

Academic research into Work- Life Balance in New Zealand (and beyond)

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Work-Family-Life Overview

- Inter-role conflict (1960s) = *focus on work*
- **work-family conflict** (1986) = *focus on work and family [becomes the norm]*
- Positive spillover (1990s)
- **work-family enrichment** (2006)
- Work-family balance (2003) = *focus on allocation*
- **Work-family balance** (2009) = *focus on perception including from others*
- **Work-life balance** (2013) = *focus on self-perception (my work)*

Work-Family-Life Issues

- Working hours (NZ is high!!)
- Working women & mothers
- Multiple jobs
- Dual-career couples
- Single parent families
- Childcare & childcare costs
- Eldercare issues
- Housing costs (Auckland x10 income)
- Technology...24/7 (e.g. *Nomophobia*)
- State of economy (e.g., recession)
- Be healthy – exercise! (don't ask when!?)

No pressure but...

We're the 4am SUPERWOMEN: Yes, that's when they get up in the morning every weekday to steal 'magic hours' while their families sleep - and why, they say, they're wealthy, successful and slim

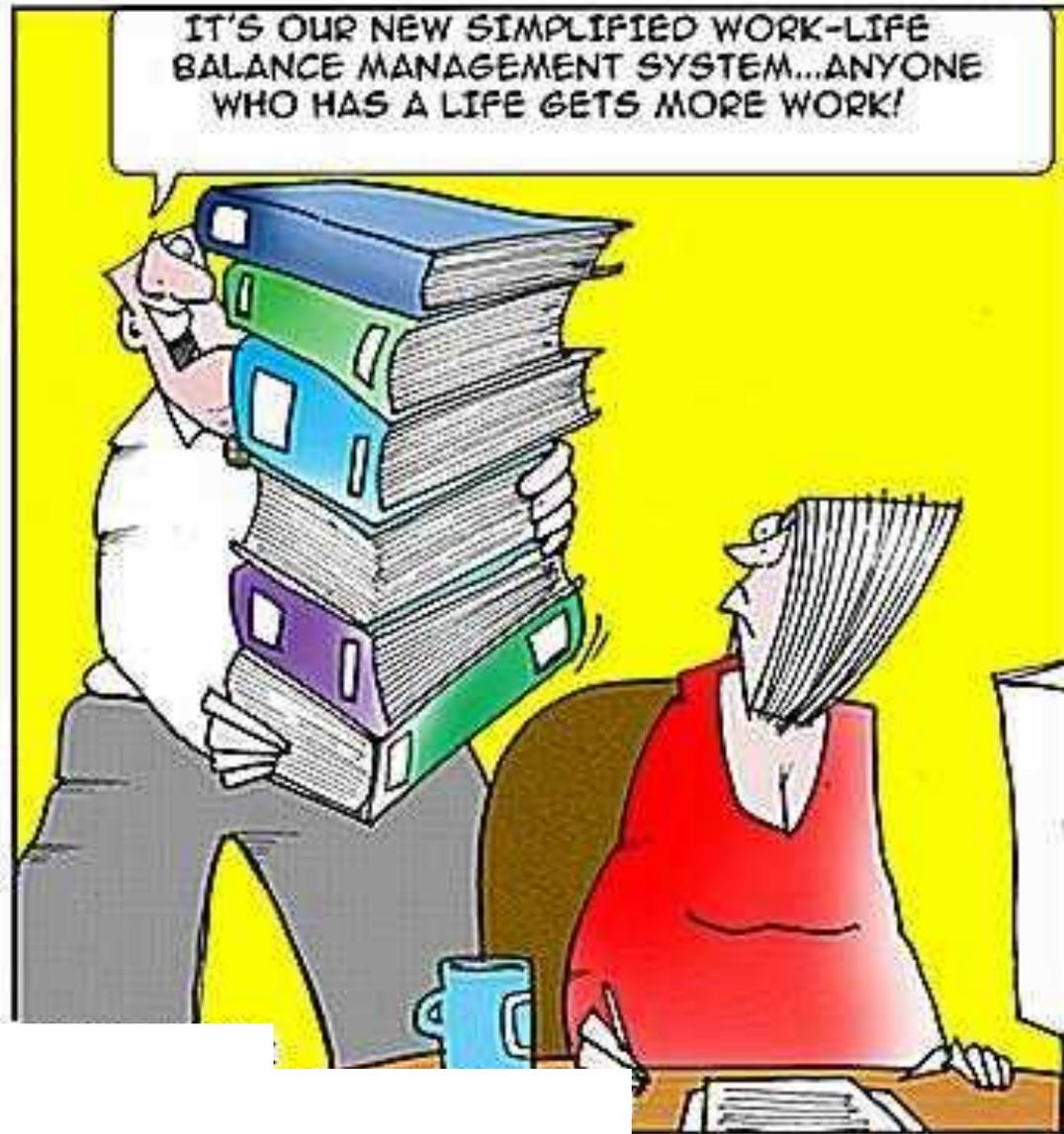


These are the women getting ahead in business by sacrificing a lie-in for a morning 'magic hour'. They say by getting up at around 4am, they can be more productive and creative.

21%

A global study of 50,000 workers found those who feel they have a better work life balance tend to work 21% harder than those that don't, *Business Week* reports.

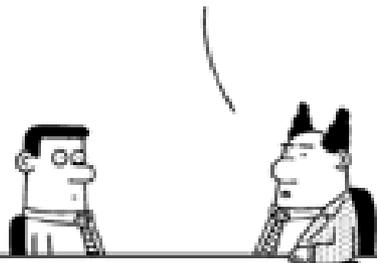
Setting the Work-Family Scene



Work-Family Conflict

- “A form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role”
- Conflict Types: time (after hours work), strain (Air traffic Controllers); and behaviour (e.g. Drill Sergeant)
- Occurs in both domains: work-family and family-work

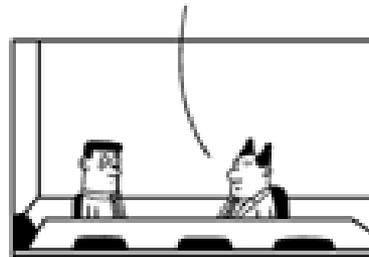
TED, I NEED YOU TO
WORK LATE EVERY
NIGHT UNTIL WE
CATCH UP.



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YOU'LL ALSO NEED
TO WORK EVERY
WEEKEND.



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WHAT
ABOUT
MY
FAMILY?



THEY
HAD A
GOOD
RUN.



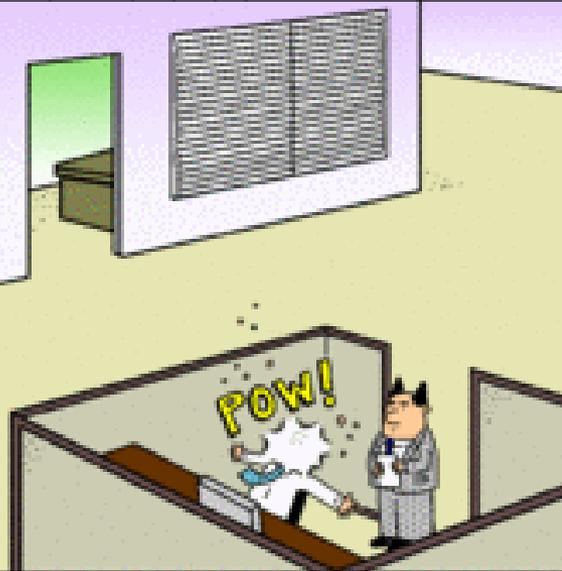
TED, I KNOW YOU
SAID YOUR HEAD
WOULD EXPLODE IF
I ASK YOU TO DO ONE
MORE THING, BUT...



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POW!



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CLEANUP ON
AISLE THREE.



Work-Family Enrichment

- Academia was slow to catch up 😊
- Defined as “the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role.” This enhancement in the quality of life (as evidenced by improved performance or favorable moods and emotions in the other role) occurred as a consequence of the resource gains from the other role.

Work-Family Enrichment

- As with conflict, both work-family and family-work dimensions! Three main categories:
 1. **Development:** work/fam participation results in higher skills, knowledge, behaviours, & perceptions
 2. **Affect:** work/fam participation results in positive emotions/moods = perform better
 3. **Capital (WF):** sense of security, confidence, accomplishment etc. = thru work & **Efficiency (FW)**, individual develops a sense of focus and efficiency by participating in the family role



Barfoot & Thompson

1/20

An address to impress! 85m² Pullman Apt - Ci...

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Antecedents & Consequences

Generally, they share the same – but universally: conflict is detrimental and enrichment is beneficial!

The good: support (family, spouse, supervisor, org, co-worker); autonomy; control; work-family supportive climate

The bad: stressors, role ambiguity, overload, conflict & demands

Consequences typically stronger in same domain: work-family for job outcomes and family-work for family outcomes. For example:

- satisfaction with job, career, family, & life;
- job attitudes and performance;
- anxiety, depression, moods, psych distress, stress
- physical health, diet, even sex life 😞 [conflict only]

Gosh!

It is so depressing!!

Why do we bother working...???

And having a family...???

Well, the truth is...it ain't so bad...



Work-Life Balance

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TIES.



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ROMANCE
HOLIDAYS

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YOU HAVE TIME
FOR THREE THINGS.
WORK AND HOLIDAYS
ARE TWO. YOU GET
TO PICK THE THIRD.



Introduction

- The challenge of balancing work and family demands is one of today's central concerns for both individuals and organizations.
- Work-life balance defined as “as the extent to which an individual is able to actively engage in and manage the multiple roles in their life, including work, family, and other major responsibilities”. Mine is perception based
- E.g. work and family only, while for others, this will be work and sports, work and hobbies, or community, church etc.

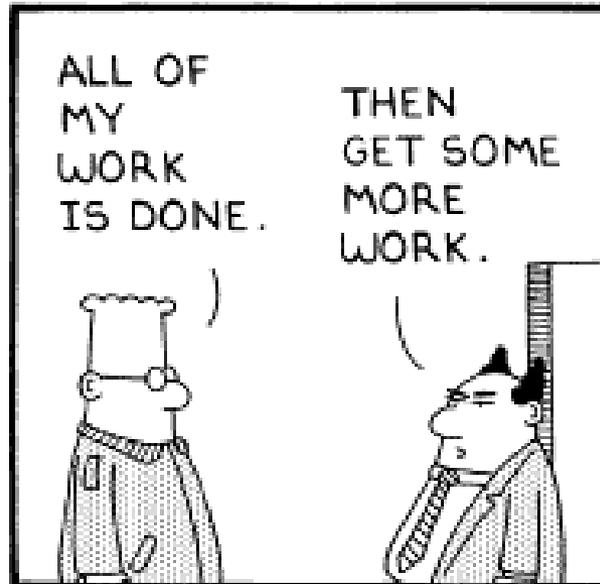
Work-Life Balance

- Academia has 'flirted' with balance but things have been slow to become established!
- Indeed, the first real/major academic work found work-life balance **not** linked with a higher quality of life, which personally raised my hackles...!!!
- As such, I have undertaken major empirical studies of work-life balance involving thousands of New Zealand employees (including teams!) and international employees

Work, Exercise, and Health



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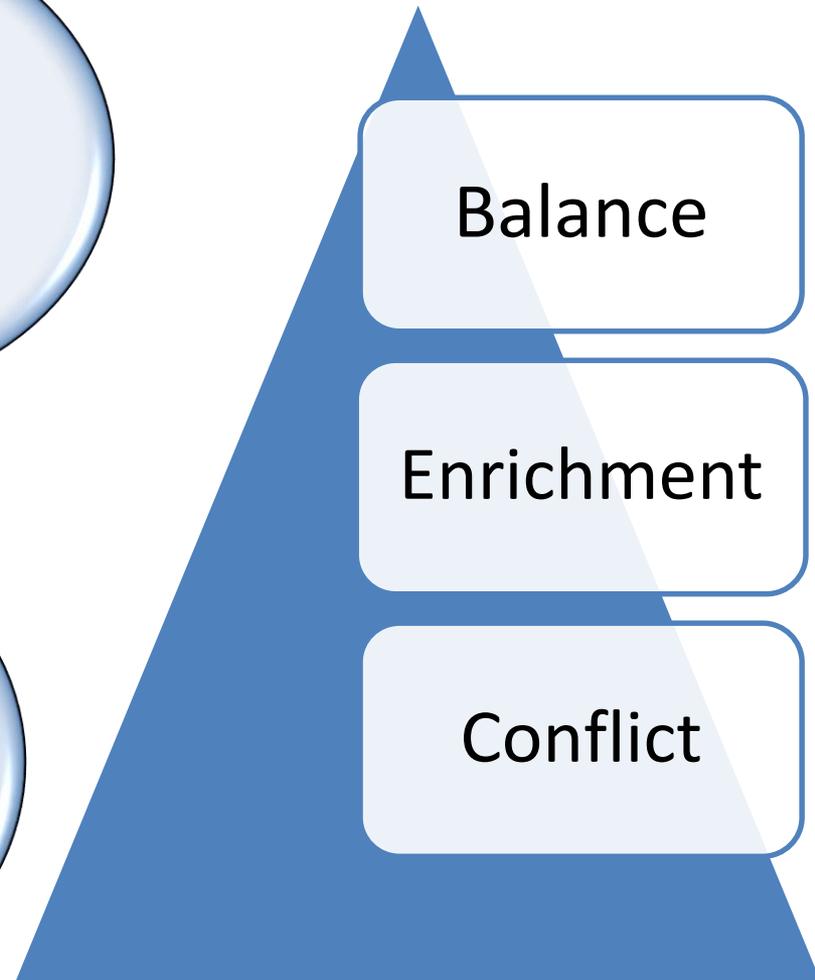
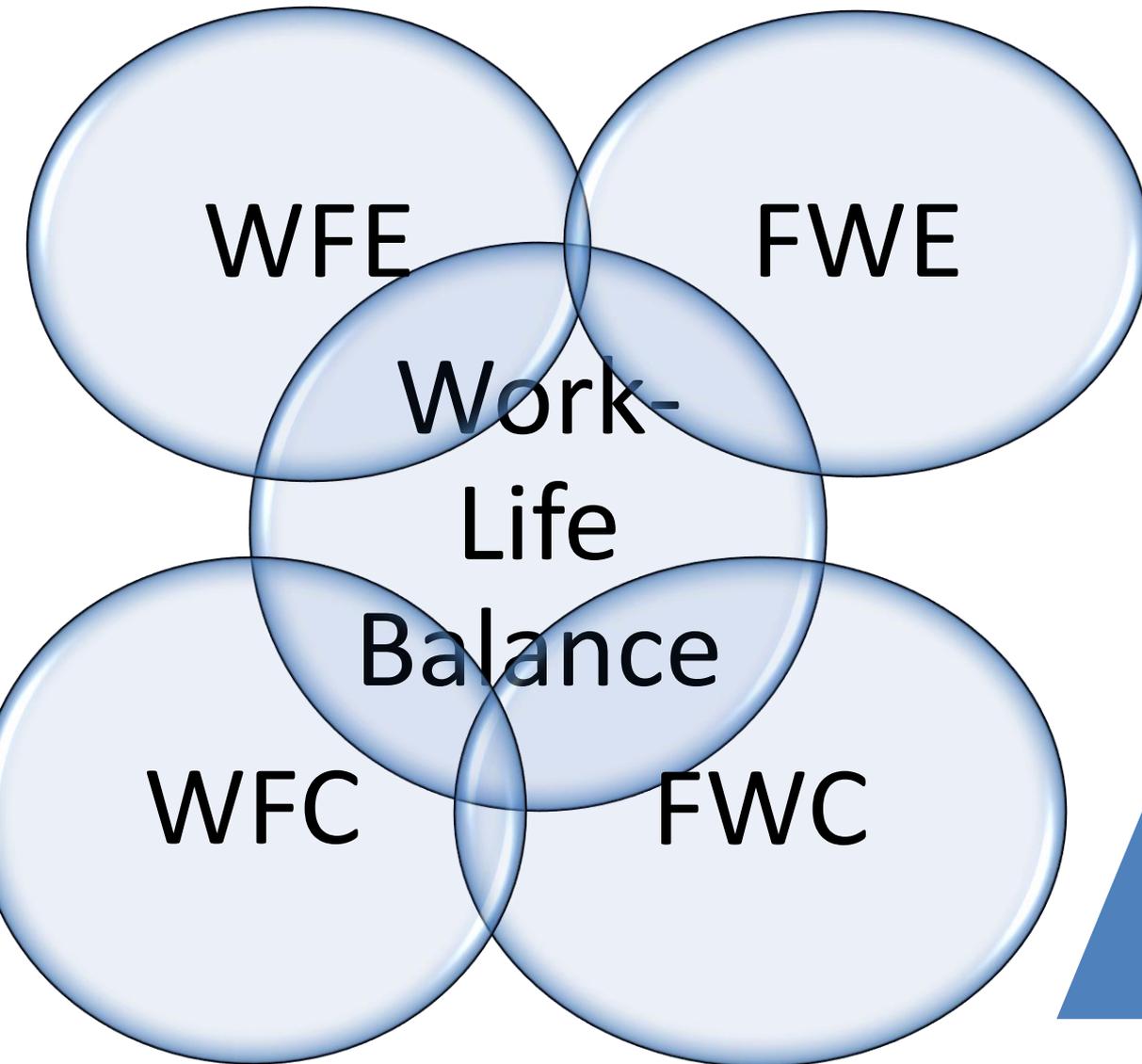
Work-Life Balance

- Relationships with siblings, friends, eldercare, sporting groups, exercise, church groups, community roles and hobbies may all provide additional demands on employees towards seeking greater balance. Term *work-family* draws towards family and parents, which has been criticized as being too narrow in focus.
- ‘Balance’ [50/50] is a misnomer! It assumes that only through achieving balance will employees find happiness and success. However, for some employees, greater happiness may be achieved through imbalance, such as working mothers who work part-time. Thus ‘harmony’ might be a better term (just saying 😊).

Measuring Work-Life Balance

- *Role Balance Theory*: Participating in multiple roles may create conflict and enrichment, but by attaining a level of self-perceived balance between these roles, perhaps by being extremely regimented and organized, or by being extremely relaxed and flexible, employees will be able to attain additional levels of enjoyment from their roles through the ability to successfully manage and juggle their multiple roles
- Thus, employees with greater balance are better able to meet the challenges of their multiple roles, extracting additional benefits

Diagrammatical Model



Study Methodology

- 300 firms (wide range industry/professions), with a wide range of employees by age and gender.
Married employees only (n=609) & Single employees only (n=708) [from the 2nd article]
- Other data: Small business owners (**n=144**), medical doctors (local hospitals) (**n=105**), utility workers (**n=106**), navy (**n=290**), teachers (**n=200**), junior managers (**n=265**), senior managers (**n=249**), entrepreneurs (**n=109**), CEOs (**n=205**), Maori (**n=551**), various employees (**n=337**), plus international studies (**n=2600+**)

Overall Results

Conflict is detrimental to outcomes including work-life balance

Enrichment is beneficial to outcomes including work-life balance

These positive influence of work-life balance is **over and above work-family conflict & work-family enrichment.**

Antecedents

What predicts work-life balance?

- Work hours are detrimental – but small! As are work demands and family demands
- Being a parent is positive! 😊
- Job autonomy and supervisor work-family support is also positive
- Other positive antecedents include resilience, mindfulness, and psychological capital

Outcomes

Work-life balance positively influences job satisfaction, org commitment, meaningful work, and life satisfaction

Work-life balance negatively influences job burnout, anxiety, and depression. Also turnover intentions

Its influence is strongest towards satisfaction outcomes [quite large], and more modest towards mental health outcomes

Overall, work-life balance is important! 😊

Discussion

- Consistent with expansion theory, work-life balance was linked positively to job and life satisfaction and negatively to mental health outcomes, over and above the influence of conflict and enrichment. This is confirmed in all 14+ studies.
- Findings support the argument that additional roles do not always lead to detrimental outcomes and support the 'additional' benefits of employees achieving greater harmony between work and life roles

Strategies

- It's all about perception...so think about how you might balance things better!
- what's important to you? drop unnecessary activities [e.g. TV! Maybe streaming more efficient?!]
- Remember **you** are important [ladies listen up!]...spend time on yourself! [protect your time]
- Ask for help – and when offered, accept some help! [social support important! 😊]

Strategies

- Budget time in and out of office [control distractions...]
- Where possible [😊] leave work on time [some times at least!...and leave work behind if you hate it!!]
- Related to this...find work you love!!! [p.s. your employer isn't necessarily going to do this for you!!]. Maybe check out New Zealand's Best Workplaces...
- Flexitime and flexible scheduling can help [ask]

Strategies

- Plan fun and relaxation. Enjoy the weekend.
- SLEEP!!! Z-Z-Z...[reset button effect 😊]
- Get some exercise...
- Seize the weekend!!
- Be mindful [in the now!]

For Organisations:

- Note the importance of leadership [& culture]!
- Supervisor work-family support can be taught!
- Provide some level of control/autonomy
- Increase performance and retention 😊

Work-Life Balance & Exercise

A healthy lifestyle strategy.

