

From Work-Life Balance to Work-Nonwork Balance: A Conceptual Approach

Areeha Malik^{*}, Bhawna Chahar^{**} and Meenakshi Sharma

*Department of Business Administration
Manipal University Jaipur, Rajasthan, India*

Abstract: Work-life balance (WLB) is well-established concept in literature, having been referenced since the 19th century. However, a universally accepted definition has yet to be established. Throughout most of the literature available on WLB, this term is often compared to a similar term called 'work-family balance', so much so that both 'work-family' and 'work-life' have been used interchangeably in the literature. While several researchers have advocated for the need of a broader definition of the 'life' component of the WLB, this paper argues that the term 'life' itself is semantically and socially constrained. There has been a significant shift in the recent times towards the use of the terminology 'work-nonwork balance' instead of the traditional work-life balance. Following on similar lines, this paper draws from the existing literature and necessitates a more nuanced construct of 'work-nonwork balance' (WNB) which encompasses an individual's holistic well-being beyond the traditional confines of family than the overly exhausted and restricted 'work-life balance'. This conceptual approach is necessary to re-evaluate the traditional framework and include various other aspects such as personal time, leisure, mental health activities, community engagement, and playtime etc within the realm of the nonwork research. By grounding this perspective in well-established theories and supported by recent empirical evidence, this paper proposes a strong case that reframing 'life' as 'nonwork' in the WLB research is both justified and necessary in order to advance the field.

Keywords: WLB, WNB, Conceptual Approach, Role Theory, Boundary Theory, Spillover and Enrichment Theory, COR Theory, Identity Theory

^{*}Research Scholar. ^{**} Corresponding author. Email: bhawna.chahar@jaipur.manipal.edu