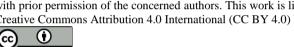**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Balancing Personal and Professional Life: A Study of Experiences and Perceptions of Divorced People

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ABSTRACT
This study intends to evaluate the emotional and psychological aspects of divorce, with a special emphasis on the delicate interplay between their personal and professional lives. Purposive sampling was utilized in conjunction with semi-structured interviews under the constructivist-interpretive technique. During the interviews, all procedures were carried out with the participants' informed consent with strong ethical norms to protect confidentiality. Member verification and consistent data analysis were used to maintain credibility. The data obtained from the interview were thematically analyzed to detect reoccurring patterns throughout the narratives. The study found that gender and culture have an impact on individual experiences, but mindfulness, meditation, and therapy are essential for overcoming the emotional difficulties associated with divorce. Personalized coping strategies, encouraging workplaces, therapeutic interventions, and a more thorough comprehension of gender and culture-specific variables are essential. These findings have significant implications for therapists assisting, businesses developing compassionate workplaces, governments concerned about the emotional well-being of their constituents, and divorcees seeking support. The study investigates the firsthand encounters of individuals managing the balance between work and professional life amidst divorce, providing crucial perspectives for practitioners assisting individuals and similar circumstances.
KEYWORDS: Work-life balance, divorce, emotional experiences, psychological reality

INTRODUCTION
        The word 'divorce' denotes the formal termination of a marital union, frequently entailing emotional, financial, and practical hurdles for the parties concerned. In contrast, 'work-life balance' concerns the state of equilibrium between an individual's professional obligations and personal affairs, incorporating elements such as adaptable work schedules, effective time utilization, and holistic welfare. Divorce is a profoundly transformative life event, one that carries substantial consequences for individuals across

various domains of their lives (Arosio, 2023). Among many challenges it poses, the ability to sustain a healthy work-life balance emerges as a paramount concern. The process of divorce and its aftermath disrupt not only the familial and emotional landscapes but also intersect profoundly with an individual's professional life, making the pursuit of work-life equilibrium increasingly complex (Haferkamp & Hans, 1992). As divorce rates continue to rise globally, an understanding the intricacies of how individuals navigate this tumultuous juncture within the framework of their work-life balance has become imperative for both researchers and practitioners (Zhang et al., 2018). The rising number of divorces in the world calls for a better knowledge of how people balance work and personal life during this life-altering experience. In addition to upsetting the family and emotional domains, divorce has a significant impact on people's professional lives as well, which emphasizes how crucial it is for both researchers and practitioners to examine this dynamic interplay.

Divorce is a complicated intertwining of individual narratives, emotions, and coping mechanisms, making it an ideal subject for qualitative investigation (Cao et.al., 2022). While the subject of divorce and its implications for work-life balance has received scholarly attention, much of the existing literature relies heavily on quantitative analysis (Guest, 2002), which provide valuable data but often lack the depth and context that qualitative research methods can reveal. This study argues that the qualitative approach is better suited to capture the complexity of divorce. One of the most major life experiences a person can go through is the breakdown of a marriage (Lawler, 2002). Divorce brings with it a slew of practical obstacles that enter numerous facets of a person's life, in addition to emotional and relational complexities (AL-shahrani & Hammad, 2023). Work-life balance is one such factor that is critical for general well-being and productivity (Bloom et al., 2006). Divorce-related stress, emotional anguish, and changes in family relationships can penetrate the workplace, adding another layer of complication to people's working lives (Gidisa, 2023). Divorce's impact on job performance, productivity, and career paths has piqued the interest of researchers, human resource practitioners, and organizational executives (Imna & Hassan, 2015). Divorce, a big life event, brings with it practical, emotional, and interpersonal difficulties that affect work-life balance and productivity at work. Because of its effects on career paths and productivity, executives, human resource (HR) professionals, and researchers are paying attention to this topic.

According to Mohlatlole et al. (2018), communication breakdown, financial difficulties, infidelity, and other marital issues can all contribute to divorce. These issues frequently worsen the emotional and psychological difficulties that people going through divorce endure. Furthermore, the divorce process, which typically entails legal procedures, property division, and child custody disputes, can be emotionally draining and exhausting at times (Watson & Ancis, 2013). While some people endure divorce with fortitude, adaptation, and personal growth, others become trapped in distress, disrupting their work-life balance (Walsh, 1996). Understanding the multiplicity of experiences in the context of divorce is critical for establishing support mechanisms and treatments that recognize and meet the particular needs of individuals going through this life-changing event (Miller, 2010). Numerous quantitative research has provided useful insights into the broad trends and statistical connections between divorce and work-life balance over the years (Potter, 2021). However, a quantitative study may not reflect the complex web of emotional and psychological experiences that people go through throughout divorce (Koppejan-Luitze et al., 2021). In contrast, qualitative research methodologies are well-suited to revealing these intricacies and providing a greater insight of individuals' subjective experiences (Pulla & Carter, 2018).

This study explores lived experiences of divorce, focusing on work-life balance effects and strategies used through interviews. It aims to understand emotional challenges, support systems, and divorce's impact on work-life. The research also aims to uncover personal growth and resilience post-divorce, impacting work-life balance. Overall, the study seeks to understand the complex relationship between divorce, work-life balance, and emotional well-being through narrative analysis. This study intends to answer concerns about divorce and work-life balance, such as what coping mechanisms and techniques people use to deal with the emotional and psychological challenges that come with divorce, and how these mechanisms affect their work-life balance. What emotional challenges do people confront while attempting to maintain a work-life balance during and after divorce? How can support systems help people navigate the emotional and psychological aspects of divorce, and how does divorce affect work-life balance? Furthermore, what examples of personal growth and adaptability occur during and after divorce, and how do people acquire resilience and personal growth that affect their work-life?

This research enhances knowledge by exploring emotional and psychological experiences of individuals balancing work and divorce. Qualitative research complements quantitative data, offering personal narratives and emotions. It provides a comprehensive view of divorce and work-life balance issues. The study's findings impact various stakeholders, enabling employers to support employees undergoing divorce. Organizations can create policies and systems addressing emotional needs during divorce. Anand and Vohra (2020) suggest that organizations can help employees manage work-life balance by fostering supportive environments. The findings of this study can help therapists, counselors, and support groups who work with people who are going through divorce. These experts can provide more targeted and effective support to their clients if they obtain a deeper awareness of the emotional and psychological components of divorce. This study has policy implications, notably in the areas of family law and workplace policies. A deeper knowledge of how divorce impacts work-life balance can influence the development of policies that promote individuals' overall well-being during and after divorce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Achieving work-life balance involves effectively handling both work-related responsibilities and personal obligations to enhance overall well-being. Conversely, divorce represents a multifaceted legal and emotional procedure that disrupts established family dynamics and daily routines. The breakup of a marriage through divorce is a serious and life-altering event that has far-reaching consequences for individuals in many facets of their lives (Eshun et al., 2019). Among many obstacles that divorce brings, maintaining a healthy work-life balance emerges as a top priority (Nepali, 2018). Understanding the complexities of how individuals manage this difficult moment within the context of their work-life balance has become critical for both scholars and practitioners as divorce rates continue to climb globally (Cao et al., 2022). Work-life balance, frequently defined as the balance between one's professional and personal commitments, is critical for overall well-being and productivity (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Even in the absence of substantial life upheavals, achieving and maintaining this balance can be difficult, as the pressures of modern workplaces and family life regularly overlap (Uddin, 2021). When people face divorce, the already difficult task of managing work and personal life becomes exponentially more difficult (Aldwin & Levenson, 2001). Work-life balance spans a wide range of disciplines, including time management, emotional well-being, and the ability to meet personal and professional obligations

(Haddon et al., 2009). It is especially important for people going through divorce since it affects not only their mental and emotional health but also their job performance and overall career trajectories (Barber & Eccles, 1992). The intersection of divorce and work-life balance presents a critical challenge, impacting individuals' well-being and productivity. Divorce, a significant life event, disrupts established routines and family dynamics, necessitating a delicate balance between personal and professional responsibilities. Understanding how individuals navigate this tumultuous period within their work-life equilibrium is crucial for scholars and practitioners amid rising divorce rates globally, emphasizing the importance of maintaining this balance for overall success and fulfillment.

Divorce is a complicated event with far-reaching emotional, psychological, and practical implications. It can have an emotional and psychological impact on an individual's work life, influencing job performance, relationships with coworkers, and general well-being (Symoens et al., 2014). Individuals who experience a marital divorce frequently experience substantial emotional challenges, such as stress, worry, grief, anger, and a sense of loss (Amato, 2000). These emotional states can have a significant impact on job performance, resulting in lower productivity, absenteeism, and difficulty concentrating (Medved, 2017). Divorce is sometimes exacerbated by asset splits, custody negotiations, and the reorganization of familial and residential arrangements. This complicated web of practical problems adds to the emotional weight, making it difficult for individuals to effectively navigate work-life balance (Williams & Dunne-Bryant, 2006).

Wanberg et al. (2023) states that quantitative studies have attempted to quantify the impact of divorce on work-life balance, while these studies have provided useful insights into the statistical relationships between divorce and job success, they may not fully capture individuals' emotional and psychological experiences. The limits of quantitative study highlight the need of qualitative investigation, which can shed light on the complexities of this relationship by interacting with individual narratives and personal experiences (Pilcher & Cortazzi, 2023).

Understanding the circumstances that lead to divorce is critical to understanding its impact on work-life balance. Among the most often reported factors contributing to divorce are marital discontent, communication problems, financial difficulties, and infidelity (Amato, 2010; Fincham & Beach, 2010). These characteristics can increase the emotional and psychological issues that individuals going through divorce confront, making it vital to investigate the relationship between these factors and work-life balance. Financial stress following divorce can generate practical difficulties in keeping housing, supporting children, and managing day-to-day expenses (Wang & Amato, 2000). The mental tension caused by financial worries can then permeate an individual's workplace, resulting in lower job performance and productivity (Samuels, 2017). Furthermore, a breakdown in communication inside a marriage, as well as the emotional discomfort it creates, can flow over into the workplace (Arumugam et al., 2021). Individuals who are dealing with the emotional effects of divorce may find it difficult to concentrate, interact with coworkers, or do work-related duties successfully (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997).

Another prevalent cause of divorce is infidelity, which can cause feelings of betrayal, rage, and emotional distress (Sweeney & Horwitz, 2001). As individuals try to cope with the psychological repercussions of infidelity and eventual marriage dissolution, these feelings may further disturb work-life balance (Carr & McNulty, 2016). Due to the emotional and psychological obstacles of divorce, people frequently use coping mechanisms and seek help to navigate their work-life balance throughout and

after the divorce process. Coping tactics might include obtaining professional assistance, such as therapy or counseling, as well as self-help strategies such as exercise, mindfulness, or writing (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). According to a study, the influence of divorce on work-life balance may vary depending on gender and cultural factors (Burnett et al., 2010). Differences in emotional expression and coping techniques between men and women can influence how men and women experience and navigate divorce (Simon & Barrett, 2010). Women are more prone to seek emotional support from friends and family, whereas men are more inclined to rely on practical problem-solving methods (Thomas et al., 2017). These gender disparities can have an impact on a person's work-life balance and job performance during and after divorce (Burnett et al., 2010).

Cultural considerations can influence how divorce is experienced and managed. Cultural norms, values, and expectations can influence the emotional response to divorce as well as the coping mechanisms utilized (Barber & Eccles, 1992). Understanding the cultural context of divorce is critical for assessing individuals' emotional and psychological experiences and their consequences for work-life balance. While quantitative research has provided useful insights into the statistical correlations between divorce and work-life balance, the emotional and psychological elements of this relationship have received little attention. Qualitative research can provide a more in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of people going through divorce and the impact on work-life balance (Thomas & Ryan, 2008).

Divorce's impact on work-life balance is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon that necessitates thorough consideration (Oludayo & Omonijo, 2020). Divorce can dramatically damage an individual's capacity to maintain a healthy work-life balance due to emotional, psychological, and practical problems (David & Karen, 2016). Here, while quantitative study has offered useful statistical data on this subject, qualitative research is required for a more in-depth knowledge of the emotional and psychological experiences of people going through divorce. It provides a more thorough understanding of the emotional and psychological components of divorce and their implications for work-life balance by interacting with individual narratives and personal experiences (Thomas & Ryan, 2008). The parts that follow will go deeper into these elements, highlighting the coping techniques, support systems, and personal growth strategies used by individuals in their distinct divorce journeys.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study is based on a constructivist-interpretivist approach to understand the subjective experiences of people going through divorce and its impact on work-life balance. In-depth interviews were used to gather context-specific insights. Purposive sampling was utilized to ensure a diverse range of participants for a comprehensive knowledge of divorce, emotions, and work life interaction. Participants were chosen from Pokhara valley using various channels and given an informed consent form. Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method, allowing participants to share their experiences and emotions related to divorce and work-life balance. Interviews were conducted by the principal researcher in a comfortable setting, some via video conference with participant permission.

Thematic analysis involves identifying themes in data introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006). Analytical process includes data familiarization, coding, theme building, and interpretation process developed by Creswell (2014). Member-checking was done for validity and ethical requirements were followed to protect participant rights. Pseudonyms were used for anonymity and credibility was enhanced through member

checking. Consistent data analysis techniques were implemented and audit trail was used for consistency in research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results

This study focuses on the emotional and psychological realities of people balancing work and life after divorce. The researchers acquired insights into the distinct issues they faced and the solutions they used to cope with these challenges through in-depth interviews with four participants.

One of the participant Samantha, a 43-year-old lady, described her emotional ups and downs during and after her divorce. It was "one of the most challenging periods of my life," she said, with incessant despair and anxiety. Her mental anguish extended beyond her home and into her professional life. Samantha struggled to concentrate, engage with colleagues, and meet professional obligations. She emphasized the importance of "keeping it together at work while dealing with emotional turmoil at home." Samantha resorted to mindfulness and meditation to help her deal with these emotional issues. Mindfulness helped her stay grounded at work, deal with stress better, and keep her emotions in check. Meditation gave her a sense of calm and helped her have a clear head during times of emotional stress. Here, the theme from the participant is resilience and coping with emotional challenges in the face of a divorce. It focuses on how the participant dealt with emotional turmoil in her personal life while maintaining her professional equanimity through mindfulness and meditation. The finding is consistent with the work by David and Karen (2016). During challenging circumstances, it emphasizes the significance of balance and self-care.

Another participant Raj's divorce was characterized by rage and frustration. He described it as a "tornado tearing through my life" and acknowledged the challenge of separating his personal struggle from his professional life. Raj stated that he brought his anger to work, which harmed his relationships with coworkers and resulted in poor job performance. He found it difficult to concentrate on chores since his mind was preoccupied with his divorce. Raj sought professional assistance in dealing with his emotional difficulties by seeing a therapist. He saw this as a watershed moment in his work-life balance management. The therapy sessions gave him a safe place to process his feelings and get a better understanding of himself, allowing him to regain control of his emotions and increase his attention at work. Here, the participant is concerned with the influence of divorce on an individual's emotional well-being and professional life. It shows how the participant rage and dissatisfaction throughout his divorce influenced his work performance and relationships. The participant emphasizes the value of obtaining therapy as a means of regaining emotional control and improving work-life balance. The finding is supported by the prior research conducted by Wanberg et.al. (2023).

Sumina's divorce was an extremely draining experience. She was overcome with melancholy, worry, and waves of loss, making it impossible for her to be productive at work. Her mental anguish spilled over into the workplace, impairing her ability to concentrate and interact with coworkers. Her work performance decreased as a result, and she struggled to satisfy her professional obligations. Sumina resorted to mindfulness and meditation to help her deal with these emotional difficulties. Mindfulness assisted her in remaining grounded throughout hectic work hours and dealing with stress more efficiently. When she was struggling with emotional anguish, meditation gave her a sense of inner serenity that was vital. These practices were anchors for her, allowing her to regain control of her emotions and, as a result, her work-life balance.

In the case of Sumina, the central issue is the enormous effect divorce has on an individual's emotional well-being and professional life. It emphasizes Sumina's emotional issues, which were characterized by melancholy and worry, had an impact on her working productivity and relationships. The participant emphasizes the value of mindfulness and meditation in assisting her in regaining emotional control and achieving a better work-life balance. This finding is supported by the study of Thomas et.al. (2017). Emotional issues are crucial for work life balance.

In contrast to Sumina's divorce, Suman's divorce was emotionally exhausting, with constant worry and anxiety. He found it difficult to concentrate at work, interact with colleagues, and meet professional obligations. His mental turbulence at home frequently accompanied him to work, producing a persistent sense of struggle. Suman sought professional assistance in dealing with his emotional issues by seeing a therapist. This choice represented a watershed moment in his quest for equilibrium. He was able to analyze his feelings and get a better understanding of himself thanks to the therapy sessions. It eventually helped him restore emotional control and focus better at work. This participant is concerned with the emotional toll of divorce on an individual's work life. It focuses on how Suman's ongoing concern and anxiety damaged his work performance and relationships. Seeking therapy is portrayed as a critical step in his path to reclaim emotional equilibrium and increase his ability to focus at work. The interpretation of the participant is consistent with the finding of Simon and Barrett (2010), on emotional difficulties during divorce transition.

The interview content from these four participants highlights the different and very personal experiences of people navigating work-life balance while going through divorce. Emotional difficulties were a recurring theme in their stories, affecting their job performance, relationships with coworkers, and overall well-being. Samantha's emotional rollercoaster, Raj's tornado of wrath and fury, Sumina's cloud of grief and anxiety, and Suman's persistent tension and anxiety highlight the emotional toll that divorce can take on individuals. These participants' coping mechanisms differed, emphasizing the significance of seeking support and adopting strategies that resonate with their specific needs. Samantha found peace via mindfulness and meditation, which helped her restore emotional control. Raj's decision to seek professional therapy was a watershed moment in his path, creating a secure environment for emotional processing. Sumina's use of mindfulness and meditation as anchors assisted her in regaining emotional control. Similarly, Suman's decision to attend a therapist provided critical assistance, allowing him to concentrate better at work.

These results offer the insight into the emotional and psychological aspects of divorce, as well as the consequences for work-life balance. They emphasize the importance of adopting a more compassionate and accommodating attitude, both personally and professionally, to support work-life balance amid difficult life transitions as divorce.

Discussion

The qualitative investigation has shown a comprehensive grasp of the emotional and psychological challenges that people confront during this tumultuous phase of their life. This section dives into the implications and broader context of the findings, emphasizing the need to assist those going through divorce in their pursuit of a good work-life balance.

The participants' tales in this study offered a realistic picture of the emotional problems they faced. Samantha's continual melancholy and anxiety, Raj's tornado of rage and fury, Sumina's clouds of grief and anxiety, and Suman's excessive tension and

anxiety all show the diverse emotional anguish that divorce may cause. These feelings, as eloquently depicted, do not remain confined to the personal realm, but they penetrate the workplace, having a significant impact on job performance and work relationships. Individuals navigating divorce experience emotional distress, which becomes a shadow that is difficult to escape. This finding is consistent with previous research that emphasizes the emotional turbulence involved with divorce and its impact on different aspects of life, including work (Barber & Eccles, 1992; Amato, 2000; David & Karen, 2016).

One striking feature of the participants' narratives is the variety of coping techniques. Samantha discovered emotional balance through mindfulness and meditation, Raj sought professional treatment through therapy, Sumina found consolation in mindfulness and meditation, and Suman made the critical decision to see a therapist. These various approaches highlight the significance of personalized and adaptive approaches to coping with the emotional issues of divorce. Mindfulness and meditation, as demonstrated by Samantha and Sumina, provided participants with a means of regaining emotional control. They were able to stay grounded, deal with stress properly, and prevent emotions from taking over. The findings of this study align with a growing body of research suggesting that mindfulness and meditation can be effective tools for managing stress and emotional well-being (Shapiro & Remle, 2011).

Seeking professional aid through therapy, as evidenced by Raj and Suman, was another important source of support. The therapy sessions provided a secure space for participants to process their emotions and get a better understanding of themselves, allowing them to restore emotional control and concentrate at work. This emphasizes the significance of seeking outside help and the value of therapeutic interventions during the times of emotional turmoil.

The participants' narratives also shed light on the potential role of gender and cultural factors in the divorce experience and its impact on work-life balance. Samantha's experience of navigating a double life and Raj's difficulties with expressing rage, a typically expected emotional response from men, highlight the gendered expectations and obligations imposed on individuals during divorce. Prior research has highlighted such gendered experiences, with men and women frequently struggling with different societal expectations following divorce (Burnett et al., 2010; Simon & Barrett, 2010; Thomas et al., 2017; Barber & Eccles, 1992).

Sumina's experience as a woman also demonstrates how cultural variables can play a role. Divorce can be stigmatized in some cultures, putting additional pressure on individuals to conceal their emotions and maintain a façade in both their personal and professional lives. She is a character who represents a woman from a broad cultural background, provides insights into the interaction between culture and the experience of divorce, implying that cultural standards can increase emotional difficulties during this transition. Her interpretation also supports the findings by Burnett et al. (2010) and Simon and Barrett (2010). Raj's story illustrated the impact of gender stereotypes on emotional expressiveness and work-life balance. Men like Raj may feel pressured to be powerful and emotionless, making it difficult for them to reconcile their emotional experiences at work with established gender stereotypes.

This qualitative examination highlights the emotional and psychological challenges that people face during this life-changing change. The individuals' emotional issues were discovered to extend outside the house and have a major impact on their job life. Coping methods ranging from mindfulness and meditation to professional assistance were critical in assisting individuals in navigating these emotional issues and regaining control over their work-life balance. The findings also emphasized the possible impact of

gender and cultural factors on the divorce experience and its impact on work-life balance which is similar to the findings from other scholars (Thomas & Ryan, 2008; David & Karen, 2016). The differences in men's and women's experiences, as well as cultural expectations placed on individuals, highlight the need for a more nuanced and culturally sensitive approach to understanding and helping people going through divorce.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study adds to researchers understanding of the emotional and psychological components of divorce, as well as its consequences for work-life balance. The participants' stories highlight the need for a more compassionate and sympathetic attitude in both personal and professional settings to support work-life balance during times of emotional upheaval. This is especially important for employers, human resource experts, and therapists, who may play critical roles in assisting individuals going through divorce. The following are some implications that this study has suggested for policy implementation and further research:

1. Individuals undergoing divorce can derive benefits from this research by comprehending the significance of personalized coping strategies tailored to their distinct emotional requirements. Through acknowledging the array of emotional encounters and having the autonomy to select coping mechanisms that resonate with them, individuals can effectively and resiliently navigate the process of divorce.

2. Employers, counselors, and policymakers have the opportunity to utilize the findings of this study to establish more nurturing settings for individuals undergoing divorce. By providing adaptable work schedules, access to therapy services, and customized assistance based on gender and cultural backgrounds, they can cultivate a more empathetic and all-encompassing society that aids individuals during demanding life transitions.

3. Professionals in mental health and researchers can investigate deeper into the convergence of gender, culture, and divorce experiences to formulate more precise interventions and support systems. This study underscores the necessity of contemplating these elements in therapeutic methodologies and organizational policies, ultimately contributing to the progression of knowledge in psychology, sociology, and organizational behavior.

4. This study brings up several promising options for further research. Future research can improve academics' understanding of the dynamics of divorce and work-life balance by building on the findings of this study. Longitudinal studies that track individuals' work-life balance after divorce over time are an interesting subject for future research. This method would provide a full understanding of how the emotional and psychological experiences depicted in this study grow throughout time. Researchers can examine the long-term influence on participants' professional performance, personal well-being, and life satisfaction by monitoring them for months and years after their divorce. Understanding individuals' resilience and flexibility, as well as how they adjust their coping mechanisms as they negotiate the challenges of post-divorce life, might be beneficial. An in-depth look into firms' practices and policies regarding employees going through divorce is another intriguing field for research. This study could evaluate the effectiveness of Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and other employer-provided assistance systems. A cross-organizational comparison research could aid in identifying best practices and places where support systems can be improved. It is critical to understand the opinions and experiences of both employees and employers in connection to these activities. Another intriguing research field is the confluence of culture, gender, and

divorce experiences. Future research could look into how cultural norms, expectations, and stigmas influence people's emotional experiences and coping mechanisms during and after divorce. Cross-cultural study could reveal similarities and differences in how divorce is seen and negotiated across cultures. Furthermore, research on the gendered experiences of divorce and work-life balance might shed light on the distinct obstacles that men and women confront.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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