

Breaking Boundaries: A Feminist Perspective on Work-Life Balance and Women's Empowerment in Emerging Economies

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance (WLB) has evolved from personal concern to a critical socio-political issue intersecting with gender, labor, and empowerment discourses, especially within emerging economies. This paper advances a feminist perspective on WLB, emphasizing its role as a structural determinant of women's agency and social change. Focusing on young professional women in Pakistan, the study reveals how the erosion of boundaries between work and life perpetuates gendered inequalities, emotional labor, and cultural expectations. Drawing on qualitative narratives, the research highlights women's resilience and agency in reconfiguring their roles amidst systemic constraints. The findings advocate for gender-sensitive policies and organizational reforms that recognize WLB as a feminist imperative for sustainable empowerment. The paper contributes to feminist HRM literature by emphasizing collective agency, ethical workplace practices, and policy interventions aligned with social justice goals.

Keywords: Collective agency; Emotional labor; Gender equality; Organizational reform; Qualitative research