

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

The interface between employees' professional (at work) and personal (away from work) life has been a focal point of research for time immemorial. The theory expressing work and life issues has evolved in view of the changing social, economic and work place conditions. In the 60s the interface between work and life was labeled as 'work-family conflict', which then included positivities to the issue and changed to 'work-family enrichment', which subsequently evolved to a more holistic and encompassing construct of 'work-family balance' and 'work-life balance'. In earlier times the boundaries between work and life spheres were reasonably clear but with the changing world order the boundaries have blurred. Hence work-life interface issues are currently framed in terms of 'work-life integration' and 'work-life harmonization'

The aim of this paper is to review aspects of contemporary theory and research of interface between work and life. It starts with exploring emergence of work-life discourse from the pre-industrial phase to the present day. Further it examines how several work-life interface constructs have developed and put into practice. An attempt is made to understand the underlying the assumptions of these constructs. An enhanced perspective about work and life interface theory will contribute in development of policies, programmes and interventions that are better equipped in resolving the present day work-life challenges.