



Look Mom I'm All Grown-Up!

A Third-wave Feminist Perspective on Work-Life Balance

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Purpose/Objectives

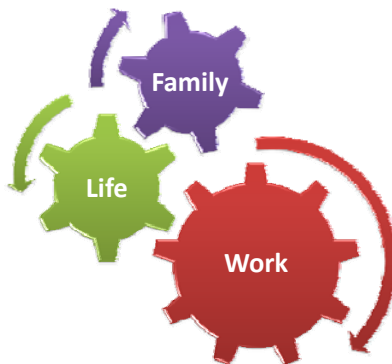
- Significant theoretical contribution:
 - Themes in the literature about how men and women attempt to balance work and life examined from a third wave feminist perspective.
- Research questions:
 1. How do men and women balance work and life?
 2. How are men and women's approaches to balancing work and life similar or different?

Data Collection Method

- Thematic analysis
- Identified common themes in existing work-life research

Method of analysis

- Analyzed through third-wave feminist lens
 - Third-wave feminism: accepts anyone for their cause including men.
 - These feminists do not want to be seen as victims, and they are concerned with many axis of oppression such as racism, classism, and heterosexism.
- Thematic Analysis: identified common themes within the research.
 - Focused on significant implications: work-place satisfaction & work-life balance



Findings

- Flexible Career Path vs. Dual Career Path
Quality of life vs. Climbing the corporate ladder (found that younger men and women preferred quality of life over climbing the corporate ladder)
- Positive relationship: perception of work-life balance & perception of career advancement potential
Reference: Lyness, K. S. & Judiesch, M. K. (2008). Can a manager have a life and a career? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93 (4), 789-805.
- Family role = source of gratification
Working mothers = greater gratification (from work and family)= better ability to cope
Solution to high stress and inability to cope with work and life suggests being involved with family will help to create a balance between work and life.
Reference: Higgins, C. A. & Duxbury, L. E. (1992). Work-family conflict: A comparison of dual-career and traditional-career men. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13, 389-411.
- Perceived stressful life events (related to life, death, divorce, illness, etc.) appear to outweigh work-related stressful life events.
Reference: Hobson, C. J., Delunas, L., & Kescic, D. (2001). Compelling evidence of the need for corporate work/life balance initiatives: Results from a national survey of stressful life-events. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 38, 38-44.
- Balance, conflict, strain
Options:
 - Both spouses can attempt to capitalize on their careers.
 - Men & women → high stress & high conflict with work and life
 - Only 8.8% of spouses both work over forty-five hours a week outside of the home.
 - Both spouses focus more on their personal than professional lives, but both work full-time.
 - Men and women → lower stress & lower conflict with work and life
 - Men find this area to be the least stressful and satisfying.
 - One spouse member highly focuses on their career and the other spouse member works a reduced work schedule.
 - Men and women → lower stress & lower conflict with work and life
 - Women find this area to be the least stressful and satisfying.
- Non-professional women state that being married to a professional man results in having minimal work/life conflict and stress
- Professional men that are married state that their work/life conflict and stress levels are higher when compared with non-professional men; which was not dependent on whether their wife had a professional or non-professional career.
Reference: Moen, P. & Yu, Y. (2000). Effective work/life strategies: Working couples, work conditions, gender, and life quality. *Social Problems*, 47 (3), 291-326.

Implications

1. Young adults prefer quality of life over career advancement.
2. Life stressors were ranked above work stressors on levels of stressful events.
3. Finding an individual based balance between work/life/family is key to minimizing conflict and stress.
4. Women and men who have a professional career and work full time and/or overtime may find it harder to balance work, life and family.
5. When women are married to professional men they may be more financially secure and not find it necessary to work full-time if children are in the picture.

Future Research:

- From a third-wave feminist epistemological framework
 - Future research should focus also on:
 - other factors such as: racism, classism, and heterosexism and their implications for work-life balance and perceived work-place satisfaction.
 - alternatives coping methods
 - professional men can benefit from, besides family involvement, enabling them to balance work & life.
 - those voices/faces being left out of the picture i.e., different races, classes, ages, genders, religions, & non-heterosexual couples.