

## Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Job Attitudes: A Review

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### ABSTRACT

*Employee is a key element of the organization. The success or failure of the organization depends on employee job attitudes (job satisfaction, employees' commitment and job engagement). However, employees are happy to work in an organization that helps them to balance between the needs of personal and the needs of work-life. Difficulty in balancing work and personal life affect job satisfaction, employees' commitment and job engagement. The challenge of balancing work and personal life is one of today's central concerns for both individuals and organizations. The importance of managing an employee's work-life balance has become more prominent in the last decade. Therefore, the study submits that establishing and implementing effective work-life balance policies and programmes in work settings will go along way to enhance employee's job attitudes. The study also lays down strategies to strikes a better work-life balance.*

**Keywords:** *Work-life Balance, Employee Job Attitude, Job Satisfaction, Employees' Commitment, Job Engagement.*

### INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance practices are deliberate organizational changes in policies and programmes that are designed to reduce work-life conflict and enable employees to be more effective at work and non-work demands or roles. The transition from view work-life balance practices solely as a means of accommodating individual employees with care giving responsibilities to recognizing their contribution to organizational performance and employee engagement is an important paradigm shift that is still very much 'in process' (Lazar, Osoian & Ratiu, 2010:202). However, the challenge of balancing work and non-work demands is one of today's central concerns for both individuals and organizations. Competing and multi-faced demands between work and home responsibilities have assumed increased relevance for employees in recent years, due to demographic and workplace changes, such as a greater numbers of women in the workforce (dual-career couples), transformation in family structures

(a rise in the number of single parents), a growing reluctance to accept the longer hours culture, and technological advancement. (Lazar et al., 2010:202). In response to these changes and the conflict they generate among the multiple roles that individuals employee occupy, organizations are increasingly pressured to design various kinds of practices, intended to facilitate employees' efforts to fulfill both employment-related and their personal commitments. Job satisfaction, employees' commitment and job engagement are three important concepts affecting work performance and the attraction and retention of employees. Noor (2011:4) contend that employees are happy to work in an organization that helps them to balance between the needs of personal and the needs of work-life. Difficulty in balancing work and personal life affect employee job attitudes (job satisfaction, employees' commitment and job engagement). In many of today's workplaces employers are cutting cost mainly through lay-offs and are placing more demands on the lean staff left behind. The excuse is to stay afloat in the wake of a global economic recession (Igbinomwanhia, Iyayi & Iyayi, 2012:110). The implication however, is that the more time and energy employees give to work, the less they have to give to the other important aspects of their lives, thus creating a work-life balance problem with it attendant negative consequences for both the employee and the organization. In this study, we contend that establishing and implementing effective work-life balance policies and programmes in work settings will go along way to enhance employee's job attitudes.

### **Concept of Work-Life Balance**

Practices that are meant to help employees better manage their work and non-work responsibilities are referred to in the literature as family-friendly policy, work-family policy or family-responsive policy. In recent years, the term 'work-life balance' has largely replaced what used to be known as 'family-friendly policy' (Armstrong, 2009:977). This semantic shift arises from a recognition that childcare is by no means the only important non-work responsibility and the issue can be applies to any non-paid activities or commitments and to a diverse range of employees such as women, men, parents and non- parents, singles and couples. Other life activities that need to be balanced with employment may include study, travel, sport, voluntary work, personal development, leisure or elder care (Lazar et al., 2010:202). From the very beginning it is import to understand that work-life balance does not mean to devote an equal amounts of time to paid work and non-paid roles, in its broadest sense, is defined as a "satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life" (Lazar et al., 2010:202). According to Work Foundation (2003b) cited in Armstrong

(2009:977) work-life balance is “about employees achieving a satisfactory equilibrium between work and non-work activities (i.e parental responsibilities and wider caring duties, as well as other activities and interests)”. The Work Foundation recommends that practical day-to-day business and related needs should be considered when organizations set about selecting the range of work-life options that should be made available to staff, whether on a collective basis (as, for example, flexitime arrangements) or on an individual level (say, allowing an individual to move to term-time working provisions). As Kodz, Harper & Dench (2002) explained, the principle of work-life balance is that: “There should be a balance between an individual’s work and their life outside work, and that this balance should be healthy.

Work-life balance is a concept that supports the efforts of employees to split their time and energy between work and the other important aspects of their lives. It is a daily effort to make time for family, friends, community participation, spirituality, personal growth, self-care, and other personal activities, in addition to the demands of workplace. Work-life balance is assisted by employers who institute policies, procedures, actions, and expectations that enable employees to easily pursue more balance lives. The pursuit of work-life balance reduces the stress employees experience. When they spend the majority of their days on work-related activities and feel as if they are neglecting the other important components of their lives, stress and unhappiness result. Work-life balance has been defined differently by different scholars. In order to broaden our perspectives, some definitions will be presented. Clark, (2000:751) defined work-life balance as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict”. It could also be seen as an experience of satisfaction in all of one’s life domains, which require personal energy, time and commitment resources (Kirchmeyer, 2000) cited in Igbinomwanhia et al (2012:113).

Work-life balance practices are “concerned with providing scope for employees to balance what they do at work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside work and so reconcile the competing claims of work and home by meeting their own needs as well as those of their employers” (Armstrong, 2009:977). Delecta (2011:186) defined the subject only with work and family and put forward the concept of “life balance” with a more whole perspective. He defines life balance as “fulfilling the demands satisfactorily in the three basic areas of life; namely, work, family and private. Additional work hours subtract from home time or work

pressure may result in fatigue, anxiety or other adverse physiological consequences that affect the quality of home and family life.

Work-life balance is not the allocation of time equally among work, family and personal demands. In literature, it is also emphasized that work-life balance is subjective phenomenon that changes from person to person (Delecta, 2011: 187). In this regard, work-life balance should be regarded as allocating the available resources like time, thought and labour wisely among the elements of life (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2010:475). Work-life balance policies can assist employees achieving a balance between their work and personal commitments that is right for them. The policies need to be supported by the workplace culture, which reflects the beliefs, values and norms of the whole of the organization from the CEO to staff members. Other important factors in the success of work-life balance policies include proper communication of the policies to existing and future employees, raising awareness of the policies, education of managers about the important of policies, and training of managers on 'how to' implement these policies (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2010:476).

Because many employees experience a personal, professional, and monetary need to achieve, work-life balance is challenging. Employers can assist employees to achieve work-life balance by offering such opportunities as flexible work schedules, paid time off (PTO) policies, and company-sponsored family events and activities. Therefore, work-life balance is "meaningful achievement and enjoyment in everyday life". To achieve better work-life balance, each individual employee need to work smarter-to get more done in less time. The primary way organizations can help facilitate work-life balance for their employees is through work-life practices, that are usually associated with flexible working, reductions in working time or work-life balance options or policies.

### **Work-Life Balance Options**

Organizations can implement various work-life balance initiatives that may assist employees to better balance their work and family responsibilities, gain improvements in well-being and provide organizational benefit (Lazar et al., 2010:203). As Vlems (2005) cited in Igbinomwanhia (2012:114) notes, when organizations decide to facilitate their employees' work-life balances, they choose from a wide array of options that include:

#### **Flexi-Time Working**

Flexi-time allows employees, to determine (or be involved in determining) the start and end times of their working day within guidelines specified by

the organization. This can allow them to meet family or personal commitments or emergencies (enable employees to respond to both predictable and unpredictable circumstances), during the day or to reduce their commuting time by starting and ending work before or after rush hour (Lazar et al. 2010:204). It works well for full-time office staff, but not in shift patterns or in production line. The working day is not rigidly controlled and this gives employees daily choice in timing of work and non-work activities.

### **Compressed Work Weeks**

Some employees often wish for shorter working weeks. A compressed work week is an arrangement whereby employees work longer shift in exchange for a reduction in the number of working days in their work cycle. The working day is thus, extended beyond the standard eight (8) hours so that the employee needs to work only three to four days a week in order to fulfill their weekly forty (40) hours obligations. It is said that this practice leads to increased leisure activities (Longer weekends), avoidance of peak travel periods, savings on overhead cost to the organization. The disadvantages are: fatigue caused by elongating the working day, loss of business by being closed on a day when clients would expect service and premium (overtime) payment may be demand to compensate for the longer working hours. Common arrangements for a forty hours work week are working ten hours per day; four day a week; working an extra hours a day with one day off every week; or working an extra half hour a day and having one day every two or three weeks off. Compressed work week arrangements may be particularly useful for employees who wish to reduce the number of days per week spent at work.

### **Job- Sharing**

Job-sharing is a system which allows two (or sometimes more) employees to jointly share a job. Job-sharing may be appropriate where opportunities for part-time jobs or other arrangements are limited (Lazar et al., 2010: 205). The idea is to afford employees ample time to attend to non-work activities so as to be able to achieve a good measure of work-life balance. Apart from the obvious advantage of allowing employees more time for other non-work activities, including family responsibilities, job-sharing also facilitates the development of partnerships, where job sharers can learn from each other while providing mutual support. It can benefit employers as well by improving staff retention, increasing productivity and combining a wider range of skills and experience in a single job (Lazar et al., 2010:205).

### **Breaks from Work**

By taking breaks from work once in a while, the right balance between work and life can be achieved. These breaks should not only be about maternity, paternity and parental leave, but also time off for career breaks and sabbaticals (Igbinomwanhia et al. 2012:114).

### **Self Rostering**

Employees can roster their hours the way they want to. The organization checks every day the number of staff and skills required and lets the employees then decide which of hours they would like to work. Employees are thus able to schedule their time conveniently between work and non-work activities.

### **Teleworking**

Employees, with the aid of modern communication technology can carry out their jobs without necessarily having to be at the office. Often, they can work from home or in satellite offices (telecentres) rented by the organization close to where they live. It can be advantageous for employees by allowing them: to organize their work day around their personal and family needs; to decrease work-related expenses; to reduce commuting time; and to work in a less stressful and disruptive environment. It may also help to accommodate employees who, because of particular disabilities, are unable to leave home (Lazar et al., 2010:204). Despite these benefits and the attention that telecommuting has attracted in the media, very few collective agreements contain telework provisions. The paucity of telework clauses is partly due to the fact that not all occupations are amenable to such an arrangement. Moreover, employers may be concerned by the initial implementation costs, potential legal liabilities, and difficulties in supervising and appraising the performance of teleworkers. Trade-Unions may disapprove of work-at-home clauses if they perceive them as leading to greater isolation of employees, reduced job security and promotion opportunities, and diminished health and safety protection (Lazar, et al., 2010:204). Notwithstanding, teleworking allows employees to attend to family or non-work activities so long as it does not affect their output or the quality.

### **Child Care**

People with families do not have the luxury to stay at home anymore and take care of the children. The trend is towards dual-earning families as life has become too expensive to let a potential money-maker stay at home. Thus, the demand for child care options as a means of helping employees

achieve work-life balance is becoming increasingly important (Vlems, 2005) cited in Igbinomwanhia et al (2012:115). Some of the popular child care options include Crèche, Day-nursery, After school child care, Teen care, Host parent care, and Leader-at-home.

### **Part-Time Work**

Part-time arrangements can also allow people with health problems, disabilities or limited disposable time (e.g students) to participate in the labour force, develop their skills and obtain work experience. Part-time work can facilitate re-entry into the workforce for those who have had career breaks, particularly mothers (or fathers) who have stayed at home to raise their children. From the employer's point of view, the use of part-time workers, where feasible, can help maximize the use of human resources and increase operational flexibility, by providing additional coverage during peak periods (Lazar et al. 2010:204). However, the increased cost of requisite training, and the limited applicability in most jobs makes it less attractive to employers, while the absence of promotion opportunities serves to discourage its preference among employees.

### **Consequences of Work-Life Imbalance**

In today's competitive world, work is likely to invade individual employee personal life and maintaining work- life balance is no simple task. This might be specially true if employees are concerned about losing their job due to restructuring and other factors. It can be tempting to rack up hours at work, especially if an employee is trying to earn a promotion or manage an ever increasing workload or, simply trying to keep his/her head above water. But if an employee spending most of his time working, his whole life will take a hit. There is compelling evidence that work-life imbalance portends grave consequences for employees, their organizations, and society (Igbinomwanhia et al., 2012:115). Conflicts, particularly between work and family, significantly affect quality of family life and career attainment for both men and women. Consequences of work-life balance, according to Delecta (2011) include:

Increased level of stress. The stress-based conflict occurs when one of the roles of the individual at work or in the family causes stress on the individual and this stress affects the other roles of the individual.

Lower-life satisfaction. Work-life balance affects the overall well-being of the individual causing such problems as dissatisfaction from life, prolonged sadness, using drugs or alcohol.

Lost time with loved ones and friends. Employee spending most of his/her time working might miss important family events or milestones. This can leave the employee feeling left out and might harm his/her relationship with his/her loved ones. It's also difficult for employee spending most of his time working, to nurture friendships.

Increased expectations. Organization expects from individual to allocate more time for their work while at the same time the family want him to perform his responsibilities too. Those who can't sustain work-life balance are bound to experience many problems in their families such as lower family satisfaction, decreased involvement in family roles etc.

Employee's fatigue. Work-life imbalance result to higher degree of employee's fatigue. When an employee is tired, his ability to work productively and think clearly might suffer, which could take a toll on his professional reputation or lead to dangerous or costly mistakes. The continuous inability of employees to balance work and life responsibilities can have the following organizational consequences:

Reduction in productivity and job satisfaction.

Increased sick leave usage.

Lower levels of organizational commitment and loyalty.

Higher rates of absenteeism and turnover intentions.

Decreased corporate image.

Rising healthcare cost.

### **Benefits of Work-Life Balances**

Over the last decade, the evidence for the business benefits of work-life balance policies has been growing in volume and strength. Work-life balances is an ongoing quest for the individual employee, but this should now also become a concern for the employers because of the double-throng benefits to employee work-life balance. Where the right balance is found and sustained, both the employee and the employer gains (Igbinomwanhia et al., 2012:116). Susi & Jawaharrani (2010:478) has concluded that there is strong links between work-life balance policies and reduced absenteeism, increased productivity and job satisfaction. Other benefits



include improved recruitment and retention rates with associated cost savings, reduced sick leave usage, a reduction in workers stress and improvements in employee satisfaction and loyalty, greater flexibility for business operating hours, an improved corporate image etc.

### **Benefits for the Employee**

Many factors improve where the employee is able to find the right balance. Some of these factors, according to Vlems (2005) cited in IGbinomwanhia et al. (2012:116) include:

Improved employee's happiness. Employees would be happier when they are able to balance their work and life demands. The advantages of many organizations come from happy employees.

Improved relations with management. Perceived support of management towards employee's work-life balance fosters a good relationship between the workforce and management which itself improves effective communication within the company.

Improved employee's self-esteem, health, concentration, and confidence. One UK study reports that more than forty percent of employees are neglecting other aspects of their life because of work, which may increase their vulnerability to mental health problems (Mental Health Foundation, 2012).

Employee loyalty and commitment. These increase with opportunities for work-life balance. Employees are more likely to stay with an organization when there are opportunities for achieving work-life balance.

Tasks are managed better, there is increased motivation and there is reduction in the level of stress among employees.

### **Benefits for the Employer**

Generally, the following factors, as Vlems (2005) notes, improve for the employer:

Maximized available labour. The workforce will be very motivated and so the employer can benefit from maximized available labour. Every employee will give their very best during the working hours.

The balance makes employees feel valuable. Implementing work-life balance programmes gives an impression that the organization cares about

the employees. Thus, they will feel more valuable and work harder as a result.

The work environment will be less stressful; which means, less stress related illnesses and decreased health care costs.

The presence of work-life balance programmes in an organization makes it attractive to a wider range of candidates when it comes to recruitment.

The workforce will be more loyal and motivated, absenteeism will be reduced and productivity will increase because of the maximized available labour.

### **Attitudes: An Overview**

An attitude can broadly be defined as a settled mode of thinking. An attitudes could also be refers to as a “set of emotions beliefs and behaviours toward a particular objects, person or event. They are evaluative statements-either favourable or unfavorable- about objects, people or events” (Robbins, Judge & Sanghi, 2009: 78). They reflect how we feel about something. According to Kinicki & Kreitner (2009:73), it is a “learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object”. Attitudes is developed through experience but they are less stable than traits and can change as new experiences are gained or influences absorbed (Armstrong, 2009:305). They can have a power influence over behaviour. Attitudes can also be explicit and implicit. Explicit attitudes are those that we are consciously aware of and that clearly influence our behaviours and beliefs. Implicit attitudes are unconscious, but still have an effect on our beliefs and behaviours. In other words, it can be said that attitudes are formed through the integration of numerous specific responses within an organized structure. Social roles and social norms can have a strong influence on attitudes. Social roles relate to how people are expect to behave in a particular context. Social norms involve society’s rules for what behaviours are considered appropriate. Attitude can also be learnt through imitation of parents, teachers, supervisors or peers. While attitudes are enduring, they can also change. Sometimes there may be a discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour, i.e., someone may believe in one thing such as being fair to people but act differently (Armstrong, 2009:305). This is called “cognitive dissonance”.

## **Components of Attitudes**

Robbins et al (2009:79) identified three major components of attitude. They include:

### **Affect Component**

This refers to the feelings or emotions one has about a given object or situation, or how an object, person or event make you feel. For instance, how you feel when a subordinate raise his/her voice at his/her boss. Your feelings could either be positive or negative.

### **Cognitive Component**

This reflects one thoughts, beliefs and opinion about subject or situation. For instance, what do you think or how do you interpret your friend's behaviour? Do you see the behaviour as acceptable, well deserved rude?

### **Behavioural Component**

This refers to an intention to behave in a certain way toward someone or something. For instance, how would you react if the person shouting at his boss was your friend? Would you reprimand him or pat his back?

In summary, attitude theory suggests that your ultimate behaviour in this situation is a function of all the three attitudinal components. Viewing attitudes as being made up of three components is helpful in understanding their complexity and the potential relationship between attitudes and behaviour. In other words, these three components are closely related. For instance, a situation where an employee did not get a promotion he/she thought he/she deserved but another co-worker got it instead. The employee's attitude towards his/her supervisor is illustrated in terms of the three components of attitude as follows: the employee though he/she deserved the promotion (cognitive), the employee strongly dislikes his/her supervisor (affect), and the employee is looking for another job behaviour). In work settings, attitudes are important for instance, if workers believe that they are being exploited, attitudes could be formed which will related directly to actual job behaviour and if there is perceived organizational support, desirable attitudes that will build the organization and improve work quality could be formed.

## **Job Attitudes**

There are two major categories of job attitudes-positive or desirable attitudes and negative or undesirable attitudes. Desirable job attitudes are attitude requires for the promotion and attainment of organizational goals. Every leader expects such attitudes as commitment, engagement and job

satisfaction from their employees. Positive worker's attitudes more often than not, elicit positive behaviours which could be inform of organizational citizenship behaviour, punctuality, subordination, good interpersonal relations or improved efforts. Undesirable job altitudes on the other hand constitute deviant attitudes which may impede growth and success of an organization. Such attitudes may include absenteeism, turnover intention, cynicism towards change, lake of commitment, etc (Robbins et al.,2009:83). An individual's attitudes may result from or be attributed to several things or situation such as observation and imitation of peers or some significant others as well as some direct personal experience but this study seeks to focus specifically on the impact of work-life balance on employee job attitudes. These include job satisfaction, employees commitment and job engagement.

### **Work-life Balance and Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction can be defined as a "positive feelings about a job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics" (Robbins et al. 2009: 83). A person with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive feelings about his or her job and vice versa. Bushra & Vasir (2014:25) further explained job satisfaction as an "attitude that individuals have towards their jobs which stems from their perception of their jobs and the degree to which there is a good fit between the individual and the organization. This can be achieved when employees enjoy the benefit of work-life balance programmes. People who have better balance (i.e. balance between work and personal life) have a greater job satisfaction and perform better in their position. They have a bigger loyalty and a higher level of trust (Vlems,2005) cited in Igbinomwanhia et al (2012:110). Employees feels more satisfaction with their work and family when they enjoy the benefit of work-life balance programmes provided by their employers (Bushra & Yasir 2014;26). Work-task and work-life are positive related, pay is related to mediating factor of work-life balance which ends up in employee job satisfaction. Work-life balance practices generally have a positives impact on individual job satisfaction and organizational productivity.

A study by Bushra & Yasir (2004) in Pakistan on the impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among university teachers revealed that work-life balance practices reduced turnover and increased productivity and employee satisfaction. Yutata (2012) cited in Bushra & Yasir (2014;26) contend that work-life balance programmes have different effect for male and female employees. Male employees are satisfied with all the three measures as job, work-life balance programme and employer. But female employees have a significant

relationship only with employer satisfaction. Today employers have realized that the quantity of an employee's personal and family life impact work quantity and there are concrete business reasons to promote work and non-work integration (Igbinomwanhia et al.,2012;110). Therefore, studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between employee satisfactions and business. As a result, organizations should focus on developing policies and programmes on work-life issues. Organization which encourages work-life balance in principles and practice will reap the benefit of increased productivity and employees' performance, enhanced organizational image and retention of desirable employees and better team work. These benefits are derived from increased job stress levels, enhanced control over work-life environment and a greater sense of job security which are benefits of work-life balance for the employee.

### **Work-life Balance and Employees Commitment**

Commitment is simply defined as "loyalty and attachment of an individual or group to the organization. Organizational commitment is defined as a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goal and wishes to maintain membership in the organization (Shukurat,2012). Commitment has been used by organizations to predict desired employee behaviour in the areas of performance, absenteeism and emotional attachment. Theoretically, organizational commitment has three components; affective, continuance and normative. Affective commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to the organization; continuance commitment is the perceived economic value of remaining with an organization compared to leaving it; and normative commitment is an obligation to remain with an organization for moral or ethical reasons. Employees who are committed to their organization are less likely to leave. Work-life balance and employees commitment both are important because, they are playing important role in the organizations performance and family well-being (Bushra & Yasir, 2014;26). They conclude that work-life balance is positively related with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Noor (2011;4) found out that employees are happy to work in an organization that help them to balance between the needs of personal and the needs of work-life. Difficulty in balancing work and personal life can affect employees commitment and this could lead to turnover intentions. The adoption of work-life programmes and policies are being considered as a part of 'high commitment work system' required for high levels of employee commitment and innovation.

## **Work-Life Balance and Job Engagement**

Job engagement refers to an “employee’s involvement with, satisfaction with and enthusiasm for the work they do” (Robbins et al., 2009:83). It can also be defined as the “psychological well-being that contributes to optimal functioning; it also includes physical and emotional energy put forth at work” (Evans, 2016:21). Job engagement, a work-related state of mind that is positive and fulfilling, is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption.

Some of the possible consequences of engagement include positive job attitudes, individual health, and extra- role behaviours such as organizational citizenship behaviours. When people who are more engaged in their job are compared to those who are less engaged, the former have greater job satisfaction, are more committed to their job, and have lower turnover intentions. Highly engaged employees also exhibit personal initiative, proactive behaviour, and learning motivation. Mitchell (2015:5) argues that fully engaged staff members are highly energetic, enthusiastic, intensely immersed in their work, and fully engrossed in their roles. She adds that engagement is vital to retaining employees as well as to the overall success and health of an organization. Work-life balance and employee or job engagement becomes a visible benchmark among high-performing organizations that reap the economic and reputational benefits of being publicly recognized as a ‘best place to work’ or an ‘employer of choice’ (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2010:481). Organizations which encourage work-life balance programmes and policies will reap the benefits of increased employee engagement, discretionary effort and therefore high-productivity. Susi & Jawaharrani (2010:481) argues that there is a mixed evidence regarding the cost-effectiveness of work-life balance policies. Some research links these policies with reduced levels of employee turnover, increased employee satisfaction, commitment and productivity, and decreased rates of physical and emotional disorders associated with work-life conflict. A major study funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and carried out on a nation-wide level by researchers at the university of Cambridge (Dex & Smith, 2002), concluded that:

There are positive effects on employee commitment from having work-life balance policies.

Approximately nine out of every ten establishments with some experience of these policies found them cost effective.

Increase in performance was associated with having one or other work-life balance policy in the case of five out of six performance indicators (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2010:481).

For years, managers in numerous business setting have realized the importance of employee's job engagement for the success and even the survival of their businesses. High levels of employee engagement are typically associated with retention, profit, high productivity, sales growth, and good customer service; but while managers are aware of the importance of engagement, they typically do not do much about it. Managers often view the problem of getting employees engaged as an overwhelming and potentially costly challenge (Willoughby, 2011:1-2). Engaged employees are generally believed to have a sense of energy, dedication, and connection to their work, while it is thought that non-engaged ones view their work as stressful and may be more cynical, more exhausted, and less effective at their work (Schmitt, 2011:2). The most important impact of work-life balance practices is an improvement in job engagement.

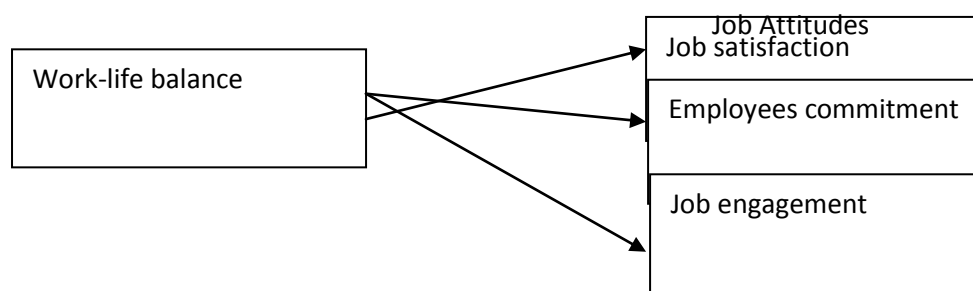
### **Theoretical Framework**

The theories guiding this study are: Resource Drain Theory and the Inter-role Conflict Theory. Though these two theories represent separate perspectives of work-life balance, they are however related and suit the purpose of our discourse. The resource drain theory refers to the transfer of limited resources (time, energy, money, attention) from one domain to another which consequently reduces the available resources in the original domain (Morris & Madsen, 2007). The consequence of resource drain brings about inter-role conflict. The Inter-role conflict theory refers to what happens when meeting the demands in one domain makes it difficult to meet the demand in the other domain (Greenhuas & Beutell, 1985). It is also useful to point out that though inter-role conflict can occur both when work roles interfere with non-work roles and vice versa, the focus of this study is on the former relationship, as it considers work-life balance in the context of the impact of work on non- work.

Availability and use of work-life balance practices, when provided in the context of supervisor and organizational support can reduce work-life conflict and increase positive appraisals of one's organization. These effects are often associated with employee attitudes such as increased job satisfaction, employees' commitment and job engagement. The results are: reduce absenteeism, lower turnover intentions, lower job stress levels and

work-life conflict and increased productivity (Lazar et al., 2010:212). A lower turnover intentions means: lower recruitment and training costs, increased retention of valuable employee and increased organizational commitment and loyalty. All of these are associated, in turn, with costs savings, higher customer satisfaction and implicitly higher levels of organizational performance.

Therefore, the more control employees feel they have over their lives, the more able they are to balance work and family (Lazar, et al., 2010:212). An overall conclusion of much of the research is that work-life balance practices are most effective when they enhance employees' autonomy and increase their capacity to perform well in work and in family situation. A successful convergence between work and non-work activities can be a win-win situation for employees and employers alike (Igbinomwanhia et al., 2012:121). The ability to achieve satisfying experiences in all life domains enhances the quality of personal relationships and a range of organizational benefits. Base on the literature reviewed, we present model of impact of work-life balance on employee job attitudes.



**Figure 1:** Model of impact of work-life balance on employee job attitudes.  
**Source:** Author's construction 2017.

The figure above suggests that work-life balance stimulate employee job attitudes. Employee job attitudes has a clear link to increased business success. Therefore, employee job attitudes has emerged as a critical driver of business success in today's competitive marketplace. Thus, to gain a competitive edge, organizations are turning to HR to set the agenda for job satisfaction, employee engagement and commitment. These can be achieve if the HR can use different work-life balance policies and programmes to reduce work life conflict and induce employee job attitudes.



## **Employee Work-Life Balance as Strategic HR Imperative**

In today's knowledge economy, employees are looking for opportunities to learn and improve their skills and to have an open value for imagination, creativity and ideas; senior management interest in employee well-being; and to work for an organization with a reputation as a good employer (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2010: 474). Research shows that organizations that provide a workplace culture with the psychological conditions of meaningfulness (job enrichment, work-role fit), safety (supportive management and co-workers) and availability (resources available) are more likely to have engaged and committed employees. Employee satisfaction as the most important attitude in the field of organizational behaviour is used to describe whether employees are happy and fulfilling their desire and needs. Therefore, employee satisfaction can help to build employee commitment and engagement toward organizational success. Work-life balance is increasingly important for employee job attitudes. By being aware of the unique needs of diverse groups, as well as by recognizing individual differences within the groups, HR can better understand the challenges of increased diversity in the organization's workforce (e.g., different generations, more female) and work toward designing and implementation work-life balance policies and practices to engage diverse employees (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2011:475).

Many organizations are concerned about increasing employee commitment and engagement during this time of financial uncertainty. One might think that the economic downturn and the job insecurity it brings would translate into increased employee commitment and engagement. Igbinomwanhia et al (2012:110) contend that assisting employees to achieve a work-life balance should become a critical part of HR policy and strategy if it is to truly get the best from the organization's people (employees) without leaving them unsatisfied, burnt-out and unfulfilled. Businesses and HR professionals have aligned work-life balance practices with a broader, more strategic focus on fostering employee job attitudes, i.e., motivating, recruiting and retaining employees in a highly competitive environment. Flexible work arrangements, telecommuting, and a variety of leave, family support and wellness programmes are more often integrated and aligned with business objectives (Susi & Jawaharrani, 2010:479). Researchers have noted that organizational culture and supervisory support are key factors in accounting for the availability and effectiveness of work-life balance practices. The key role of HR therefore, is to understand the critical issues of work-life balance, integrate it into the organization's HR policy, and champion work-life balance programmes.

## **Strike a Better Work-Life Balance**

A lot of people are having a more difficult time finding balance in their lives because there have been cut-backs or layoffs where they work. They are afraid it may happen to them, so they are putting in more hours. But even if you don't have much control over the hours you have to work you can find other ways to improve your work and personal life. Focus your time and attention on things you can control. As long as you are working, juggling the demands of career and personal life will probably be an ongoing challenge. Consider these ideas to find the work-life balance that's best for you:

**Track your time:** Pay attention to your daily tasks, including work-related and personal activities. Decide what's necessary and what satisfies you the most. Cut or delegate activities you don't enjoy or can't handle, or share your concerns and possible solutions with your employer or others.

**Take advantage of your options.** Ask your employer about flexible hours, a compressed work week, job sharing telecommuting or other scheduling flexibility. The more control you have over your hours, the less stressed you are likely to be.

**Build downtime into your schedule.** When you plan your week, make it a point to schedule time with your family and friends and activities that help you recharge. If a date with your spouse, activity with your family or outing with friends is on your calendar, you will have something to look forward to as an extra incentive to manage your time well, so you don't have to cancel.

**Drop activities that sap your time or energy.** Many people waste their time on activities or people that add no value, for example, spending too much time at work with a colleague who is constantly venting and gossiping. You must take stock of activities that are not really enhancing your career or personal life and minimize the time you spend on them.

**Learn to say no respectfully.** When you quit accepting tasks out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, you will have more time for the activities that are meaningful to you.

**Rethink your errands.** Consider whether you can outsource any of your time consuming household chores or errands.

Leave work at work. With the technology to connect to anyone at any time from virtually any where there might be no boundary between work and home unless you create it. Make a conscious decision to separate work time from personal time. When you are with your family, for instance, keep your laptop in your briefcase.

Manage your time. Organize household tasks efficiently, such as running errands in batches or doing a load of laundry every day, rather than saving it all for your day off. Put family events on a weekly family calendar and keep a daily to-do list. Do what needs to be done and let the rest go.

Bolster your support system. At work, join forces with co-workers who can cover for you and vice versa-when family conflict arises. At home, enlist trusted friends and loved ones to pitch in with childcare or household responsibilities when you need to work overtime or travel.

Nurture yours. Eat a healthy diet, include physical activity in your daily routine and get enough sleep. Set aside time each day for an activity you can do with your partner, family or friends.

Get moving. It's hard to make time for exercise when you have a jam-packed schedule, but experts say that it may ultimately help you get more done by boosting your energy level and ability to concentrate. Research show exercise can help you to more alert.

Remember that a little relaxation goes a long way. Don't get overwhelmed by assuming that you need to make big changes to bring more balance to your life. Set realistic goals and make a little time for the things that ignite your joy.

Remember, striking a healthy work-life balance is not a one shot deal. Creating work-life balance is a continuous process as your family interests and work-life change. Periodically examine your priorities-and make changes, if necessary -to make sure you are keeping on track.

## **CONCLUSION**

Work-life balance is increasingly viewed as a "win-win" strategy for employees and employers. The effects of introducing work-life balance practices on employee job attitudes include job satisfaction, employees commitment and job engagement. The establishment and implementation of effective work-life balance policies and programmes in the organization

will do both the employer and employee good. For the employer, work-life balance initiative create positive employer branding, increased retention of valuable employee, improved productivity, enhance organization image, reduced absenteeism and lateness, promote being an employer of choice and foster employee loyalty and commitment. For the employee, there is reduced job stress levels, increased job satisfaction, increased happiness, motivation and a greater sense of job security, better physical and mental health, enhanced control over work-life environment and a better chance of reaching both personal and career goals satisfactorily. Work-life balance is key driver of employee job attitudes. Work-life balance stimulates employee job attitudes which in turn influences organizational performance and effectiveness.

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