
AXEL HAUNSCHILD

Work, Life, Balance

A critical glance at the debate on the relationship between work and life

The term work-life balance plays an important role in current discussions about the world of work. But are the problems this term refers to a new phenomenon? What are the changes in the world of work that made the work-life balance a hot topic (just now)? And what are the blind spots in the discourse about the work-life balance? The article details which (implicit) assumptions are made about life and work, which target groups are addressed or not addressed and who people put the blame on for a failed or unsuccessful work-life balance.

The article casts a critical glance at the work-life balance debate.

PETER KULEMANN, ANKE THOREIN

Work-life balance in the context of constant contactability – The concept of Good Work

The article discusses the criteria for a work-life balance from a labour-policy point of view in the context of the concept of Good Work. This concept measures the quality of a work culture by the extent to which work is designed to contribute to the personality development, health and well-being of the employees. Results of nationwide representative surveys on selected aspects of deregulated work in the context of the DGB Good Work Index are presented in the article. It focuses on the work requirement of being constantly contactable which has drastically changed the balance conditions during the last few years.

HERMANN GROB, HARTMUT SEIFERT

Voluntary work and working hours – A compatibility problem?

Voluntary commitment takes time. People with jobs have to be able to invest the time it requires in addition to their time on the job and their other private and everyday obligations. But how do employed persons manage to balance these multiple demands on their time? What role do variations in working hours and flexible working hours as well as night time and weekend work play in the performance of voluntary work? Which kinds of working hours obstruct or promote volunteering? The article explores these issues on the basis of a representative survey of more than 10,000 people with jobs.

RITA MEYER, JULIA K. MÜLLER

Work-study-life balance in knowledge-intensive work

Education policy programmes and scientific discourses raise the question on the compatibility of work and life without considering that study is also an area that is increasing in importance and can therefore lead to conflicts in terms of the compatibility of working, studying and living. The article presents results from a research project in which the individual and company factors in the compatibility of this triad are examined. It focuses on the way persons employed in the IT industry see their work-study-life balance. Instruments are then outlined that can help employees and enterprises establish a balanced relationship between work, learning and living.

ANNA PETERS, MIRIAM REXROTH, KARLHEINZ SONNTAG

Learning to set limits: A training course in making work and private life more compatible

The dissolution of accustomed structures in the modern working sphere makes it increasingly hard to reconcile the vocational and private areas of life. The goal of „Work-life balance: Pathways to anchoring the work-life balance in the culture of enterprises“ is it to identify the conflicts and needs of employees in making work and private life compatible. With that as the starting-point, measures to make the two areas more compatible were developed and implemented. The article presents relevant project results and a training concept for setting boundaries between work and private life.

ERNST DEUER

Work-life balance in training and studies

The concept of work-life balance is often reduced to the family-friendly organisation of work and (young) parents as the target group. That, however, is an unsatisfactory reduction, since the aspects of the work-life balance are comprehensive in nature and in the long run they concern all persons. This also applies to trainees and students, who have, however, rarely been paid attention to in the context of the work-life balance, even though we know very well from different studies as well as from the „Generation Y“ discussion that the work-life balance has greatly increased in importance specifically for younger employees and especially younger managers.

VOLKER BORN, HERMANN NEHLS

The German Qualifications Framework – A milestone on the path to the equivalence of general and vocational education

On 31 January 2012, the top representatives of the federal and state governments, the social partners and business organisations agreed on the assignment of the first central qualifications to the eight levels of the German Qualifications Framework. They thus took an important step towards the equivalence of general and vocational education. The equivalence debate has a long tradition in German education policy. Lines of development and crucial milestones in the discourse are traced in the article. Action requirements are also designated, so that the equivalence of general and vocational training certificates can become reality in a permeable education system.

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