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WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A HISTORICAL REVIEW AND INSIGHTS FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

RAVNOTEŽA IZMEĐU ŽIVOTA I POSLA: ISTORIJAT I IMPLIKACIJE ZA HOTELSKU INDUSTRIJU

***Abstract:** Work-life balance has become a popular area of research in the past twenty years. Before the 1970s, work and family were studied as mutually exclusive domains. The term "work-life balance" was introduced in the late 1970s to describe the balancing act of employed women who were mothers, juggling child care and work responsibilities. During the 1990s, the recognition of work-life balance's significance emerged as a vital issue for all employees, regardless of gender, parental, or marital status. The concept of work-life balance has evolved from role conflict between family and work, managing multiple roles to work and life enrichment and integration. Currently, the goal of work-life balance research is to determine whether the expectations of employees regarding work and multiple life roles are compatible or not. The significance of work-life balance research*

***Apstrakt:** Ravnoteža između života i posla postala je popularno istraživano područje u poslednjih dvadeset godina. Pre 1970-ih, posao i porodica su se proučavali kao međusobno isključeni domeni. Termin "ravnoteža između života i posla" uveden je u stručnu literaturu krajem 1970-ih kako bi opisao balansiranje zaposlenih žena koje su majke između brige o deci i poslovnih obaveza. Tokom 1990-ih godina, prepoznavanje značaja ravnoteže između života i posla nametnulo se kao vitalno pitanje za sve zaposlene oba pola, bez obzira na bračni i roditeljski status. Koncept ravnoteže između života i posla evoluirao je od konflikta uloga između porodice i posla, upravljanja višestrukim ulogama do obogaćivanja i integracije posla i porodice. Aktualan su istraživanja ravnoteže između posla i života sa ciljem da se utvrdi da li su očekivanja zaposlenih u vezi sa poslom i višestrukim*



extends to individual, organizational, institutional, and national levels of outcomes. It is particularly relevant in the hospitality sector due to the unique nature of the work involved (intense work activities, long working hours, challenges in human resource management, organization of work, vacation planning, a significant representation of women employees, and health issues among hospitality workers). Therefore, it is considered a crucial issue in the hotel industry.

Keywords: *roles, life, work, family, leisure time, hotel industry.*

Introduction

The concept of work-life balance is commonly used in literature, but its precise definition remains uncertain. It encompasses the interaction between work and other life roles, which authors have described using various terms such as enrichment, enhancement, integration, or facilitation of roles (Brough et al., 2014; Voydanoff, 2005). Various definitions of work-life balance exist, including Frone's (2003) perspective, which views it as a state where there is little conflict between an individual's work and family life, facilitating functioning with ease. According to Voydanoff (2005), work-life balance occurs when individuals successfully engage in both work and personal life domains. Other scholars perceive work-life balance as a subjective evaluation of one's effectiveness and satisfaction in both job and family life (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). According to Clark (2000, p. 751), the concept of work-life balance is characterized by "satisfaction and effective functioning in both work and home domains, with minimal role conflict". Kalliath and Brough (2008) describe work-life balance as an individual's alignment between work and personal activities that enable personal well-being and harmony. Greenhaus and Allen (2011)

životnim ulogama kompatibilna ili ne. Značaj istraživanja ravnoteže između posla i života ogleda se na individualnim, organizacionim, institucionalnim i nacionalnim nivoima ishoda. Istraživanje ravnoteže između života i posla posebno je značajno u sektoru hotelijerstva zbog specifičnosti posla (radno intenzivna delatnost, dugo radno vreme, problemi upravljanja ljudskim resursima, organizacija posla, korišćenja godišnjih odmora, veliki udeo zaposlenih žena, zdravstveni problemi zaposlenih u hotelijerstvu), pa se smatra najvažnijim problemom hotelske industrije.

Ključne reči: *uloge, život, posao, porodica, slobodno vreme, hotelijerstvo.*

argued that work-life balance refers to an individual's satisfaction and effective fulfillment of their work and life roles. Hirschi et al (2019) further describe work-life balance as the belief held by individuals that they are efficient and content in both domains, while also aligning with their values.

The construct of work-life balance focuses on analyzing the equilibrium between work and various non-work domains, including family, personal life, self-care, social relationships, and religious activities, among others (Gragnano et al., 2020). The exploration of work-life balance is conducted in various scientific disciplines such as sociology (Stoilova et al., 2020), psychology (Casper et al., 2018), management (Adkins & Premeaux, 2019), gender studies (Perugini & Vladislavljević, 2019), medicine (du Prel & Peter, 2015) and hospitality (Deery et al., 2018). The World Health Organization emphasizes that health equity requires a work-life balance that is equal for all individuals, ensuring a harmonious integration of personal and professional spheres (WHO, 2022). In relevant research studies, work-life balance has been acknowledged as a prominent issue for both employers and employees (Gragnano et al., 2020). As such, it represents a personal ideal that individuals strive for throughout their lives.

In the context of the hotel industry, the unique characteristics of the job contribute to an imbalance between work and personal life, resulting in a lack of work-life balance for employees (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). Providing work-life balance for employees has emerged as a crucial managerial strategy in the hospitality industry for sustaining performance and retaining staff (Deery & Jago, 2015).

The objective of this study is to conduct a historical evaluation of the concept of work-life balance, analyzing its development and research trends, while also assessing its relevance and challenges within the hospitality industry. This research will employ a literature review methodology, utilizing secondary data from academic papers and books in the fields of tourism, management, sociological research, and psychology. The study will encompass an examination of the historical development of the work-life balance concept and a specific analysis of the factors and considerations relevant to achieving work-life balance within the hospitality sector.

Historical evolution and key concepts of work-life balance: From early labor movements to modern challenges

Work-life balance has a historical origin in the early 19th century when workers began advocating for shorter working hours in factories (Hogarth & Bosworth, 2009). The concept gained further attention in the 20th century with labor unions campaigning for limited work hours (Myers, 1926). The challenges of balancing family and work, particularly for employed women, became a research focus after World War II (Roberts, 2007). In the 1950s, specific issues faced by shift workers and those with non-standard hours were recognized (Roberts, 2007). Research in this area has since concentrated on employed mothers and dual-career families (Bird, 2006), reflecting the evolving workforce demographics. Kanter (1977) was among the early authors to emphasize the interconnection between work and family.

Pleck (1977) highlighted the gender-segregated labor markets for paid work and family tasks. The term “work-life balance” emerged in the late 1970s in the publication “New Ways of Working” by a small organization representing working mothers in the United Kingdom. It referred to the juggling of professional obligations and childcare responsibilities. In the 1970s, as more mothers entered the workforce, employers acknowledged the challenge of balancing work and obligations outside of work. The focus initially centered on work-family balance, particularly childcare responsibilities (Bird, 2006). Companies like IBM introduced programs for dependent care, while others implemented maternity leave, flexible hours, telecommuting, and childcare support (Bird, 2006). Concerns about employee burnout and stress expanded in the late 1980s and 1990s, highlighting the issue of conflict not only for working mothers but also for men, couples, singles, and organizations as a whole.

Emergence and evolution of the term ‘work-life balance’ in the late 20th century

The study of work-life balance gained momentum in 1977 with Rosabeth Moss Kanter’s book “Work and Family in the United States”. Kanter challenged the prevailing notion of “separate worlds” between work and family (Kanter, 1977). In the United States, the phrase “work-life balance” emerged in 1986, emphasizing time boundaries between work domains and non-work activities (Burnett, 2011). In the 1990s, work-life balance gained recognition as a vital concern for all individuals, resulting in increased efforts to achieve a balanced life (Bird, 2006). In the 1990s, researchers expanded the concept of work-life balance to include the interplay between work and non-work activities, emphasizing its stronger connection with work, family, and personal resources compared to the traditional work-family balance construct (Frone et al., 1992). Researchers have claimed that



work-family balance is a sub-theme within the broader construct of work-life balance (Frone et al., 1992). The campaign for work-life balance emerged, targeting the challenges of long working hours and sectors with significant work-life imbalance, which negatively impacts employees' well-being (physical and mental health, burnout) as well as organizations and society (Allen et al., 2000). Young (1999) contested the belief that family is the main factor diverting employees from work, showing that work-life conflict arises from various sources including personal preferences, spousal employment, physical health, education goals, second job, commuting, and caregiving responsibilities. Studies have also examined the effects of employee personality traits on achieving work-life balance, including the influence of the Big Five personality factors (Wayne et al., 2004), intrinsic motivation, and factors such as guilt, loyalty, sensitivity, the constant need for availability to family members, and the ability to cope with new situations (Soni & Bakhru, 2019).

Theoretical foundations of work-life balance: A multifaceted perspective

Theoretical foundations of insufficient work-life balance can be found in Conflict theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), Conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), Spillover theory (Zedeck, 1992), Boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000), Compensation theory (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000), Work-family border theory (Clark, 2000), Facilitation theory (Voydanoff, 2005), and Work-family enrichment theory (Powell & Greenhaus, 2006).

Evolving perspectives on work-life balance: From conflict to enrichment

The notion of work-life balance has progressed from role conflicts to achieving satisfaction in various domains of life, including work and family, aligning with perceived values and priorities (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Adkins & Premeaux, 2019).

Research on work-life balance up until the year 2000 primarily concentrated on addressing work-family conflicts and family-work conflict, and finding strategies to achieve work-life balances by effectively managing the boundaries between work and family domains (Kirchmeyer, 1995). However, a shift occurred after 2000, as scholars recognized that the interplay between work and family can both enrich and deplete individuals (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This new perspective emphasizes the potential for work and family to mutually enhance each other (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The effects of work integration with other life domains are being simultaneously investigated (Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). The concept of work-life balance became popularized but was limited to primarily focusing on the balance between work and family, neglecting other aspects of life (Fisher et al., 2009). As a result, research on work-life balance has branched out into two directions, exploring its effects on both family and overall life (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Voydanoff, 2005). Subsequently, researchers propose a shift in focus from individual experiences of work-family conflict and role enrichment towards examining the wider social context (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Longitudinal studies are occasionally published (Brough et al., 2014). During that period, the focus shifted toward organizational intervention studies, organizational strategies, and family-friendly policies (Grzywacz et al., 2007) and there is an increasing emphasis on the stigma of flexibility.

Expanding the Work-Life Balance Construct: Beyond Work and Family

Research on work-life balance has been focused on clarifying and defining the construct. Eby et al (2005) identified gaps, such as the exclusion of leisure activities, community involvement, religious, volunteer obligations, and extended family support. Ransome (2007) highlighted the importance of overall family responsibility and recreational activities. Despite limited research,

Hamilton et al (2006) found that even single women without children experience work-life conflicts similar to other women. Kamenou (2008) challenges the narrow focus on gender and childcare in work-life balance discussions and emphasizes the need to consider other factors like ethnicity, culture, religion, disabilities, and caregiving responsibilities. It is crucial to recognize individuals' priorities, as a person who prioritizes work over family may struggle to achieve work-life balance if they equally engage in both domains (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). While the common perspective of work-life balance centers on balancing paid employment and childcare, it fails to address other important aspects of life such as caring for parents, partners, adult children, or pets.

The consequences and dynamics of work-life imbalance

The lack of balance between work and life can have negative consequences for individuals in various domains, including family, personal life, and work. Multiple roles can lead to conflicts, stress, and detrimental effects on mental and physical health, life satisfaction, family relationships, and overall well-being (Frone et al., 1992). The imbalance between work and life can result in increased costs for organizations, including higher rates of absenteeism, reduced psychological availability, increased accidents, decreased productivity, fluctuations, and loss of human potential (Wagner & Neal, 1994). Poorly managed work-life balance policies in organizations are associated with employee stress, job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, retention problems, and low motivation (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2015). Recent research has prioritized efforts to clarify and define the construct of work-life balance (Casper et al., 2018; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Wayne et al., 2017). Insufficient personal and organizational resources, including time constraints and lack of support, along with conflicting role demands at work and in the family, are now recognized as the primary causes of work-life imbalance

(Brough et al., 2014). Hirschi et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of work and family roles in individuals' lives. Balancing these roles involves making choices and considering the broader implications for other aspects of life. Strategies for achieving work-life balance are shaped by these choices (Hirschi et al., 2019). The interaction between work and personal life is intricate, as both encompass various dimensions (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Challenges faced by hotel managers: Work-family needs and work-life balance

The initial research paved the way for further studies, prompting scholars to emphasize the importance of the hospitality industry addressing the work-family needs of its employees, particularly hotel managers. These management positions are known to have a negative impact on family life, due to long and irregular working hours, limited time for family, turnover reasons related to insufficient family time, emphasis on "face-time" presence, and frequent relocations (Stalcup & Pearson, 2001). Frequent relocation in the hotel sector, especially for managers, can cause family conflict due to disruptive transitions and added stress on families (Kennedy & Fulford, 1999). The effects of workplace stress, job burnout, workload, bullying, unrealistic expectations, and poor management on employees' intention to leave an organization (Rowley & Purcell, 2001). In their study, Karatepe and Uludag (2007) developed and examined a model that explores the impact of work-family conflict, emotional exhaustion, and intrinsic motivation. In the hospitality sector, investigating the effects of non-work factors, job stress, burnout, and work-family conflict on employees' intention to leave an organization. Mulvaney et al (2007) conducted a pioneering study in the field of work-life balance for hotel managers, specifically focused on the hospitality sector. This study investigated the impact of non-work factors, including job stress, burnout, and work-family conflict, on hotel managers' intention to leave



an organization, with a specific focus on their work-life balance (Mulvaney et al., 2007). Cullen and McLaughlin's (2006) study sheds light on the prevalence of "presenteeism" in the hotel industry, who feel compelled to provide emotional support, and work long hours due to the demanding nature of the industry, ultimately leading to detrimental effects on employees' work-life balance.

The impact of industry demands on work-life balance in hospitality

Time is a crucial aspect that cannot be ignored when examining work-life balance, particularly in industries like hospitality where long working hours are prevalent (Wong & Ko, 2009). The demanding nature of the industry, coupled with low pay and status in certain tourism roles, particularly in hospitality, poses challenges in attracting and retaining employees (Deery & Jago, 2018). Work-family conflict is a concern in international hotel settings and is often associated with significant workforce fluctuations, low morale, reduced workplace performance and commitment, life dissatisfaction, and subjective well-being (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008). In recent studies, it has been found that in the hotel industry work environment insufficient perceived organizational support, long working hours, continuous customer interactions, excessive workload, lack of training, many women in the workforce, job monotony, dysfunctional guest behavior, and shift work are common challenges in increased stress, which negatively impacts work-life balance (Gajić et al., 2021; Hofmann & Stokburger-Sauer, 2017).

Work-life balance challenges in the competitive hospitality labor market

Given the presence of a highly competitive labor market, where the recruitment, motivation, quality of employees, and retention of talented employees are particularly challenging, achieving work-life balance necessitates managers to exhibit heightened awareness and engagement (Deery et

al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2020). Support from colleagues and managers is directly related to job satisfaction, stress reactions, role conflict and ambiguity, and commitment among employees in the hospitality sector (Salama et al., 2022). The absence of support in achieving work-life balance for employed women during maternity is a specific challenge that is particularly prominent in the hospitality sector (Ma et al., 2021). According to Kaya and Karatepe (2020), achieving a work-life balance is the most significant challenge in the hospitality industry.

Conclusion

In summary, the historical evolution of work-life balance underscores its enduring significance in modern workplaces. This evolution recognizes its strong connection with work, family, and personal resources, emphasizing a holistic approach. The campaign for work-life balance addresses the challenges stemming from long working hours and work-life imbalances, affecting individuals, organizations, and society at large. Research in this field has focused on defining the concept, addressing gaps, and considering various life domains and factors like ethnicity, culture, religion, disabilities, and caregiving responsibilities. It underscores the need to recognize individual priorities and expand the focus beyond traditional employment and childcare aspects. An imbalance between work and life has negative consequences for individuals and organizations. Recent research highlights the importance of clarifying the concept, identifying key causes of imbalance, and emphasizing comprehensive strategies to address this complex issue. In the context of the hospitality industry, characterized by long working hours and various challenges, achieving work-life balance is a critical issue. Hotel managers, in particular, face demanding roles, stress, and frequent relocations, which impact their family life and job satisfaction. Understanding these dynamics is essential for promoting the well-being and work-life balance of employees in the hospitality sector. This study contributes to

the ongoing conversation about work-life balance and its significance in the contemporary working world, particularly within the hospitality industry.

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