

Public Abstract

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Title:Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea(m): A Case Study Exploring the Borders between Work and Life Domains described by Women in the U.S. Apparel Industry

The study explored the border development and management between work and life domains as described by women working in the U.S. apparel industry. The study's aim was to discover how women manage and negotiate their work and family domains, the borders between domains, and the people who occupy the domains in order to attain balance. The interpretation from a qualitative case study approach, which triangulated semi-structured interviews, field observations, and photo elicitations of five women working in the apparel industry in New York City and Philadelphia revealed three theme categories: (a) definition of work and life domains; (b) grand view triggering events and effects; (c) every day triggering events and effects. Implications derived from the results offer several important opportunities. First, through an in-depth understanding of these women professionals' work and life domains, the findings help today's working women realize that they are not alone in their struggle with work-life balance. Second, corporate human resource departments may want to utilize the study's findings to cultivate a work environment that may be more sustainable in the long term with reasonable work expectations and more supportive role models.