WORK – LIFE BALANCE OF PERSONNEL IN UKRAINIAN ORGANIZATIONS: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

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The paper is devoted to the investigation of the interaction between work and personal, family life of an employee called "work – life balance". The purpose of the study was to develop the theoretical model of work – life balance and to determine the content and the structure of work – life balance, its resources, benefits, outcomes and enrichment. The analysis of the problem has shown the changes in the social, economic and psychological conditions of organizing the activities of enterprises. The lack of work-life balance leads to burnout, gender disbalance and discrimination, job dissatisfaction, absenteeism. Work – life / life – work conflicts have many important negative outcomes for individuals, their personal life, families and organizations. On the base of the experimental research, we have identified the following conditions for the implementation of work – life balance programs: involving personnel at all levels, team approach, clear indicators of job performance and quality of life of the staff, warranty for the staff, remuneration, communication, the inclusion of the work – life balance concept into the HR strategy of the organization.

Keywords: work-life balance, personnel of organizations, work-life balance programmes, psychological support of personnel.

ECHILIBRUL MUNCĂ-FAMILIE LA ANGAJAŢII DIN ORGANIZAŢIILE DIN UCRAINA: CADRU TEORETIC ŞI CONTEXT

În prezenta lucrare analizăm interacțiunea dintre muncă și viața privată/ familie la angajați, referindu-ne la „echilibrul muncă-familie". Ne-am propus să elaborăm un model teoretic privind echilibrul muncă-viață privată, analizând conținutul și structura echilibrului muncă-viață privată, factorii care determină acest echilibru, beneficiile, efectele pe care le produce și influența pe care o are asupra îmbogățirii de rol. Analizând problema dată, am evidențiat anumite schimbări sociale, economice și de ordin psihologic în activitatea organizațiilor. Lipsa echilibrului muncă-viață privată determină apariția sindromului arderii profesionale, a dezechilibrului și discriminării de gen, a sentimentelor de insatisfacție la locul de muncă, a absenteismului. Conflictul muncă-familie/ familie-muncă se răsfrânge negativ asupra indivizilor, vieții private și familiei acestora, inclusiv asupra organizației. În baza cercetărilor experimentale am identificat următoarele condiții pentru implementarea programelor ce vizează echilibrul muncă-viață privată: implicarea personalului de la toate nivelurile organizaționale, abordarea de echipă, stabilirea unor indicatori clari de performanță la locul de muncă și calitatea vieții angajaților, un sistem de garanții pentru angajați, remunerarea, comunicarea, includerea conceptului de echilibru muncă-familie în strategiile organizaționale privind resursele umane.

Keywords: echilibru muncă/viață privată, personal al organizațiilor, programe privind echilibrul muncă/viață privată, suport psihologic al personalului.

Introduction

Over past three decades the issues of work-life balance has received extensive publicity and have been a subject to increasing investigation all over the world, but not in Ukraine. Today work environment becomes stressful, with many tasks and problems to solve. It is overloaded, imbalanced, complicated and often full of conflicts. In this climate, managing the boundary and balance between home and work is becoming more challenging. There is a need for organizations and personnel alike to find flexible and innovative solutions that maximize productivity without damaging personnel' well-being, their personal life, family relationships.

There are several terms, which describe work-life interface and interaction. For example, "work-life balance" [1-3], "work-family balance" [4,5], "work-life integration" [6,7]. We think, that all these terms are corresponded to each other, but the term "work-life integration" is more general and includes "work-life balance". And the term "work-life balance" includes "work-family balance". The negative aspects of this interaction have been defined as work-family / work-life conflict (T.D. Allen et al. [8], B. Beham et al. [9], U Kinnunen et al. [10], V.K. Lim et al. [11], and the positive as work-family / work-life enrichment T.D. Allen et al. [12,13]).

The purpose of our study was to develop the theoretical model of work – life balance and to determine the content and the structure of work – life balance, its resources, benefits, outcomes and enrichment.

Work life interaction: theoretical aspects

We can start from some definitions. *Work – life balance* is a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. Work – life balance from the employee viewpoint is the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities. Work – life balance from the employer viewpoint is the challenge of creating a supportive company culture where employees can focus on their jobs while at work [14,15].

Work – life integration is a satisfying, healthy and productive life, that includes work, play, and love; that integrates a range of life activity with attention to self and to personal and spiritual development; and that expresses a person's unique wishes, interests and values. It contrasts with the imbalance of a life dominated by work, focused on satisfying external requirements at the expense of inner development, and in conflict with a persons' true desires [16].

Among the components that determine this balance, the researchers distinguish the following: time balance (equal distribution of time between work and life), the balance of the environment (the equivalent psychological force), the balance of pleasure (the same satisfaction from the professional and family roles) [17-20]. In our research we have also singled out the following: load balance; job planning; complexity of the job; social contacts.

So, the main components of work – life balance are: load balance (optimum number of working hours, the ability to separate work from leisure time, to take a vacation, not to think about work all the time); time balance (equal distribution of time between work and other spheres of life); work planning (influence on the content of the job, the possibility of an open-plan working hours); job complexity (curiosity, the complexity of the tasks, the optimal number of tasks to solve problems); balance of environment (equivalent psychological efforts to workers and resolve family and personal problems); social contacts (friendships with colleagues, leader support, no feeling of loneliness, satisfaction of needs in social contacts at work); balance of pleasure (the same satisfaction from professional, family, interpersonal roles).

Work-life balance model

The analysis and summary of the researches of T.D. Allen et al. [21], B.Beham et al. [22], T.K. Billing et al. [23], C.Emslie et al. [24], M.R. Frone [25], M.J. Grawitch et al. [26], U.Kinnunen et al. [27], A.M. Konrad et al. [28], Lockwood [29], K.S. Lyness et al. [30], A.D. Masuda et al. [31], K.L. Scott et al. [32], which were devoted to the study of work – life balance / work – family conflict, enrichment of work–life interface, the determinants and consequences of unbalancing, allowed us to create a model of work–life balance (Fig.1).
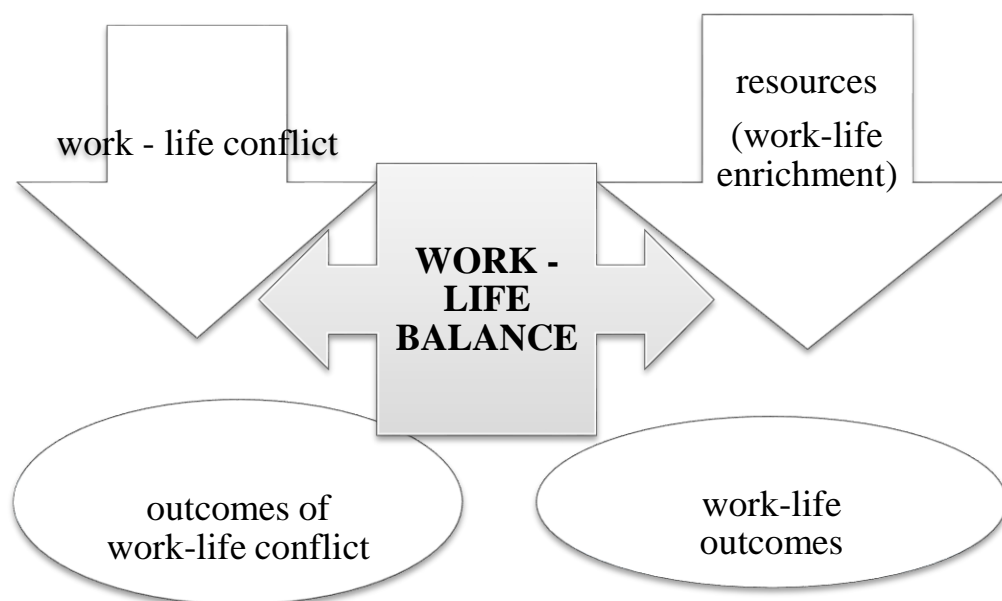

Fig.1. Work – life balance model.

Work – life conflict is a form of inter-role conflict whereby role pressures from the work and family domains are incompatible. Hence participation in one role is made more difficult by participation in other roles, such as work and family. The imbalance between work and family roles and the resultant conflict requires greater attention by researchers. Authors also found, that work – family and family – work conflict was negatively related to autonomy, while family – work conflict was also negatively related to competence and relatedness.

T.D. Allen et al. [33], M.J. Grawitch et al. [34], U. Kinnunen et al. [35], A.M. Konrad et al. [36], K.L. Scott et al. [37] distinguished a number of causes of work – life conflict. Among them are role stressors, role-playing environment, social support, work and family characteristics, personal characteristics. Most causes of both types of conflicts are much more related to the work and its content than to the family or personal life.

Generalization and systematization of the causes of work – life conflict enabled us to make the key groups of them (Tab.1).

Table 1

The causes of work – life / life – work conflicts

Work – life conflict	*Life – work conflict*
Stressors of professional roles: Role overload (lots of job tasks). Role conflict. The amount of time, which devoted to work (working time requirements).	Stressors of personal and family roles: Role overload (lots of family responsibilities and tasks). Role conflict (performing of conflicting multiple roles).
Social support: Lack of support from the organization (care for the welfare of employees), management and colleagues.	Social support: Low level of support from the partner or husband / wife, other family members.
Personality characteristics: Neuroticism. External locus of control. Destructive coping strategies.	Personality characteristics: Neuroticism. External locus of control. Destructive coping strategies.
Socio-demographic characteristics: • Gender. • The number of children.	Socio-demographic characteristics: Gender. The number of children.

So, the causes of work – life / life – work conflicts can be divided into four categories: stressors of professional and family roles; social support; personal characteristics; socio-demographic characteristics of personnel. Note that the stressors of professional and family roles and the sources of social support are differed from one another. But personal and socio-demographic characteristics in both types of conflict (work – life / life – work) remain unchanged.

In addition, studies have shown that social support from partner showed little connection with life – work conflict [38]. Also, according to Allen et al., personal characteristics such as extraversion, openness to new experiences, harmonious interaction with others, conscious attitude were insignificant, unlike neuroticism and locus of control were significantly associated with both types of conflict [39].

According to the researchers, strengthening and improving working and family characteristics that have helped shape the balance between these two areas is more likely and possible to improve in the short term than working with personal characteristics that are more difficult to change and to develop. Work – life / life – work conflicts have many important negative outcomes for individuals, their personal life, families and organizations. T.D. Allen et al. distinguished among three different types of outcomes: 1) work-related outcomes (work dissatisfaction); 2) non-work-related outcomes (life dissatisfaction); 3) stress-related outcomes (health problems, burnout, tiredness) [40]. In addition, the other negative consequences of these types of conflicts include: absenteeism, staff turnover, low labour discipline, low motivation, lack of satisfaction in relationships, stress, exhaustion, emotional burnout, depression, role conflicts, deterioration of physical health, increased number of incidence among personnel [41,42].

Let's now talk about resources *(work–life enrichment)* of the work – life balance, which increase the level of balance between work and other spheres of employees' life: personal life, family, social activities, interests, hobbies (tab. 2).

Table 2

Work–life / life – work resources

Work–life enrichment	*Life–work enrichment*
Organizational resources: Work autonomy A variety of job tasks Investigation of opportunities and resources Social support Leader support Support of colleagues Organizational support Professional skills Direct and long-term results Other physical, psychological, social and material resources of working environment	*Family, other areas of life resources:* Family support Partner support Support of friends Relationship satisfaction Social activity Other physical, psychological, social and material resources of the personal life
Personality characteristics: Extraversion Low level of neuroticism	*Personality characteristics:* Extraversion Low level of neuroticism Personal flexibility

The work-life interface may produce positive outcomes for the individual, and defined work – life enrichment as the extent to which experiences in one role improves the quality of life in the other roles. Therefore, the workplace can positively influence an employee's performance in their family, partner, social roles and this is called work-life enrichment. Alternatively, positive experiences in the family and other personal and social roles may increase employees coping strategies, resulting in increased efficiency and work productivity, and is termed life-work enrichment.

Results of enriching work – life interaction (work-life outcomes) is affecting various areas of life. They are manifested in job satisfaction, positive involvement in professional interaction, marital satisfaction, family and personal relationships, increasing productivity and improving psychological and physical health of the individual. Professional achievements lead to a sense of satisfaction that "transferred" to family and personal life, and enhance the pleasure of leisure activity. Performing multiple roles is a personal resource that enriches various spheres of life of the individual. Satisfaction with work and family roles have been found to have additive effects on happiness, life satisfaction, and perceived quality of life. Empirical findings also suggest that involvement in multiple roles can improve psychological and mental health by buffering negative effects such as reduced.

There is a number of mechanisms of multiple roles that allow them to be a resource: the accumulation of role privileges; different roles may act as "buffer" to each other or offset each other; getting additional resources and improving performance of different roles; personal development and personal satisfaction through psychological experience gained from multiple roles [43].

The enrichment of work – life balance is the following: a positive impact on the achievements of the organization and the quality of life of employees; effective communication in the workplace, teamwork is necessary to change to be effective; employees work on their "real" work (real job tasks); employee engagement in cooperation enhances accountability and provides energy. It creates an efficient workflow and there are positive changes in organizational culture. Work on distance (phone, internet connection) enables better manage one's own time, family responsibilities.

According to T.D. Allen et al. [44], C.Emslie et al. [45], M.R. Frone [46], M.J. Grawitch et al. [47], N.R. Lockwood [48], L.Muse et al. [49] work – life balance provides the following *benefits for employees*: time to focus on life outside work; control of working life; employees feel that their life is in balance, their work is easier and more manageable; employees can manage their tasks better; they will be more motivated to work; stress levels among employees – employees, who have found the right balance between work and life, haven't

worry about stress; employees would like to have more power because they feel better and feel, that they can handle it.

We also defined the *benefits of work – life balance for the organization*, which include: increasing of employees' motivation; balance helps employees feel valuable to the organization and improv productivity and loyalty; less stressful work environment; increasing competitiveness in the labour market, increasing the number of potential employees, reducing the number of absenteeism etc.; good reputation of the employer; the possibility of retraining employees, that also help to expand knowledge, to increase flexibility, to improve teamwork, to increase personal interaction, motivation, and communication.

We've measured the level and peculiarities of the work-life balance in Ukrainian enterprises (n=1138) in different types of enterprises (educational, medical, commercial, industrial, etc.) by psychological scale, which indicates the following components of work-life balance: load balance; time balance; work planning; job complexity; balance of environment; social contacts; balance of pleasure. The level of work-life balance in Ukrainian personnel is low ($p<.05$), especially in work-planning ($p<.01$), but the level of social support is high ($p<.01$). Significant gender and age differences in balance in personnel have been found ($p<.01$), especially in social support. Also there were some differences in balance in different types of enterprises (low level of balance in commercial and industrial sphere).

Conclusion

On the base of the experimental data, we have identified the following conditions for the implementation of work – life balance programs: involving personnel at all levels, team approach, clear indicators of job performance and quality of life of the staff, warranty for the staff, remuneration, communication, the inclusion of the work – life balance concept into the HR strategy of the organization. The implementation of the program (n=250) has shown its effectiveness ($p<.05$) and it also improve the psychological support of personnel in organizations.

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