074, in which 29.5% were Saudis (i.e. 28896). The dentists alone were counted as 15694. The total number of nurses was 185693, in which 36.7% were Saudis. The pharmacists were observed as 28312 in total, including 22.2% of Saudis. The total count of allied health professionals was 1,11861, in which 74.7% were Saudis (MOH, 2017). Besides, the Saudi population is estimated to be 34.81 million by 2020, from 34.14 million in 2019 (Global Media Insight, 2020). Due to the expansion of the Saudi population, there would be a need for 20,000 additional hospital beds by 2035 (Bell, 2018b).

Moreover, the Saudi government requires a substantial rise in the supply of HCPs to face the rising demands of its population. At the same time, it has to meet the objectives of Vision 2030 and the NTP 2020 by focusing on Saudization in the healthcare sector. However, the strength of Saudi healthcare graduates is insufficient to replace the HCPs who are leaving their jobs. Besides, the Saudi government needs to recruit a high number of nurses by 2030. This accounts for a net average of 6000–7000 new nurses to join the workforce yearly (Al-Hanawi et al., 2019). The nature of work of HCPs such as work in shifts, overtime, working at odd hours affects their physical as well as mental well-being, and balancing their work and life becomes a daunting task for them (Shaikh & Dange, 2017). In the Saudi Arabian context, AlGhamdi. (2014) revealed that female Saudi doctors perceived a poor WLB, and their work adversely affected their family relations. Besides physicians, it was found that 58% (n = 295) of PHC nurses in Saudi Arabia were unable to balance their work and family demands (Almalki, Fitzgerald, & Clark, 2012).

Challenges Facing Academics to Manage the WLB in Saudi Arabia

Demographic Factors: Gender

The profile of academic staff in Saudi universities constitutes 59% male staff and 41% female staff, in which Saudi nationals are comprising of 60% of the workforce and 40% expatriates (Muramalla & Alotaibi, 2019). With the rise in female participation in the Saudi workforce (Al-Ghalayini, 2018), female employees are expected to perform the matriarchal functions in their homes in addition to their employment commitments. This condition leads to occupational stress suffered by these women as they are now committed to perfecting a WLB (Rodrigo, 2016).

A recent study by Al Mousa, Alzuwaed, and Binsaeed (2020) concluded that female faculty members working at a Saudi university are struggling to manage WLB since they play a vital role in performing household tasks and caring children. As a result, they experience stress, which leads to poor job performance. The most significant factor influencing their WLB was observed as a job demands more long working hours after work at home in the evenings or at weekends. They agreed that employers should recognise their personal as well as family responsibilities, and the employers should aid them in balancing their work and life.

Organisational Culture

Work-family culture is defined as "the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organisation supports and values the integration of employees' work and family lives" (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999, p. 394). It is the extent to which an organisation's culture recognises and respects the family responsibilities of its employees and encourages management and employees to work together to meet their personal and work needs (Dhas & Karthikeyan, 2015). The factors

such as the degree of flexibility in working hours, and working conditions, the scope for the employee to influence these matters, expectations of employee behaviour, and the level of consideration given by employers to employees' other-domain commitments can all facilitate or constrain the achievement of WLB (Aldhobaib, 2017). A previous study also indicated that WLB practices need to be supported and encouraged in workplace culture (Arif & Farooqi, 2014). A more recent study indicated that a periodic evaluation is required to reveal the needs of employees and revise the existing WLB policies in Saudi Arabia (Al Mousa et al., 2020). A recent Saudi-based study indicated that only 65% of academics could achieve a healthy balance between their work and home life (Subbarayalu & Al Kuwaiti, 2019). As such, Saudi universities have to offer effective WLB practices to enhance recruitment and retention and reduce work-life conflict among employees.

Increased Workload Load Among Saudi Academics

In Saudi Arabia, the maximum teaching workload of faculty members in the universities is observed between ten to eighteen teaching units per week during a semester, which would differ between faculties, and between public and private universities. It also varied with the academic title (HEC, 1998). In Saudi Arabia, the number of students enrolled has increased to 1,680,913 (2016–2017) from 636,445 (2005–2006). On the other hand, the Saudi government has adapted some mechanisms, including the introduction of paid educational programmes, more scientific chairs, and a rise in charities of universities to organise additional funds. Also, Saudi universities are trying to enhance their funds by delivering consultancy services for both the public and private sectors. These universities are encouraging partnerships and networks for scientific research and utilise the faculty's skills in specialised research and professional consultations (Khayati, Selim, Chan, 2019). This increased workload poses a serious problem to the faculty members, and it interferes with WLB. As a result, 60% of professors and 70% of lecturers employed at Saudi Universities expressed their view that they can able to

balance their work and home life in a healthy manner (Subbarayalu & Al Kuwaiti, 2019).

However, Kamel (2013) found that Saudi faculty members perceived the quality of work-life dimensions, including WLB, as above average. Thus, there is a need for developing initiatives to improve the faculty's quality of work-life that includes decreasing workload, improving the sense of job security, and enhancing salary packages. Recently, Muramalla and Alotaibi (2019) reported that faculty members working in Saudi universities have positively perceived equitable workload in terms of teaching, research, and academic administration. Faculty members of public universities are more positive concerning the workload in teaching, academic administration, and research than those working in private universities.

Impact of Job Satisfaction

Brough et al. (2014) indicated that WLB is found to be negatively associated with work demands, turnover intentions and psychological strain, and positively associated with both family and job satisfaction. Recently, Kuwaiti, Bicak and Wahass (2019) have observed a high level of job satisfaction among faculty members of health sciences programmes at a Saudi university towards all domains of job satisfaction except salary, which is observed as the medium. Moreover, there is a significant positive relationship between employees' job satisfaction and their perception of WLB (Walga, 2018). To be precise, the lesser the job satisfaction, the lower the control the employee has to balance his or her work-life (Subbarayalu & Al Kuwaiti, 2019). Thus, there is a need for administrators to improve employees' job satisfaction and satisfaction with WLB to warrant organisational success irrespective of the context of the organisation (Walga, 2018).

Organisation Policies and Practices for WLB

In general, several arrangements are applied by organisations to help employees in balancing between work and their personal lives. Some of these organisational policies include suitable ways of adjusting work hours, through sharing of work between two employees, or part-time working, designing flexible working arrangements such as flexi-time where employees start and finish work at a time of their choice according to their personal needs, but work certain core hours (Bahudhailah, 2019).

A survey conducted by Arab news indicated that nearly 50 per cent of the Saudi workforce believes they can work efficiently from home rather than from an office (Arab News, 2014). Even though the employees prefer to have flexible working hours, such arrangements may not be possible in educational sectors as the teachers have to adhere to their class schedule, which is mostly student dependent, and the students are attending the university in a stipulated time. Saudi universities have a standard working time usually begins at 7.30 am and ends by 2.30 pm every day, and five working days per week is in practice.

Job Crafting

Job crafting necessitates balancing both the demands and resources of the job in which the employee engaged in. Higher job demand means having too much to do in a short time and may result in increased fatigue, pain, and functional limitation (Lundberg, 2002). It involves the social, organisational, and physical aspects of a job that require prolonged personal effort from employees. Time pressure and work intensification are frequent cases of job demands, whereas typical examples of job resources are work-type, job flexibility feedback, and social support (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). In the higher education sector, the role of faculty members in a university is to perform academic tasks, and also to involve actively in research activities, community services, workshops, seminars, and conferences. Involvement in research with a specific focus to publish the research work in the Web of Science

(WoS) database augments the stress level of contracted faculty members. Moreover, research publications are considered as one of the mandatory requirements to get their job contracts renewed on a yearly basis. As a result, workloads have enhanced and faculty felt more burden to "publish or perish" (Winefield, 2003). Furthermore, the nature of the work in higher education sector is monotonous and requires staff to adjust to unanticipated work variations. Faculty members who have the least control over their job have the highest demands imposed on them and receive the least amount of support from the workplace. Such individuals are at the highest risk for developing occupational health problems (Subbarayalu & Al Kuwaiti, 2019). A study by Praveen (2013) observed that the faculty members of a Saudi government university perceived the interference of job demands with their personal activities (home, recreation, and other interest) with the mean score of 2.488. It is suggested that a proper WLB should be preserved and priority should be given to schedule their work to prevent work-life imbalance.

Lack of Job Security

Faculty members in Saudi universities are more or less even mix of Saudis and expatriates, and the administrative positions are held mostly by Saudi nationals. Presently, the Saudi government is attempting to reduce reliance on expatriates through the 'Saudization' programme (Ramady, 2013). Saudi universities continue to recruit and retain non-Saudi academics until a qualified Saudi national is available to take up the higher-level teaching and research roles in the university (Ahmed, 2016). To be precise, public universities in Saudi Arabia can use expatriate workforce as being temporary and they would be offered one-year renewable contracts, and they are allowed to continue their work until Saudi university graduates are able to take up the roles (Havergal, 2017). Such a situation throws uncertainty among expatriate faculty members, which in turn has an impact on their family life, ultimately disturbing WLB.

Compensation and Rewards

An earlier study indicated that adequate and fair compensation showed a strong positive relationship with job satisfaction among faculty members (Tabassum, Rahman, & Jahan, 2012). A satisfied faculty member would positively perceive and balance their WLB (Brough et al., 2014). In Saudi Arabia, WLB of the faculty members was mainly influenced by rewards and compensation (Kamel, 2013). A study of Al-Smadi and Qblan (2015) observed a moderate level of satisfaction towards the salaries and financial support among the faculty members of Najran University, Saudi Arabia. A recent study indicated that only 65% of academics employed at a Saudi university felt they are fairly compensated for their work and can achieve a healthy balance between their work and home life (Subbarayalu & Al Kuwaiti, 2019).

Supportive Relationships

An earlier study indicated that social support from supervisors and colleagues showed a significant positive correlation with WLB among faculty members of a Malaysian public university (Shahid, Amdan, Alwi, Syazreena, & Hassan, 2016). Notably, support from co-workers is essential since it could reduce the stress perceived by faculty members due to the broader responsibilities and heavy workload demand. The policymakers should focus on providing a conducive work environment that teamwork within and across departments to deliver faculty members with access to support from co-workers in coping with job demands (Shahid et al., 2016). Besides, family support is a significant factor influencing the WLB of female employees (Padma & Reddy, 2013). Unsupportive relationships at work and not getting proper recognition for the job done are leading to an unproductive work environment that makes an employee feel isolated. Similarly, at home, where no one helps each other or considers other people's pressures creates frustration and unhappiness (Jansen, 2016). An earlier study indicated that social support from supervisors and colleagues showed a significant positive correlation with WLB among faculty members of a Malaysian public

university (Shahid et al., 2016). In Saudi Arabia, support network at home or work is identified as one of the significant factors influencing WLB of female faculty members of a public university at Riyadh (Al Mousa, Alzuwaed, & Binsaeed, 2020). A recent survey conducted among Saudi academics also revealed that 70% expressed their opinion that they are getting support from their colleagues, and their colleagues are helping them in resolving work-related problems (Subbarayalu & Al Kuwaiti, 2019).

Challenges Faced by Healthcare Sector Employees in Saudi Arabia to Manage Their WLB

Marital Status

Marital status is one of the significant predictors of WLC since young married employees described that they have a high level of work-life conflict than others (Lajtman, 2016). In the healthcare sector, nursing professionals are the most commonly affected people since they have to take care of their families during non-working hours and perform clinical care while working in shifts. Such a scenario forced them to find a suitable method to balance both work and family life (Varma, Kelling, & Goswami, 2016). In the Saudi Arabian context, female Saudi nurses are facing problems such as too long working hours and night shifts, which prevents the Saudi community from agreeing with nursing as a profession, particularly for married women with home and children responsibilities (Aldossary, While, & Barriball, 2008). Altakroni et al. (2019) recently found that some features of married life, such as the number of children, living with or without dependents and having disabled children at home, and age would cause work-life imbalance. However, those features have no statistically significant effect on the productivity of Saudi female nurses. Another most prominent category in the healthcare sector, which is prone to work-life imbalance are doctors, and a recent study indicated that 43% of married female Saudi

doctors were unsatisfied in balancing career and family life (AlGhamdi, 2014). However, marital status showed no significant association with the satisfaction of balancing career and family life among doctors.

Long Working Hours

Employees working more than the stipulated time frame failed to meet their family needs (Rajan, 2017). In Saudi Arabia, the life of female Saudi nurses is hard since their working hours are too long when compared to Saudi working women in other fields. Also, shift and night work is another major issue facing those nurses. These problems lead to the female nurse turnover rate being higher than that of male nurses (Aldossary et al., 2008). Moreover, Almalki et al. (2012) revealed that the majority of Saudi nurses (i.e. 80% of 409 participants) felt unhappy with their working hours, which failed to suit their daily life as they have no energy left following work. In that study, it is also stated that 80% of Saudi nurses agreed that the system of working hours adversely influenced their work-life.

Recently, Almazan, Albougami, and Alamri (2019) found that working hours per week were a significant factor influencing the stress levels of Saudi nurses. It is clear that the working hours of Saudi nurses are not in match with their family life, and it leads to stress as well as negatively impact their work-life. A recent study also reported that clinical pharmacists in Saudi hospitals criticised the heavy workload, and the majority of female pharmacists were not satisfied with the working hours (Slimane, 2017). These issues exert a negative impact on pharmacists' ability to handle their work and family obligations.

Like nurses and pharmacists, Saudi residents also reported long working hours and had a high level of burnout. However, residents' burnout failed to show a strong relationship with long working hours. There is a prerequisite for framing national-wide working hour regulations in Saudi Arabia to protect residents' rights and ensure patient safety (Hameed, Masuadi, Al Asmary, Al-Anzi, & Al Dubayee, 2018). Non-Saudi doctors also perceived that working hours, pay, and benefits are unequal for both gender as compared with Saudis (Baqi et al.,

2017). Further, AlGhamdi (2014) explored the balance between career and family life among female doctors in a Saudi Medical City. Out of 174 female doctors, 43.1% perceived a poor balance between work and family, and 51.7% perceived that their work negatively affected. There is a need for developing national-wide working hour regulations in Saudi Arabia to protect residents' rights and ensure patient safety influenced their family affairs.

Working in Shifts

Most HCPs are in need to work for long hours and night shifts, which leads to an imbalance between their work and family life (Shivakumar & Pujar, 2016). Most of the HCPs (i.e. 66% of physicians and nurses) in Saudi Arabia reported the average number of night shifts per month as 6–9. However, it was not significantly associated with high emotional exhaustion and burnout among HCPs. Only a few HCPs reported on-call duties (Alqahtani et al., 2019). A positive association was found between the irregular shift work and employees' work-life imbalance (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Predominantly, women are poorly satis-fied with the WLB as a result of the night shift and less time to spend with families. For nurses, the condition is worse since they have to play dual roles to take of family responsibilities during non-working hours and to perform their duties during work shifts. Such a working environ-ment forced nurses to balance these roles effectively (Ross, Rideout, & Carson, 1993).

In Saudi Arabia, 60% of registered nurses (RNs) are female with a high turnover rate than males. Married female RNs having children tend to leave their jobs since they are working 12 hours shifts (Aldossary et al., 2008). A recent study by Alsayed and West (2019) revealed that those Saudi female RNs who worked in 12 hours shift systems shared their experiences towards the organisation of shifts, and they pointed out inflexible working arrangements were a vital issue for Saudi female nurses. Since there was no chance to demand preferred changes in shift work, many of them felt stressful during their efforts to balance work demands and family-related problems. Those RNs with complicated

family situations also felt issues in organising shift schedules to accommodate their specific requirements. The most recent empirical study also reported that 50.8% of Saudi female nurses in the Qassim region disliked night shifts (Altakroni et al., 2019).

Work Stress

Previous studies stated that employees' role stress might influence their WLB and further reduce their performance (Al Kahtani, Nawab, & Allam, 2016b). Recently, Nurumal et al. (2017) found that stress as one of the health factors that influence the WLB among teaching hospital nurses in Malaysia. Moreover, Kamal, Al-Dhshan, Abu-Salameh, Abuadas, and Hassan (2012) reported that Saudi nurses in a Taif governmental hospital were exposed to various job-related stressors such as patient's demands, their families' complaints, and nurse's workload. In a Saudi acute hospital setting, Almazan et al. (2019) recently stated that working hours per week and nationality were found to be a significant predictor of nurses' stress levels. It is revealed that the higher the working hours per week, the greater the stress level of nurses.

Further, nurses with Indian nationality perceived higher stress levels than nurses of other nationalities. As they are family-oriented, they might feel homesickness due to the abrupt shifts in their family environments. This situation could lead to diminished concentration and make them return to their familiar atmosphere (Chadda & Deb, 2013). Another recent study by Batayneh, Ali, and Nashwan (2019) in Saudi Arabia reported that the key external sources of stress among multinational nurses are workload, lack of workforce, and conflict with physicians. The extremely stressful situations perceived by those nurses are fear of making a mistake and making decisions in the absence of physicians during medical emergencies.

Workload

The workload is termed as the amount of work that an individual has to complete within a stipulated time (Chen & Spector, 1992). Vogel (2012)

stated that employees often get scared about the work-life imbalance if they are overloaded with work. In the healthcare sector, the most critical profession to be affected due to heavy workload is nursing, and it affects nurses' satisfaction with WLB (Holland, Tham, Sheehan & Cooper, 2019). This condition results in when there is a lack of proper organisational support to replenish the individuals' lost resources (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In the Saudi Arabian context, Saudi nurses having higher burnout levels reported high-stress, mainly due to their workload and uncertainty on treatment (Alsaqri, 2014).

Recently, Batayneh et al. (2019) stated that multinational nurses in Saudi Arabia perceived burnout due to workload and work-related stress. The majority of Saudi nurses felt dissatisfaction with the work-life due to those factors comprising family needs, duty hours, and energy left after work. Nurses experienced heavy workload and little energy left after work as they spent more time at work. As a result, the nurses were not able to balance their work and family (Almalki et al., 2012). Alharthi and Damanhouri (2018) also observed that the majority (82.3%) of Saudi nurses were strongly agreed that the work negatively affected their family responsibilities physically and psychologically. These nurses are prone to both physical and psychological fatigue due to the workload that prevents them from enjoying their time out of work. Also, those nurses expressed their opinion that they often abstain from family responsibilities to fulfil their work duties. About the workload of physicians in Saudi Arabia, Altaf et al. (2019) observed that specialists tended to be less satisfied than consultants. As per the recent empirical evidence, 68% of the Saudi consultants slept for ≤ 6 hours per day, and those consultants perceived a stressful work environment and a high workload (Alosaimi et al., 2018). A study by Al-Shuhail, Al-Saleh, Al-saleh, Elhassan, and Wajid (2017) stated that many physicians in the Saudi healthcare setting were expatriates, and the prevalence of burnout among them was observed to be moderately high. Many of them perceived that the rise in frequency of work obstructing with family obligations was linked to their exhaustion. Hence, it is essential to address the issues related to workload, working environment, working hours, and mental health, which might reduce the risk of burnout among Saudi physicians.

Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is described as the shared basic assumptions, values, and beliefs that represent a working environment and are adopted and educated to beginners (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). All organisations have their policies and benefits for their employees that represent the overall organisational culture. Those organisations with properly developed policies and benefits provide a healthy WLB among employees. Some of these organisation-wide policies focus on annual vacation, maternity leave, flexible hours/schedules, sick leave, and communication (Groner, 2018). As such, employees experience a strong WLB if their organisations have family-supportive policies (Lapierre et al., 2008). Nevertheless, employees must sense comfortable in utilising these family-supportive policies that are influenced by the organisational culture and leadership style (Groner, 2018). A recent study indicated that female Saudi RNs concerned with unfair vacation policies by allowing expatriate nurses to organise their vacations as per their needs (Alsayed & West, 2019).

Furthermore, Anderson et al. (2002) stated that several factors associated with organisational cultures such as flexible schedules and job autonomy had improved the work-life imbalance among employees in hospitals. Inflexible working schedules were a key concern for female Saudi RNs working in acute care settings of a Saudi public hospital. The majority of those nurses were not satisfied with the organisation of shift schedules made by nursing managers (Alsayed & West, 2019). Furthermore, Almalki et al. (2012) reported that some primary healthcare nurses (38%) felt as they did not have the required autonomy to make patient care decisions. A recent study by Batayneh et al. (2019) found that multinational nurses felt a highly stressful situation while making decisions in the absence of doctors and are scared of making a mistake during emergencies. Nursing professionals also felt inadequate nursing policies and procedures, inferior respect from top-level management, especially on those policies governing vacations, were unsuitable neither for them nor for their families (Almalki et al., 2012). Most of the female Saudi RNs felt that several structures and policies related to the workplace had been framed to meet the needs of expatriate nurses. This situation makes it

hard for Saudi nurses to accommodate work environments. There is an urgent need for the organisation to reframe policies and regulations to acknowledge their obligations to aid them in continuing their profession (Alsayed & West, 2019).

Supportive Work Relations

Recently, Shaikh and Dange (2017) identified that supportive work culture that includes support from superiors, peers, and subordinate is one among the factors which influence the WLB of HCPs. Nurumal et al. (2017) found that supervisor support is one of the influencing factors of WLB among Malaysian nurses working in a teaching hospital. Moreover, lack of social support from colleagues and superiors is recognised as one of the factors causing health problems among Saudi nurses (Al Hosis, Mersal, & Keshk, 2013). A recent study by Alharthi and Damanhouri (2018) found that the majority of Saudi nurses (60%) intended to quit their job due to the issues in their job as well as family and social facets. The most important reasons for leaving their job are lack of support from nursing managers, job dissatisfaction, conflicts between work and family commitments, poor appreciation from society for their profession. Besides, female Saudi RNs experienced an issue concerning the presence of expatriate nursing managers, which develop a power inequity within their working environment. They described their stressed relationships with expatriate co-workers (Alsayed &West, 2019). Further, Alsayed and West (2019) also identified four specific factors that create workplace conflict affecting the interpersonal relationships among nurses and these include: (i) attempts to exclude Saudi nurses from the workplace by expatriate nurses (ii) fear of expatriate nurses about the 'Saudization' programmes (iii) the intention of Saudi nurses to progress towards senior positions, and (iv) lack of interest among expatriate nurses to return to their home.

Aldubai et al. (2019) have also identified that the lack of support from superiors as one of the significant forecasters of burnout among Saudi family medicine residents. Those residents perceiving unfair assessments and lack of support from supervisors were significantly linked

with emotional burnout. In contrast, half of the Saudi doctors, regardless of gender and nationality, felt that they experienced informational and instrumental support from their department and supervisors. Nevertheless, mixed responses (neither agree nor disagree) were observed towards their experience on emotional support from supervisors during times of stress or unhappiness. The majority of non-Saudi doctors perceived that their supervisors offered emotional support when required, as compared to Saudi doctors (Baqi et al., 2017). Based on the thorough exploration of the empirical literature as stated above, it is understood that inadequate support from co-workers and supervisors would enhance the stress and work-life imbalance. Further, stress from patient interactions might denote the requirement of peers to discuss the emotional facets of nursing jobs. Interventions addressing stress and work-life imbalance should aid nurses in achieving job satisfaction, retention, and wellness. Such attempts should develop a supportive working environment to augment nurses' well-being and WLB; thus, a satisfied and productive workforce is created (Varma et al., 2016).

Lack of Job Security

WLB is associated with the feeling of job insecurity (Roberts, 2007). Moreover, nurses might experience job insecurity due to the cost-saving nature of hospitals in the nursing workforce. This feeling of job insecurity could lead to stress and work-life imbalance (Chan, Tam, Lung, Wong, & Chau, 2013). Currently, the nursing profession has significantly involved in 'Saudization' to replace expatriate nurses with the local workforce. Training programmes related to 'Saudization' have been established for nurses to face the lack of local Saudi nurses and to boost the replacement of expatriate RNs with trained local RNs (Alsayed & West, 2019). The rise in the number of Saudi RNs would enhance employment among Saudis and provide openings for qualified Saudi RNs to hold the senior rank in their profession, which are commonly occupied by expatriate nurses (Maben, Al-Thowini, West, & Rafferty, 2010). Saudi RNs acknowledged that expatriate nurses were scared about their job insecurity due to the execution of the 'Saudization' programme. They also

experienced poor professional relationships with several expatriate nurses due to their fear of 'Saudization', and it leads to workplace conflict. Such conflict occurs between Saudi nurses who were progressing towards their promotion and expatriate nurses who were not interested in losing their current job and returning to their home country. Reasonably, these contradictory aims of both groups were influencing the professional and friendly relations in their working environment (Alsayed & West, 2019).

Moreover, expatriate nurses are employed in Saudi Arabia on an annual contract basis. When their contract is not renewed, their residence permit that is connected with employment is also not renewed. Therefore, they have to return to their own country, and there are few possible chances to transfer visa sponsorship to another employer without exiting Saudi Arabia and starting a new visa application process. The employer also can terminate the contract earlier with a 30-day notice to employees. The limited duration would set a feel of uncertainty among employees regarding their job security. Also, the 'Saudization' programme contributes to the sense of job insecurity among expatriate nurses. It is observed that job insecurity is significantly associated with severe stress, anxiety, and depression among foreign nurses (Saquib et al., 2019). Hence, the 'Saudization' programme and uncertain work situation lead to job insecurity and stress among non-Saudi nurses, which might influence their WLB.

Family Domain

Malik, Saif, Gomez, Khan, and Hussain (2010) stated that social support from family aid employees to reduce their stress and manage their work and home effectively. Concerning the nursing profession, family support is a vital one, and the family should provide its full support by considering the work pressure prevailing in that profession—such family support aid nurses to manage their work-life efficiently (Satpathy, Patnaik, & Jena, 2014). In the Saudi Arabian context, long working hours have impacted the energy level of Saudi nurses, and they find it hard to spend time with their families (Almalki et al., 2012). Moreover, there is a direct association between family affairs and Saudi

nurses' turnover when more family responsibilities overlap the work duties (Alharthi & Damanhouri, 2018). The main reasons for avoiding the nursing profession among Saudi women are cultural norms, family disagreement, gender integration, and poor image of working shifts (Al-Mahmoud, Mullen, & Spurgeon, 2012). Thus, it is usually perceived as an unsuitable profession for Saudi women.

On the other hand, female physicians are in need to care for their family responsibilities to develop WLB (Addagabottu & Battu, 2015). Saudi female doctors who were working more than 60 hours per week were unsatisfied with managing their WLB. They felt that their work had negatively affected their relationship with their spouse and children and also the performance of their children at school (AlGhamdi, 2014). However, Baqi et al. (2017) stated that Saudi female doctors spent significantly more hours on home activities and caring for the family than their male counterparts. They observed a gap in their professional life due to family responsibilities other than maternity leave. Besides, the rise in frequency of work interfering with family obligations was associated with burnout among Saudi physicians. There is a need to pay attention to attaining a WLB for healthcare staff (Al-Shuhail et al., 2017). Mone, Ashrafi and Sarker (2019) recommended the hospital administrators to develop more work-family friendly policies for their female physicians to manage the WLB.

Conclusion

WLB among employees is a state of achieving the balance between their work and family needs. On exploring the workforce pattern that exists in Saudi Arabia, a multicultural working environment is witnessed. This chapter gives an overview of the Saudi workforce in both higher education and healthcare industries. In the higher education sector, faculty members felt hard to manage their WLB since their job demands additional long working hours to be carried out at home. The policymakers should recognise the faculty's personal and family responsibilities and assist them in achieving WLB. Though WLB policies are existing, periodic evaluation is needed to reveal the current needs and update the

existing systems. Saudi universities should be cautious while involving its faculty members to take additional tasks such as consultancy and other revenue-generating activities as it imposes extra workload on the faculty members, which would affect their work-life balance. Academics also felt job pressure in their working environment and received support from their colleagues; thereby, these factors influence their WLB. Moreover, a high level of faculty's satisfaction with their job and WLB is essential for the success of the organisation. Several empirical evidence indicated job insecurity among non-Saudi academics, and it has negatively influenced their WLB.

In the healthcare sector, the most common professionals face challenges in managing WLB are physicians and nurses. Factors such as job stress, heavy workload, lack of autonomy in making decisions, inflexible working schedules, and poor organisation of shift schedules, inadequate vacation planning, and reduced professional relationships between expatriate and Saudi nurses are directly impacting the WLB of the nursing professionals. Studies also pointed out that nurses tend to quit their jobs due to long working hours, job dissatisfaction, lack of support from superiors, and poor appreciation from the community concerning their profession. Notably, the Saudization programme and uncertain work situation lead to job insecurity and stress among non-Saudi nurses, which affect their WLB. Nurses also felt that hospital administrators should consider reframing policies and regulations to recognise their needs and assist them in continuing their profession.

Moreover, the main reasons for avoiding the nursing profession among Saudi women are cultural norms, family disagreement, working with men, long working hours, and night shifts. Like nursing professionals, female Saudi doctors also perceived that their work adversely affects their family lives. Saudi physicians perceived that raised obstruction of work with family affairs was linked to their burnout. There is a need to address workload, working conditions, working hours, and mental health, which might reduce the risk of burnout among Saudi physicians. Even though Saudi physicians get enough support from their supervisors, Saudi residents feeling unfair assessments and lack of support from supervisors and were significantly associated with emotional burnout. Based on these challenges, the authorities belonging to both the higher education and

healthcare sectors should take appropriate measures to overcome those challenges. There is a need for healthcare organisations to frame or revise the WLB policies and practices that support their employees in achieving WLB without hindering their performance.

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Part III

Asia

9

Work–Life Conflict in China: A Confucian Cultural Perspective

Sudong Shang, Xi Wen Chan, and Xuchu Liu

Introduction

The present chapter focuses on the factors influencing work–life conflict in China. We extend the concept of "work–family conflict" to "work–life conflict" which is a type of inter-role interference across work and non-work domains. Work domain refers to an individual's paid employment, while the non-work domain comprises all other components of life, including family, recreation, community activities, and personal life (Dewe, O'Driscoll, & Cooper, 2010). Although research on non-US populations has emerged in recent years, a considerable gap still

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exists in our knowledge of cross-cultural work–life issues (Foster & Ren, 2015). That is, the generalisability of work–life theories across different cultural contexts remains uncertain (Crawford, Thompson, & Ashforth, 2019; Powell, Greenhaus, Allen, & Johnson, 2019), and the extant cross-cultural work–life research has not explored the influence of specific cultural values in one nation beyond the prevailing macro-level cultural frameworks (i.e. Hofstede, 2010) on the mechanisms underlying work–life phenomena. To capture the influence of the aforementioned research limits, this chapter aims to discuss work–life conflict in the Confucian culture, which is a specific cultural context of China. This chapter focuses on how Confucian values embedded in Chinese society mould Chinese employees' work–life experiences. In doing so, we hope this chapter can pave the way for future work–life research conducted in China and contribute to the advancement of work–life theories.

Work–Life Conflict in Brief

The seminal paper of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work–family conflict as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects" (p. 77). The notion of inter-role conflict has its roots in Goode's (1960) scarcity theory, which assumes that resources such as time, skills, and energy are fixed and limited and that resources expended in one role deplete those available for other roles. Therefore, individuals who participate in multiple life roles (e.g. work and family) are more likely to experience conflict between those roles due to the diminished quality of roles that received fewer resources (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) also conceptualised work–family conflict to be bi-directional: work-to-family conflict occurs when the pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible, and as a result, participation in the family role is made more difficult by participation in the work role; family-to-work conflict occurs when participation in the work role is made more difficult by participation in the family role.

In recent times, work–family scholars (e.g. Keeney, Boyd, Sinha, Westring, & Ryan, 2013; Siegel, Post, Brockner, Fishman, & Garden, 2005; Skinner & Pocock, 2008) have extended "work–family" conflict to "work–life" conflict, reflecting the other life domains and interests (e.g. friends, sports, community, education, volunteering, and so on) beyond the family domain. Life domains refer to the spheres of activity that make up an individual's identity (Keeney et al., 2013). Therefore, work–life conflict describes how work interferes with one's personal life in general, including but not limited to the family domain. Additionally, while national policies tend to focus on the work and family domains out of concern for the well-being of children and working parents, it should be recognised that all employees, regardless of their circumstances and living arrangements, should have a right to a balanced relationship between their paid employment and other life domains (Skinner & Pocock, 2008).

In a recent meta-analysis by Xu and Cao (2019) of the antecedents and outcomes of work–life conflict, it was found that social support (including supervisor support, co-worker support, organisational support, and family support) and positive and negative affect predicted both work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict. Further, in another meta-analysis by French, Dumani, Allen, and Shockley (2018), it was found that social support emanating from the work domain consistently reduced work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict. French et al. (2018) also found that the strength of the relationships between social support and work–life conflict varies as a function of social support domain, form, source, type, and national context. Also, Xu and Cao's (2019) meta-analysis revealed that work-related characteristics (e.g. work overload and job control) only predicted work-to-life conflict. Work–life conflict, in turn, was negatively related to positive work- (e.g. job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and job performance) and non-work-related (e.g. life satisfaction) outcomes, and positively related to negative work outcomes such as burnout and turnover intentions. In an earlier meta-analysis by Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, and Semmer (2011), it was also found that work-to-life conflict was more strongly

associated with work-related than non-work-related outcomes, and life-to-work conflict was more strongly associated with non-work-related than work-related outcomes.

The Chinese Context

China, with the largest population (approximately 1.4 billion) in the world, is also the second-largest economy in the world after the United States. Since economic reforms began in 1978, China's economy has rapidly transformed from a centrally planned system to a more market-oriented economy, and the private sector has since blossomed. The fast growth of its private sector has led to long working hours and work intensification for many employees, including managers and professionals, in a broad range of industries (Xiao & Cooke, 2012). Additionally, with its socialist ideology which emphasises gender equality both at work and home, China has one of the highest percentages of female employees in the Asia Pacific region (61.5% in the Year 2017) (The World Bank, 2018). Uniquely, China's one-party political system has imposed tremendous influence on Chinese society, which has led to some unique Chinese characteristics across workplaces in China. For example, China's Communist Party has established a party branch each in most state-owned and private organisations in China. Also, China is a large country geographically, and each area has its unique features due to different combinations of Westernisation, market liberalisation, and central control (Xiao & Cooke, 2012). Given its economic forces, a high work participation rate of women, a unique political system, and geographical variations, employees in different areas tend to have different values, attitudes, and behaviours related to their work and life. Hence, it is necessary to contextualise work–life theories to a Chinese context. Before discussing work–life issues in China in detail, we first provide an overview of Confucian values which have underpinned the Chinese society.

Confucian Values

National contexts (e.g. institutions and economy), policies and cultures have been shown to influence individuals' work–life conflict experiences (Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, 2015; Xiao & Cooke, 2012). In China, individuals' work–life conflict experiences are influenced by the traditional Chinese culture, characterised by Confucianism, to a large extent (Choi, 2008; Hofstede, 2001, 2010; Ren & Caudle, 2016). Although work–life scholars had suggested that work–life theories are "culture-sensitive", and urged more researchers to investigate the influence of culture on work–life phenomena a decade ago (Powell et al., 2009), current work–life theories still need to be further strengthened from a culture perspective (Powell et al., 2019). Researchers (e.g. Haar, Russo, Suñe, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014; Ollier-Malaterre, 2014) have broadly applied macro-level cultural perspectives, such as national cultures and cultural values, to work–life conflict research. Those research studies have paved the way to envision a general picture that differences of work–life experiences occur in different national cultures. However, a micro-level cultural perspective about a specific culture may be more helpful and beneficial, if we want to unveil the nuanced work–life experiences in a given culture, which would provide rich information for implementing specific interventions and coping strategies (Hammer, Kossek, Anger, Bodner, & Zimmerman, 2011). Therefore, it is crucial to explore the subtle and specific values of the Chinese culture.

Although Westernisation and modernisation have imposed considerable influence on China's contemporary culture, Confucian values are still the foundation of it (Warner, 2010). The core of Confucianism has been elaborated along with seven values by Redding (2002): **Societal order**: preservation of established order, maintenance of harmony; **Hierarchy**: legitimacy of paternalism in the domains of family and organisation; the individual occupying the higher position should have the power to make decisions; **Reciprocity**: emphasis on the limited but adequate trust to ensure social exchange; individuals with close relationships are expected to exchange favours beyond their job scopes; **Control**: allocation of resources at superiors' discretion; **Insecurity**: need to insure against downturns and build reserves; **Family-based collectivism**: care

for extended family, the importance of filial piety and family prestige; and **Knowledge**: value learning, intelligence, education, and resourcefulness highly. All these values have permeated every corner of China's society and are shaping individuals' work and family ideologies, and, by extension, the work–life experiences of Chinese employees.

Individual-, Organisational-, and Societal-Level Factors

By reviewing previous work–life research in the context of culture, Powell et al. (2009) suggested a culture-sensitive theory of work–life phenomena and articulated that "values related to the cultural meaning and enactment of work and family may influence the nature and strength of the relationship between individuals' experiences in these two domains" (p. 598). That is, particular cultural values, on the one hand, may generate some unique factors influencing work–life conflict; on the other hand, may moderate the relationships between some universal factors and work–life conflict (Aycan, 2008; Eby, Caspar, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Powell et al., 2009). Drawing on the growing number of research studies conducted in the context of Confucianism, the objectives of this chapter are to identify unique factors existing in the Confucian culture, and to explore how Confucian values influence the relationship between universal factors and work–life conflict. We categorised those factors into three levels: individual, organisational, and societal. It should also be noted that this chapter does not aim to comprehensively introduce all factors influencing work–life conflict in China, but rather to illustrate the most salient factors, which we hope can shed light on future work–life conflict research on Chinese employees who are immersed in Confucianism. The factors we will be discussing are listed in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Factors influencing work–life conflict in China

	Factors
Individual level	• **Work-related factors**: workload and working hours; job insecurity; *yingchou* (after-work hours business entertainment); work prioritisation
	• **Family-related factors**: family demands (high family expectations, and the paradox of elder parents' support); harmonious family environment
	• **Social network-related factors**: leader-member exchange (LMX) and *guanxi*
	• **Personality-related factors**: neuroticism; internal locus of control; workaholism; face consciousness
Organisational level	• Family-friendly policies, practices, and culture
	• Supervisory support under paternalistic leadership
	• Communist Party of China unit
Societal level	• Constant work connectivity
	• Ramifications of the one-child-per-family policy
	• Gender role expectations
	• The policy of Protection of the Rights and Interests of Older Workers

Individual-Level Factors

Individual-level factors refer to employees' attributes, including attitudes, behaviours, demands, and beliefs, which can influence work–life conflict. Historically, work–life research has been primarily guided by role theory (Powell et al., 2019), aiming to investigate how individuals' behaviours led by their understanding of the roles of work and life can cause the interference between work and life domains. Therefore, it is not surprising that many previous work–life research studies have focused on individual-level factors of work–life conflict. In the following section, we categorise individual-level factors into four themes: work-related factors, family-related factors, social network-related factors, and personality-related factors and elaborate on a few salient variables under each theme based on a cultural perspective.

Work-Related Factors

Workload and Working Hours

Numerous studies have found that workload and work hours are associated with greater work–life conflict (e.g. Hill, Erickson, Holmes, & Ferris, 2010; Skinner & Pocock, 2008). For example, based on data collected in a national Australian study, Skinner and Pocock (2008) found that work overload was the strongest predictor of full-time employees' work–life conflict, and work hours demonstrated small to moderate associations with work–life conflict. Further, Ilies, Schwind, Wagner, Johnson, DeRue, and Ilgen (2007) found that employees' perceptions of workload predicted work-to-life conflict over time, even after controlling for the number of hours spent at work. More recently, China's technology (or "tech") industry has endorsed the "996" culture, which refers to Chinese tech employees' punishing work schedule of 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week, often with no extra pay (Gao, 2019). The rise of China's "996" culture mirrors the United States' Silicon Valley's "hustle" culture. As a result of the long intense work hours, many Chinese tech employees suffer from mental (e.g. stress) and physical health problems (e.g. poor sleep quality, fatigue, and spine and neck disorders) (Wang, 2019). They also barely have time for their families and personal life (Wang, 2019), sacrificing most of their non-work time for work. The combination of high workload and long working hours is not only for the pursuit of higher salaries, but it is also the result of the cultural value of insecurity. The insecurity aspect generally leads many Chinese to take on a long-term orientation and "prepare for rainy days" (*wei yu chou mou*) (Yao, Arrowsmith, & Thorn, 2016). Generally, Chinese employees value working hard because it is a reliable way to improve their quality of life, and prepares them for any uncertainties (e.g. financial hardship in a downturn) in the future (Hofstede, 2010).

Also, there is a greater emphasis on preserving harmony across all life domains among Chinese employees, as maintaining balance is regarded as one of the highest virtues by Confucius (Burke, Astakhova, & Hang, 2015). Therefore, Chinese employees generally seek harmonious passion,

which is the autonomous internalisation of activity into one's identity (Vallerand & Houlfort, 2003). For the same reason, they are more likely to view their work and life domains as integrated than segmented and accommodate long working hours and intense job demands (Chen, Zhang, Sanders, & Xu, 2018; Yang & Poelmans, 2005). Chinese employees also perceive a greater need for integrating work and family roles because work is viewed as a key instrument to provide the family with financial support (Chen et al., 2018). However, as with millennial (1981–1996) and generation z (1997–present) employees in most developed economies, younger Chinese employees are becoming less tolerant of bad working conditions and long working hours (Wright, 2018) and more aware of the negative work-to-life spillover and personal consequences resulting from the intense workload and long working hours (Burke et al., 2015).

Job Insecurity

Job insecurity, or concern over losing one's job, has gained increased importance due to globalisation and its associated changes, such as major organisational restructuring and downsizing, as well as workplace automation enabled by technologies (Richter, Näswall, & Sverke, 2010). It is a strain-based demand that threatens the economic well-being necessary for the stability and quality of family life (Voydanoff, 2004). In fact, a number of scholars (e.g. Batt & Valcour, 2003; Richter et al., 2010; Westman, Etzion, & Danon, 2001) have found that high levels of job insecurity are associated with high levels of work–life conflict. As with many other developed economies, the concept of an "iron rice bowl" (i.e. an occupation with guaranteed job security, as well as steady income and benefits) in China has eroded since the late 1990s. Chinese employees are also no longer guaranteed lifetime employment, as advanced technologies, economic downturns, and global competition have led organisations to lay off employees to reduce costs and inefficiencies, and have collectively contributed to high levels of anxiety, distress, and fear of losing jobs among employees who remain in these organisations (Lam, Liang, Ashford, & Lee, 2015). As we have discussed

earlier, insecurity is one aspect of the Chinese culture and it causes Chinese employees to constantly worry about uncertainties in the future (Hofstede, 2010). Therefore, it is anticipated that Chinese employees would be more sensitive to job insecurity, and the cultural aspect of insecurity is likely to intensify the positive relationship between job insecurity and work–life conflict.

Yingchou

Yingchou, which refers to after-work hours business entertainment involving activities such as banqueting, binge drinking, and Karaoke singing (Bedford, 2016), is a uniquely Chinese phenomenon. *Yingchou* is an integral component of working life in China, as it can facilitate business transactions through entertaining current and potential clients and promote individual career advancement through socialising with colleagues and supervisors after work (Bedford, 2016). It has been regarded as the most salient and common work-related stressor for Chinese employees across industries and occupations (Chang, Chen, & Chi, 2014). Within a culture emphasising social order and hierarchy, it is an implicit norm that Chinese employers or managers have the prerogative to summon their employees to attend to business matters after legal working hours, such as in the evening or over the weekend (Xiao & Cooke, 2012), and employees normally feel obliged to abide by such requirements. Therefore, individuals are connected to their work 24/7, and their actual number of working hours could be much more than the legal working hours (approximately 40 h per week). Accordingly, some research have empirically demonstrated that *yingchou* can severely intensify work–life conflict among Chinese employees as it significantly extends working hours (Chang et al., 2014).

Work Prioritisation

Prioritisation refers to individuals' preference for how they prioritise their life roles. In the last four decades, China's enormous economic achievement has encouraged a popular goal among many Chinese—to "get rich

first, enjoy life later"—reflecting the value paid to work more than family and personal time in their lives (Hofstede, 2010; Xiao & Cooke, 2012). In one study, Shenkar and Ronen (1987) found that mainland Chinese managers rated lower importance on family and personal time than on paid work, similar to their counterparts in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. Work prioritisation in China is also derived from the Confucian value of insecurity, as Chinese employees need to build up and accumulate resources for their future and are willing to constrain their short-term material or emotional gratification (Hofstede, 2010; Redding, 2002). Therefore, Chinese employees are more likely and willing to sacrifice non-work activities and personal time to progress at work.

Family-Related Factors

Family Demands

Stressors from the family are also a primary contributor to work–life conflict (Zhang & Liu, 2011). Spouse/partner's work, stress and work hours generally increase the difficulty of balancing work and non-work, leading to work–life conflict (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; Westman & Etzion, 2005). Family demands, which refer to the time spent, level of commitment to, and responsibilities associated with fulfilling family-related obligations such as the tasks of housekeeping and childcare, are also another contributor to work–life conflict (Choi, 2008). In particular, dependent care (such as caring for children and elderly parents or other dependents) generates burden on the focal employee, increasing tensions between their work and non-work roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011), and leads them to experience work–life conflict (Dugan et al., 2016). Among various family demands, we will focus on two unique factors: high family expectations from children, and the paradox of elderly parents' support.

High Family Expectations from Children

Given the cultural value of knowledge, Chinese parents are extremely obsessed to give their offspring the best education to help them succeed in life, which can be represented by a prevalent idiom, hoping one's son/daughter to become a dragon/phoenix (in Chinese: *Wang Zi Cheng Long* or *Wang Nv Cheng Feng*). In other words, all Chinese parents want their children to achieve great success. Chinese parents' high expectations of their children have been heightened by the three-decade-long one-child-per-family policy, as parents pin high hopes on their only child, and channel their attention and emotional and instrumental support on their child's education (NPR, 2008). Therefore, "tiger parenting", which refers to the act of parents consistently pushing their child to achieve higher, has become a popular way to educate children in China (Shang, O'Driscoll, & Roche, 2018). However, being a tiger parent comes at a great cost. Parents need to spend more of their time studying the content their child is learning at school and take it upon themselves to guide and supervise their child's study daily (NPR, 2008). As such, having high educational expectations of their children is likely to lead to high levels of work–life conflict, especially for Chinese employees with children as they have to dedicate a large portion of their time to their children's study which may have negative spillover effects on their work and other life domains.

Paradox of Elderly Parents' Support

In China where people are influenced by the value of family-based collectivism, most tend to emphasise the integral benefit of their extended family (Hofstede, 2010). As such, parental support is more prevalent in China compared to Western societies (Strom, Strom, & Xie, 1996). Elderly parents in China are also willing to provide any necessary support to their adult children, and therefore adult children can access excessive support from their elderly parents, for instance, doing household chores and looking after grandchildren. Research has shown that support from family can attenuate the conflict between work and life (e.g. Dewe et al.,

2010). As opposed to their Western counterparts, Chinese employees are expected to be filial to their parents, which may be considered an additional role and responsibility of caring for their ageing parents. That is, they have to provide considerable instrumental and psychological support for their elderly parents (Ling & Powell, 2001), which may be regarded as a significant stressor contributing to their work–life conflict. Such detrimental effects can be intensified by the one-child-per-family policy (see details in the section of ramifications of the one-child-per-family policy). Therefore, adult children in China would very often face the paradox of receiving parental support, as they are also expected to care for their elderly parents alongside their full-time employment and caring for their spouse and children. When employees want to access parental support, they need to take into account the negative effects of parental demands on family-to-work conflict and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages between parental support and parental demands (Shang, O'Driscoll, & Roche, 2017).

Harmonious Family Environment

The Confucian value of order also requires the Chinese to devote themselves to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships in their life domains. Previous cross-cultural research has consistently suggested that Chinese place greater importance on interpersonal harmony than their Western counterparts (e.g. Ling & Powell, 2001; Shang et al., 2017). In the family domain, members are interdependent and obligated to express concern for each other's instrumental and emotional demands to maintain a harmonious family environment (Ling & Powell, 2001). In particular, many Chinese prefer an extended family, and two or more generations to live together, which sometimes make maintenance of family harmony even harder, as worldview and personal values can be fairly disparate between generations. Failing to do so, family members are more likely to feel embarrassed, frustrated, or ashamed, and it is not easy for both sides to be freed from it (Ling & Powell, 2001). To remedy or restore the relationship, members will need to expend considerable energy and time, which are likely to spill over negatively

to their work domain and social networks, increasing work–life conflict. Hence, the particularly strong emphasis on the maintenance of harmony could intensify the negative family-to-life conflict experience of Chinese employees.

Social Network-Related Factors

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and Guanxi

LMX refers to a relationship-based approach to leadership that focuses on the two-way or dyadic relationship between leaders and employees. A few studies have examined LMX in a work–life context and they have generally demonstrated that high LMX is associated with lower work-to-life conflict as it reduces employees' work pressure (Major, Fletcher, Davis, & Germano, 2008; Tummers & Bronkhorst, 2014). For example, in a high-quality LMX, subordinates may take on extra job tasks to assist their leaders, and in turn, their leaders may provide more resources and opportunities to support them, which reduces work–life conflict (Hsu, Chen, Wang, & Lin, 2010; Major & Morganson, 2011). On the contrary, a low-quality LMX is likely to result in leaders being less supportive, or in some cases, engage in leader incivility with their subordinates, leading to work–life conflict (Thompson, Buch, & Glasø, 2018). In China, the concept of *guanxi* is strongly associated with LMX (Hsu et al., 2010), and is highly related to the value of reciprocity. *Guanxi* between leaders and subordinates refers to a type of abstract, implicit understanding, commitment or obligation in interpersonal connections or relationships (Tsang, 1998). LMX in Western settings tends to focus only on the exchange of job-related resources (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), while *guanxi* in China may involve the exchange of non-job resources, such as information about the well-being of families, giving colleagues souvenirs after returning from a vacation, and providing assistance with non-work-related tasks (Law, Wong, Wang, & Wang, 2000). Nevertheless, the principles are the same. Employees with high-quality *guanxi* with their leaders generally receive more recognition, interpersonal assistance, and emotional support, which helps to relieve their work-related

stress and reduces the likelihood of work–life conflict (Wu, Yuan, Yen, & Xu, 2019). Conversely, employees who have low-quality *guanxi* with their leaders will face added work pressure as they are more likely to receive fewer resources, support, and recognition from their leaders (Wu et al., 2019).

Personality-Related Factors

Personality refers to the characteristic sets of behaviours, cognitions, and emotional patterns that evolve from biological and environmental factors (Corr & Matthews, 2009). General cognitive, affective, and behavioural propensities, such as internal locus of control and neuroticism, may influence employees' perceptions of their work–life conflict. Accordingly, individuals high in an internal locus of control generally feel greater control over their work and non-work responsibilities, while individuals high in neuroticism tend to feel high levels of psychological distress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction in any work–life conflict situations (Michel et al., 2011).

Neuroticism

Neuroticism is typically characterised by high levels of trait-based psychological distress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Negative affect is also considered a component of neuroticism (Judge & Ilies, 2002), and both negative affect and neuroticism have been examined as antecedents of work–life conflict because they influence how individuals perceive both their work and life situations (Bouchard & Poirier, 2011; Rantanen, Pulkkinen, & Kinnunen, 2005). Neurotic individuals are more likely to experience negative affect in response to challenges and view themselves and their surrounding environment negatively (Rantanen et al., 2005). In particular, Bouchard and Poirier (2011) found that men high in neuroticism were more likely than women to feel that the role pressures from work and family were mutually incompatible leading them to experience work–family conflict.

A handful of studies on neuroticism and work–life conflict conducted in China (e.g. Cao, Yuan, Fine, Zhou, & Fang, 2019) also found that neuroticism is related to negative behaviours such as aggression, which subsequently have negative flow-on effects on other non-work domains (e.g. conflict with a spouse).

With the emphasis on societal order, Chinese individuals are expected to endure the unpleasant nature of interpersonal conflict to maintain a harmonious environment. With the emphasis of hierarchy, Chinese employees are sometimes expected to endure abusive supervision. With the value of reciprocity, Chinese are expected to engage in an excess of social exchange to maintain *guanxi*. Therefore, endurance (*ren*) is a praised virtue in Chinese culture (Xing, 1995). We expect that endurance may play a role in either escalating or mitigating the negative effects of neuroticism and negative affect on work–life conflict, depending on how the employee deals with the impacts of enduring.

Internal Locus of Control

Internal locus of control refers to the extent to which an individual feels outcomes are caused by the individual or self, as opposed to external variables such as chance (Rotter, 1966). A handful of studies (e.g. Andreassi & Thompson, 2007; Hsu, 2011) have been conducted on the relationship between locus of control and work–life conflict. For example, Andreassi and Thompson (2007) demonstrated that internal locus of control was negatively related to work–life conflict, while Hsu (2011) found that internal locus of control assisted Taiwanese correctional officers to gain greater control over their task requirements and moderate the negative effect of work–life conflict on job satisfaction. This is because employees with a high internal locus of control are more likely to be satisfied with their work and identify ways to overcome work and non-work demands, as compared to those with a low internal locus of control, leading to lower levels of work–life conflict (Hsu, 2011). From a cultural perspective, Chinese values such as social order, hierarchy, and reciprocity provide structural expectations of emphasising the interdependence of individuals within a larger group such as the family.

Guided by such values, Chinese are likely to attribute the success to people related to them, which is contrary to their Western counterparts who tend to attribute success to their efforts or competencies because of their emphasis on self-reliance (Hofstede, 2010; Hsu, 1981). Therefore, Chinese employees are expected to have lower levels of internal locus of control compared to their Western counterparts. Based on the above, we propose that Chinese values of social order, hierarchy, and reciprocity can indirectly influence work–life conflict through the internal locus of control.

Workaholism

Workaholism refers to an addiction to work where individuals work longer and harder than their job duties necessitate, often to the neglect of other non-work roles (e.g. family and friends), and they persistently and frequently think about work when they are not working (Scott, Moore, & Miceli, 1997). Ample evidence has shown that workaholism is related to negative non-work outcomes, such as lower family satisfaction (Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2009), greater marital dissatisfaction with one's spouse, as well as greater work–life conflict (Bakker, Demerouti, & Burke, 2009). Clark, Michel, Stevens, Howell, and Scruggs (2014) also found that workaholism exhibited a positive relationship with both work-to-family and family-to-work conflict. Clark et al. (2014) further explained that workaholics typically strive to reach some unattainable level of performance and, consequently, experience a high level of anxiety and disappointment. Specifically, they found that workaholism had a positive indirect effect on work-to-family conflict through work anxiety and disappointment, as well as a positive indirect effect on FWC through home anger and disappointment. In a comparative study by Hu et al. (2014), employees in China had the highest level of workaholism across countries such as Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, and Finland, and the authors attributed this to the Confucian values of hard work and valuing work as a familial responsibility.

Face Consciousness

Face consciousness refers to the extent to which individuals believe they can increase their social status by exhibiting flaunting behaviours (Zhang, Cao, & Grigoriou, 2011). Although concerns with status is a fundamental human concern, in the highly interdependent and hierarchical culture of China, such concerns are even more salient, as it can result in experiencing status anxiety, as people would worry about where they rank in society (De Botton, 2005; Tse, 1996). Immersed in a culture that emphasises face consciousness, many Chinese consume brand products not merely for material possessions but for social needs, such as a desire to have favourable social self-worth and to be respected about others and social activities (Liao & Wang, 2009). Such face consciousness-related behaviours can lead to increased stress for Chinese employees, both mentally and financially, as they often feel the need to "keep up with the Joneses". Considerable research has since demonstrated that mental stress consistently creates tension between work and non-work domains, as it is destructive to performance in all life domains (Dewe et al., 2010). Additionally, financial stress will push individuals to work even harder to earn monetary resources, which is certainly not constructive for obtaining work–life balance.

Organisational-Level Factors

Organisational-level factors refer to institutional conditions, including organisational structure, policies, culture, and supervision system, which can directly mould employees' work behaviours. Those working behaviours can be uplifting, enabling employees to approach the interface between their work and non-work domains positively. On the contrary, some working behaviours can be noxious for employees to achieve work–life balance. In the following section, we elaborate on the relationships of family-friendly policies and practices, culture, supervisor support, and the Communist Party of China Unit with work–life conflict.

Family-Friendly Policies, Practice, and Culture

Organisations can help employees cope with work–life conflict through a variety of mechanisms, including formal family-friendly policies and practices and informal family-friendly culture. Family-friendly policies and practices often aim to provide employees with increased flexibility, autonomy, and legal protections (Chou & Cheung, 2013). The range of policies typically adopted by organisations include paid sick leave and carers' leave, flexible work arrangements, and opportunities for telecommuting (Su, Li, & Curry, 2017; Wadsworth & Facer, 2016). However, it is unclear whether these family-friendly policies and practices are as accessible to employees in Asian countries as in western countries, especially since researchers have argued that their availability depends on both a government's approach to welfare and cultural values (Chou & Cheung, 2013; Gornick & Heron, 2006). Alongside formal policies and practices, organisations may foster a culture that supports the family, enabling employees to reduce work–life conflict (Beauregard, 2011; Chang, Chin, & Ye, 2014; Fiksenbaum, 2014).

As discussed earlier, influenced by the Chinese culture, working hard and prioritising work are ubiquitous norms among Chinese. Many managers work intelligently around family-friendly policies, while still abiding by the law. The most prominent example is the "996" culture. Although the "996" culture deviates from existing family-friendly policies and even violates the Labour Law in China, it is still the default working mode among many employees in the technology sector in China. Multiple studies have demonstrated that even when formal family-friendly policies are implemented, such policies tend to be under-utilised (Feeney, Bernal, & Bowman, 2014) because there have been many accounts of a "*backlash*" effect when employees made use of the family-friendly practices but ended up working more after office hours (Field & Chan, 2018), leading to work-to-life conflict, or showed decreased work engagement and performance (Timms et al., 2015). Cech and Blair-Loy (2014) also observed that while organisations may attempt to help employees cope with work–life conflict, the focal employee's colleagues and supervisors may regard the need and use of flexible work arrangements as a sign of reduced commitment to the

organisation, leading to a phenomenon known as the "*flexibility stigma*". Hence, formal family-friendly policies and practices have to be implemented with a supportive organisational culture for them to be effective in reducing employees' work–life conflict.

Supervisory Support Under Paternalistic Leadership

In most workplaces, supervisors are the most crucial link between management and employees as they deal with subordinates daily, at the same time representing them to upper management (Major & Morganson, 2011). Research has consistently suggested that supervisory support is an effective means to reduce employees' work–life conflict, as employees can access instrumental aid, emotional concern, informational, and/or appraisal functions from their immediate supervisor, which will, in turn, lead to a reduction of the time, attention, and energy required for work performance, thereby alleviating work–life conflict (Michel et al., 2011).

It should be noted that whether employees receive supervisory support and the type of support they obtain depends on their supervisor's leadership style. Therefore, in Chinese culture, it is necessary to discuss supervisory support under paternalistic leadership which is a widespread people management approach in Chinese organisations (Chen, Eberly, Chiang, Farh, & Cheng, 2014). Chinese paternalistic leadership is developed from a combination of the values of hierarchy and reciprocity (Chen et al., 2014), and is defined as "a style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence and moral integrity couched in a personalistic atmosphere" (Farh & Cheng, 2000, p. 91). Research shows that paternalistic leaders are usually aware of their subordinates' family lives and provide care and support for them when necessary, and in turn, these leaders expect to earn respect from their subordinates (Chen et al., 2014). Therefore, we propose that Chinese paternalistic leadership may enhance the positive aspects of supervisory support and reduce employees' work–life conflict.

Communist Party of China (CPC) Unit

The CPC unit is a unique Chinese feature present in organisations to maintain control in Chinese society. A CPC unit is set up in nearly every Chinese organisation, including governmental organisations, public institutions, state-owned enterprises, private enterprises, and even foreign enterprises. The purpose of the CPC unit is to convey the intentions and policies of the CPC to its party members and build close relationships among the CPC, party members, and non-partisan employees. All employees, especially party members, are expected to dedicate a portion of their time to learn and reflect on the CPC's recent policies, guidelines, activities, and events. As these are typically considered non-work-related activities and can be time- and energy-consuming, they are likely to aggravate work–life conflict.

Societal-Level Factors

Societal-level factors refer to the systems that enact rules or phenomena that produce norms, which are used to organise and constrain human interactions in their life domains. For example, labour laws as a system directly influence employees' rights and welfare, such as their working hours and leave entitlement, which are highly relevant to work–life conflict. Technological advancement as a social phenomenon has enhanced the possibility of working at home or on holiday, which has further weakened the boundaries between work and non-work domains (Field & Chan, 2018). In the following section, we explore four pertinent social trends that are affecting Chinese employees' work–life conflict experiences.

Constant Work Connectivity

Proliferating information and communication technologies (ICTs), often mobile, are connecting people, but also intensifying work beyond traditional offices and working hours (Ciolfi & Lockley, 2018). The

boundaries of time and space that traditionally provided a clear distinction between work and non-work are vanishing (Field & Chan, 2018). Without clear boundaries, employees now remain connected to the workplace from any location, at any time. Therefore, "anytime, anyplace connectivity" has become "all the time, everywhere" connectivity (Richardson & Benbunan-Fich, 2011). Continuous or 24/7 connectivity makes employees feel as if they need to be constantly connected and constantly available (Field & Chan, 2018). In Field and Chan's (2018) study, it was revealed that constant availability for work has become a proxy for organisational commitment. Virtual displays of employee engagement through 24/7 work connectivity have also become the norm. Some employees in Field and Chan's (2018) study sample also worked during the holidays to avoid out-of-control work situations, leading to short-term work-to-life conflict, but potentially reducing their medium-to-long-term work–life conflict. In China, work is viewed as a family responsibility, thus working after hours can be viewed as a virtue and self-sacrifice made for the benefit of the family (Xie, Ma, Zhou, & Tang, 2018). Coupled with the pervasive use of mobile phones in both urban and rural parts of China, Chinese employees are more likely than employees in Western countries to send and receive work-related calls and text messages after office hours. Consequently, constant work connectivity and ICT use are likely to intensify job demands for Chinese employees and increase work–life conflict drastically.

Ramifications of One-Child-Per-Family Policy

The one-child-per-family policy was implemented nationwide in China in 1980 to limit most Chinese families to one child each to decrease the rapid growth of the country's population. The policy has significantly reduced the average family size and hence family demands related to childcare and household chores (Yang et al., 2000), which was beneficial for earlier generations of Chinese employees. However, the ramifications of such a policy for younger generations of Chinese employees are highly detrimental, as they are heavily burdened by not only their parents but also their parents-in-law, and they do not have siblings to share such

family demands (Choi, 2008). These family demands typically lead to role overload and work–life conflict for Chinese employees. Further, as the elderly retirement and pension schemes are still not widely available to most Chinese retirees, elderly parents tend to rely heavily on their working adult children for support. Their adult children may also be publicly shamed if they do not take care of their parents as this violates the cultural values of family-based collectivism which emphasises filial piety (Hofstede, 2010).

Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly People

In 2013, China passed a law entitled "*Protection of the Rights and Interests of Elderly People*" to legally mandate that children should visit their parents in person and check in on them regularly. Also, companies are obliged to provide employees time off from work to look after the needs of their elderly parents. The fact that such a law was passed indicates that Chinese society values family-based collectivism to a large extent (Powell et al., 2017). This law elevates the duty of looking after elderly parents from an affectionate level to a legal level, which will likely increase some employees' family pressure, especially rural migrants who move to urban cities to work and are thus separated from their elderly parents.

Gender Role Expectations

In China, since Mao Zedong declared that "women hold up half the sky", female employment has increased drastically (Riley, 1996). However, the influx of female employees in the workplace has not reduced female workers' household responsibilities (Choi, 2008). Female employees continue to spend a large amount of their time at work and are also expected to perform domestic chores and childcare at home (Cooke 2007; Zuo & Bian, 2004). This can be attributed to the deeply held cultural convictions in China which view the family as a woman's domain

and paid employment as a male domain (Foster & Ren, 2015). There-fore, Chinese employees—in particular, female employees—typically experience high levels of work and non-work demands, and by exten-sion, work–life conflict (Xiao & Cooke, 2012). Further, the Chinese culture also scores high on masculinity which has led to a preference for achievement, assertiveness, and material rewards for success (Hofstede, 2001), reinforcing the notion of hierarchy (i.e. wives should obey their husbands). As a result of such cultural characteristics, the Chinese society thus holds the belief that men should be primarily responsible for their family's finances, whereas women are mainly responsible for matters about the family domain, such as housework and taking care of family members (Chen et al., 2018). Also, women in China are frequently frowned upon if their careers are more advanced than their husbands'. Even though more Chinese couples are now dual earners and career couples (Chen et al., 2018; Cooke 2007; Zuo & Bian, 2001), the conventional norm that the husband deals with external matters and the wife look after domestic chores remains highly pervasive in modern China, and that has led many female employees to experience role conflict.

Recommendations and Future Research Directions

Based on the individual-, organisational-, and societal-level factors we explored above, we carve out a future research agenda highlighting future areas of research on the issue of work–life conflict in the Chinese culture. First, future work–life research in China should further explore the role of specific Chinese cultural constructs about Chinese employees' work–life conflict. Identifying specific cultural constructs beyond Hofstede and GLOBE cultural dimensions is important for both work–family theory development and theory testing (Yang et al., 2000). Hofstede and GLOBE cultural dimensions are undeniably helpful for researchers to understand the role of culture in work–life conflict, especially on a national level. However, those universal approaches may limit our capability to understand specific aspects of the Chinese culture (e.g.

reciprocity is hardly discussed in the two cultural approaches), and to recognise the uniqueness of Chinese culture (e.g. it is hard to distinguish the nuanced differences between two cultures with similar scores on the metrics). Therefore, applying a specific Chinese cultural construct, like Reeding (2002), to work–life research in China may reveal more insights. On the one hand, it can help researchers to identify some unique factors influencing work–life conflict among Chinese, which has not been discussed under other cultural contexts. On the other hand, it can also assist scholars to obtain an in-depth understanding of the causes of work–life conflict. For example, some studies (e.g. Lu et al., 2010; Ollo-López & Goñi-Legaz, 2017) found a significant positive relationship between power distance and work–life conflict but did not probe further. By using specific Chinese cultural constructs, we would understand that the Confucian values of hierarchy and social orders jointly contribute to the perception of power distance. Once we understand the Chinese conceptualisation of power distance, it is a lot more helpful for us to comprehend this relationship and offer coping strategies to mitigate work–life conflict.

Second, work–life researchers should contextualise workplace policies and practices to work–life research in China. Chen et al. (2018) found that two types of flexible work arrangements—namely, flexible working time and compressed workweeks—were key drivers of positive work-to-family spillover for employees in China. In particular, their study showed that both types of flexible work arrangements led to increased job satisfaction and decreased turnover intention. Chen et al. (2018) also anticipate that more organisations in China will implement flexible work arrangements going forward, given that an increase in workplace flexibility (especially time flexibility) helped employees to reduce their perceived job stress and strain. Given that Chinese employees are influenced by a collectivistic culture, they are also more likely to integrate their work and family roles than separate them (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). However, research on work–life conflict and workplace policies and practices among Chinese employees remains scant (Foster & Ren, 2015). In general, the number of work-life studies conducted in a Chinese context is also much lower than the number of studies conducted in a Western context (Chen et al., 2018; Foster & Ren, 2015).

Work–life studies conducted in the West often assume that work–life conflict is gender-neutral and can be alleviated through policies that enhance flexibility and individual choice (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007), but in collectivist cultures such as China, the relationship is not as straightforward. Correspondingly, we recommend that future studies contextualise and explore more workplace policies and practices that may alleviate work–life conflict for Chinese employees, taking into consideration the traditional patriarchal Confucian values and gender role expectations prevalent in modern Chinese workplaces.

Third, future research should also consider societal-level factors in their theoretical models and discussions. The contextualisation of work–life research is hindered by the complexity of identifying country-level variables (Ollier-Malaterre & Foucreault, 2017). As suggested in the call for papers as well as in some other articles (e.g. Bear, Bear 2019; Crawford et al., 2019), more work–life theories are needed from a societal or national culture perspective. A societal cultural perspective is suggested by Leslie, King, and Clair (2019) who found that travel and immigration policies and social welfare systems shape work–life ideologies. Further, Bear (2019) also examined social policies that support caregiving as a moderator in her theoretical model, proposing that they influenced people's work–life experiences. Also, several articles (e.g. Allen et al., 2015; Ollo-López & Goñi-Legaz, 2017) have incorporated the influence of societal culture in their models by including gender roles and gender role socialisation and examining how they shape people's work–life experiences. However, dimensions of national culture that may influence linkages among work–life phenomena have seldom been explicitly incorporated into work–life theories to make them "culture-sensitive" (Powell et al., 2009). We thus recommend additional theory that examines the role of societal similarities and differences in the meaning of work and other life domains to explain how dimensions of national culture affect employees' work–life experiences.

Conclusion

For decades, work–life scholars have been constantly calling for the contextualisation of extant work–life theories to different cultures since such theories generally assume that work–life phenomena are similar across cultures and thus are not "culture-sensitive". In response to the call, this chapter holistically investigates the individual-, organisational-, and societal-level factors that may influence employees' work–life conflict in China from a Confucian cultural perspective. Simply put, we portrayed the potential impacts of the specific Confucian values on the individual-, organisational-, and societal-level factors, and provided recommendations for future areas of research that can help to contextualise work–life conflict research to the specific Chinese cultural context.

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10

Work-Life Balance in India: Policy, Practices and the Road Ahead

V. Chandra

Introduction

The term work-life balance (WLB) entered corporate corridors some thirty years back (Singh, 2014) in the western world as more and more women entered workforce (Lambert, 2000). The term garnered immediate attention of behavioural scientists and WLB has now become an integral part of work systems. Supportive WLB policies and practices help employees manage multiple roles more efficiently in a stress-free manner. They also help organizations build and nurture a robust engaged workforce, thus contributing significantly to its productivity. Abundant literature on the positive relationship between work engagement and performance (Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2012) is available. Studies reveal a positive influence on employee job satisfaction, turn over intentions, increases organizational loyalty and commitment, reduces absenteeism

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(Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett, 1988; Dex & Scheibel, 1999; Duxbury & Higgins, 2001; Frone, Russel, & Cooper, 1992; Groover & Crooker, 1995; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Lobel & Kossek, 1996; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002), increases individual and organizational performance (Osterman, 1995; Sand & Harper, 2007). Indian subcontinent is too large a country with varied and diverse practices that it is difficult to identify a single standard for WLB programmes. Most research on work and family in Indian context falls under two distinct domains. One domain centred round women subordination at work and home as an offshoot of patriarchal social context targeting the underprivileged sections of society. The other focusing on work family conflicts (Rajadhyaksha & Smita, 2004). However, unlike the western counterparts, not much evidence is available on impact of these practices from organizational perspective (Poster, 2005; Rajadhyaksha & Smita, 2004; Wang, Lawler, Shi, Walumbwa, & Piao, 2008).

Historical Development of Work-Life Balance Initiatives in India

India traditionally being an agrarian country, nature of work was primarily home based. Even after industrial revolution, though people started working in factories various sectors like agriculture, family businesses, retail, etc., continued to operate as home-based units. WLB was best handled at the family level where the husband went for paid employment and the wife took care of the household work. Technology brought a new impetus to the nature and meaning of work.

National Context and WLB

The services sector, comprising of both organized and unorganized sectors, contribute to a large chunk of Indian economy contributing significantly to the country's GDP. The last two decades have seen exponential growth in services sector especially in the information and

communication technology space. While both organized and unorganized sectors contribute to the country's GDP, there was greater transparency and accountability in transactions of the organized sector.

Since independence public sector firms were at the forefront of Indian economy. They prospered as mini replicas of Indian national culture where employee development and talent retention are greatly valued. With the thrust area being nation development, institution building and welfare orientation formed the bedrock. Respect for age, seniority, authority is well documented. They are also significant factors in employee and organizational performance. Perceptions about organizational thinking and practices are deeply rooted and guided by cultural assumptions. High power distance (PD) is a characteristic feature of Indian culture suggesting a more centralized decision-making and hierarchical relationships (Sagie & Aycan, 2003). When power and authority rests only with few individuals, team participation is often assumed and taken for granted (Hofstede, 2001). Studies by Indian behavioural scientists in the early eighties suggest that unequal distribution of power is not only culturally and socially accepted but also encouraged (Thiagarajan & Deep, 1970). An ideal boss subordinate relationship is a nurturant task relationship (Sinha, 2004) where seniors have the responsibility to guide juniors and juniors are obligated to respect seniors and authority (Carl, Gupta, & Javidan, 2004) unquestioningly. Job security is a common denominator for all public sector organizations. Power of authority moderates the relationship between the behavioural and psychological constructs (Hauff & Richeter, 2015).

Another strong pillar for Indian economy since independence has been the contribution of the family owned businesses. Of the top 20 business houses in India today, 15 are family owned. 16 of the top business groups are a result of post-independence economic growth. While both private public sector firms had similar work ideologies during their initial years, the 1991 economic reforms opened new vistas for doing business (Sinha, 2004). Business groups that adapted to the changing business scenario survived and continue to grow while other fell off the race (Sarkar & Sarkar, 2012).

Twentieth century has witnessed major demographic shifts with a significant inflow of women entering paid workforce. There was a major

move in women employment from agriculture to services sector changing the gender equilibrium both at workplace as well relationship within the family (Sun, 2008). Between 1971 and 1999, women employment figure in public sector has increased by 327% and private sector by 175%. In the past half century, the percentage of stay at home mums dropped from 76 to 28% (Mary, Cynthia, & Black, 2007). Multiple perspectives about work and work norms; life and life priorities have emerged. While there are studies that point towards the convergence of unpaid work, there are equal number of studies pointing to the perceived unequal distribution of household responsibilities (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Sun, 2008). The late 1990s saw a trend towards family-friendly policies with management's main agenda to safeguard the interests of women employees specially working mothers (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). The policies and regulations were more on healthcare, nutrition, townships and residential facilities for employees, schools, etc. Relationship focused education was not their prime focus area. Many first-generation urban youths found it difficult to strike a balance between work- and non-work-related roles (Gore, 1994). A need for reviewing management strategies and people practices was felt as more and more global firms started establishing their foothold on the Indian soils. This essentially entails not only skills and competencies matching global standards, but also changes in mindset, prevailing norms and values which fall under the domain of national socio-economic and political spheres (Budhwar & Sparrow, 1998; Hofstede, 2011).

Gender Egalitarianism

Work and life have varied definitions (Guest, 2002). Work refers to paid employment and every other activity of the individual beyond the realm of paid employment comes under the purview of 'Life'. Researchers associate this ambiguous definition of 'work' and 'life' to the societal gender division (Ransome, 2007). Several factors both at the individual level as well as national level are responsible for the gendered division of household responsibilities (Sun, 2008).

India has since ancient times held its women in high esteem. Hindus who constitute the majority community typically pray to goddess Saraswati for knowledge and learning, goddess Lakshmi for wealth and goddess Durga for strength to fight evil forces. Indian women have excelled various walks of life, including as saints (Meera Bai) and warriors (Rani Jhansi and Rani Rudrama Devi). Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest exponents of Hindu Culture, exhorted that a civilization is known by the way it treats its women. India is a predominantly patriarchal society. Still, some states like Kerala in the southern India and several states in Northern India, which are advanced states in the country in terms of UNDP's Human Development, are matriarchal societies.

Constitutionally there is no discrimination against women. Rather Indian constitution has deliberately tried to force policies in favour of the 'fairer Sex' through its Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. The various constitutional privileges include not only equal opportunity in employment, but also directs state to adopt various affirmative action plans in favour of women. Through various employment legislations it is aimed to build a secure and environment-friendly workplace for female work force where social, economic and political disparities are minimized.

Mythologically women enjoyed a special status in India. Yet demographic, social and economic indicators point out that women continue to be disadvantaged in terms of their access to education and employment. Attitudes about gender role, social belief systems, customs and physical infrastructure have perpetuated the relative conservativeness and vulnerability of women in society though this trend is slowly changing in the urban side.

In India as is with most Asian countries, WLB even today is seen as a gender issue pertaining to a women's struggle in an otherwise male-dominated world of work (Chandra, 2012). Studies have also revealed that family obligations are more demanding for women than men even when they are equal co-earners (Bharat, 2003; Gershuny, 2000; Pleck, 1997; Ramu, 1989). This gendered public psyche is so deeply rooted that many working women too view themselves first as homemakers. Compromising for less demanding job roles to manage dual responsibilities is common.

Technology and Employment Trends

Technology gave a new impetus to the nature and meaning of work. Traditional forms of nine to five, eight-hour permanent jobs are giving way to a variety of new work arrangements (Briscoe, Hall, & De Muth, 2006). Linear organizational structures and rigid views about jobs about careers (Greenhaus, Callanan, & Godshak, 2000) underwent swift transformation giving way to matrixed structures with multiple reporting systems. Work practices became more dynamic and less predictable. Though flexible working arrangements have been very well accepted in the west, it was somewhat a new trend for Indian community. With technology as a great enabler the possibility of managing work and family encouraged more and more women to look for corporate jobs and individuals started integrating multiple roles.

With the wave of information and communication technologies (ICTs) redefining the way work is done it has also interfered with the ideologies that prospered during the times of industrial modernization (Townsend & Batchelor, 2005). Agile technologies, pod structures, scrum tools have all rewritten the way work is being done. Work is now seen more as an activity than a place to go. As a transformational tool, technology has helped organizations and individuals to work more smartly and effectively, thus increasing productivity in a very cost-effective manner. Agile working is based on the complete flexibility of work drive long-term organization success. While it can unlock value for both employer and employee it will be driven by business needs (Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion, 2013).

Causes and Consequences

Though the boundaries between work and home are getting blurred, they still continue to remain as very distinct entities (Duxbury & Smart, 2011; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). They are like two sides of the same coin. While family contributes significantly to individual's performance at workplace (Baral & Bhargava, 2009), employees who perform well in their jobs also contribute positively to family well-being. What causes

work-life imbalance and how one perceives and reacts to it are very different (Muna & Mansour, 2009; Poelmans, Kalliath, & Brough, 2008). The spillover effects are very many both for the organizational performance as well as for individual well-being. Most research on WLB revolves round two closely linked and overlapping yet very distinct streams—one focusing at the individual level and the other measured at the business and organizational performance level. Both individual as well as organizational drivers are influenced by the socio-cultural context in which they operate. National culture of the land, individual's orientation towards self and market dynamics can be considered as some of the main reasons behind these variations (Delcampo & Hinrichs, 2006).

Individual Factors

Individual's life philosophy plays a major role in managing conflict. Where focus is on 'being' individuals tend to seek satisfaction in what one is and accept situation as it comes. On the other hand, where life philosophy is on 'becoming', achievement orientation becomes important. It is said that greater the conflict between being and becoming, lower is the WLB (Singh & Awasthy, 2009). Traditionally, issues related to WLB were viewed from worker and work perspective. So, individuals tend to achieve this balance through the personal choices they make. Individual personality type, personal values and attitude towards work and family are some of the key areas that this domain focusses. Even today for women family obligations take precedence over paid employment and often had to make career sacrifices for family needs. Going by Vineeta Chandra (2010), work family conflict affects men and women differently and McClelland's need hierarchy acts as an antecedent to work family conflict. Balancing work and personal life continues to be a challenge. The ride could be bumpy enough especially for dual career couple (Schulz & Schulz, 2005). The first-generation female working families find even more difficult as the values they grew up with are drastically different from the ones they currently face (Henry & Parasarathy, 2010).

Organizational Factors

Maintaining a healthy WLB is essential for the health of the individual as well as the organization, though it effects individuals and organizations very differently. Organizations are fast realizing that work and family issues are not separate entities and should be looked at as part of the whole continuum. Several studies have demonstrated the relationship between work-life conflict and job performance, job satisfaction, employee and organizational performance (Lyness & Judiesch, 2008). Workplace plays an important role in not only helping employees manage their workspace but also help coordinate and manage personal roles and responsibilities (Bowen, 1988; Kamerman & Kahn, 1987; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Voydanoff, 1987; Warren & Johnson, 1995). An internal poll at Accenture as stated by Klun (2008), over 80 per cent of employees emphatically stated that their commitment to continue with the company is influenced by their ability to manage WLB. The poll also reveals that 32% of employees have turned down offers in the past two years because it would destabilize their WLB.

Research in this domain suggests that WLB initiatives and interventions are of utmost importance not just for people with family responsibilities but for all employees irrespective of their family commitments. WLB is a much broader concept and HR professionals are increasing using it as a strategic tool (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000) in bringing about innovative employee-friendly practices and thereby help them take care of their personal needs. Glass and Beth (1997) classified these initiatives into three broad categories that aim at: policies that aim at reducing work hours, policies that allow flexibility in time and location, and policies that provide social support. By reducing the number of work hours per week, employees get to spend quality time with their families and shoulder caregiving responsibilities more effectively. Studies have demonstrated that work autonomy, work family responsibility are high in priority for employees. Employers too have acknowledged the positive effect of work-life balance on work engagement which in turn contributes to overall business performance (Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989). Organizations have faced setbacks due to absenteeism, reduced productivity, job satisfaction, turnover, which are

all a result of poor attention to WLB policies (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

Flexible working hours have been very popular in the west. In the Indian context studies reveal that flexible work arrangements have positively impacted employee relations, enhanced commitment and loyalty towards organization, reduced attrition (Venkata Ratnam & Chandra, 2009). However, there is also indication of operational and administrative challenges. The legal and institutional framework for social support followed by Government of India is adopted from the several conventions framed by International Labour Organization (ILO) and enacted through legislative measures. Government, employers, trade unions and civil societies have together joined hands and took their first baby steps in the direction.

Consequences of Work-Life Imbalance

Work to family spillover retards the individual and his/her family functioning. Family to work spillover negatively effects not just individual performance but also hampers organizational productivity and turnover intentions (Glass & Beth, 1997). Over worked parents may not be able to give adequate attention to the much-needed sensitive care that is instrumental in developing cognitive and social skills. The flexibility that comes with the blurring of boundaries is viewed differently by different individuals. ICTs infiltration on WLB can be viewed both positively as well as negatively. While some embrace technological convenience more easily and manage professional and personal spillovers with greater ease, others take this infiltration as an interference and prefer strict boundaries between personal and professional life (Nam, 2014). There is however more research on the negative consequences. Opportunity of juggling multiple roles has created more work for employees which ultimately results in more private costs (Brett & Stroh, 2003; Clark 2001; Eikhof, Warhurst, & Haunschild, 2007; Pocock & Clarke, 2005; Walsh, 1999). Unpleasant consequences reported include overwork and workaholism (Olson & Primps, 1984) resulting in what Gore (1994) calls choice anxiety—anxiety stemming from increased autonomy and

choice. Variable pay could often be lucrative monetarily but is negatively correlated WLB. On an average Indians spend around 1,437 hours yearly which is among the three highest scores globally (Thacker, 2018). 1980s and 1990s saw a rapid increase in issues related to both 'work-family' and 'family-work' conflict (Hewlett & Luce, 2006; Lewis et al., 2007). Disturbed personal life and broken relationships are also on the rise. Legal experts in Family Law see a steady increase in the number of divorce cases with many getting separated through mutual consent in less than a year of marriage (Henry & Parthasarathy, 2010).

Job-related stress, professional burnout, frequent headaches and depression have become today's workplace realities. This is seen to be more prevalent the Indian IT industry. Long working hours, graveyard shifts, workover weekends, project driven assignments cut across time and space could have all contributed to the existing scenario (Chiang, Birtch, & Kwan, 2010). With sedentary lifestyle, ailments like diabetes, hypertension and obesity are hitting employees much earlier than the earlier generations. While life expectancy for an average Indian has gone up, quality of life has deteriorated. Diabetes in urban India is growing at an alarming rate retaining the name of being the diabetic capital. One in three Indian adults above 25 has high blood pressure.

Coping Strategies

Social protocols and cultural norms are still largely gender specific. Structurally too within the household, care-giving responsibility is shouldered by the female members. With the breaking up of the joint and or extended family systems, nuclear family structures became dominant household forms following the patterns prevailing in most industrial nations (Coltrane, 2000). With the rise in working women population, there grew a need to look at alternate modes for childcare and household work. As work family conflict is seen as women's problem and a personal choice, coping strategies also tend to be individual driven (Chandra, 2012). Outsourcing domestic work is a common trend. As compared to the developed countries, reliable domestic help is more easily and

economically available. However, quality day-care facilities in India especially in tier two cities are still at its nascent stage. Even in the bigger cities with larger number of dual earning couple's childcare and elderly care services does not sufficiently meet the growing demand (Rajadyaksha et al., 2020). Indian pre-school/childcare market is expected to grow at 19% during 2019–2024 (Government of India, 2013). Some take the help of parents and parents-in-law. While there isn't much empirical data available there is a trend towards young couples living closer to either the husband's parents or relatives (patrilocal residence) or the wife's parents or relatives (matrilocal residence). In fact, life course theorists see a global trend in intergenerational relationships (Dannefer, 2003; Putney & Bengtson, 2003).

Select Best Practices

As opportunities of globalization unfolded, India became a favoured destination for foreign investments (FDI, 2017). Table 10.1 shows the top ten companies across the globe in terms of work-life balance. Seven of these have their branches in India. Glassdoor.com which is globally one of the most widely used employment and review sites seeks to capture what the employees actually feel about their workstations.

Table 10.1 Top 10 companies for WLB

Sl. no.	Company name	WLB rating[b]
1	SAS	4.5
2	National Instruments	4.3
3	Slalom[a]	4.1
4	MITRE[a]	4.1
5	Orbitz Worldwide[a]	4.1
6	Mentor Graphics	4.1
7	FactSet	4.1
8	Agilent Technologies	4.1
9	Nokia	4.1
10	MathWorks	4.1

Source Glassdoor.com; [a]Companies that do not have offices in India; [b]Rating on a five-point scale

Flexible work environment is a common feature most appreciated by the employees of these companies. Lower salary and limited growth opportunities as compared to the head office emerged as a common concern.

Table 10.2 shows ten top companies to work for in India. The list consists of companies that have been consistently rated among the top ten within their industry by various rating agencies in the country during the past five years. What really makes a company an ideal place to work is its employee-friendly policies and not necessarily pay packages. Flexibility of time and location, caring and nurturing work environment, healthcare facilities seem to be common across the organizations. These companies look at WLB in a much broader perspective and are consciously adopting more inclusive strategies while care is taken to incorporate the special needs for women. The IT and IT-enabled services take a lead when it comes to innovative policies. Many tech companies are going the extra mile by ensuring not just the balance between work and life, but by bringing life into work through various engagement activities.

Techstop, an in-house one stop solution provider for all hardware and software issues, is one of the most favoured facilities provided by Google for its employees. Employees can also avail and experiment with beta-test products even before they hit the market. Resource groups like 'Businesswomen network' at SAP offer employees an opportunity for self-reflection as well as provides a platform for exchange of new ideas and experiences. Google's 'Women Techmakers' programme aimed at women empowerment regularly rolls out programmes helping them grow in leadership roles. 'People Leader Learning Path' (PLLP) initiative by American Express offers its employees a provision to look beyond their jobs and identify their long-term potential. American Express was also the first to join hands with other leading multinational companies and start a collaborative learning platform and regularly organizes workshops, focused learning circles across partnering organizations. Employees go through a continuous learning process so that work remains interesting and employees engaged. SAP Labs India offers 'Run Mummier' programme where a buddy is assigned to female employees going on maternity leave. This practice of assigning a buddy helps the employee

Table 10.2 Ten best companies to work for in India

Company Name	Employee-friendly practices	Practices for women empowerment
RMSI	Great work culture, flexible work environment, high level of empowerment and accountability, focus on employee well-being and overall health through regular health check-ups, stress management through yoga, meditation, pranic healing, etc.	Anti-sexual harassment policy, self-defence workshops like tai chi, etc. Extended maternity leave, part-time/flexi working/work from home options, options for short career breaks, etc.
Google India	Excellent work environment, colourful ambience to promote creative thinking, fun activities like TGIF(thank God it's Friday), access to best facilities like beta-test products, Techstop, a host of recreational facilities like table tennis, pool, air hockey, sleep pods, etc., world class gym with customized health plans, free cafeteria facilities, annual day celebrations where employees children are encouraged to participate	Supports employee resource groups Women @Google. Offers academic scholarships outstanding women achievers
Marriott Hotels India	Employees are referred to as associates, company's core value—taking care, friendly work environment and training facilities, great discount policies for employees, health insurance, etc.	Equal opportunity employer. Deliberate effort on recruitment of female employees at managerial levels. Mentorship programmes for high potential women employees for leadership roles

Table 10.2 (continued)

Company Name	Employee-friendly practices	Practices for women empowerment
American Express India	Creating an inspiring work environment, offers programmes like 'People Leader Learning Path' and employee relation fundamentals programme for promoting talent growth, hosts fun activities like blue bucket challenge, Reach Out, smart savings for financial wellness	Focus on gender parity. Flexible work hours
Sap Labs India	'Care for life' fund, part-time work for new fathers, temporary part-time work, varied interest groups to encourage individual passion	Businesswomen network, extended maternity leave, options for part-time/leave without pay, crèche, Run Mummier programme, in-house crèche
Godrej Consumer products	Nurturing work environment. High emphasis on diversity and inclusiveness, employee referral policy, Godrej LOUD (live out your Dream), Godrej Fellows programme	'Godrej alliance for women', six-month maternity leave, work from home/part-time work options
Intuit Technology services	High priority on inclusiveness and diversity, adoption perks and leave, health check-ups, medical insurance, stock options, concept of unstructured time	Tech Women@ intuit dedicated parking spaces for pregnant women employees. transport facilities, day-care discounts at partnering creches

(continued)

stay connected as she juggles multiple parenting roles. The programme also acts as a retention tool. The Run Mummier programme and Mobile app helped lower attrition from 40% in 2010 to 6% within eight years (*Business Line*, 2018).

Table 10.2   (continued)

Company Name	Employee-friendly practices	Practices for women empowerment
Ernst and Young	Opportunity for collaborative learning, flexible work arrangements, inclusive work culture	Career watch, special programmes for high potential women employees into leadership roles, everywoman network, EY WIN learning hub, opportunities for career break and re-entry
Tech Mahindra	Friendly, transparent work environment. Bereavement leave, a 12-week paid adoption leave for same-sex couples, attractive employee social options (ESOPs). Volunteering programmes, school donation policy	All Women Tech Mahindra SMART Healthcare Academy, Digital key chains with GSM chips to women employees for safety
Lifestyle international	Openness, transparency, camaraderie and trust form core values, get connected, connect over coffee, flexible working hours, group term life insurance, whistle blower policy, etc.	Focus on caring and respectful work environment for female workforce

Source Author

Many Indian industrialists claim that progressive forward-looking Indian organizations have similar work values comparable to global standards. However, given the diversity in nature and scale of organizations, it would be unfair to generalize for the country as a whole. A study carried out by Great Place to Work and *The Economic Times* (*Economic Times*, 2018), whose sample cuts across 20 sectors and 700 companies, 1.8 lakh employees believe that WLB at MNCs is superior to Indian companies. Technology as a great enabler has helped employees manage and regulate the pace of their work thus striking a balance between professional and personal fronts (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman,

2001; Middleton, 2008; Towers, Duxbury, Higgins, & Thomas, 2006). As more and more multinational companies started exploring Indian markets, workforce gradually got exposed to flexible working styles of the western world. Many forward-looking organizations proactively initiated several WLB practices along with flexitime and flexilocation policies like compulsory annual leave, creches at workplaces, compensatory leave, no incentives for overtime, no meetings to be scheduled after core working hours, etc. Developing innovative policies that cater to different generation is a challenge. 'Future leave' initiated by Accenture has been very popular across generations. Employees are entitled to take an unpaid sabbatical of one to three months without giving any specific reason.

The public sector firms have been in forefront for their welfare measures through statutory and non-statutory benefits while private sector has a very paternalistic approach in dealing with WLB issues. The Maternity Benefit Amendment Act which was passed in 2017 came as welcome relief as it increased the paid leave from 12 to 26 months for female workforce. With the financial burden falling directly on employers, not all employers find this a positive move. The provision for paternity leave was introduced for government employees in 1999 (Vazquez, 2020) where young dads of newborn can avail a 15-day paid leave. There is however no available information on how many are availing it. There is no law that mandates private sector though many bigger companies have been liberal with their paternity leave policies which range from five days to 17 weeks.

Generational Values and Career Attitudes

What constitutes WLB has always been a point for debate. Some consider the term itself to be misnomer (Guest, 2002). Societal perceptions about gendered distribution of work are slowly changing, though the role spillover for male employees is still very less (Bartnett & Hyde, 2001). Given that individual needs and personal responsibilities change with different stages in individual's life some have construed WLB as a phase in a continuum. Organizations have started looking at WLB with

a broader perspective beyond the needs of working women, more specifically working mothers. Both men and women have work and non-work responsibilities (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Sturges (2008) looks at WLB as a stage in an individual's career. Developing innovative policies that cater to different generation is a challenge. As a whole it is said Gen Y prefers relaxed work atmosphere (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010).

India is not only one of the fastest growing economies, it also has a very large population of young workforce. Its working population is predicted to reach 95 crores by 2026 (Nilekani, 2009) and currently almost 50% belongs to generation Y (Nayar, 2013) with average age being 29 years. This is considerably low when compared with many other countries, 37 in China and the USA, 45 years in Europe and 48 in Japan (India's New HR Challenge, 2014). The new demographic diversity posed both a challenge as well as opportunity for organizations. With millennials entering workforce intergenerational differences became glaringly visible. Accordingly, career preferences, attitude towards work and work engagement are fast changing and significantly different across generations. When it comes to reward preferences variations are not significant (Chawla, Dokadia, & Rai, 2017). Generation X and Y no longer believe it to be a personal issue to be handled at the individual level. They are demanding their right for a more balanced work-life and exerting pressure in bringing about more attractive options (Guest, 2002; Klun, 2008; Ng, Schweitzer, & Schweitzer, 2010; Sheahan, 2005). Vinita Chandra (2010) observes that the negative spillover is getting reduced with the millennials entering work stream.

Latent Challenges

While the intent behind WLB interventions is to bring about institutional transformation, at the implementation level these policies still operate in a very patriarchal setup with gender-biased norms of understanding (Chandra, 2010). In many cases, flexible work arrangements are handled on a one-to-one basis at an informal level based on the business and personal needs. This is more so in smaller businesses. The inability of workplace to accept and adapt to a condition where every

adult family member is a working professional is the biggest challenge (Prasad, 2006). India is ranked 129th in Human Development Index out of 189 countries (UNDP Report, 2019). One of the main reasons for this low score is unemployment and underemployment which is reflected in quality of life. WLB scenario in the metropolitan cities in India is found to be extremely low (Thacker, 2018) as compared to their western counterparts. Pressure to perform becomes inevitable given the tough competition. With fluctuations in economy, job insecurity and fear of losing job remains lingering factors. There is also a general increase in contingent workforce including contractual, part-time and self-employed. When relationship between employer and employee is more transactional, there is little investment in employee development (Sharma, Budhwar, & Verma, 2008). As WLB practices reap long-term rewards benefits are often underestimated as compared to the immediate costs that occur. Motivating the employers to see the big picture is sometimes a challenge. Fear may not always be a great motivator, especially when employees are constantly on stretch targets (Kim et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Technological advancements, demographic shifts and changing business environment have together raised the level of awareness about WLB, from accepting the imbalance as part of life to demanding it as part of employee rights. It is an emergent issue and businesses big and small are offering a wide array of programmes. Employers have realized that WLB policies and practices are no longer choices to make, they are business imperatives. New age organizations are using WLB policies as strategic tools to attract and retain talent. Broadly two trends are visible. Welfare-oriented initiatives continue to be the hallmark of PSUs. Multinational and private sector firms are adopting practices which are more popular among the younger generations that can be compared with the global best practices. Cultural undercurrents seem to be closely interwoven with WLB practices and often interfere at the implementation level. Quite often, there is a gap between what is stated and what is practiced. There

is also a general perception that these policies come with unquantifiable hidden costs suggesting a preference for not availing such benefits (Chandra, 2017). For more positive outcomes there is a need to look at the whole process in a more holistic manner. It is important to see the interdependency of these interventions and not as separate entities. People development teams in organizations can play a more proactive role in bringing this transformational change. It is time the HR gives a critical thought to the buzz about WLB, listen to the silent voices of its employees and collectively bridge the gap if any, for the benefit of the employees, the employers and the society at large. In the Indian context, WLB is still seen as a gender issue. Ninety per cent of working women earn their living in the unorganized sector, thus contributing to the unaccounted national income. The very many employee-friendly policies that the new age organizations proactively practice, especially in the white goods sector, are applicable to a very small educated elitist group. This chapter attempts to look at WLB for white collared professionals in organized sector. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter, equally pertinent and critical are the issues of the blue collared workers be it in organized or unorganized sectors.

All in all, the Indian subcontinent presents a wide spectrum of WLB initiatives sharing many similarities with both developed and developing countries. The gendered societal protocols at work and non-work are similar to those across other collectivistic countries. Stiff competition, pressure to perform to make ends meet without much thought on WLB is a common denominator that India shares with many developing countries. At the same time, corporate India takes pride in nurturing a wide basket of WLB initiatives that are at par with the global best. The mosaic of diverse practices thus created at times can lead to cross comparisons and conflicting interests.

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11

The Implicit and Explicit Influence on Work-Life Balance in Malaysia

Wee Chan Au

Introduction

Workers in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, have the worst work-life balance (WLB) (ranked 40 out of the 40 cities surveyed), with Helsinki, Munich, Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo ranked 1st, 2nd, 32nd, 35th and 39th, respectively (Tay, 2019). On average, people in Kuala Lumpur not only work 46 hours a week, with 22 per cent of people working for more than 48 hours per week, but also took the third lowest number of paid leave (12.3 days/year) (Wong, 2019). This made Kuala Lumpur the fourth most overworked city, behind Tokyo, Singapore and Washington. Accordingly, Malaysia is an interesting context to explore the implicit and explicit influencing factors that shape the Malaysian workers' WLB.

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WLB refers to "issues relating to the integration of paid work and the rest of life" (Lewis, 2003, p. 343). As work and nonwork spheres are the two main aspects of a working adult's life, reconciliation between the two, in terms of WLB, is important to most if not all individuals. Although WLB is an individual experience, it reflects social, political, economic and organizational developments and concerns (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). In other words, to fully understand an individual's experience of WLB, his or her broader environment should also be taken into account. Neglecting this aspect, as is common in many existing studies, omits a major influencing factor in WLB.

This chapter explores institutional factors at the national and organizational level shaping experience of WLB within Malaysia. WLB is a western-rooted concept and is largely unexplored in non-western settings. This makes the investigation of WLB in different contextual settings particularly important. Contextual influence in work-life practices has attracted considerable research interest in developed economies, especially European contexts (Hobson, 2011; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009; Poelmans et al., 2003). A few studies have been conducted in Asian settings, such as Hong Kong and Singapore (Lo, Stone, & Ng, 2003; Thein, Austen, Currie, & Lewin, 2010). However, little is known regarding the issue of WLB in Malaysia (e.g. Au & Ahmed, 2015, 2016)—a developing nation in Southeast Asia. Multi-level proponents highlight that there are limitations in conducting work-life research based on the assumption of homogeneity of legal and cultural characteristics in a particular region or sector (Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). Therefore, it is important to identify the specific attributes of Malaysia in terms of economy, culture, social and other contextual features that shape the distinctive work-life experience in Malaysia.

Literature Review

Multi-Level Contextual Framework of WLB

In work-life literature, there is an emerging recognition that an individual's broader context serves as an interactive backdrop influencing the

reconciliation between work and nonwork domains (Lewis et al., 2007; Voydanoff, 2005). Most such studies focus on the influence of contextual features in the implementation and adoption of work-life practices (Bardoel & De Cieri, 2006; Lewis & Smithson, 2001; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). In addition, a number of cross-national work-life studies identify the potential of contextual elements, culture in particular, in explaining the differences across nations (Hill, Yang, Hawkins, & Ferris, 2004; Lu et al., 2010; Spector et al., 2004).

Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004) proposed a multi-level framework that facilitates the systematic study of contextual features of WLB. This framework is aligned with the contextualist approach of HRM, which emphasizes the embeddedness of HR policies in a specific environment (Brewster, 1999). According to the multi-level framework, an individual's context is made up of macro-, meso- and micro-environments that determine an individual's WLB experience. Economic, social, technological, legal and the political system are typical macro-contextual features; meso-level variables consist of organizational culture, leadership style and human resource practices; and finally job autonomy, status, reputation, seniority and gender form the set of micro-level variables (Poelmans, 2003). A multi-level framework is important and useful in understanding the experience of WLB in a particular context. Researchers claim that a multi-level contextual approach is insightful for work-life research since it highlights the inter-linkages between social policies at the macro-level, corporate practices at the meso-level, and individual needs and expectations at the micro-level (Bardoel & De Cieri, 2006; Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). In other words, the multi-level approach is useful to study how public policies and cultural expectations frame employer practices and employees' experiences of managing work and nonwork roles (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000; Korabik, Lero, & Ayman, 2003).

Key to the multi-level approach is "the intrinsic coherence created and nurtured by interactions between the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels in each country" (Maurice, Sellier, & Silverstre, 1982 as cited in Ollier-Malaterre, 2009). According to Poelmans (2003), it is the accumulated misfits within and between different levels of context that brings about a dynamic environment which leads to conflict between work and

nonwork roles. Therefore, in addition to analysing the various contextual elements in the respective context level, it is also important to study the interaction of contextual elements within each level, as well as the interaction between levels in shaping the experience of WLB in a particular country.

Sen's Capabilities Framework and WLB

In general, WLB refers to "issues relating to the integration of paid work and the rest of life" (Lewis, 2003, p. 343). WLB is deemed as a functioning (Sen, 1992), as it can affect one's health and well-being (Hobson, Fahlén, & Takács, 2011). Furthermore, it is a valuable functioning as it enhances capabilities and agency for attaining a better quality of life (Drobnič & Rodríguez, 2011; Hobson et al., 2011). The capabilities approach proposed by Sen (1999) provides a framework that captures multi-level processes that embed individual agency into specific institutional/normative settings. The key of relating capabilities approach to WLB is to assess people's capabilities to achieve functioning, namely a satisfactory balance between work and nonwork life. As an alternate to the multi-level framework (that consists of macro-, meso- and micro-level) proposed by Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004), a multi-layered conversion factors framework based on capabilities approach is proposed by Hobson et al. (2011). The conversion factors are categorized into (1) institutional factors (including both policy and firm level); (2) societal factors (such as societal and community norms); and (3) individual factors (such as network and partner's resources). Hobson et al. (2011) highlight that these resources may be converted into substantive freedoms to make choices and constraints that lead to work-life imbalance.

Using Sen's (1999) capability approach, a number of researchers have investigated the gap between availability of public policies and legislations that are WLB friendly and the agency of individuals to claim them within European contexts (i.e. the capabilities and agency freedom to actually use such arrangements) (den Dulk et al., 2011;

Hobson et al., 2011; Mrčela & Sadar, 2011). To assess a person's capability set in successfully attaining WLB, the broader environment and societal context have to be taken into account to understand which societal resources can be translated into agency and capability (Drobnič & Rodríguez, 2011). In specific, researchers suggest that reconciliation of paid work and nonwork commitment, especially parenthood, is embedded in multi-layered processes that involve individual, institutional and societal resources (Fagan & Walthery, 2011; Mrčela & Sadar, 2011). The evidence arising from these studies highlights that the capabilities framework of WLB is context specific.

A common feature of the multi-level contextual framework by Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004) and the multi-layered conversion factors by Hobson et al. (2011) is the emphasis on investigating the contextual influence of WLB in an integrated manner (den Dulk et al., 2011; Fagan & Walthery, 2011). Therefore, in addition to the specific influence of each contextual element, the interaction of contextual aspects within and between layers should also be taken into account in understanding the contextual influence on WLB.

Research Method

This chapter is based on an in-depth interview of 25 Malaysian working adults. The contextual contingencies of the study were also incorporated as part of the analysis. Semi-structured interviews, each lasted between 50 to 75 minutes, were conducted. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview guide was used flexibly to maintain consistency of the main agenda while allowing the researcher to probe the participants further with unscripted questions when new ideas emerged. The study employed a snowball sampling approach. The researcher first contacted participants from her personal network and invited them to participate. Individuals from her personal network were also asked to forward the email invitation within their own networks. All potential participants were provided with the study information sheet. Those who were interested in participating reached out to the author to schedule an interview. All interviews were held in-person.

Participants represented a variety of industries including education (20%), construction (24%), manufacturing (12%), engineering (16%) retail, etc., in the private and public sectors, and varying organizational levels, including non-supervisory (28%), professionals (48%), middle management (16%) and senior management (8%). Examples of positions held by participants include procurement manager, project executive, teacher, engineer, auditor and support staff. Fifteen participants (60%) were female, nineteen participants (76%) were married and the sample had an average age of 36 years, with an average of 2 children among the married participants.

Inductive thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the data. The inductive approach is a data-driven process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2002) in which the data coding is done "without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions" (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 83). The analysis guide proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was followed closely. To become familiar with the interview data, the researcher read the full transcripts multiple times before starting the coding process. The researcher completed the coding procedure for the first transcript and then moved on to the next transcript. After coding the first three transcripts, the researcher started to search for themes based on all the codes. With the initial themes established, the researcher continued coding the rest of the transcripts. During the coding procedure, each code was assigned to a particular theme immediately. Existing themes were refined, and new themes were also developed as needed. This procedure of developing new themes, reviewing themes and naming themes continued until the last transcript was completely coded.

Presentation of the Findings

Multi-Level Contextual Analysis of WLB in Malaysia

In this section, contextual factors that frame the Malaysians' experience of reconciling work and nonwork life were described. Representative quotations from the interview transcripts were presented to support the

findings. To ensure anonymity, all participants were given a pseudonym. The contextual contingencies were also incorporated as part of the analysis. To capture the macro (including economy, legislation and social) and meso (such as organizational practices and culture, supervisor) environmental aspects of the study, in the descriptions, (*macro*) and (*meso*) were added when referring to contextual contingencies.

WLB in Malaysia

Malaysia, a middle-income country, shifted from an agriculture and mining economy in the 1970s to an industrial economy in 1980s (*Macro-Economy*). As a developing country, the necessity to earn for survival remains high among most Malaysians, as their income levels are relatively low. With economic pressure for survival, the drive to work hard to ensure the sustainability of financial return and wealth accumulation outweighs the interest of WLB. In other words, Malaysians are willing to work excessively hard to earn more money, although doing so may jeopardize their WLB interest. Teoh and Rizal, single and married, respectively, shared similar sentiments:

> Honestly, at this moment, pay matters [more]. Because living expenses keep increasing. And I'm still young; this is the time to work harder and save more while I can, yup. (Teoh, Engineer)
>
> For now, it's a bit hard to achieve something like what we call – the WLB. In Malaysia, even working couples like us find it hard to go through the days, to survive. We have so many things to handle, house, transportation, and food. (Rizal, Draftsman)

The Group Interest (Economic Need of the Family) Is Emphasized

The urge to work for survival was also clearly featured among female participants. Married female participants shared that relying solely on their husband as breadwinner place the sustainability of household at high risk. According to Fatimah and Neelem, both are working as a

teacher, are encouraged by their family members to continue working full-time. The bottom line is that their family commitments are well taken care of despite their employment:

> My husband will never let me stop working. He said if anything happens to him, how am I going to survive with my children? At least I'll have my own income and career. As long as I am able to balance my career and family, he doesn't mind. He wouldn't let me stop. (Fatimah, Teacher)
>
> My sister-in-law, my husband's brother's wife, she quits her job. My mother-in-law was not happy. Actually, she was very angry… I don't think she would be happy if I become a full-time mum… She wants her daughters-in-law to work and manage the family at the same time. (Neelem, Teacher)

Such a trend also partly attributed to the collectivist culture in Malaysia, where family welfare is given upmost importance (Triandis, 1995) (*Macro-Social*). Accordingly, being part of a strong collectivist society, Malaysians show a high level of tolerance and a greater willingness to deal with work-life imbalance given that the group interest (economic welfare of family) tends to outweigh individual interest (need for WLB).

Men's Obligation Towards Childcare Is Not Recognized in the Legislation

Looking at Malaysian policies and legislation closely, one notices the "one-sided" nature of this legislation. WLB is largely deemed to be a women's issue at the national level. Indeed, it was first brought onto the national platform as part of the agenda in The Women Summit (2008 and 2009), initiated by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia (*Macro-Policy*). Its intention was to boost women's participation in the labour force.

Compared to 60 days of mandatory maternity leave, Malaysian fathers' role and right in childbearing responsibility are not mandated formally (*Macro-Legislation*). Such a situation demonstrates that while the expectation of women's obligation in childcare is reflected liberally, Malaysian men's obligation for childcare continues to be neglected.

Malaysia's national policy and legislation, together with the deep-rooted traditional gender role, which places high social expectations on women for childcare and family responsibilities (*Macro-Social*), suggest that Malaysian women are expected to bear most, if not all, of the childcare and household responsibilities. As shown in the excerpt taken from Bathma, a highly educated woman, Malaysian women continue to be predominantly responsible for household matters despite being employed:

> They don't have [a] negative idea on me working, but they want me to still play the [domestic] roles… I cannot say I am earning and I can't … the role is still there, the expectations are there, that sometimes might impose problems, it does… say you have to take care of your husband, to make sure his clothes are ready, his food is ready, the house is kept well, so he comes back, and he feels good. Well, not only your husband, you have your husband's side to come around, and you also need to keep them happy. I also have to teach the children, that responsibilities automatically come to me, my husband doesn't take those responsibilities… So, once you are married, women have more roles to play, as a daughter-in-law, as a mother, as a wife, as a housewife, as a housekeeper, it becomes more complicated. Men? They just earn money. (Bathma, Lecturer)

Traditional gender role expectations in Malaysian society remain a major obstacle in discouraging women from joining the formal workforce. In 2019, the labour force participation rate among Malaysian women was 56.1% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). According to the Statistics on Women Empowerment in Selected Domains, the labour force participation rate for Malaysian women (54.3%) was relatively low as compared to other countries: Malaysia stood lower than Singapore (66%), Thailand (70%), United Kingdom (71%) and Australia (71%) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017) (*Macro-Economy*). In line with Malaysia's traditional gender role expectation, there is a high social expectation upon women in terms of childcare and family roles (*Macro-Social*). Given that childcare and domestic chore falls almost totally on women, married women who stay active in the workforce tend to experience great challenge in juggling work and family commitments. Even their male counterparts feel sympathetic towards the situation:

> Actually, I feel not quite fair for her (his wife). She has to work and has to take care of the family. But for me, easier, I just concentrate on work. But for her, work and the family, both together. (Wong, Quality assurance manager)
>
> In terms of children, spent time with them, helped them with studies… my wife did most of it… She works in the shop; she also has to do what mothers do, cooking and all that… Her resting time is very short because she has to work and cook. Usually, it's after 7 pm or 8 pm then she has her own space and time, doing her own stuff. (Tan, Businessman)

Materialistic Nature of Local Private Firms

Growth of the industrial economy does not only shape the employment pattern in Malaysia but also national policies and employment legislation. As a developing economy, Malaysia's national policy mainly focuses on how to maximize the productivity of its human capital to improve economic growth (*Macro-Policy*). Such national policy may further shape the materialistic practices among the employers (*Meso-Organisational Practices*). To strive for higher financial returns, employers tend to emphasize the cost and profits, which often undermines employees' WLB.

> When my children were young, one got sick, the other follows, oh goodness… I took leaves. They (supervisors) warned me, "you have to do something about it, either to get your husband to take care, or you get a maid". Of course, it is not fair to bring family [issues] to the company. Their mindset is "You come to here to work; you have to work. We pay you; you have to settle your family problem". This is normal; I think most companies are like this. (Lian, Project executive)
>
> If you talk about WLB, I don't think any company will take it seriously… Like when I was in XYZ (name of a local firm), they kept pushing the [factory] operators to work 12 hours [a day], sometimes 7 days continuously… That's not good, but no one aware that we need to do something about it. (Laila, Procurement manager)

Primacy of Paid Work Outweighs the Interest of WLB

The findings showed that Malaysian employees exhibit high tolerance of work-life imbalance, given their primary aim to provide income for survival. Accordingly, the potential of work overload is high in Malaysian work settings, which is detrimental to WLB significantly. The subservient and harmony seeking behaviour of Malaysian has important ramifications in the experience of WLB (Au & Ahmed, 2014) (*Macro-Social*). The prevalence of non-assertive behaviour provides considerable opportunity for employers to place higher demands on employees. The resulting increased work demand leads to overload and higher stress for employees in their efforts to integrate work and nonwork life. Long working hours, sometimes even up to 12 hours a day, was common among the participants. Hui and Mei, at their late 20s and late 30s, respectively, shared that overworked seems like a norm in their daily life:

> I spent more time at work than at home or for myself. I don't get enough personal time; I spend too much [time] on doing or finishing (work). It's kind of obvious, because like one week, [we are] supposed to work five days, and we (colleagues) see each other 6 days and is usually more than 8 hours a day…. (Hui, Assistant brand manager)
>
> I usually start around 8.45am and work till about 10 pm, every day, Monday to Friday, and certain weekends I work as well… if I could be home by 6 pm, that would be nice. Unfortunately, in my current career, I can't do so. (Mei, Marketing manager)

Likewise, Lian, who is a project executive in an engineering consultancy firm, shared the rigidity of higher management in allowing her time off to attend to family commitments. This is mainly owing to the heavy workload in the company. She accepted the pay-cut arrangement. However, many Malaysian workers, especially those from lower-income group, would have financial pressures to compromise with a pay cut for time off to attend family matters.

> Once, my mum was sick, I took a whole day leave, and he (the higher-level manager) wrote there [on the leave application form] "No, why didn't she come back? She can come back [for] half [a] day". So, they

deducted my pay… I didn't argue, doesn't matter, that's the company policy. (Lian, Project executive)

Compounding this is that Malaysians do not use up their annual leave for vacation or other nonwork matters because they fear their boss would not be happy if they did. Wong, who works at the senior team of a factory, shared that although the senior team members are entitled to more paid annual leaves due to seniority, most of them only utilize less than half of their entitlement.

Some of my colleagues, they have [paid] annual leave of about 40 days. Most of them would just spend less than 10 days, the balance of 30 days' annual leave, they will burn [it] off. They just spend as much time in the work environment. Because sometimes our management, they will judge which person is more hardworking, they will see… "ahhh, this person took quite many annual leaves." (Wong, Quality assurance manager)

Who Should Be Responsible for Workers' WLB?

Limited Legislation on WLB

Malaysia is weak in enacting legislation to protect employees' WLB. According to the Employment Act 1955, which is the primary encapsulation of employment legislature, employees are entitled to paid annual leave from 8 to 16 days, depending on the length of service within the organization (*Macro-Legislation*). In terms of maternity leave, working mothers in private sectors are entitled to sixty-day leave while their female counterparts at the public sector have additional thirty-days. Whereas working fathers in public sectors have three days of paternity leaves while those from the private sector does not have any mandatory provisions. In particular, participants stressed that most government-initiated policies are recommended but not enacted in the private sectors, which limited its effect on making a positive change on individuals' WLB.

> They [the government] may not be able to influence the private companies to follow. It's very difficult for them to do that… Like the recent [national] budget announcement, they are initiating something for the WLB, like flexi-hour in the government department, work-from-home for the government servants. They are encouraging the private companies to follow, but you know…. (Ravi, Group leader)

For example, in 2019, the Malaysian government has urged the private sector to match the maternity and paternity leaves with the public sector (Landau & Babulal, 2019; Lim, 2019) (*Macro-Legislation*). However, until such provisions are enacted, workers from the private sectors continue to struggle in juggling work and nonwork demands.

> Two months [paid maternity leave] is too short. I would like to still breastfeed my kid. When I started working, I can only breastfeed her at night. If I have three months, it is much better… I can monitor the day-care centre, to see if it is good or not. Now with two months, I had to send her there straight and keep worrying about her. Worrying if they take good care of my baby, whether they feed my baby or not (laugh). Thousands of questions in my head. (Aishah, Support staff)

Limited legal provisions that are favourable to employees' nonwork interest, together with the materialistic characteristics of some private organizations, bring about limited provisions from the organizations that support employees' WLB needs. To make the situation worse, participating in workers' union is not common in Malaysia. In 2017, only six per cent of the workers in Malaysia was union members (Hector, 2017; *Macro-Policy*). Hence, workers have restricted outlet to push for more legal provisions concerning their WLB and well-being.

> For [paid] annual leave, the government policy is only eight days or maybe 14 days… That's the minimum guideline. [If] companies wish to give more, it's up to them. And of course, they don't care, all they care is how to pay less tax every month, that's it… My ex-boss followed exactly what is stated in the rules and regulation. (Nazura, Secretary)
>
> The Labour Law said the minimum is eight days per year… To me, our Malaysian Labour Law is very weak. My company follows rigidly,

just add [additional] two [days]. The work we do covers the whole Asia Pacific, and the workload is quite high. Ten days' annual leave is too low [little]… Our unions, the worker unions, are very weak. Well, they [the employer] don't encourage you to be in the union anyway. So, the rights of the workers are greatly oppressed. (Fadzli, Engineer)

Other than leave-related statutes, legislation over flexible work arrangements and childcare facilities that is directly relevant to WLB remains yet to be enacted in Malaysia. In 2019, the Malaysian government rolled out ten million Ringgit Malaysia (approximately 2.3 million in USD) to set up childcare facilities at the public sector's workplaces for the first time (Timbuong, 2019). The private sectors are encouraged to do the same (*Macro-Policy*). Despite the positive steps, the importance placed on WLB at the national and organizational level continues to remain low.

WLB policies? There's not much, for career women in Malaysia, there is no [childcare] centre in our working place. We worry about our children… There is nothing like this with the current policy; we have been waiting for this for long. The recent [national] budget said they [the government] will try out in certain places, but only in a few places. (Wani, Teacher)

In all, WLB is not the key agenda at the national level despite government recognition of its importance. The Malaysian government has yet to implement any legal enforcement or policy to address citizens' WLB concerns specifically. Nevertheless, the Malaysian government has made gentle moves in urging and encouraging employers to adopt WLB initiatives.

WLB Provisions at Organizational Level

Building on the limited legal provisions at the macro-level, analysis at the meso-level (industry and organizational) was conducted to explore the lived experiences of Malaysians' WLB. The findings show that provisions available in the public sector are more favourable than the private

sector. Other than additional provisions in terms of maternity and paternity leaves, civil servants in Malaysia also have more paid annual leaves (20 to 35 days), while those from the private sector only have eight to 16 days. These differences contribute to a varied experience of WLB among individuals from the public and private sectors.

The analysis also showed the individuals working in local firms and MNCs had varied WLB experiences. An increasing number of MNCs and joint ventures have set up their businesses in Malaysia, which has opened up alternate employment options. Some of the MNCs adopt home country's WLB practices and other organizational policies that are friendly to employees' nonwork commitment in their Malaysia operations (*Meso–Organisational practices*). Flexi-hours and work-from-home are the most commonly cited WLB-friendly practices by the participants from MNCs.

> If you come at 7 am, you can leave at 4.30 pm; and if you come at 9am then you leave at 6.30 pm. If you come [in] between that, you just adjust your time. Yup, that's the flexi hours… Everyone should be in between 9 am to 4.30 pm, it's just good enough time to do meeting, discussion. It's very flexible, even [if] you come in later, they don't mind as long as you finish your job… because this is a French company and they have this European mentality of not so calculative. (Rajesh, Engineer)
>
> My first company is an MNC; all the upper and middle management are from Europe. The Europeans, in general, have very strong [belief in] WLB. So, they sort of also incorporated that culture into the Malaysian environment… They have groomed me into this… As an employee, I would look for company that gives me this environment. (Sugu, Engineer)

In addition to the flexibility in terms of time and place to work in the MNCs, which is helpful for individuals' WLB, participants identify with the organizational culture in MNCs where individuals' nonwork interest is highly valued and respected. They have much less pressure to attend to work after working hours and during weekends.

> The culture in XYZ (name of the MNC), they are American [firm], they don't want you to work [on] Saturday, Sunday, which is good. And they

> care about WLB. So, I can look after my family. (Laila, Procurement manager)
>
> My company is a Belgian base, so they follow the European norms… They respect you if you don't answer your emails after office hours. I mean they appreciate if you do, but they won't judge you if you don't answer, respond to their emails… If I have a call from my colleague in Europe, and if I say I am on leave on that day, they'll immediately put down the phone. Ya, because they respect my off-work time. (Fadzli, Engineer)

Such positive and favourable experiences in MNCs are in contrast with the rigid and materialistic characteristics of some of the local firms. As shown in the quotes below, local firms were identified to be more calculative and inflexible, where employees' nonwork interests tend to give way to the force of higher financial return for the company. Individuals working in such firms face considerable challenges in dealing with WLB as compared to individuals working in MNCs.

> They're very strict. [Latest] 8.30 am clock in, 5.30 pm earliest to clock out. So, you have to clock in and out, even for lunchtime. If you clock in late or you clock out early more than five times a month, warning letter. Warning letter, after that counselling, then they'll release you. I mean, if you repeat [the] offence then they'll release you. (Teoh, Engineer)
>
> I've experienced working in three different companies. One is a Bumi (local indigenous) company, the other two are from overseas. I can see the difference…The first company, you have to be really punctual and there were lesser benefits. (Rizal, Draftsman)

However, some participants identify the invisible costs in WLB while working in MNCs, which should not be overlooked. To illustrate, working in MNCs means that one has to work together with American and European counterparts on a regular basis, which has eight to 12 hours' time difference with Malaysia. To suit the overseas counterparts' working schedule, one may be required to work at odd hours, which have a negative implication on their social and family life.

> Most of my affiliates are from Europe. So, I need to work at nights sometimes, to attend [the] late meeting, the latest one that I have attended was

till 12 am or 1 am… Because most of my teammates are from Europe, so I have to sacrifice. (Tham, System developer)

Starting this year, I have to keep constant contact with my European contacts, which is usually in the evening and at night. So that eats into a lot of my family time…The time difference is about seven to eight hours. So, at night, sometimes, I have to answer emails or calls from my colleagues from Europe, because they are working at that time. So, my WLB has actually deteriorated a lot…The family relationship, I mean sometimes when we go out for dinner, or somewhere else, I still have to answer emails. (Fadzli, Engineer)

Supervisors as the Key Determinant

Apart from organizational culture and norms, participants shared that their immediate supervisors are the key persons at the workplace that influence their WLB experience. Whether it is in MNCs or local firms, trust and close relationships with immediate supervisors have been identified as the key in making a difference in supporting their WLB needs. Given the rigidity in some of the local firms, informal arrangements with supervisors include swapping duties, flexibility in start and end time, unrecorded leave and other initiatives to help employees manage their WLB.

We don't really have [work-from-home], but some line managers trust some of their staff well enough, then those staffs have the privilege to work from home. (Sugu, Engineer)

I took leave, I tried to swap duties. But if they are very strict, then it's difficult… I sometimes negotiated with my supervisor, come in early, or go back late, informally, nothing formal. It was quite difficult because it's a fixed hour [work]. (Bathma, Lecturer)

The good thing here is, it's the discretion of the supervisor…My superior allows staff to take unrecorded leave. As long as the HR manager doesn't know about it…He gives me a lot of freedom. I'm in good relationship with my superior, he knows what I'm doing, my dedication etc. (Fadzli, Engineer)

Participants do not only show favourable attitude towards the MNCs workplace that tends to be WLB friendly, but they also identified Europeans to be the most WLB-friendly supervisor. Participants who are currently or had worked in MNCs before share the contrasting experiences with Asian supervisors (e.g. Malaysian, Japanese and Singaporean) and European supervisors. For example, Sugu who is an engineer stressed that Asian supervisors tend to embrace face time more.

> I function better if my immediate boss is a European, more specifically, a central European. I tend to have a lot of problems if my direct boss is an Asian (Laugh)… For the Asian, they themselves don't practice it, so when they don't practice it, they expect their staffs also not to practice it. In general, most of the European, especially Central European, they practice work-life [balance]. That's very important for them, that's how they have 35 hours per week, they'll disappear immediately after work. (Sugu, Engineer)

The expected paternalistic role of supervisors in collectivist society is not compatible with the materialistic characteristics of some local firms (Au & Ahmed, 2014) (*Macro-Social*). Even if the supervisors are sympathetic to the subordinates' nonwork commitments, they are powerless to change business practices. In other words, paternalism of middle-level managers loses out to singular money-making focus of leaders.

> In the middle management level, I have to report to my upper management. At the same time, I have to make sure my subordinates complete the tasks being assigned… I had been through that as well, so I understand what exactly the feeling… when they are under tremendous tight deadline to complete a task. Sometimes, I tried to explain to the upper management… But they will only give one advice, saying things like "this is very important for the company, so you must ensure that everybody delivers, ok?" With that, I have no choice but keep pushing my subordinates. (Hui, Assistant brand manager)

Low Sense of Entitlement of State and Employer WLB Provisions

Overall, the participants demonstrate a low sense of entitlement towards state and formal WLB provisions. Working within the developing country and emerging economy context, the participants show high tolerance and understanding towards the lack of provisions from the government and the employers. They understood that the priority of the government and the businesses is economic development.

> Of course, at the moment, whatever government policy is not enough… But I mean there are so many other things that they [the government] should focus on rather than focusing on this. (Ravi, Group leader)
>
> It's not really the government ['s obligation]…but there was good example [initiative], like abolishing of [working on] Saturday… So, we have extra time, that's quite good… [Paid annual] leaves as well… Of course, in terms of WLB, the more, the better. But from the economy point of view, I don't know how much more free time the company can afford to give their employees. (Sugu, Engineer)

While some participants expect the employers to play a more active role, most of them feel that it is the personal responsibilities of individuals to manage the incompatible demands between work and nonwork roles.

> No, I don't think [the] government could… I never considered [the] government to… Well, how could [the] government help? Because WLB is you, also depends on the organization that you are working. (Laila, Procurement manager)
>
> Eventually, it is [an] individual's responsibility. Boss too plays an important role. Not so much from the government. What can they give? If the boss doesn't understand, it'll make us woman very stressful, you know? (Wani, Teacher)

Family as the Main Source of Support

Among the married participants, as described earlier, traditional gender role still very much being practiced in most Malaysian households.

Women are expected to carry out family and childcare commitments, despite their full-time work commitment. The most common child-care/household chores shared by their husband are sending and picking up children to/from schools, childcare centre and parents/parents-in-law' house, before or after work.

Sixty per cent of the participants (n = 15) stay together with or close by with their parents or parents-in-law. Accordingly, they access to a generous amount of support from their family, including home-cook meals after work, less burden on house-chores and also aid in child-care for married participants. Relatives are their second-best option for childcare support when their immediate families are not available. This reflects the collective culture among Malaysian, where family welfare is given upmost importance (Triandis, 1995; *Macro-Social*).

> I'm staying with my parents; my mum is taking care of the kids. My husband's work is also about 1 hour ['s drive from home]. So, if any emergency, say my kids have [a] fever, my dad will bring them to [the] clinic and all… Even if we move out, my mum wants me to stay some-where near to them, so that I have time with them. (Laila, Procurement manager)
>
> My mother take care of them [the children], she will go and pick them up [from school] and take them to her house, feed them, their homework and all, take care of them basically. (Mei, Marketing manager)

For young parents moved from the rural area, their parents or parents-in-law move in with the family to take care of the grandchildren until they reach schooling-age is also not uncommon among Malaysian house-holds (*Macro-Social*). For young parents who do not have the access of such support, paid supports including domestic helper, day-care centre and kindergarten become the next best feasible alternative. It is esti-mated that there are approximately 300,000–400,000 migrant domestic helpers in Malaysia (ILO, 2018; *Macro-Social*). For a live-in domestic helper, one may expect to pay MYR900 to MYR1200 per month. Without family support, childcare responsibilities intensify the burden upon young parents both financially and mentally. Domestic helpers, whether in the form of full-time or part-time, play a huge role in reducing women's burden of household chores in Malaysia. Nine out of

nineteen of married participants rely on paid support for their childcare responsibilities.

Discussion and Conclusion

Guided by the multi-level contextual framework by Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004) and the multi-layered conversion factors by Hobson et al. (2011), findings of the study are summarized in Fig. 11.1.

The legislation and practices relating to WLB in Malaysia (both at the national and organizational level) are at an infancy stage, as compared to developed economies. In addition to annual leave, public holidays and maternity leave, there is no other legislation or statute that covers the interest of WLB. The concepts of job sharing, work time flexibility, workplace flexibility (e.g. work-from-home) remain unfamiliar to most Malaysian employers.
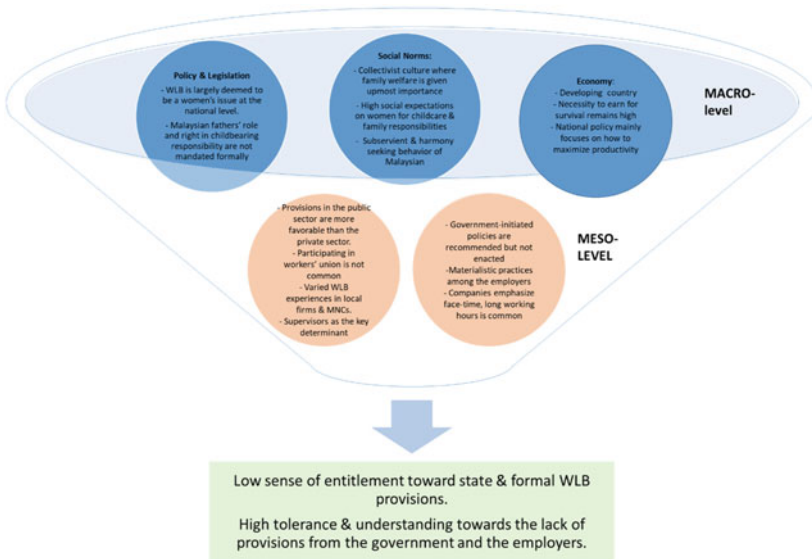
Fig. 11.1 Multi-level approach in understanding implicit and explicit influence on WLB in Malaysia

Given the strength and persistence of the traditional gender role assumption, the Malaysian government has adopted a cautionary position for taking the initiative to enact legislation enforcing businesses to account for work-life considerations. Here it is observed that societal norms strongly influence agency positions, even powerful ones such as government. In this case, strong social norms have allowed the Malaysian government to desist from introducing legislative change despite the emergence of conflict in women's WLB experience. The existence of deep-rooted traditional gender role has a major influence on the experience of WLB among Malaysians, especially women. On the one hand, the persistence of traditional gender role expectations of women is reflected within national policies; on the other hand, the government encourages Malaysian women to participate in the formal labour force. Such "clash" between two macro-environment features eventuates in difficulty for Malaysian women to attain WLB. This finding is in line with Joplin, Shaffer, Francesco, and Lau (2003) proposition, who in reference to Social Identity Theory (Burke, 1996; Thoits, 1991) notes that clashes between environmental changes (expectation to enter labour market) and societal culture (traditional gender role expectations) at the macro-environment lead to greater stress and work-life imbalance.

Furthermore, it is observed that lack of WLB practices at the organizational level and passive role of employers in WLB (meso-environment) is evidenced by the lack of policies and legislation at the national level (macro-environment). Since there are no legislated policies that enforce employers to offer WLB benefits, self-initiated WLB practices at the organizational level remain rare. It is therefore clear that lack of government legislation in the Malaysian context contributes to slow adoption of WLB facilities among Malaysian organizations. This is in line with past research which identifies the effectiveness of WLB practices depends not only on organizational conditions, but also legislative and cultural conditions of specific countries (Bardoel, De Cieri, & Santos, 2008; Lewis et al., 2007). This situation serves to demonstrate the interaction of contextual features between context layers (macro- and meso-levels) contributes to shaping Malaysians' experience of WLB.

A large number of Malaysian middle-class households depend on domestic help for household chores and childcare support. In addition to that, the collectivist nature of Malaysian society also facilitates support from immediate families. Domestic help and family members are observed to be the primary source of nonwork support. This situation suggests that Malaysia fits is a "conservative welfare regime" as classified by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999), in which family is an essential provider of welfare, and there are very low provisions from state or employer. A strong male-breadwinner model which emphasizes traditional gender role ideology, where dependent care is presumed to be a woman's responsibility, is another key characteristic of a conservative welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999; Lewis & Smithson, 2001) which fits the Malaysian context. However, one should not assume that paid support and family members are the preferred source of support over employer and government support among Malaysians.

As stressed by one of the participants, "*[WLB friendly] policy? There's not much, for career women in Malaysia, there is no [childcare] centre in our working place. We worry about our children… There is nothing like this with the current policy; we have been waiting for this for long*". Given that there is a lack of supportive social policies and a near absence of support available from the organization, such "choice" seems to be the best choice out of no choice. This situation is similar to Fagan and Walthery (2011)'s findings that part-time arrangement may be a "choice" in liberal societies but a "constraint" in a context in which gender inequalities and low public provisions exist. In other words, Malaysians' reliance on domestic helpers and family members for nonwork responsibilities is confined within the limited freedom of an individual to choose between feasible alternative ways of doing things, i.e. constrained capability (Sen, 1999). Sociological Preference Theory postulates that women in modern liberal societies are able to choose between a family-oriented or career-oriented lifestyle (Hakim, 2000). Accordingly, it would suggest that Malaysia has not reached this stage but remains an entrenched conservative welfare state.

There is a growing gap between employees' increasing awareness of the importance of WLB and the availability of work-life support from employers and government in Malaysia. The constant mismatch between

employers' attitude towards employees' WLB interest (meso-level) and employees' expectations (micro-level) reflects a misfit between context levels. Such misfit not only constrains individuals' capability to attain WLB, but also prompts individuals to look out for alternate employer that could meet their expectations. As one of the participants expressed "*Actually I was spoiled by my first company (chuckles). My first company is an MNC, all the upper and middle management are from Europe. The Europeans in general have very strong [belief in] work-life balance. So, they sort of also incorporated that culture into the Malaysian environment… They have groomed me into this… As an employee I would look for company that gives me this environment. If it doesn't, most likely I will leave (laugh). I have a very high expectation on this*". According to Poelmans (2003, p. 271), "when employees are aware of and start demanding family supportive policies, but companies are not aware of, refuse to implement, or are slow in implementing these policies, the experience of work–family conflict can be more severe".

In addition to the misfit between employees' growing expectation and employers' slow response, there is a gap in practices concerning employees' WLB between local firms and MNCs operating in Malaysia. MNCs often import WLB-friendly practices from their home country into Malaysian operations. Malaysian individuals working in MNCs generally enjoy more favourable conditions in dealing with work and nonwork demands. According to Poelmans (2003), perceived inequality between effort and reward leads to negative emotion and intensive conflict between work and family. This is in accordance to Equity theory (Greenberg, 1990) whereby inequality exists if an individual is aware that another person working in a different firm but in similar work and the same sector receives more rewards (wages plus work-life support) for the same effort. It is thus no surprise to observe that Malaysian employees perceive MNCs much more favourably than local companies when selecting an employer, especially if WLB is a priority for the individual.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The capabilities framework (Sen, 1999) which has been used extensively in developed nations to determine the capability and agency freedom of individuals in utilizing wide availability of WLB practices helped to show that even when capability exists in the Malaysia setting, individuals lack freedom to take advantage of it, i.e. they are strongly constrained. The study also highlights the relevance and usefulness of the multi-level framework (Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004) as a descriptive lens for the study of WLB of a particular society needs to be complemented with analytic frameworks such as the multi-layer conversion framework (Hobson et al., 2011) as a way to fully capture the unique unfolding of WLB experience in Malaysia. The importance of systems-level thinking (Carlson & Grzywacz, 2008; Lewis & den Dulk, 2010), which emphasizes the interaction between mutual and dynamic influences of multiple social systems, is supported in this study. In adopting an integrated multiple lenses to draw a rounded and fine-grained picture of the multiple social systems involved in WLB, this chapter serves as a starting point for an empirical study of the work-life reconciliation phenomena in Malaysia, and other developing neighbour countries, such as Indonesia and Thailand.

For policy implications, the findings of this study suggest that to facilitate Malaysian workforce's WLB, the Malaysian government may look beyond recommendations, to mandate certain legislation (e.g. mandated paternity leaves) and impose tax incentives to push employers to initiate more WLB-friendly provisions. Most importantly, the monitoring mechanism should be in place to ensure effective execution of the legislation and tax incentives. For practical implications, the findings suggest that Malaysian employers need to take active action in acknowledging and trying to address the issue of WLB. Without this, local enterprises will remain at a highly disadvantaged position in attracting and retaining talented human resources as compared to MNCs, who not only recognize but also offer a variety of WLB supports to their employees. Malaysian employers should take note of the long-term impact of employees' work-life (im)balance on their organization since there is considerable evidence that stress in WLB incurs significant additional

costs for the business in terms of absenteeism, turnover, recruitment costs and lost productivity (Joplin et al., 2003). On the other hand, healthy and committed employees bring about significant positive gains in terms of organizational performance and competitiveness (Brough, Holt, Bauld, Biggs, & Ryan, 2008; Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008).

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12

Pakistani Women and Traditional Values: The Role of Culture in Work-Life Balance

Ibrahim Noorani and Khurram Shakir

Introduction

Culture incorporates a variety of frameworks and social activities, ranging from education to economics, politics to creative arts, ethnic and racial mannerisms to religious ideologies, domestic lifestyles to travel and tourism, and technologies to artisanship and accommodates diversification. Mogherini (2016) defines culture as a social setting where individuals celebrate their differences as a collective unit and integrate societal behaviours and value systems existing in human communities. Culture emerges from human interactions, which Herskovits (1995) refers to as a man-made creation. The Pakistani culture comprises a variety of values and beliefs that are peculiar within and across diverse regions within the country (Abbas et al., 2019). Such cultural proclivities have both positive and negative impacts on the achievement of work-life balance (WLB), particularly among Pakistani women.

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Pakistan is located in the southern region of Asia, with a population of over 220 million people (fifth largest in the world) across six major ethnic groups (Central Intelligence World Factbook, 2019). Governed by a federal parliamentary republican government, the Pakistan economy thrives with a gross domestic product (GDP) of 1.061 USD as of 2017, with about 64 million people comprising its labour force (Central Intelligence World Factbook, 2019). The females constitute 49 per cent of the country's population, and the estimated female unemployment rate is 6.8 per cent as of 2018 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Islam is the dominant religion in Pakistan and contributes fairly towards its cultural formations. However, being part of the Indian subcontinent, the country still owes many of its cultural traditions to Hinduism and thus integrates a blend of both religions. Furthermore, the broader perspective of Pakistani culture cannot be divorced from its provincial history, caste, creed, tradition, hierarchical structures and tribal associations. Pakistan belongs to the geographical region which Caldwell (1982) describes as 'Patriarchal Belt' in which women generally have limited access to life's resources compared to men. In the Pakistani society, the decisions regarding economic well-being, education facilities, healthcare options, skill development and participation in politics and work settings primarily rest with men. Moghadam (1993), describes this kind of culture as, 'a culture against women'. Against this backdrop, this study examines the WLB of working women in Pakistan in the face of the Pakistani patriarchal regime. Further, we explore the family system and the nature of womanhood in Pakistan. After that, a review of the literature on the WLB of women in Pakistan was highlighted. The research methodology and findings were presented and followed by the discussion and conclusion.

Culture in WLB: An Overview

The role of culture in achieving WLB cannot be overemphasized, given that cultural values are different across societies (Ollier-Malaterre & Foucreault, 2017). Culture is based on implicit values and assumptions that guide people's behaviour (Hodgetts, 2005). Kassinis and Stavrou

(2013) argue that culture is an instrumental factor in an individual's work and life engagement because it shapes the mode of interaction between the two fundamental domains of human life. Although culture has been defined in several contexts, however, there is no precise definition of the concept (Glovan et al., 2010). Nevertheless, in his popular literature, Hofstede (1980) defines culture as the values, assumptions and individuals' shared beliefs based on common historical experiences. Ollier-Malaterre and Foucreault (2017) further explored Hofstede's cultural definition and the role of structural impacts (legal, economic and social institutions) as a primary predictor of several outcomes in the work-life interface.

Over the years, Hofstede's cultural dimensions have remained a blueprint for exploring the concept of culture in diverse perspectives. As such, in the WLB academia, researchers have revised the cultural framework within the work and life hemisphere to include components such as individualism and collectivism (Spector et al., 2004), institutional and humane orientation (Beham et al., 2014), gender egalitarianism (Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, 2015), masculinity and femininity (Joplin, Shaffer, Francesco, & Lau, 2003), power distance (Lu et al., 2010), horizontal and vertical (Mortazavi, Pedhiwala, Shafiro, & Hammer, 2009), uncertainty avoidance (Lucia-Casademunt, García-Cabrera, & Cuéllar-Molina, 2015), and survival and self-expression (Snir & Harpaz, 2009). Extrapolating from some of these dimensions, this chapter focuses on the national context of culture to explore its roles in shaping the work and life spheres of women in Pakistan.

Family System in the Pakistani Culture

The Pakistani culture evinces family as a crucial and functional component of the society based on collective and not individualistic behavioural patterns (Chattoo, Atkin, & McNeish, 2004). The collectivistic pattern arises mainly because 63% of the population still reside in the rural areas of the country, where tribal and feudal systems take precedence over all activities of life (National Institute of Population Studies—NIPS, 2019). A traditional Pakistani family is consanguineous and lives together in

a joint family set-up, and each member contributes their quota to the overall socio-economic well-being within their family roles (Hussain, 1999). The Pakistani culture mirrors a patriarchal hegemonic system arising from the dominance of the male gender (grandfather, father, elder brother or husband) over the females within the family and the wider society (Chattoo et al., 2004). Like in many other less egalitarian communities, the Pakistani culture situates autonomous power in the hands of the dominant males (mostly, heads of the family) to make decisions regarding distribution of resource among the family (Nauman, 2015).

Prevailing family types consist of nuclear and semi-nuclear in the urban areas, while joint and extended families are existent in the rural areas of Pakistan (Chattoo et al., 2004). Nonetheless, joint and extended families also exist in the metropolitan cities, in which larger families consisting of several generations cohabit together (Chattoo et al., 2004). Sathar and Kazi (2000) claim that women in the urban areas of the country have relatively higher levels of freedom compared to their counterparts in rural areas. Besides, their studies found that women in nuclear and semi-nuclear family structures are more involved in the decision-making process and have comparatively better access to education, health care and work opportunities. However, women in rural areas, particularly those that are surrounded by larger groups of people are subject to increasing levels of control by the males in the family and have less autonomy and control over life's resources (Sathar & Kazi, 2000).

ul Haq, Akram, Ashiq, and Raza (2019) submit that the sexist ideology prevalent in Pakistan exposes a majority of the women to exploitations and remains a common phenomenon in most parts of the country. According to Hussain (2011), the patriarchal mindset regarding the division of work compels women to be solely responsible for the household work, while the responsibilities of the men are focused mainly on the external affairs (political and economic activities). Consequently, women have limited access to resources and are subjected to discrimination, physical and mental abuse and restricted movement in the public sphere (ul Haq et al., 2019). Nevertheless, women are expected to exercise exceptional time-management skills and undertake additional duties at home after work also referred to as 'a second shift', and as a result, they

become less motivated to be engaged in the external societal affairs like their male counterparts (Cohen, 2002). Moreover, female members of the family and younger men as well define themselves by the value system created by the male family heads, and such system influences the living patterns within the family and the society at large (Nauman, 2015).

Womanhood in Pakistan

In many societies with a less egalitarian system, women societies are regarded as weak and vulnerable under the autonomous control of the males in the society (McGinn & Oh, 2017). In such cultural setting, women are regarded as primary caregivers and carriers of the family honour, and as a result, they are considered valuable, which compels men to act as a primary guardian of their vulnerabilities (Chattoo et al., 2004). Hence, only women that adhere to these cultural norms are considered respectable in the society. Hussain (2009) reports this phenomenon to have escalated even further in urban societies. As Pakistan progresses towards modernization, women dignification is evidently increasing due to their association (particularly in marriage) with the men and career progression, which enables them to earn a better livelihood (Nauman, 2015).

Tabassum (2016) foregrounds that the Baradari (or patrilineage), caste and tribal structures are predominant among Pakistani family organizations. Social, political and economic alliances are all interlinked within the Baradari system. This plays a vital role in shaping societal values, norms and beliefs (Tabassum, 2016). The prevailing hegemonic system makes distinct the division of work between males and females in the family. According to Qadir and Afzal (2019), within the patriarchal system, men are considered as the breadwinners and active participants within the political and economic domains of the society, while women are primarily confined to look after the family affairs as their core responsibilities including cleaning, cooking, child-rearing, stitching, forming strong familial relations by organizing family events and also helping out in some aspects of farming. Since women are unpaid workers, having comparatively less contribution to economic maintenance, they

are considered insignificant to the decision-making process (Akhter & Akbar, 2016). Thus, women are left disadvantaged in the labour market.

Furthermore, Sayeed and Ansari (2019) aver that the required practice for most women in Pakistan to cover themselves with veils outside of their homes (including at work) contributes to their desires to remain housewives or domestic workers. This has been argued to cause further gender segregation in the society. Similarly, Shaikh, Shah, Katpar, and Shah (2019) attribute the segregation of women from men as a norm in Islam, which is predominant in Pakistan. The religious practice requires that females dress modestly following strict Islamic instructions—thus separating them from strangers and unrelated menfolk (Sayeed & Ansari, 2019). Although these practices are considered to preserve the female heritage, however, men in this society have overturned the practices as a means of restricting women activities outside of the homes (Zia, 2009).

Women and Work-Life Balance in Pakistan

The influx of women into the workforce became apparent in 1987 during the first government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Since then, over a span of three decades, women have formed almost 24 per cent of the total labour force in Pakistan (Amir, Kotikula, Pande, Bossavie, & Khadka, 2018). However, the present government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan claims to be taking measures to improve and modernize the country as a means of facilitating economic welfare and encouraging higher levels of female participation in the labour market (Sayeed & Ansari, 2019). The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) also motivates women to participate in the labour force to earn a living (Mukhtar & Ummar, 2016). Similarly, Saad et al. (2019) argued that the CPEC programme was initiated to enhance women participation in the labour force as well as alleviating the issues regarding work-life imbalance among them.

Women WLB remains a subject of interest as the increasing number of women participation in the labour force over the years has stimulated several debates regarding workforce planning (Duong, Hussain, & Subramaniam, 2020). This breeds issues of juggling work and family

responsibilities simultaneously. The expectations of working women to assume dual responsibilities in the Eastern culture pose severe threats to their physical and mental well-being (Abbas et al., 2019). Shaikh et al. (2019) report that the number of Pakistani women in the workforce has increased phenomenally in recent years. In contrast, Sayeed and Ansari (2019) claim that such increases remain statistically insignificant, given that the Pakistani women remain the lowest in labour force participation in the region. Nevertheless, the female workforce comprises working mothers, single parents and unmarried women working in both public and private organizations. Multi-nationals, service industries, academics and government services are areas where women majorly work (Shaikh et al., 2019). This thus puts working women, especially mothers, under tremendous pressure to maintain role-balancing.

Akhter and Akbar (2016), in their study on working women in Punjab, reported that the majority of the working women were satisfied with the government's efforts towards women empowerment and improvement in their quality of life. In recent years, Pakistani women have benefited from compensations for their historical deprivation in the whole power structures (Abbas et al., 2019). They are provided jobs and political quotas, better education opportunities, property rights, healthcare facilities, equal employment opportunities and prospects for a positive self-image within their respective societies (Abbas et al., 2019). Generally, Pakistanis love female child and are often elated at their birth (Akhter & Akbar, 2016). Families ensure that their female children are well supported so that they excel in life. However, the scenario for many working women changes after marriage. Married women are consistently reminded of their initial responsibility as the primary care provider in the family and are discouraged to work outside of their homes after marriage (Khursheed, Mustafa, Arshad, & Gill, 2019).

Umer and Zia-ur-Rehman (2013) reinforced the presence of patriarchy within the Pakistani household and its adverse effect on women WLB. They argued that the involvement of Pakistani women in multiple roles often results in negative spillover from home to work and vice versa. Aside from engaging fully in domestic duties, working Pakistani women (mostly in the urban areas) also contribute financially to their households (Arif et al., 2017). However, juggling both roles simultaneously is a

huge problem for them and often create imbalance and conflicts between their work and nonwork lives. This, according to Frone et al. (1996) negatively affects the well-being of women and results in poor health, mental stress, demotivation, reduced satisfaction, emotional exhaustion and increased anxiety and depression. Although both men and women face these consequences, women are generally more disadvantaged (Umer & Zia-ur-Rehman, 2013).

Malik (2011), in his study of working women in Baluchistan, found that socially weaker groups, particularly women, are employed within the hospitality sector primarily for reasons that they are unable to oppose tasks assigned to them. Women have considerably less knowledge of the local surroundings and are often victims of abuse by customers and co-workers, as they are deemed to be vulnerable, which often expose them to the dangers of continuous stress and mental illness (Abbas et al., 2019). Hisrich and Brush (1988) and Umer and Zia-ur-Rehman (2013) have consistently found that in South Asia, the decision to work outside of the home for married women is exclusively their husbands. Duong et al. (2020) aver that working women prefer to operate their businesses from home because they like to be in charge of their work and family lives. The Pakistani culture expects women to fully fulfil their primary responsibility of homemaker before thinking of engaging in paid employment (Abbas et al., 2019). This, therefore, makes achieving WLB difficult for women in Pakistan (Tabassum, 2016).

Similarly, women find it challenging to adjust to the patterns of work compared to their male counterparts. This is because they are subsumed into their multiple roles depriving them the time and space to learn new ways of coping with the enormous responsibilities (Duong et al., 2020). Contrastingly, Arif et al. (2017) argue that the requirements within the job roles of the female workforce compel women to dedicate more hours to their workplaces to the detriment of their familial roles; however, they sacrifice their weekends and holidays to reconcile the deficiencies in their home duties. Nevertheless, the main opposition for married working women does not necessarily emanate from their husbands, but rather the pressures from the non-working women within the household. This corroborates with the studies of Cartwright (1978) and Keith

and Schafer (1980), which argue that women cohabiting in a large-sized family have increasing demands from their womenfolk compared to those in smaller family settings. Qadir and Afzal (2019) posit that an overwhelming number of household chores leave women in these families to experience more conflicts managing work and family lives. However, research has found this phenomenon to be more prevalent in the lower- and middle-class families, while working women in the upper-middle and elite classes that have better dignifying jobs are more likely to cope better since they can outsource some of their domestic responsibilities (Abbas et al., 2019; Duong et al., 2020). Many women in Pakistan have limited options available in terms of working outside of the home (Mehmood et al., 2018).

Furthermore, Ahmed (2018) reports that with a majority of the females working in the informal sector, they are persistently exposed to unsafe and life-threatening conditions without legal protection. Such females are predominantly working as domestic workers, housemaids and piece-rate workers for factory owners. Ahmed (2018) further argues that despite the passage of bills by the governments in Sindh and Punjab for the protection of domestic workers, law enforcement remains a challenge for these group of workers. This neglect on the part of the government has adverse effects on female participation in paid work because of the possibility for sexual harassment, gender discrimination and pay inequality which discourages families from allowing women to work.

Research Methodology

The study adopts qualitative research method with interpretative phenomenological approach. This allows researchers to capture and interpret the lived experiences of WLB among working women in Pakistan. This study adopts Hughes, Kinder and Cooper's (2019) multi-dimensional WLB matrix which covers eight areas of work-life: career and work, financial administration and management, partnership and romance, family and social life, health, fitness and recreation, and creativity and personal growth. Following the interpretative phenomenological approach, the study examines the implications of the Pakistani
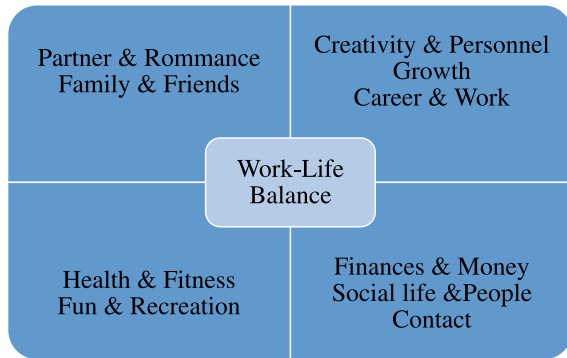
Fig. 12.1 Work-life matrix

culture on the WLB of working women in Pakistan through the lens of the identified work-life matrix (Fig. 12.1).

Hughes et al. (2019) proposed a matrix which consists of eight areas of work-life balance that may help to create a balance in one's life. A lack in level of satisfaction in any of the matrix engenders work-life imbalance. In this study, we have used this matrix to probe into interviewees' lived experiences about work-life balance.

Time and Locale for the Study

Data was collected over a period of six months (May–November 2019) in Karachi, Pakistan. Being one of the few mega cities in the country, Karachi is recognized as the economic hub of Pakistan (NIPS, 2019). The city is well known for its metropolis activities and gender diversity. With a population size of over 20 million people, Karachi remains one of the cities with the largest influx of migration from other parts of the country (NIPS, 2019).

Participant Selection

Fifty-five working women with varied backgrounds were interviewed for this study (see Table 12.1). The participants are women working in different sectors of the economy: banking, telecommunication, hospitality, multinational FMCGs, academia and household/domestic sectors. The participants' ages range between 18 and 41 years. 75% of the participants are working mothers, 65% are married, 10% are divorced, and 25% are single women. The participants ranged between high-income, moderate-income and low-income families. These were selected to gain a better insight into the WLB dynamics of high- and low-income working women. The table below provides a summary of the participants' profile.

Data Collection and Analysis

Date was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observations with the consent of the participants. Participants shared their lived experiences along the lines of the work-life matrix. The study adopts the convenience and snowball sampling techniques. First, the researchers employed the convenience sampling technique by recruiting a small group of participants that were easy to reach in Karachi. Second, the snowball technique, which allows researchers to recruit other participants from existing participants (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016), was employed. Thus, participants from the convenience samples suggested friends and colleagues for the study. According to Creswell (2014), the non-probability sampling method is presumed to eliminate bias in the choice of participants, therefore giving every participant equal chances of selection. The interviews were tape recorded in order for the responses to be captured verbatim. The initial interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes; however, some of the participants were contacted a second time for further questionings based on their responses from the initial interviews. The interviews were conducted in Urdu and then translated into the English language by the researchers.

Table 12.1 Details of the respondents

Serial No.	Age	Occupation	Sector	Marital status	No. of children
1	36	Manager	Education	Married	2
2	40	General Manager	Health	Married	3
3	30	Marketing Manager	Telecom	Single	0
4	36	Engagement Manager	FMCG	Divorced	2
5	26	Digital Marketer	Hospitality	Single	0
6	33	Facility Manager	Hospitality	Married	2
7	41	Director	Health	Married	2
8	34	Accountant	Insurance	Married	2
9	28	Software Engineer	IT	Married	2
10	31	Domestic worker	Household	Married	3
11	23	Social Media Coordinator	Footwear	Single	0
12	41	Domestic worker	Household	Married	5
13	31	Domestic worker	Household	Married	3
14	30	Office Assistant	Automobile	Married	2
15	29	Receptionist	Oil & Gas	Married	2
16	34	Lecturer	Education	Single	0
17	27	Domestic worker	Household	Married	4
18	35	Guest Services Manager	Hospitality	Divorced	2
19	35	Entrepreneur	Fashion	Married	3
20	28	Operational Manager	Banking	Married	1
21	35	Fashion Designer	Textile	Married	3
22	36	Assistant Professor	Education	Single	0
23	42	Assistant Professor	Education	Married	3

(continued)

Table 12.1 (continued)

Serial No.	Age	Occupation	Sector	Marital status	No. of children
24	37	Entrepreneur	Commerce	Married	3
25	34	Accountant	Consultancy	Married	3
26	38	Gynaecologist	Health	Married	2
27	25	Retail Manager	Garments	Single	0
28	35	HR Officer	FMCG	Married	2
29	31	Sales Manager	Insurance	Married	2
30	37	Domestic worker	Household	Married	7
31	41	Domestic worker	Household	Married	3
32	28	HR Specialist	Banking	Single	0
33	33	Teller	Banking	Married	2
34	35	Sweeper	Education	Married	4
35	18	Domestic worker	Household	Single	0
36	32	Administrative Assistant	Oil & Gas	Married	3
37	35	Janitor	Education	Married	3
38	26	Digital Marketer	Media	Married	1
39	22	Research Assistant	Education	Single	0
40	34	Lecturer	Education	Married	2
41	21	Domestic worker	Household	Single	0
42	32	Microbiologist	Pharmaceutical	Married	1
43	35	Financial Advisor	Financial Services	Married	3
44	22	Echo Technician	Health	Single	0
45	26	Office Manager	Automobile	Single	0
46	33	Finance Manager	Financial	Married	2
47	40	General Manager	FMCG	Divorced	2
48	38	Civil Servant	Civil Services	Married	3
49	26	Service Quality Manager	Food & Beverage	Single	0
50	34	Marketing Manager	Hospitality	Divorced	1

Table 12.1 (continued)

Serial No.	Age	Occupation	Sector	Marital status	No. of children
51	32	Customer Service	Banking	Divorced	1
52	28	Electrical Engineer	Energy	Single	0
53	30	PR Specialist	Hospitality	Married	2
54	28	Relationship Manager	Health & Beauty	Married	1
55	38	General Manager	Textile	Married	3

Field notes were also taken to provide the needed contextual information to gain better insight into the phenomenon. Pseudonyms are used to protect the participants' confidentiality.

Following the interviews and transcription, thematic analysis procedure (TAP), as suggested by Gibbs (2007), was used. The procedure required that codes were generated following the identified WLB matrix, which enabled the researchers to organize the codes under the identified themes carefully. Thorough processing of the recorded interviews was organized, arranged and interpreted in a structured manner, such as narrations, descriptions, definitions, classifications, comparisons, analogies and cause and effect dimensions.

Study Findings

Career and Work

Generally, our data evinces that female attitude and orientation towards career development and work management have progressively shifted over the years. Although it is evident that a majority of the participants were mainly motivated by the need to achieve financial liberty, it is believed that engaging in meaningful and dignifying jobs also promotes self-esteem among women. Many participants were driven by the need to prove their worth to family members and particularly the menfolk rather

than being defined as mere wives or mothers. However, this perception differs across the social spectrums given that working women in the upper-income class with unlimited access to good education and social facilities take up paid employment as a way of boosting their self-esteem. In contrast, women in the middle- and low-income class were more concerned about the economic or financial benefit from working as a means of providing for their families. The following highlights some of the responses:

> I work because my financial independence is dear to me […] it is not a luxury but rather a necessity […] my economic survival depends upon it […] to maintain a certain living standard, I have to work because my husband's income is not enough to fund my need – fashion, dressing, lifestyle etc. (Participant 40)
>
> My work is not just an escape from home responsibilities; it is a way of life. I cannot just be a depressing housewife, and child-rearing stops at a certain age […] when they grow up they want to have their own way of life […], so you have to have something other than children to look forward to. (Participant 6)
>
> I come from an educated family, and it helps a lot […] my dad pushed me to go work outside because he didn't want me to waste my MBA by sitting at home […] the constant sense of achievement I get from work gives me an essential sense of productivity and meaningfulness. (Participant 30)
>
> My working outside gives me a women's perspective of career development which men cannot contribute […], I can now give a different take on what career my kids should choose since my husband has a different gathering of friends and I have a different set of friends which give me a different take on life. (Participant 42)

Family support has been identified by many participants as crucial for career progression and for achieving WLB. Participants, regardless of their marital status, found it challenging to cope with familial responsibilities, especially with little or no support from their spouses. For many married women, the multiple roles of working and undertaking the 'second shift' at home to attend to domestic chores and caregiving duties proved challenging and resulted in work-life conflict (WLC). The

majority of the participants that were single and childless claimed that their employers were less considerate compared to their married and with children colleagues. These are the people who benefit from workplace flexibility and less workload. This corroborates Akanji et al.'s (2020) study that employers often think that single and childless professionals do not have WLB issues and problems because they have little or familial duties and more time to focus on their career. However, unknown to these employers, single and childless employees equally have familial roles such as caregiving to their dependents (e.g. parents, nieces, nephews and grandparents) and also the time to concentrate on finding a suitable partner or building the readily existing relationships. Some of the respondents commented:

> Family support is essential for career progression – since I don't have anyone at home to take care of my kids many a time I have to pass opportunities to take on challenging work that can be a real career booster because I have to head home as fast as I can – but women who have parents or in-laws to help out with their children don't feel that pressure and so can focus on career. (Participant 36)
>
> Marriage means the end – end of the career before it begins […]. I will marry only when it feels right, but for now, I need to make a name for myself and prove my worth to my family. (Participant 26)
>
> It is quite difficult being single to achieve work-life balance […]. Imagine that my employer thinks because I am single or childless, then I do not have the same or as much access to flexible working arrangements given to my colleagues that are married or have children […], I always have to work more and sometimes take work home, and that gives me no time for myself nor my family. (Participant 27)

As Arif et al. (2017) have argued, when women are unable to find a balance between work and family, they find themselves in disillusionment from both work and marriage, which is likely to engender family crisis and increase divorce rates. Although gendered roles influenced by patriarchy in Pakistan contribute to the decline in female well-being, we found that the caste system, particularly in the cities (e.g. Karachi), was a major determinant to the achievement of WLB. While the women in the high-income class could reduce the role stress by outsourcing some of

their familial duties by employing domestic workers, the women in the middle- and low-income classes may not be able to afford such a luxury; hence, many of them have no choice but to personally perform these duties. Interestingly, most of the women in the low-income class worked as domestic helpers in the homes of those in the upper caste system. For many, work is merely an activity for meeting their basic needs, particularly that of their children. The lack of spousal support or support from other members of the family engenders WLC for women since they have to engage in multiple jobs and even self-employment to cater for their family needs at the detriment of their personal well-being. The following comments highlight some of the responses:

> My husband doesn't work, he only orders, so I have to work to meet household expenses […]. I can clean, cook, wash so I should do that […] I want to give my children decent life resources even though I earn but money brings no respect for me at home. […], where I come from, men don't view their wives with respect, our husbands do not care if the house is taken care of or children are fed properly, so I have to manage all. (Participant 41)
>
> I have no money left to spend on myself […], household expenses take away everything. My husband is a rickshaw driver, and it's hard for us to save because everything is too costly […] it is hard to manage within the income we make. (Participant 31)
>
> My Ladyship takes good care of me; they all treat me like one of their own […]. Instead of cleaning five houses a day, I now have to take care of this one house the whole day. […] I do this because I also want my children to go to English medium schools – it is important for me. (Participant 17)

These findings resonate with George (2007) and Rani and Saluja (2017) studies that women that engage in paid domestic work are unlikely to achieve WLB due to the unstructured nature of their work. The majority of the women in the upper caste system in Pakistan lack job security, healthcare facilities, reduced work-spans due to health issues and work only out of compulsion for economic survival. Similarly, Mustafa et al. (2019) explored the trend of micro-entrepreneurship among females in Pakistan. The report suggests that although the women lack adequate

education and are subjected to overwhelming household responsibilities, they manage to run small enterprises successfully and learn to make the best use of the opportunities available to them. However, the level of autonomy in their personal and professional lives was severely limited. More so, these women were relegated continuously and forced to remember that work was merely a secondary activity which should not be taken as their 'first love', but rather, a sense of primacy is placed on familial responsibilities. One participant commented:

> I love my job, but the sad part is nobody understands the work I do. People around keep reminding me of my 'real responsibilities' […]. My husband is supportive of my work […], but that is only as long as I do my housework seamlessly […] so even when I do have opportunity to succeed, I pass because I have to rush home. (Participant 28)

Financial Administration and Management

Financial planning and management can be gauged in terms of spending behaviours, savings and investment habits and contingency and risk management. Generally, men have been evidenced to be financially prudent compared to women and remain one of the reasons why in many less egalitarian societies, the males are the primary household finance decision-makers (Kim, Gutter, & Spangler, 2017). Similarly, Shaheen, Hussain, and Mujtaba (2018) argue that the influence of patriarchy in Pakistan stereotypes women as non-prudent financial advisors or counsellors. However, the study reports that there is an increasing trend among Pakistani women to become financially independent through gaining awareness from several knowledge sources such as the microfinance schemes. Our study found that some of the participants are able to manage their micro and small businesses successfully and use it to support their families financially. The following evinces some of the responses:

> My business affords me economic empowerment […] I can support my husband; meet with family expenses and the best part I am no

longer dependent on others for meeting my children's educational needs. (Participant 19)

Whatever I earn, I save a substantial portion of it and buy gold items on instalments. I have seen my mother doing the same […] it is an investment in the future of my daughters when they will get married. (21)

Our study also reveals that the majority (88 per cent) of the women, besides spending money on family needs, also saved a substantial proportion for buying gold. Investment in gold was deemed to be a culture among the women as they regarded it as a means of saving for the future. However, this culture was prevalent among the upper- and middle-income classes, while the majority of the low-income earners lacked the financial buffers for such luxury. Nevertheless, despite the increase in financial liberty among Pakistani women, an overwhelming number of them relied on their husbands, fathers or brothers to assist with financial planning. Some of the respondents commented that:

I am not good with the whole banking stuff […], it creeps me out […] thank God my husband is very good with this kind of stuff, so that is taken care of. (Participant 38)

My husband and I have invested in a plot […]. Buying a property is a huge thing, and men are generally good at these things […], this area is dominated by men and women aren't taken seriously, so it helps having my husband by my side while making such decisions. (Participant 38)

Although our findings reveal that the Pakistani women's quest for financial liberty has increased compared to previous findings (Hussain, 2011), the level of dependence on their male partners and relatives reveals that they still struggle to make effective financial decisions. This could be because throughout their upbringing, women are generally not involved in financial decision-making. As opined by Akhter and Akbar (2016), the ingrained patriarchal system dissuades women from partaking in decisions on economic and financial issues. Further, our findings reveal that women generally save either for their children's future, for dowry payments or for rainy days. Dowry payment is an important cultural rite

for Pakistani women. Mustafa et al. (2019) opine that women are accustomed to taking out some portion of their earnings to purchase and store items needed to be presented as dowry for their wedding. However, they mostly save up such money without the knowledge of their husbands since the men are likely to invest the funds in properties or businesses. Some participants commented:

> [...] I do not inform my husband of my savings to purchase gold because generally, our men do not believe in such things. They would instead buy a plot of land or set up a new business if possible [...]. So, we do more work than usual just to enable us to save some extra money. (Participant 7)
>
> As a Pakistani woman, it is our culture to make sure that we save enough money to buy golds and jewellery for our daughters and also for the dowry rites. [...] my husband could not care less, he would persuade me to spend the entire money, so I rather hide it from him [...] but of course, they are aware that we are hiding some money. Kitties are very popular in this city, so it is a much-preferred way of saving even though I sometimes have to do some menial jobs to earn more money. (Participant 26)

It is evident that working beyond the usual working time is prevalent among the participants. This is done to raise extra savings for various reasons. However, it causes WLC for the majority of the women. We also found that working women of all classes tend to save through participating in kitties. The kitties is a voluntary financial contribution (or financial cooperatives) among 20 people predominantly in the Bachat Committee (BC), where low-income earners, rather than borrowing from a bank, form a group that periodically contribute and access funds. Generally, Pakistani women are more risk-averse, which reflects in their financial planning and contingency management as they would rather opt for safe and interest-free investments such as gold, foreign exchange and most commonly BCs.

Partnership and Romance

According to Abbas et al. (2019), strong relationships thrive upon the availability of self-disclosure, social support and physical intimacy among partners. These elements are paramount in the lives of women, especially working women. Rao (2017), in describing the situation of women in South Asian countries, propounded that generally in these societies, the reasons for getting married comprise social security, companionship, happiness, love, desire to breed their own families, sexual motivation and to a greater extent evade social isolation. Abbas et al. (2019) argue that social support is crucial for sustaining marriages and families because it plays a crucial role in the reduction of anxiety and stress for both working and non-working women in Pakistan. Some participants commented:

> Work is tough but having a supportive husband at home helps a lot […], we share our day to day happenings, and honestly, it helps in reducing the stress I get from work. […] to know that you have someone caring waiting for you at home is very refreshing. (Participant 31)

Although the participants were evasive about their intimate lives with their partners, we drew some assumptions from our observations. Women of all classes mirrored their sexual intimacy to be a revitalizing activity and a significant contributor to power, security, confidence and active participation at work. Women who were having satisfactory relationships were found to have reduced work and home conflicts. These findings resonate with the previous claims made by Rasool, Zubair, and Anwar (2020) that intimacy among spouses produced stress reliefs and fostered love and compassion, particularly in the interest of the women. However, women (predominantly in the lower caste system) with no physical and social intimacy were generally observed to display low self-esteem and increased anxiety due to work-family conflicts. Nevertheless, despite being sexually active, the majority of the women found it challenging to combine work with home duties. One participant stated:

[…] I have six kids, and seventh is on the way […] five minutes of my husband's pleasure, and I am stuck with this for another nine months. (Participant 30)

From our observations, we found that a limited number of the participants were satisfied with their romantic lives and more importantly, the level of support from their spouses. Resurfacing the outcomes in spousal support across the different social caste system was different but only marginally. The majority of the upper- and middle-income classes had more support because they could afford to hire domestic workers and have more time for intimate activities, while the reverse was the case for the low-income earners.

Family and Social Life

The communal-family setting in Pakistan fosters in-depth relationships among family members and friends. Our data evinces the significance of the family institution to the participants as they, regardless of their marital status, had several ties to families which they recognized as a fundamental part of their life. Family and friends' support comes in various ways such as helping each other with work, finances and providing social support. Our findings reveal that familial support is crucial for all working women. However, women in the low-income cadre often prioritize family over other things. The strong family culture among the Pakistanis often propels them to prioritize family and friends over their work engagements and at times are willing to quit their jobs just to attend to a family event. Some participants commented on the significance of family:

Family is family, even if I can't do much to help them. […], I can at least wipe tears off the bereaved. (Participant 41)

As a woman, I am required to participate in all the family events […], it doesn't matter how tired I am from work I am expected to get dressed and be present at all the family gatherings, otherwise women in the family take it as if I am too pompous or arrogant to participate with them which is not true. (Participant 33)

Rasool et al. ([2020](#)) suggest that one of the coping mechanisms for dealing with work-family conflict for the Pakistani women is family and friends' supports. We found that working women who receive support from family and friends find it easier to achieve career progression. In contrast, Sarwar and Imran ([2019](#)) found that many of these women are subjected to a glass ceiling and gender discrimination, which transcends into working overtime as a means to prove their worth to their male counterparts in particular, and achieve their career goals. One of the respondents mentioned:

> Ever since I started working, my family takes my opinions seriously […], no one says the, 'how would you know' phrase anymore. […], I am involved in the decision-making process, and now I do not have to have kids to feel important at home, work is good enough. (Participant 28)

However, due to increase in working time and workload in an attempt to gain self-esteem, these women are exposed to various health hazards, increasing family crisis and hysterics. Also, many participants alluded to the importance of having a social life or network consisting of close friends as a means of relieving work stress. Besides, our data reveals that women with limited familial support take advantage of social gatherings and friendships to reduce work stress. Some of the respondents commented:

> Hanging out with friends is better than any family gatherings […], I can be my true self with them, and I don't have to pretend to be civil with friends as they don't judge me. […] family events are usually about match-making, as older women in the family are usually looking for potential brides. (Participant 22)
>
> No matter how busy I get; I always try to assure that my presence is felt at all social gatherings I am invited to. […] it is a huge motivating factor for me. (Participant 34)
>
> Being nice to others never goes unpaid. Just the other day I did an echo for a gentleman who happened to be the general manager of a big fashion outlet, he was so happy with my work that he sent me two new branded suits afterwards […]. (Participant 33)

The above excerpts reveal that socialization forms a vital part in the lives of Pakistani women. However, we found that the high-income class represented the majority of the women that prioritized friends and non-family social gatherings over their family. This corroborates the findings of Zafar (2019) which posits that women of higher income and educational status in Pakistan value friendships over family through developing social network, whereas the low-income earning women with low educational backgrounds give primacy to their families.

Furthermore, our findings reveal that religion is recognized as an essential social institution for Pakistani women. Although all the participants were Muslims, only 82 per cent of them practise Islam. The practising women sought their religious activities as a form of socialization while adhering to the religious principles. The majority of Pakistani women are less interested in politics; however, they envision some aspects of politics to create platforms for networking and meeting new friends. Some of the participants mentioned:

> I do not know much about politics, but I am a huge fan of Imran Khan; I know he will do good for the country. […] we are more interested in what Marium Nawaz (a politician) is wearing rather than what she is doing. (Participant 34)

Nevertheless, it is sometimes challenging for these women to keep up with their social life and work obligations simultaneously due to workload at work and familial responsibilities.

Health, Fitness and Recreation

The deplorable state of the healthcare system remains a common problem in Pakistan. However, women are vulnerable to the backlash effect due to the limited access to good healthcare facilities which exacerbate the resurgence of WLC (Hussain, 2011). According to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) conducted by the NIPS (2019), Pakistani women are predominantly oblivious to their health issues, which engenders further complications and results in the

high mortality rate of women in both rural and urban areas. Our findings reveal that similar to other WLB matrix, the caste system in Pakistan favours the high- and middle-income classes given that they have access to and can afford good healthcare systems, while the low-income earners are subjected to a continuous health deterioration under the inexperienced hands of quack doctors and oftentimes self-medication. These findings reinforce the research of Tabassum (2016) which asserted that women's income and educational levels have a direct impact on their health conditions. Regardless of the social caste groups, our findings revealed that 87 per cent of the participants engaged in fitness activities as a means of keeping fit and healthy. Some participants commented:

> Looking good is an essential part of the job […], I pay extra care to my physical grooming […] I can't be fat or slobby at work because my job demands me to be always surrounded with people, so I have to look always good. (Participant 40)
>
>   Dieting is my way of being fit, it is cheap, easy and workable […], I have subscribed to some YouTube channels and get many hacks from there […] it works for me. (Participant 26)

Our findings highlight that the women in the lower caste system consider the access to good health facilities as a luxury; as such, a majority within this group have resorted to a few activities to keep them fit and healthy. Despite such attempts, these women often find it challenging to cope with work, family and fitness activities. In contrast, participants in the upper- and middle-income cadre can afford to hire domestic workers to allow more time for health and fitness activities. Similar to our findings, Murtaza and Khan (2017) argue that the working conditions of women as it relates to the lack of adequate transport facilities, poor health care and fitness amenities at work, unavailability of day-care facilities and organizational inflexibility mirror the factors that engender WLC for a majority of the working women in Pakistan.

Additionally, our findings present mixed reactions in the reality of recreational activities for the participants. First, despite the limited availability of recreational centres in Pakistan, working women intermittently take time to visit common places like the beach and parks and sometimes

dine out, watch movies or socialize through the social media platforms. These practices, however, are prevalent among low-income earners and less ambitious working women. Second, women in the middle- and high-income levels often tend to take less time for recreation, and such trends are consistent for those that are extremely ambitious, where work has become a form of recreation. Some of the respondents commented:

> I would go crazy if I do not work now […]. If I had not tasted this lifestyle, I might be contended being a stay at home mom, but now it is difficult to imagine my life without the office […] the office environment offers new experiences every other day. (Participant 7)
>
>   When I am depressed, I do my shopping […], men smoke to release stress, women shop. (Participant 30)
>
>   Women in our neighbourhood have since come up with recreational activities […]. Every month we do a little Hi-Tea or something at someone's house, we dress up and talk a lot […], it is very refreshing. (Participant 48)

Consistent with Lenneis and Pfister (2017), women from under-developed societies are generally not accustomed to recreational and sporting prospects. This lends credence to our findings which suggest that the culture of the Pakistani women limits their experiences of exploring a variety of recreational activities compared to their male counterparts. Such outcomes emerge as a result of lack of time due to the multiple roles of working women. Also, Laar et al. (2019) suggest that religious and cultural obligations to wear hijabs, long dresses with full sleeves and veils, discourage many women to participate in physical activities.

Creativity and Personal Growth

Hughes et al. (2019) evince the importance of individual's ability to connect with personal imaginations and utilize varying creative expressions to develop and adapt to the conditions within the environment. Our findings reveal that working women utilize their work experiences and exhibit unusual levels of creativity in their routines both at work and

at home. For the majority, juggling both work and home demands generates ideas and skills for managing both life domains. Some participants commented:

> I am so much into meeting deadlines at work that now I am conditioned to do the same at home […], I carry out my home responsibilities in a very disciplined manner – laundry, cooking, cleaning, helping kids with their stuff […] everything is chartered out. (Participant 3)

Our study corroborates with the findings of Ruhana (2020) that suggest that the quality of work-life heavily influences an individual's personal growth. Adequate pay, protective but challenging work environments and healthy physical conditions are factors that guarantee competency and development. Thus, working women are more likely to exhibit increased levels of creativity and personal growth. Similarly, Rashid and Ratten (2020) argue that the increasing number of women in developing countries investing in entrepreneurial ventures and assuming leadership roles transcends into creative and innovative mechanisms. Such mechanisms contribute to the maximization of business potentials as well as the creative capacity to handle the pressures at home.

Discussion and Conclusion

Significant assumptions can be drawn from the initial observation of this phenomenon. Post-modernism may be the dominant ideology within the discourse, but the corporate structure mirrors along the lines of modernism. Since Pakistani society is on the verge of transformation from traditional conventional structures to modernist market-oriented constructions, the role of the workforce is changing quite radically (Hussain, 2009). Growing capitalism has increased the demand for skilled workforce, and technology taking off the pressure from manual labour has allowed for female participation in the workforce to increase radically.

Mehmood, Chong and Hussain (2018) aver that the increasing literacy rate of Pakistani women has resulted in the cultural shift from a

vastly conservative and religious country to a liberal and secular nation. Their investigation revealed that female's enrolment in higher education institutions has increased from 36.8 per cent to 47.2 per cent. Although gender inequality persists, primarily due to various socio-cultural factors such as poverty, unequal redistribution of economic resources and resistance to co-education, this gap is steadily reducing owing to the proliferation of women in paid employment.

Moreover, feminism is taking its toll upon traditional societal structures, particularly in the urban areas of the country. However, Jamal (2005) and Zia (2009) argue that such feminist movement engenders a form of antagonism towards Islamization in the country. Critelli (2010) advocated that gender equality in Pakistan can only be assured when the demands exceed beyond the sphere of political and civil rights towards social justice for women in the form of equal opportunities and rights to education, nutrition, health care and income. Also, this study evinces an increasing rate of WLC among Pakistani women due to their persistent desire to either engage in paid employment for economic reason, financial liberty and self-esteem. The feminist view as postulated by ul Haq et al. (2019) imperatively advocates for equality in power-sharing between both genders as a means to encourage the women's interest in workforce participation and to alleviate oppression. However, this approach unintentionally establishes a belief that the society created by men is absolutely perfect and deprives women of getting a fair share in the world created by men. Yet, such advocacies may also blur the individual roles of men and women in the society. However, the existing patriarchal system in Pakistan may be a huge barrier for good well-being and achieving WLB.

Additionally, our findings reveal that the social caste system strongly influences the reality of WLB among Pakistani women. Based on our six WLB matrix or framework adopted from Hughes et al. (2019), this study finds that the Pakistani caste system generates some contradictory outcomes among the working women across the three dominant social classes (upper, middle and lower). Although the experiences of the women generally appeared similar in some instances, but oftentimes, contrasting outcomes ensued in spite of the cultural similarities. Regarding career and work, consistent with the study of Duong et al.

(2020), women in the upper caste were primarily driven by the need for self-esteem, while those in the middle and lower caste focused mainly on the economic and financial benefits. Nevertheless, in both cases, an increase in WLC was evident as each category of need resulted in an increased workload. We also found that a majority of the women persistently depend on their male spouses or relatives concerning financial administration and management. However, corroborating with Mustafa et al. (2019), an overwhelming number of Pakistani women through extra hours of work perceived the purchase of gold and jewellery as a medium of savings, particularly for their unmarried daughters. Such extra hours of work interfered with the time allocated to familial responsibilities, further challenging their efforts to gain WLB.

Partnership and romance constitute another significant factor that Pakistani women considered important to achieving WLB. However, despite the marginal differences across the caste system, we maintain that working women in the middle and lower caste enjoyed better intimacy with their spouses given their financial capacity to employ domestic workers in exchange for intimate vacations. In contrast, women in the lower social system faced intimacy challenges due to their constant need to satisfy their work duties and home responsibilities (household chores and childcare). Pakistani women, however, found the family and social life aspect of the WLB matrix as a fundamental factor. The communal-family structure in this society presumes that family is an integral part of work and life; therefore, a majority of the women depended on close relatives and friends as a medium for relieving the stress that emerges from juggling both work and home duties. This is consistent with the study of Rasool et al. (2020), which suggests that family and friends form part of the coping mechanisms for working women. More so, despite the deplorable state of the health system in Pakistan, women alternatively find fitness and recreational activities as a means to sustain good health which is a requirement for successfully juggling work and home duties. Nevertheless, such practices remain low particularly among the low-income earners due to the need to do more work with little or no time for such activities and at the detriment of their health and wellbeing (Lenneis and Pfister, 2017). Finally, as reported by Rashid and

Ratten (2020), we also find that the inevitable need for women (particularly low-income earners) to combine work and home duties triggers a variety of coping skills and creativity which is sometimes found useful in the workplace.

Thus, work-life balance is a critical phenomenon for working women, where substantial policymaking is required to ensure women's professional and personal well-being in Pakistan. The provision and equal access to improved infrastructural facilities across the state would be beneficial to women in particular. Likewise, employers' roles in the implementation and employees' utilization of adequate flexible working arrangement would facilitate the achievement of WLB among women in Pakistan and worldwide. More so, regarding the roles of HRM, there are several implications for the future of work for Pakistani women as the country plies the route to modernism.

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Part IV

South America

13

Towards Achieving a Meaningful Balance Between Work and Private Life: Insights from Argentine Workers

Gisela Delfino and Camila Botero

Introduction

Current changes in the world of work are conditioned by economic and social situation. Data from Argentina social context reflect increased socio-occupational segmentation, with a high association between predominant labour scenario and poverty. This impacts on quality of life and households' conditions (Donza, 2019). In other words, there is a highly fragmented market that produces deprivation for many workers and, consequently, affects living conditions of family groups.

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Another aggravated aspect in Argentina is the quality of employment. Labour informality is a recurrent aspect of job insecurity and represents the main job quality deficit in Argentina (Bertranou et al., 2014). "Latin America, and Argentina in particular, has been characterized throughout history by macroeconomic instability and its negative effects, both static and dynamic, on the labour market (on the level of employment, real wages, labour informality, among others)" (Bertranou & Casanova, 2015, p. 12). Therefore, the macroeconomic environment and growth strategies become a basic fundamental aspect to generate quality employment.

It is also important to address the new ways of structuring and organizing companies, which bring with them new changes, for example, the introduction of new technologies. The International Labour Organization has expressed that technological transformations society is currently forcing its way to reviewing skills and labour competences, making it possible to include what is expected in the near future. Therefore, in developing countries, like Argentina, it is essential to think new and better techno-productive systems since current processes of industrialization and modernization of the productive structure are insufficient and unfinished (Ernst & Robert, 2019).

Economic and social changes pose new challenges for workers' protection: for example, part-time employment and therefore reduced working hours; increased number of self-employed workers; increased number of subcontractors and officials with temporary contracts; increased work and service contracts and temporary employment; new forms of employment in the information and communication sectors (teleworking, virtual companies on the Internet, etc.); greater alternation between employed and self-employed jobs (Bullinger, 2000). In Argentina, between 2018 and 2019, there was a drop in salaried workers and an increase in self-employed workers (Indec, 2019).

Considering the labour situation in Argentina, new responses to it have arisen. Global fragmentation of value chains, the interconnection of productive capacities, and the blurring of the boundaries among producers, sellers, and consumers are other outstanding characteristics (Fisher & Fuchs, 2015). In Latin America, there is growing concern regarding new forms of work and the impact that new technologies

will have on employment, its characteristics, and the uncertainty about the resulting labour relations. If regulations do not consider new work forms, job insecurity will grow. Training and organization alternatives are required to guarantee workers' protection from the mismatch between existing labour policies and regulations and new forms of employment (Bensusán, 2016).

Home delivery platforms are a pioneering experience in Latin America. They have been driven by workers engaged in goods (Rappi, Glovo) and people (Uber, Cabify, among others) transporting. The precariousness of delivery workers' conditions is evident in low wages, insecurity to which they are exposed, lack of social security, and long working hours. Complaints of disagreement have already started to arise. This type of work is in a labour market limbo. It is assumed that employment protection and regulation do not apply since it is proposed as an eventual virtual job—that is, an activity that allows the distribution of personal time between studies, work, or any other activity (del Bono, 2019). A large proportion of people who dedicate themselves to this type of work have university studies and are immigrants. In this context of high vulnerability and lack of regulation, relationship between new technologies and new forms of job insecurity deepens.

How new technology affects work, well-being, and individual and organizational performance depends not only on how advanced it is. Objectives of those who introduce it, procedures used to introduce it, and how well it adapts to the existing social system in the workplace are also relevant (Blackler & Brown, 1986; Burnes, 1989). As mentioned by Arnold and Randall (2012), it is clear that, in many countries, individuals are increasingly aware and therefore less satisfied with the imbalance that sometimes occurs between the amount of time they spend at work and the amount of time they spend outside of it. Hence, there is a new challenge for employers who want to attract the best workers; they must also ensure that their workforce is satisfied and engaged. This way, demands that workers face in daily life, trying to achive a balance between work and non-work activities, have become problematic. "Work-life integration" concept captures the dynamics of employees trying to balance a wide range of work and non-work activities (Lewis & Cooper, 2005).

Considering some society groups, such as low-income families, work-life balance often depends on the social support network, which is frequently essential for childcare (Kossek et al., 2008). It may even happen that what is stressful is not the time spent away from the family; for some women who work outside the home, returning home is what they find most stressful (Westman et al., 2008).

Lewis and Lewis (1997) have already mentioned the importance of job flexibility in terms of flexible and informal work arrangements. It has already been studied (Burke, 2001a) that there is a negative association between work addiction and organizational values that fosters the balance between personal and work life: work-addicted people obtain higher scores in organizational values that are negative in terms of balance between personal and work life.

Results obtained from the quarterly survey carried out by Randstad Human Resources Company (2019) show that new technologies create tensions between work and personal life: 59% of Argentinians consider that their employer expects them to be available even after working hours. Employees' perception shows, for example, that 61% do not mind having to look at work matters in their free time at a convenient time and 66% said they answer calls or e-mails immediately when they are outside of their regular working hours. About 49% of those surveyed considered their employer expects them to be available also during their vacations. According to Randstad (2019), in Argentina and Uruguay, organizations need to work more actively so that the concept of work-life balance is incorporated into the corporate culture.

Importance of Work in Adult Life

Well-being is closely related to living conditions and living standards (García-Viniegras & López González, 2003). Thus, satisfaction arises when a balance is achieved between future expectations and current achievements in different areas such as work, family, health, material conditions of life, interpersonal relationships, and couple's sexual and emotional relationships (García-Viniegras, 2005). Personal satisfaction is one of the fundamental components of well-being. It interacts between

the person and his/her micro- and macro-social environment involving material and social objective conditions that offer different opportunities for personal fulfilment (García-Viniegras & González Benítez, 2000).

Researchers have pointed out the importance of work in adult life and its relationship with other aspects of life. Global satisfaction with life is necessary and is achieved when it is distributed within a set of different activities: family, work, social relationships, food, hobbies, sports, etc. Each one reaches a greater or lesser level of importance in the life of each person. Nevertheless, if the individual becomes frustrated in one or more of these facets, he/she can focus attention on one, neglecting the rest (Fernández-Montalvo & Echeburúa, 1998).

Work concept, its social assessment, and work motivation have undergone a great change throughout history. Work activity is a fundamental aspect of mental health (Fernández-Montalvo & Echeburúa, 1998). Nowadays, working requires great dedication of daily time. It is not only an activity aimed to making money; its importance transcends a person's identity. It allows inclusion into the sociocultural environment and the achievement of economic independence (Fernández-Montalvo, 1998). Work implies that the person can carry out his/her work activity freely; that is, when working, one can deploy his/her potential and develop it in a responsible way. In order to develop work in the best possible way, and to contribute to personal fulfilment, abilities and personality traits must be evaluated. Each worker has his/her style, which must be detected and improved (Griffa & Moreno, 2011).

Conditions in which a job is developed turn out to be important for the mental health of the worker. Aspects such as opportunity of control, adequacy between demands that the position requires and capabilities of the person who performs it, interpersonal relationships, and physical security intervene on psychological well-being (Arnold & Randall, 2012). It is important to observe the degree of influence that a person's behaviour, in their professional field, has on their behaviour outside of it, and how external aspects influence the well-being at work (Fernández-Montalvo & Echeburúa, 1998; Fernández-Montalvo, 2000).

Some authors have suggested that different organizations are responsible for attracting, selecting, and conserving different kinds of people (O'Reilly, 1991; Rousseau, 1995; Schneider, 1987). Those that prioritize

work are attracted to companies that offer them challenges and risks and therefore a greater labour involvement compared to normal employment (Harpaz & Snir, 2003).

It is relevant to take into account the centrality of work, as the importance that fulfils the role of work in relation to other roles in the subject's life, such as family, community activities, and leisure (Alonso García, 2004). In 1987, the Meaning of Working (MOW) International Research Team had pointed out the importance of work at a general level and of work at any time in the life of a subject. They differentiated absolute centrality, where the role of work is extremely important, from relative centrality, where other facets, such as leisure, community, and religion, are taken into account. When work value is absolutized, work activity would hinder and be dysfunctional to the other areas of a person's life (Griffa & Moreno, 2011). According to Salanova et al. (1991), it is necessary to take into account the meaning of work and the associated values according to the cultural-historical context, since in each period work is conceptualized in different ways: as a punishment, as an obligation, as a possibility of self-realization, and even as an addiction.

During work activity, working conditions and the environment, that is, the environment in which this function is carried out, favour the life and health of the worker in some way. Work allows or contributes to personal fulfilment, to the development of the personality of those who execute it, and defines a crystallized social identity in the profession or trade (Neffa, 1999). While people work, some of the physical, biological, psychic, and mental capacities of the human being are constantly updated, conditioned by the feelings of belonging or inclusion in a group, category, or profession. At the same time, within social identity, something unique is displayed in each worker with respect to the other workers, where it creates strong feelings of belonging (Neffa, 2015).

As Dejours (1998) mentions, work demands a subjective mobilization at mental and psychic level of the worker. It will be necessary to compensate for the failures of the work prescribed by others and to deal with the random problems and incidents found in the reality of the labour process. The centrality of work can be both a health operator, insofar as it allows the construction of a balance with other areas of life, and it can also be presented as a limitation to personal development

that may eventually cause pathological and destabilizing health effects (Alonso García, 2004; MOW International Research Team, 1987). In this sense, it has been argued that making work a number one priority over other aspects of life can be detrimental to physical, mental, and social health (Fernández-Montalvo, 1998).

Another interesting aspect to be analysed is what being employed can generate on a personal level, offering the possibility of building a sense of existence and finding meaning in what is being done. On the other hand, frustration can arise if the worker is prevented from building that sense of existence by a given organization or employer (Neffa, 1999). In some cases that feeling of frustration can find compensation in the possibility of having access to knowledge, improvement programs, continuous training, thus obtaining financial autonomy, establishing relationships, being part of a work group and building identity. We should highlight financial autonomy as a goal of utmost importance (Neffa, 2015).

From the perspective of mental health, work plays relevant roles: (a) it balances the level of activity, through physical and mental energy expenditure; (b) it structures daily routines, distinguishing periods dedicated to work and leisure; (c) it allows exchange of social roles: satisfying social bonds and complementing family emotional relationships; (d) it helps develop personal identity by granting social status (Fernández-Montalvo, 2000). The degree to which a job meets these requirements is strongly associated with job satisfaction and mental health.

Argentina: A Context with Structural Inequalities

It is important to give a context to the factors that articulate work. Various international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and numerous national associations of professionals such as doctors, jurists, sociologists, psychologists, ergonomists, and labour economists agree that not only conditioning factors should be considered: economic and social determinants of

health, such as the economic, technological, social, political context, and the labour market should be taken into account as well.

The United Nation Sustainable Development Goals mark a path to harmonize three basic elements: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. They are essential for the well-being of people and societies, and promote sustainable, inclusive, and equitable economic growth to create greater opportunities for all. On the other hand, studies show that social rights in force in Argentina demonstrate structural inequalities that are a real point of concern. Well-being, material conditions and social integration are necessary for full sustainable human development. Therefore, when analysing living conditions, a set of operations associated with sources of well-being is considered. This implies access to basic services and goods, protection of economic resources for life support, and decent habitat conditions. To achieve a definition of human and social development, beyond considering the indicators of income and monetary poverty, a set of aspects that allow for economic satisfaction and material achievements by households must be considered. The definition of well-being is much more complex since it covers not only economic indicators, but also social rights that imply a criterion of justice (Bonfiglio et al., 2019).

The Argentine Social Debt Observatory (ODSA) has been monitoring, since 2004, material and subjective deficiencies that have an impact on the essential capacities for personal and social development. Regarding the labour market, taking into account the last decades, after the 2001 crisis and until 2007–2008, there was a favourable socio-labourer progress—for example, investment growth, increased international competitiveness due to devaluation, taking advantage of significant idle capacity and policies aimed for domestic market expansion and extending to different countries. Therefore, adding to this, labour policies regained legal importance to protect work. As of 2009, the consumption-based model reached its limits due to lack of investment; additionally, changes in the international market did not favour Argentina; job creation decreased, and improvements in the labour market stagnated. As of 2016, the scenario has become even more negative as the adverse international context, the lack of private investment, and low public investment have continued. In addition, anti-inflationary

policy has had a direct impact on the labour context. The following two years added the devaluation process with its recessive effects, so inflation increased, generating income and consumption capacity decrease. One of the most used alternatives to measure the well-being of a society is economic deficiencies through monetary income. This is a fundamental resource to obtain goods and services that are basic to achieve well-being (Donza, 2019).

As in other developing countries with emerging economies, salaried and registered work with social security organizations comprises less than half of the economically active population. This situation must be taken into account within the conditions and environment that a worker submits and how this affects psychically and socially since the objective of entrepreneurs is often to maximize their profit or that of the organization without taking into account the employees' well-being (Neffa, 2015).

On the labour scenario, a segmentation has been generated, known as the micro-informal sector, which has a typical feature that easily oscillates between periods of occupation and others of unemployment. This is reflected in the fact that the annual income decreases due to this permanent dynamic, lack of employment relationship consolidation, seniority loss, training interruption, and permanent discontinuity of contributions to the social security system. Donza (2019) shows that labour turnover has had a marked impact in this sector, with little specialization in labour, and vulnerable labour relations with greater exposure to unemployment since the cost of layoffs for the employer is minor or null.

Workers in the informal sector are approximately 49.3% of the country's economically active population (Donza, 2019). They tend to be young (aged between 18 and 34 years), and they spend, in general, their time in precarious or unstable activities, with poor working conditions, low income, lack of social protection, and limitations to exercise labour rights. According to statistics (Donza & Salvia, 2018), 74.5% of their income comes from their employment and the remaining 25.5% is shared by retirement and pension income, social assistance programmes, employment plans, and other non-labour income. There is a higher percentage of women who belong to this sector; the distribution of occupations is very different according to sex. The most frequent work in

women is non-professional self-employment (45.4%) and 22.9% work as domestic workers in households. On the men side, 57.9% perform activities as non-professional self-employed. Women, compared to men, have 40% lower probability of working in full employment (Donza, 2019).

However, another point of view to take into account is not only how Argentina's situation affects its workers in the micro-informal segment, but those that overwork as well, regardless of socioeconomic status. It is important to consider the salary relationship, the social security system, the workers' access to education, housing, urban planning, and public services (Ramazzini, 2004). All these variables position salaried workers in a particular place of social stratification and insert them together with their family in social life, establishing relationships with others (Ansoleaga, 2013). Therefore, the relationship of these factors in each person will define the general conditions of life and the impact on health. In this sense, health can be seen as the result of a constant search for balance of human beings with their peers and with the environment, which depends on the resilience capacities of the subject to risk factors (Neffa, 2015).

Work-Private Life Balance

Dedicating long hours to work has been perceived as an appropriate behaviour, and it is socially accepted. It also responds to certain values of responsibility and a vision of progress in success and power (Fernández-Montalvo & Echeburúa, 1998). In Latin America, employees work long hours. The idea that free time is equivalent to lost time is imposed. There is an implicit idea in organizations to consider leisure time negatively and, with time, the worker internalizes this culture. Working hours in Argentina and Chile go from 40 and 45 hours per week, that is, 1,974 hours per year. However, other Latin American countries such as Colombia, Mexico, and Costa Rica stand out for higher number of working hours, with 2,496 hours per year according to the International Labour Organization (BAE Negocios, 2019). When Argentinians are consulted about the number of hours they work, 59% say they work

10 hours or more per day, 25% affirm they work 8 hours, and finally, 16% declare they work 9 hours (Universia Argentina, 2013).

Europe is usually taken as a reference to promote reduction of working hours. In countries such as Denmark, Norway, Holland, and Germany, workweek is between 25 to 40 hours (BAE Negocios, 2019). Nevertheless, of those who exceed in Argentina the typical 8-hour workday, 46% say that it is due to work volume while 39% referred financial need (Universia Argentina, 2013). Latin American countries have a number of factors such as high rates of independent workers, poorly paid jobs, job insecurity, and even cultural aspects that do not contribute to carry out this change (BAE Negocios, 2019). For example, in Argentina, of those working in the micro-informal sector, 75.9% do not have retirement contributions, 51.3% do not have health coverage, 30% were unemployed at least once in the last year, and 45.1% require more hours of work (Donza, 2019).

The main aim people try to achieve when planning to balance their work and personal life is well-being. Worker's subjective well-being is a fundamental social right that when absent confines equal opportunities (Salvia et al., 2016). A contrasted measure of well-being is psychological distress. It implies a deficit of emotional and cognitive resources, little capacity to respond to daily life's demands and difficulty in social relationships. Prevalence of employees' psychological distress varies according to working sector. In private or public sector, it is around 18% while in the micro-informal sector it rises up to 23%. People working in the last sector endure worse psychological conditions too: 24.1% have a negative approach to problems that arise, 16.6% said they feel nothing or little happy, and 14.1% have a belief of external control (Donza, 2019).

There are differences in the well-being reported by gender; women report greater psychological distress than men do. At non-professional status, 17% of women undergo psychological distress, while only 9.9% of men reports that. At working class level, the relation is 24.4% vs. 15.2%, and at marginal worker level, it is 49.9% vs. 24.3%. Regarding happiness, women at working class report a greater happiness deficit than men (19.9% vs. 10.4%) (Donza, 2019). Mismatches between the vital trajectory and the possibility of accompanying a professional career with

economic solvency generate unconformity due to the lack of adaptation between working time and family life (Neffa, 2015). When comparing local workers with people working in Argentina but born and socialized in other regions, some differences related to work happiness arise. Foreign workers highlight the importance of teamwork, organizational culture, and sustainability, while Argentinians give high relevance to work environment, distance to work and recognition more important. In this way, Argentinians take more into account factors that affect their own happiness at work, while foreigners consider more factors that impact organizational happiness (Celada et al., 2016).

A study carried out in seven big cities of Argentina shows that almost half of Argentine workers are affected by mood and material deterioration. Millennials (Y generation) are the ones that display the highest rates of exhaustion and feeling that work is not returning the levels of satisfaction they expected to find. There is a lack of harmony between expectations and what persons receive (Observatorio de Tendencias Sociales y Empresariales, 2019). Y generation demands jobs that fit needs of workers who want to build careers and family at the same time. They want to sustain a quieter life compared to their parents (Holliday Wayne, 2009; Howe & Strauss, 2000). When needing to decide whether to take or change jobs, educated new generations of Argentinians especially value company aspects such as prioritizing the emotional well-being of its employees, open and transparent communication between managers and subordinates, wellness programmes, sports and health care, professional development and training, and the balance between personal and professional life (Cuesta et al., 2009). They privilege professional projects and think about them as a structuring factor of life.

Career development, learning opportunities, and interest in work are central for men and women, but they do not neglect the relevance of work-private life balance (Golik, 2013). They assign more importance to flexible hours and to possibilities of continuing training, than to remuneration. Argentine youths say they are happier when work centrality is relative. For them, friends, social networks, free time, sharing experiences, and travelling are considered the same or more important than work. Therefore, they are less concerned about losing a job (Hernández

& Serravalle, 2014). This could be interpreted as if they did not balance properly personal life with work and as if they lacked a true commitment to work.

Labour flexibility tends to be presented as opposed to traditional conception of work, exemplified by Taylorism and Fordism that seek quality and excellence at the lowest possible cost, making use of the latest technologies. Labour flexibility is currently one of the work's characteristics most valued by employees: 65% state that they would like to work less hours and explain they devote a large amount of time to routine tasks (Zodziejko, 2006). As reported by Celada et al. (2016), young Argentine employees explain that work flexibility allows them to improve the balance between work and personal life and organize better their schedules to establish family and social relationships on a regular basis. They also value the fact they can make better use of their free time to perform other activities and hobbies, and some have even reported that it allows them to free themselves of the stress generated by work.

Teleworking

Flexible schedules and remote work are valued as facilitators of balance between work and personal life (Hewlett et al., 2009). It is more and more frequent to find employees teleworking or doing home office and companies that are full home office. A classical definition explains that teleworking occurs when salaried workers perform all or part (regularly or occasionally) of their work, outside the usual place of their activity—normally from home, using information and communication technologies (ICT) (José Andrés et al., 2001). This modality allows employee to be connected and producing no matter where the individual is (Alonso-Fernández, 2003; Ballesteros et al., 2004). In this way and given people can do their work tasks at home, they may work non-working days, like weekends, or even when they are sick (Del Líbano et al., 2004). This can occur in a strongly competitive work environment, where incentives are offered for greater productivity (Quiceno & Venaccia Apli, 2007). Teleworking somehow becomes a form of work flexibility, which in many cases can denote a labour dependency, varying

according to employers' regulations. For this reason, different European Union and Latin American countries and companies have decided to develop a regulatory framework related to health and safety when the employee carries out this work modality (Osio Havriluk, 2015).

Anderson et al. (2002) and Lapierre and Allen (2006) argue that organizations can implement policies such as time and space flexibility like home office because it makes it easier for employees to organize and assist their families. Without a doubt, teleworking can offer different benefits and can help reconciliation between work and private life. It also gives the opportunity to incorporate women and people with disabilities into the world of work (Osio Havriluk, 2015). In 2010, Telecom Argentina, based in Buenos Aires, decided to develop its own manual to regulate teleworking. It has had a positive impact on other service companies (Osio Havriluk, 2015). Argentina has achieved relevant results in the area of health and safety in teleworking.

Flexible schedules offered by teleworking can increase motivation levels and help achieve better performance and productivity. Nevertheless, it can generate negative consequences if not approached properly, especially with regard to separation between work and family life. It could also influence in terms of stress and productivity if it failed to define working hours. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a series of agreed common standards in relation to work uninterrupted concentration, as well as privacy and data protection issues (Escalante et al., 2006). Since 2007, Argentina has had a law related to hygiene and safety at work that incorporates the recommendations given by the International Labour Organization's Manual of Good Practices in Teleworking. It promotes the use of teleworking and allows inclusion of people with disabilities and those excluded from the current Argentine labour market. It also encourages youth employment, better working conditions through the use of ICT, and, above all, reconciling employees' family and working life. The Superintendence of Labour Risks is the state agency in charge of controlling work risk insurers and guaranteeing that medical assistance and monetary benefits are granted in case of work-related accidents or occupational diseases. In 2012, it defined teleworking and developed a Manual of Good Health and Safety Practices in Teleworking (Osio Havriluk, 2015).

Unemployment

In Argentina, the rate of unemployment is significantly high. According to Indec (2019), the rate of unemployment is 9.7%, but there is also a 24.7% that are beneficiaries of assistance programmes or employment plans. Thus unemployment rate rises up to 34.4%. There are some differences according to gender. Women report higher unemployment rates compared to men (12.8% vs. 7%). When considering the socio-occupational status, women's unemployment is more significant in the working class (18.8% vs. 3.8%). This situation is reversed as professional development increases, and at professional workers' level, unemployment of women is 2.1% while that of men is 4%. The possibility of working in the micro-informal sector increases 13.5 times when comparing workers in households of very low socioeconomic status with those of the medium high level. In low socioeconomic level, there are less possibilities of full employment. Workers in medium low-level households are 31% less likely to be in full employment. It decreases by 65% and 84% if they have low or very low socioeconomic status, always compared to the situation of workers of homes of medium high level (Donza & Salvia, 2018). The region where workers reside differentiates the probability of insertion in the productive structure too. People living in Buenos Aires suburbs are 1.8 times more likely to work in the informal sector than those who live in the City of Buenos Aires (Donza, 2019).

Given a labour market with oversupply of workers, employers intensify the use of informal recruitment channels and their discriminatory practices. Ethnographic studies show employers can use greater discretion in their recruitment and hiring practices. Being a man of 40 years old or a woman of 35 years old operates as a limitation to being able to obtain a job. Women explain that if they are married, mother of small children and around 35 years old, their chances of finding a job are very low. In other words, having those characteristics is a safe passport to unemployment (Cerruti, 2000)). Usually, there is no recognition of skills and abilities acquired over time (Neffa, 2015). As declared by individuals, experience, knowledge accumulated over the years, becomes their main handicap when looking for a job. Being unemployed at midlife can

precipitate severe depression or psychosomatic disorders. High unemployment rates lead to an increase in poverty levels and social marginality (Beccaria & Lopez, 1996).

Moreover, in Argentina, some people do not work because they prefer not to. Between women, the rate is 36.3% while in men it is 10.3%. The biggest difference between genders is found at working class, where 47.3% of women reports it while in men it represents 13.1%. This asymmetry between men and women decreases as socio-occupational level increases, and at professional working level, 11.1% of women do not work because they do not want against 4.7% of men (Donza, 2019). Dominant cultural stream determines working and generating money as man's identity trait. In this way, loss of work implies, in many cases, a crisis of the masculine identity. To reconquer spaces and achieve an imaginary compensation, men (former) heads of family appeal with wild spontaneity to physical and/or verbal violence. Frequently, regressive behaviours of sullen resentment or resurgence of attention demands are directed to the wife (Beccaria & Lopez, 1996). Compared with the formal (14.4%) and public sector (10.8%), more micro-informal workers (30%) were unemployed at least once in the last year. Additionally, if they have not completed high school, they have a 11% less chance of having full employment. Finally, 45.1% of micro-informal workers explains they would like to work more hours inspite of having a full working day (8 or 9 h). In the formal sector, this willingness to increase working hours is about 21% (Donza, 2019). Exceeding 45 hours per week is considered an over-occupation. Most of the time, in the micro-informal sector, workers need to increase income. In the formal sector, generally, necessity of finishing the task, regardless of salary, is the main motivation (Donza & Salvia, 2018).

Women and Household Work

In Argentina, women have been incorporated into the labour field for several decades. However, there are still obstacles that make their labour insertion conflictive (Burin, 2008). Generally, women used to be associated with domestic space. This implied that women had to give up their

aspirations to compete in the economic and political sphere because it was considered a man's function. The concept of domestic work hinders the construction of individuality and self-esteem (Vega Montiel, 2007). Many times, household work is still not recognized as work. It is non-remunerated, done after "paid" work without a schedule regulation, and tasks are performed inclusive during weekends, holidays, and vacations (Arnold & Randall, 2012). When entering the formal labour market, women's household work is not reduced. It increases the effort and obliges women to generate different strategies to avoid neglecting household chores. Since it is done privately, it tends to be seen as a woman's obligation and this leads to a clear inequality between genders (Vega Montiel, 2007). Sometimes this situation correlates with depression in middle-aged women that work in the formal labour market (Burin, 1993). Women who are doctors, psychologists, biologists, dentists, architects, entrepreneurs, and professors explain they tend to be overwhelmed and need to be very creative to deal with obligations: formal work and household work (Burin, 2008). Interestingly, women who consider themselves more traditional in the way they played both maternal and labour roles usually also found themselves in a "sticky floor" from which it was very difficult to separate. They encountered difficulties in being able to separate private life from public sphere, and many times this arises as a difficulty in accessing or maintaining their career development (Burin, 2008). Within the different effects, that household work has on women's lives is that it hinders their well-being. Depression is often found as a latent problem that generates feelings of monotony, isolation, and dissatisfaction (Oakley, 2018).

Psychosocial Disturbances at Work

Nowadays, there are psychosocial disturbances that befall at work, that been less visible than physical pathologies are seldom perceived directly. Occupational psychopathology studies the psychodynamic analysis of the intrapsychic and intersubjective processes that are manifested from the encounter with work (Sivadon & Fernandez-Zöila, 1983), trying to look at and treat the pathogenic effects of work on mental health.

In other words, it studies the psychological alterations derived from work activity, studying disorders that manifest themselves from the alterations that arise directly from work: work stress, negative consequences of working hours, interpersonal conflicts at work, and work addiction (Fernández-Montalvo, 2000).

In Argentina, absence from work has been on the increase due to problems related to work stress, panic attacks, and depression. These are psychological problems, and it has often been difficult to demonstrate that they are related to the workplace and need to be treated as medical conditions like physical illnesses (Neffa, 1999). Even employers often consider that the duration of a sick leave granted may be exaggerated or easily obtained. According to the legislation, all workers, if registered, are entitled to a maximum of three months of sick leave, without loss of salary or danger of dismissal for just cause. With more than five years of seniority or family charges, this figure doubles and the licence can go up to one year, during which the position and salary are retained. From a business perspective, the absence of an employee implies a high cost for the employers without major consequences for the employee (Neffa, 2015).

It is also common to encounter strikes that are protest mechanisms against some type of negative situation, such as low wages or poor working conditions. According to the Argentina's Ministry of Labour, in 2012, 8,333,295 individual days not worked were registered, almost double than in 2011, when the amount was 4,303,615. The public sector is where absenteeism occurs the most, which is where more sick leave is authorized too; nevertheless, absences have also increased in the private sphere (Neffa, 2015). In order to preserve health in the work environment, it is necessary to provide a means to quickly identify these risks. To be recognized by the social security system, it should be possible to verify the nature of occupational disease and the direct and essential relationship between habitual activity and the disease. However, the causal relationships of these pathologies, whose effects are diffused and deferred, are difficult to establish (Neffa, 1999). There must be a dynamic that is built collectively in a relationship with others, through communication, cooperation, exchange, recognition, and social support from peers. It is also important to get companies involved in social psychic risks at

work since they directly affect motivation, generating little involvement in tasks, labour and interpersonal conflicts that influence costs, generating lack of attention in employees, reducing productivity, and causing greater risk in occupational accidents (Neffa, 2015).

Workaholism and Burnout

Family, social, and labour relations will determine the degree of interference that work addiction might have on the employee's life (Echeburúa & del Corral, 1994). This negative interference is related to physical health, personal happiness, and family and social relationships. It includes routine activities that could be carried out by other people, but the employee resist delegation to keep control over them (Fernández-Montalvo & Echeburúa, 1998). Initially, consequences begin to affect their health, presenting cardiovascular alterations related to stress; family relationships are impaired, with social isolation, sense of humour loss, disinterest in interpersonal relationships that do not turn out to be productive and do not involve labour issues, and non-spontaneous sexual relations (Botero & Delfino, 2019). In terms of health, deterioration is frequent, since these people neglect personal needs such as sleeping hours, regular rest, and periodic check-ups. It is also common to come across a wide variety of physical problems such as obesity, hypertension, and even psychoactive addiction such as excessive smoking and alcohol consumption (Fernández-Montalvo & Echeburúa, 1998). Álvarez (2011) adds to this list the generation of bone-muscle problems, dermatitis, headaches, dental problems, low back pain, among others.

Many organizations have become used to continuing working once the workday has been completed. It is even considered a trait of success to dedicate as much time as possible to work, not taking the lunch break, or not having time for leisure or social life. Holidays and free time are achieved only at the retirement stage. As a rule, they are not only required to work as much time as possible, but they even demanded of 24 hours availability, as well. Those who meet these expectations are considered outstanding employees (Castañeda Aguilera, 2010; Moreno et al., 2005). In both large and small companies, there is a phenomenon

of social contagion, in which the labour involvement implicated in the excess of daily work hours is transmitted from employees who fulfil a greater hierarchical function or company managers to employees. Therefore, work addiction can also be due not only to a personal orientation with respect to such activity but it can be the result of a social interaction with others, as well (Moreno et al., 2005). In other cases, people who overwork, became happy shifters and enjoy working long hours (Novoa, 2011).

A study carried out by a recognized employment agency in Argentina reveals that 46% of Argentinians perceive themselves as having characteristics associated with work addiction, and 35% have reported that overwork has caused them health problems such as stress (18%), back, shoulder and neck pain (16%), headache (15%), gastric problems (12%), sleeping problems (11%), and depression (10%) (Adecco, 2019). In fact, working more than twelve hours a day increases the probability of suffering a disease by 37%. Only 3 out of 10 Argentinians, especially in the hierarchical positions, manage to take distance from their job responsibilities (Universia Argentina, 2013). Work recess is not synonymous of abandoning their tasks. However, when executives are consulted if given holidays by law are sufficient, 47% say they are not enough. On the same page, 35% say they keep an eye on the cell phone and e-mail just in case any labour issue shows up, and 32% claim to be available only for an emergency. Similarly, 24% of executives consider themselves essential and believe that their absence will negatively affect the operation of the company (Adecco, 2019). A great challenge for companies' top managers is to be able to reach balance between professional and personal life, to carry out activities that allow rest, distraction, and escape from work for a few hours, thus improving performance and health as well (Jaén, 2016).

Two realities may affect workaholism. On one hand, the organizational culture often encourages this type of behaviour because budget control causes some employees to accomplish the function of two working positions or more. On the other hand, the danger of unemployment makes people cling to their work and make it a fundamental aspect of their lives (Castañeda Aguilera, 2010). Burke (2001b) explains that people on higher organizational levels and those workers with less seniority tend to work longer hours. Similarly, companies struggle to

continue in a highly competitive market and need workers who are ready to work longer hours too. Therefore, the profiles they usually look for include a high level of work commitment, responsibility, great dedication, thus promoting workaholism. Because of this, there has been a mark increase in people suffering from work addiction (Del Líbano et al., 2004). According to ODSA data (Donza, 2019), in Argentina, there has been an increase in work exhaustion between 2018 and 2019. The highest levels of burnout are found in individuals with low educational level and low income. Almost 10% of these workers show high values of both cynicism and exhaustion. Women are more likely to experience burnout than men (13% vs. 7%). This may be due to women's difficulty recovering emotionally after work because, in general, they continue to perform work tasks after hours. This is particularly interesting since although women are part of the labour market, they are also the main caretakers at home.

Conclusion

According to last data, in Argentina, half of employees work at the micro-informal sector. They undergo high difficulty accessing to basic services, such as good academic training. Most women become just housewives due to their low percentage of insertion in the workforce. Thus most of them depend on state subsidies. Given the economic situation the country is going through, balancing work and private life is a challenge of utmost importance. Almost half of Argentine workers are affected by mood and emotional disorders, and this is not always directly associated with salary. Argentine employees are dissatisfied with work; they feel overwhelmed and receive low salaries. Youths are especially affected. On the positive side, educated new generation employee are not only satisfied with getting a good salary; they value private life-work balance as well.

It is difficult to achieve balance, particularly for the lower socioeconomic level citizen in a high unemployment context. Young people are the most damaged. The challenge is then to be able to achieve significantly better working conditions, increasing youth insertion and

balancing traditional forms of work. Work organisation methods should be able to provide more effectively this needs of both business and the workers, thus also helping significantly to increase new forms of mobility.

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