The Cambridge Handbook of the Global Work–Family Interface

The Cambridge Handbook of the Global Work–Family Interface is a response to growing interest in understanding how people manage their work and family lives across the globe. Given global and regional differences in cultural values, economies, and policies and practices, research on work–family management is not always easily transportable to different contexts. Researchers have begun to acknowledge this, conducting research in various national settings, but the literature lacks a comprehensive source that aims to synthesize the state of knowledge, theoretical progression, and identification of the most compelling future research ideas within the field. *The Cambridge Handbook of the Global Work–Family Interface* aims to fill this gap by providing a single source where readers can find not only information about the general state of global work–family research, but also comprehensive reviews of region-specific research. It will be of value to researchers, graduate students, and practitioners of applied and organizational psychology, management, and family studies.

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40 A Cross-National View of Personal Responsibility for Work–Life Balance

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Within the work–family literature, a great deal of research attention has centered on what organizations can and should do to aid employees in their efforts to balance their work and family responsibilities. This focus is driven by the point of view that individual experiences such as work–family conflict are largely determined by employees' work and/or family situations (e.g., Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). Accordingly, considerable knowledge has been amassed with regard to the association between work/family stressors and demands with constructs such as work–family conflict (e.g., Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011). Moreover, solutions for managing work and family often focus on organizational policies, such as flexible work arrangements and dependent care support, and governmental level policy, such as paid leave (e.g., Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013; Neal & Hammer, 2007).

There is also a growing body of research that acknowledges important individual differences associated with work–family experiences. For example, an increasing number of studies involve the examination of decisions individuals make when faced with a specific work–family dilemma or conflict (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Poelmans, 2005; Powell & Greenhaus, 2006; Shockley & Allen, 2015). Another body of research has examined dispositional variables (e.g., negative affect, conscientiousness) associated with work–family conflict and with enrichment (e.g., Bruck & Allen, 2003; Wayne, Musisca, & Fleeson, 2004). In concert, the results of these studies suggest that both individual and situational factors contribute to work–family experiences.

Building on individual differences research, we propose that a neglected, but potentially important line of research is needed that examines the extent individuals perceive *personal responsibility for their own work–life balance* (PRWLB). Similar to the way Greenhaus and Allen (2011) define work–family balance as "an overall appraisal of the extent to which individuals' effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are consistent with their lives values at a point in time" (p. 174), we suggest that PRWLB also encompasses a consideration of priorities across the lifespan. Specifically, we define PRWLB as a self-directed attitude toward work–life balance that recognizes personal choice and priorities. Such a perspective is consistent with the protean career concept, which suggests that the person, not the organization, takes responsibility for his/her career management (Hall, 2004).

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However, PRWLB is not based on pitting responsibility for balance on the organization versus the self, but rather reflects an individual's belief that s/he can achieve balance through personal efforts. This may even be accomplished through one's organization, such as by negotiating with a supervisor (e.g., requesting to work from home one day a week). As a preliminary investigation of the construct, we examine whether PRWLB varies across country, gender, and cultural context based on data from multiple countries that differ in terms of work–family-relevant cultural variables; specifically, institutional collectivism and gender egalitarianism. Of note, we also contribute to cross-national work–family research by including countries that have received relatively little attention in the work–family literature (e.g., Morocco, Nigeria).

To place our review and our study in context, we recognize that multiple constructs exist with regard to work–family experiences, including work–family conflict, work–family enrichment, and work–family balance. Moreover, there are variants of constructs that represent negative (e.g., work–family conflict, negative spillover) and positive (e.g., work–family enrichment, positive spillover) interdependencies between work and family. A review of definitions and differences is beyond the scope of this chapter (the interested reader may see Allen, 2012 for a review). PRWLB specifically references balance, but given known relationships between balance, conflict, and enrichment (e.g., Wayne, Butts, Casper, & Allen, 2016), research that pertains to work–family experiences such as conflict and enrichment is relevant and is included as such.

Existing Research on Individual Differences

The role of individual differences in the work–family interface has become of increasing interest within the work–family literature. To date, most of the existing research has focused on work–family conflict. Meta-analytic studies support relationships between personality and both directions of work–family conflict (Allen, Johnson, Saboe, Cho, Dumani, & Evans, 2012; Michel, Clark, & Jaramillo, 2011). In general, negative trait-based variables (e.g., negative affect, neuroticism) appear to make individuals more vulnerable to both directions of work–family conflict, while positive trait-based variables (e.g., positive affect, optimism) appear to protect individuals from work–family conflict. Moreover, there is evidence of a stable predisposition, distinct from Big Five personality traits, associated with both negative and positive work–family spillover (Cho, Tay, Allen, & Stark, 2013). These studies are an important contribution to the work–family literature in that the effect sizes associated with dispositional variables rival those associated with work and family demands and exceed those associated with work–family practice initiatives, such as flextime (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, & Shockley, 2013).

In addition to personality, individual beliefs about one's own capabilities have been investigated as predictors of work–family conflict. Specifically, self-esteem, internal locus of control, and self-efficacy are each negatively associated with both directions of work–family conflict (Wayne, Michel, & Matthews, 2016). In addition,

Butler, Gasser, and Smart (2004) examined self-efficacy specific to the work–family interface, defined as beliefs about one's ability to competently manage conflicts between work and family. Sample items included, ''Handling the conflicting demands of work and family is well within my abilities,'' and, ''My past experiences increase my confidence that I will be able to handle conflicting demands of work and family.'' They found that work–family self-efficacy was negatively associated with both directions of work–family conflict. Personal preferences and strategies for managing work and family boundaries, such as segmenting versus integrating roles, have also become of interest to work–family researchers with mixed results concerning relationships with work–family conflict (Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2015). The focus of PRWLB is likely related to perceived ability and to strategic preferences, but unique in that it centers on personal responsibility and priorities, recognizing that priorities can shift across the life course. Moreover, PRWLB is specific to the work–life interface whereas constructs such as locus of control are part of a set of stable traits that reflect one's fundamental overall evaluation of the self (Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997).

Cultural Values

It has long been recognized that context factors, such as country and culture, influence the work–life interface (Powell, Francesco, & Ling, 2009). However, the scope of inquiry has been somewhat limited. To date, most multinational work–family research has focused on differences in work–family conflict (e.g., Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, 2015). Moreover, from a cultural perspective, much of the focus has been on the examination of collectivism as the explanatory variable (e.g., Spector et al., 2007; Yang, Chen, Choi, & Zou, 2000). To provide a better understanding of cultural influences, it seems important to recognize other ways by which country and culture relate to the work–family interface. Societal culture can also shape the way individuals view the responsibility of the self with regard to work–family balance.

Beliefs with regard to PRWLB are likely to be influenced by the environment. Some research exists to support this point of view. Lewis and Smithson (2001) found cross-national differences with regard to the extent that European men and women under the age of thirty felt entitled to support from the state (e.g., childcare, parental leave) with regard to management of work and family. Variation corresponded with degree of existing support provided by the state. Specifically, those in Norway and Sweden, where greater supports exist, demonstrated a greater degree of entitlement than did those in Ireland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom, where fewer supports exist. Thus, there is evidence that existing societal norms may play a role in the extent that individuals view the self as responsible for work–family balance.

As an environmental characteristic, cultural values associated with one's own context may help determine the extent individuals believe they are responsible for work–family balance. We propose that two cultural values have implications for PRWLB: institutional collectivism (IC) and gender egalitarianism (GE). GE refers to the role that societies ascribe to men and women (House & Javidan, 2004). In more

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egalitarian societies, gender differences are minimized. Societies that hold more gender egalitarian values shun rigid social norms that dictate gender roles and behaviors based on biological sex (Emrich, Denmark, & Den Hartog, 2004). Instead, men and women are viewed as equal in ability. Gender roles tend to be more segregated in lower GE societies while in higher GE societies men and women are more likely to share equally in both work and family responsibilities. It seems likely that the expectation that work and family responsibilities are to be shared by men and women makes the challenge of attaining work–life balance more salient, increasing the likelihood that individuals espouse personal responsibility. In contrast, when gender roles are segregated, the primacy of a single role likely renders the notion of personal responsibility for work–family balance less salient.

IC refers to the degree that institutional practices at the society level encourage and reward collective action. Powell et al. (2009) suggest that members of more collectivistic cultures may express greater concern for the quality of the work–family interface than members of less collectivistic cultures because the greater sense of connectedness leads them to care more about the effect that their participation in the work role has on important others in their life. In contrast, individualists are primarily motivated by their own goals and preferences and balance may be less salient to them. Given the concern that collectivists tend to have with regard to the quality of life of others in their family sphere, they seem more likely than individualists to assume responsibility for work–life balance in an effort to minimize potential negative impact on others. Thus, it seems likely that greater IC (i.e., greater collectivism) will be associated with greater PRWLB.

Gender

Gender is inextricably intertwined with the work–life interface, owing at least in part, to a persistent gendered division of work and family labor (Leslie, Manchester, & Kim, 2016; Shockley & Shen, 2016). Although gender differences in work–family variables, such as work–family conflict, would be expected, meta-analytic evidence suggests few differences exist (Shockley, Shen, Denunzio, Arvan, & Knudsen, 2014). Some research has examined gender differences in general feelings of personal control, with mixed results as well, but among a sample of married parents Cassidy and Davies (2003) found women reported lower levels of general personal control than did men. Given differences in the social organization of work and family roles, we explore whether there are mean differences in PRWLB across gender and whether gender interacts with culture in relation to PRWLB.

Method

Participants

Participants were 3,446 employees from eight countries within a multinational organization. The countries were Egypt (n = 373), Hungary (n = 379), Kazakhstan

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($n = 147$), Morocco ($n = 233$), Nigeria ($n = 145$), Poland ($n = 798$), Russia ($n = 857$), and Turkey ($n = 514$). A total of 1,244 of the participants were female, 2,034 were male, and 159 did not report their gender. Data were collected via the organization's annual employee opinion survey.

Measures

Personal Responsibility for Work–Life Balance. PRWLB was assessed with a single item, "My work–life balance is a function of my personal choice and priorities according to the different stages of my life." Responses were based on a five-point scale (i.e., strongly disagree to strongly agree).

Gender. Gender was coded 1 = male, 2 = female.

Cultural values. Based on "as is" data from Project GLOBE (House et al., 2004), countries were clustered into different groups. GLOBE country scores have a possible range of 1 to 7, but actual scores tend to range between 2 and 6 and the range tends to vary across dimensions. Low GE was represented by Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, and Nigeria (mean GLOBE score = 2.89). High GE was represented by Kazakhstan, Poland, Russia, and Hungary (mean GLOBE score = 4.00). Low IC was represented by Hungary, Morocco, Turkey, and Nigeria (mean GLOBE score = 3.89). High IC was represented by Kazakhstan, Russia, Egypt, and Poland (mean GLOBE score = 4.46). To examine GE and IC in combination we also created four clusters: low IC-low GE (Morocco, Nigeria, and Turkey); low GE-high IC (Egypt); low IC-high GE (Hungary); high IC-high GE (Kazakhstan, Poland, and Russia). The GLOBE world average score for GE is 3.40 and for IC is 4.24.

Region. The eight countries represented in the data can also be clustered into three regions consistent with the clusters identified in the GLOBE study (Gupta, Hanges, & Dorfman, 2002). Egypt, Morocco, and Turkey were grouped into the Arabic cluster. Hungary, Kazakhstan, Poland, and Russia were grouped into the Eastern Europe cluster. Sub-Saharan Africa was represented by Nigeria.

Results

To examine mean differences in PRWLB at the country-level, we conducted a one-way analysis of variance. Results indicated significant mean differences across the eight countries ($F = 24.28$, $p < .001$). A Tukey honestly significant difference (HSD) post hoc test was conducted to determine which countries significantly differed from one another. Results are shown in Table 40.1. Hungary had the lowest mean at 3.09 while Russia had the highest mean at 3.79. We next examined mean differences across region clusters and found significant differences ($F = 14.68$, $p < .001$). The Arabic cluster ($M = 3.38$) significantly differed from the Sub-Saharan cluster ($M = 3.56$) and the Eastern European cluster ($M = 3.58$).

We next tested for differences in PRWLB as a function of cultural values. We first tested for mean differences in low versus high GE clusters and low versus high IC

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Table 40.1 *PRWLB means by country*

Country	Subset 1	Subset 2	Subset 3	Subset 4
Hungary	3.09 (1.08)			
Egypt	3.29 (1.02)	3.29 (1.02)		
Morocco		3.37 (.97)	3.37 (.97)	
Turkey		3.45 (1.07)	3.45 (1.07)	
Kazakhstan		3.53 (1.13)	3.53 (1.13)	
Nigeria			3.56 (1.03)	3.56 (1.03)
Poland			3.59 (.94)	3.59 (.94)
Russia				3.79 (.87)

Note: Countries within the same subset do not significantly differ from one another. Standard deviations appear in parentheses.

Table 40.2 *PRWLB means by cultural cluster*

Cluster	Subset 1	Subset 2	Subset 3	Subset 4
Low IC-high GE	3.09 (1.04)			
Low GE-high IC		3.29 (1.02)		
Low IC-low GE			3.45 (1.04)	
High IC-high GE				3.68 (.93)

Note: Clusters within the same subset do not significantly differ from one another. Standard deviations appear in parentheses.

clusters. Results indicated that participants in the high GE cluster (M = 3.58, SD =.98) reported greater PRWLB than did participants in the low GE cluster (M = 3.40, SD = 1.03) (t = 4.96, p <.001). Results also indicated that participants in the high IC cluster (M = 3.61, SD =.96) reported greater PRWLB than did participants in the low IC cluster (M = 3.34, SD = 1.06) (t = 7.56, p <.001).

We tested for differences across the four clusters that varied in their combination of GE and IC. One-way analysis of variance supported a significant difference in the four clusters (F = 47.96, p <.001). A Tukey HSD post hoc test was conducted to determine which clusters significantly differed from one another. As shown in Table 40.2 each cluster significantly differed from the other. Those in the high IC-high GE cluster reported the greatest PRWLB (M = 3.68) while those in the low IC-high GE cluster reported the lowest PRWLB (M = 3.09).

To further probe the interaction between GE and IC, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis in which imputed GLOBE values were used to represent GE and IC and the interaction between the two was computed. The interaction was significant (R^2 change =.01, F = 40.70, p <.001). The interaction was plotted based on levels of the variables one standard deviation above and below the mean (see Figure 40.1). As shown in Figure 40.1, the relationship between GE and PRWLB is

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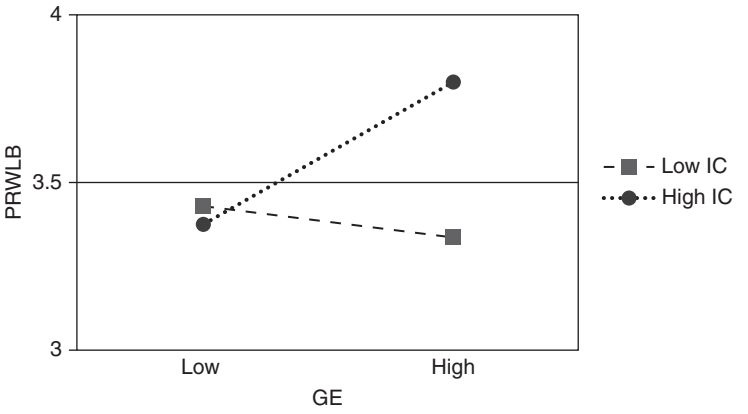

Figure 40.1 *Gender egalitarian (GE) by institutional collectivism (IC) interaction.*

positive when coupled with high IC, but the sign of the relationship switches to negative when coupled with low IC.

Lastly, we examined gender. First, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to test whether PRWLB differed by gender. Results indicated women reported greater PRWLB ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .99$) than did men ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.00$) ($t = 2.53$, $p = .01$). However, it should be noted that this difference was small in magnitude (Cohen's $d = .09$). Next we examined whether gender interacted with IC or GE. Analysis of variance based on the low-high clusters of GE revealed no interaction with gender ($F = 2.02$, $p = .15$). Similarly, no interaction between gender and low-high IC clusters was detected ($F = 1.05$, $p = .31$). Gender in conjunction with the four-group culture cluster was examined next. A significant interaction emerged ($F = 2.72$, $p = .04$) (see Figure 40.2). Results based on *t*-tests revealed significant differences in the low IC-low GE group ($t = -2.79$, $p = .01$) such that women reported greater PRWLB ($M = 3.58$, SD = 1.00) than did men ($M = 3.38$, SD = 1.04) (Cohen's $d = .20$). Gender differences were not significant within the other three clusters. Finally, we tested for an interaction between gender and regional cluster. The interaction was not significant ($F = 2.76$, $p = .06$).

Discussion

The most common approach to addressing the management of work and family has been to focus on environmental conditions, which tends to place the role of the individual as that of passive reactor (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). We suggest that individuals are active agents who can shape their own work–family experiences. Considering work–life issues from an individual perspective has been likened to "blaming the victim" (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). However, we contend that allowing for agentic capacity in managing the work–family interface is not intended to imply that individuals fully control their work–family situations. As noted by Bandura (2006), "People do not operate as autonomous agents. Nor is their

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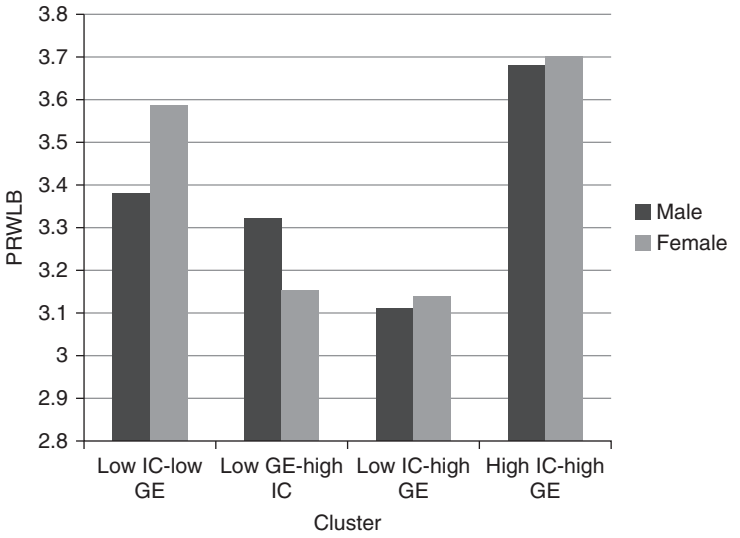

Figure 40.2 *Culture combination cluster by gender interaction.*

behavior wholly determined by situational influences. Rather human functioning is a product of a reciprocal interplay of intrapersonal, behavioral, and environmental determinants" (p. 165). We propose inclusion of personal responsibility beliefs as a supplement to existing research that has focused on situational factors widens the lens through which we are able to theorize and find solutions to work–family management.

Our descriptive research helps establish a baseline understanding of PRWLB and how it varies across different groups and contexts. Our findings suggest that there is meaningful variation in the extent that individuals agree with the notion that they are personally responsible for their own work–life balance. Our research shows that this variation is, at least in part, a function of country, region, culture, and gender.

Consistent with our expectations that PRWLB would be higher in high GE versus low GE and in high IC versus low IC cultures, we found that high IC coupled with high GE was associated with the highest level of PRWLB. Individuals are most likely to feel that they are personally responsible for their work–life balance when gender roles are egalitarian and when institutional practices encourage collective action.

In contrast to our expectations, low IC coupled with high GE resulted in the lowest level of PRWLB. This group was represented solely by Hungary, which reported the lowest country mean overall. As such it is difficult to discern if the result is due to unique aspects of Hungary versus the combination of low IC-high GE. To better understand what may be driving this finding, we specifically compared Hungary with Poland, which had one of the highest country scores on PRWLB. Poland and Hungary share many commonalities. Like Poland, Hungary is a Central European post-communist country. Moreover, both became members of the European Union in 2004 and have similar economic conditions (Bakacsi, Sandor, Andras, & Victor,

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2002). In terms of social policy related to work–family, Hungary has 24 weeks of maternity leave paid at 70% while Poland has 16 weeks paid at 100% (Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2012). One factor that differentiates the two is their standing in terms of gender equity. Although according to GLOBE both countries are high in GE, the gender equity gap in Hungary is consistently greater than is the gender equity gap in Poland (Hausmann et al., 2012). Furthermore, although the economic participation of men and women is similar across the two countries, disparities in the educational attainment and political empowerment of women versus men are considerably larger in Hungary than in Poland. The net result may be that societal practices in Hungary are more in line with that of lower GE countries, which could help explain the lower PRWLB findings. To test this speculation a wider array of countries that can be classified as high in GE and low in IC is needed (e.g., Colombia, Portugal).

With regard to regional differences, we found that individuals in the Arabic region reported lower PRWLB than did individuals in other regions. The countries in this cluster share a legacy of being under foreign control for many decades. They also are high-power-distance, low-future-orientation countries that ascribe low significance to planning and influencing the future (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002). These factors may help explain the lower likelihood of espousing personal responsibility for work and family balance.

Finally, we found that women reported more PRWLB than did men in low IC-low GE contexts. The countries that represented this cluster are all countries where economic, political, educational, and health disparities between men and women are large (e.g., Hausmann et al., 2012). In such societies, work might be thought of as more of a choice for women and outside of the norm. Such conditions may increase the extent that women perceive that they must assume responsibility for balancing work and family demands.

There are several limitations to the current study. One limitation is that a single item, which prevented an assessment of reliability, represented PRWLB. As noted by Dierdorff and Ellington (2008), who used a single-item measure of work interference with family, the use of single-item measures is sometimes a trade-off for use of broad-reaching survey data. Given these initial findings regarding the PRWLB construct, we encourage researchers to develop multi-item measures that can be subjected to more rigorous psychometric assessments. Another limitation concerns the extent that our findings with regard to cultural values are generalizable beyond the specific countries included in our analyses. Although the set of countries included in our investigation include those not often found in work–family research and can be considered a strength, the lack of literature on these countries renders our explanations of findings particularly speculative. Moreover, the data come from employees of a single organization and as such there may be greater similarity among these workers than among workers in the general population due to attraction-selection-attrition processes. Additional research with a wider array of cultural and organizational contexts is needed. Finally, we note that the R^2 change associated with the IC-GE interaction was small, raising potential concerns with regard to practical importance. The extent that small effects may be of practical import is an

issue for further consideration as findings with regard to PRWLB accumulate across different contexts.

The study has implications for the development of culture-sensitive theories of work–family phenomena. The desire to balance work–life may be universal, but the perspective that one takes in terms of personal responsibility meaningfully varies across cultural contexts. Future research is needed that expands the nomological network of the PRWLB construct. For example, research is needed to help determine whether PRWLB relates to less work–family conflict, more work–family enrichment, and/or greater work–family balance. Moreover, research that examines the impact of individual PRWLB on interactions with family members and coworkers would also be beneficial. For example, individuals high on PRWLB may be more likely to initiate negotiations with role partners to help achieve work–life balance. Additional research that examines interactions between PRWLB and other situational factors not included in the current study (e.g., family-supportive work practices, state support such as parental leave) would also lead to a richer understanding of the predictive power of PRWLB in explaining work–family experiences.

Conclusion

Our goal with the current research was to help spur conversation with regard to individual perspectives on responsibility for work–life balance and how it is viewed around the globe. Such a focus examines the abilities of the individual rather than making the individual dependent on the organization or the state for support. The role of the individual should be integrated with the situational approach to work–family management. It cannot be assumed that individuals will directly benefit or change as a result of situational benefits or policies. Ultimately, responsibility for work–life balance is one that is shared by the individual, the organization, and society.

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