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University of Cape Town



School of Management Studies

SATISFACTION WITH WORK-LIFE BALANCE, JOB CONTROL AND WORK
ENGAGEMENT AMONGST CALL CENTRE OPERATORS.

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
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COMPULSORY DECLARATION:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date:

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess satisfaction with work life balance in call centre operators and the impact that this has on work engagement of these individuals. It looks at and measures the perceptions relating to control over actual work hours, job complexity and satisfaction with work-life balance.

The study and hypotheses tested will contribute to the broader understanding and empirical knowledge relating to work-life balance, how work and job characteristics affect the satisfaction with work life balance and the subsequent consequences or outcomes of this satisfaction with work-life balance.

While a large body of literature exists for this research, the particular area of interest relates to the sample of call centre operators. With the increase in use of call centres in South Africa and the viability of this industry in the South African economy, it is useful to conduct this research to grow the knowledge base within the South African context. Thus, this study's findings will contribute theoretically to the evolving body of knowledge within the South African context, on satisfaction with work-life balance within the call centre and financial services environments.

The work-life balance concept will be summarised in the literature review, following which the research methodology will be presented and the results analysed and discussed. For the purpose of this study and for consistency, the term work-life balance is used interchangeably with work-family balance, as a more inclusive term to understand the constructs and the expected outcomes. The participating organisation and individuals consulted for the purpose of collecting data have also asked not to be identified and confidentiality will thus be maintained.

The results showed that work hours predicted satisfaction with work life balance, while commute time and job control were shown to significantly predict satisfaction with work-life balance. Satisfaction with work life balance did not prove to be a predictor of work engagement and similarly job control was also not show to be a predictor of work engagement.

INTRODUCTION

The workplace of the 21st century provides challenging and interesting anomalies to the way in which individual's live their lives today. There are more demands placed on people today and these demands come from all spheres of their lives. The challenge of balancing demands that originate from work and demands that come from other roles that an individual might play, such as family roles, a community member, student or sport's team member, is a challenge that is central to concerns of an individual and an organisation (Valcour, 2007).

While many careers and different industries in today's working world pose demanding challenges as stressful environments and challenges to balancing work-life demands, call centre industries have certainly developed and lived up to the notion of being a highly stressful and demanding industry (Tuten and Neidermeyer, 2004; Valcour, 2007; Werner, 2006). There are also many bodies of research that are quite clear in their conclusions of the intrinsically stressful nature of this industry (Werner, 2006). Many organisations are making use of call centres as central points of contact to better service their clients. Considering that call centres are considered as stressful environments and that organisations now use call centres as a competitive advantage, studying the element of satisfaction with work life balance within this context is a topic of interest.

Call centres in South Africa

According to a South African study conducted by Benner, Lewis and Omar (2007), South Africa's call centre industry largely consists of in-bound client calls with fewer call centres that have outbound sales as their core operations. Gauteng holds the larger proportion of call centres (51%) and the Western Cape (38%). Many of the country's call centres are in-house client service related functions and these call centres operate in a wide variety of industries, such as telecommunications, financial services, banking, insurance and retail services, with the former industries being the most prominent.

According to a more recent report written through the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (2010), call centre operators not only receive and make large volumes of calls, they also are a 'contact centre' for the collective handling of emails, letters and faxes and more recently, web-chats on Twitter or Facebook. This means that a call centre is a one point of contact for dealing with client enquiries and service requests. Many organisations have set up these call centres as competitive advantages to dealing with client satisfaction and to remain closer to what their clients' needs are in terms of the organisation's products and services.

According to this report (Gauteng Enterprise Propeller, 2010), call centres in South Africa have attracted a lot of foreign interest and investment and many call centres in the country operate in the offshore sphere. While this may certainly be true, one cannot discount the expansion and improvement of IT and technologies and how businesses in South Africa operate today, which includes the expansion into client service operations by virtue of call centres. Clients have higher expectations from businesses and subsequently organisations will have higher expectations of the people that work for them. With this in mind one must consider the high levels of skill required by individual's now working in call centres as these individuals have to work with a wider range of complex problems to solve and these problems must also be resolved in the quickest turnaround time possible. Individuals must thus be highly knowledgeable, skilful, adept at listening to client's problems, managing their own emotional responses to client calls and being highly client centric and service-driven.

The Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (2010) report states that the majority of call centres are located in Gauteng and this concurs with the Benner et. al. (2007) study. Most call centres are inbound and are located with the financial services, IT and health related industries. The complexities of the industries within which these call centres exist is further complicated by the stressful and complex environment that experts claim a call centre environment to be. Added to this, with South Africa as multi-cultural and as diverse as it is, call centre consultants should be able to provide a higher level of customer service and be able to tend to a diverse range of clients. Recently, a call centre commenced operations in Durban, creating over 1000 jobs (Naicker, 2012). This is promising for the South African economy as a whole, as it can help reduce unemployment (Bhorat and Van der Westhuizen, 2010).

With the highly complex and sophisticated technologies that enable and facilitate the smooth operation of call centres, call centre operators are monitored for performance, quality of calls, levels of expertise and client service delivery. While technologies enable this automation, one cannot discount the human element that has to deal with clients and the complexities that an individual who handles the call brings with them and to compound the complexity, there are organisational issues to consider (Gauteng Enterprise Propeller, 2010). Furthermore, many call centres report directly into senior management which shows the importance of running an effective call centre in providing a value-added service to bring about and preserve client satisfaction.

The call centre industry ballooned globally in the late 1990's (Benner, et. al., 2007) and the subsequent growth in South Africa, according to the Business Day attributes 0.92% of the country's GDP (Gauteng Enterprise Propeller, 2010) to this, which is a rather significant contribution. This growth in the industry is clearly a positive incline in providing employment and training and development for unskilled individuals of this country and can have a huge impact on the economy. What is interesting to note is that while traditionally call centres are seen to operate within business and commerce industries, the public services sector has also significant potential for growth of this industry and this is evident in the successful implementation of the call centre at SARS.

South Africa is also an interesting location for call centre operations due to our time zone and ability to service European and Asian markets. This in itself can pose issues to consider, with cultural and diversity concerns that can come to the fore. According to the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (2010) report, the level of service provided by individuals in this industry is highly regarded and subsequently international businesses have made South Africa as the country to house their call centres. With expansion of many businesses into the rest of Africa the call centre industry will follow suit and that holds many opportunities for further connection to the rest of the world.

There are significant advantages to having a call centre as part of an organisation's client service operations. One of the most significant advantages is the ability to transform client information held by systems in call centres, into marketing strategies and product and service development or improvement (De Ruyter, Wetzels and Feinberg, 2001). This competitive advantage is mainly afforded by adopting innovative technologies for sustaining long-term organisation success.

There are clearly many challenges evident in the nature of call centres and the individual's operating in this industry have their own challenging demands of life outside of work that they need to contend with. It is thus important to understand the nature of call centre roles and a fundamental part they play in the value chain of an organisation (Gordi, 2006). There are many stresses placed upon individuals due their work roles in this industry and how these affect their work-life balance and the overall employee well-being are also areas worth studying in order to gain deeper understanding. Another aspect to consider is that many call centres are 24/7 operations and this can further complicate the work-life balance of call centre operators, besides having its own aspects that need to be accommodated.

What does it take to work in a call centre?

Working in a call centre may seem easy at first glance but when taking all the factors above into account, it is clear that the job is not merely about answering telephones. Considering this, what does it really take to work in a call centre? The key competencies listed below are combined from several sources as defined by organisations approached (personal communication, July 2012) and was confirmed by information researched on the internet ("Do you have what it takes to work in a call centre", November 2012; "What it takes to work in a call centre", November 2012). The most commonly listed competencies and key characteristics when seeking a fit between an individual and a call centre role are:

- *Aptitude for working quickly* – Speed is often imperative as calls are logged and productivity measured through computer systems. Call and wait times are thus often tracked to measure efficiency and subsequently the costs associated with these. ability

- *Learning agility* – The working world is constantly changing and with changing organisations, products and services also change. Call centre employees will therefore need to be adept at facing continuous changes and melding their skills to fit with new knowledge so that they can provide clients with the answers that they are calling in for.
- *Accuracy and attention to detail* – When clients call into a call centre they are placing their trust and faith in the person dealing with their query efficiently and effectively. The employee will thus need to demonstrate clear strength in being able to deal with information ranging from both complex to simple problems, in a quick and accurate manner. This will ensure that clients maintain their faith in the organisation.
- *Dealing with difficult people* – Clients most often call in when they are experiencing a problem and will expect call centre employees to deal with them empathetically. Employees will therefore need to be adept at diffusing tense clients.
- *Flexibility* – Often call centre employees will need to work longer hours to work through their daily cases. Sometimes shift work is also required. This will subsequently affect work-life balance and employees will need to make accommodation for this.
- *Problem-solving capabilities* – Employees will need to be able to think quickly and creatively to solve complex and simple problems.
- *Listening skills* – Clients who call in just simply want to be heard and have their questions or concerns addressed. Employees will need to actively engage and listen to clients; this may require learning simple listening techniques such as paraphrasing or confirming what the client has said.
- *Affiliation for dealing with people* – Clients can often pick up on employee's moods when on a telephone call. Employees in this type of role need to have

an affiliation for dealing with and talking to clients. That energetic attitude comes across and both the organisation and the employees' reputation will be impacted by it.

- *Ability to multi-task* – This competency is not unique to call centre agents only but is often required in many other roles as well. In this instance, call centre agents will need to be able to talk to clients and log information on systems while retrieving information to assist clients, at the same time.

Considering the dynamics that exist in call centres, as well as the type of individuals that are sought for employment in this sector, it is clear that the well-being of employees in call centres is an important aspect to be studied and that organisations, to maintain competitive advantage from a client service and client experience perspective, understand the role that they play in enhancing work-life satisfaction of these individuals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section describes the search procedure used for the literature review, introduces the main theoretical framework for the study and then outlines its antecedents and outcomes. Satisfaction with work-life balance is presented as the main construct in the review. Work engagement is then introduced as individual and organisational outcomes and the link to satisfaction with work-life balance is tested.

Literature Search Procedure

The literature search procedure involved the use of a range of electronic database search engines in particular, Ebscohost, Sage Premier and Google Scholar. Terms used to search for work-life balance were 'work-family conflict', 'work-family spillover', and 'work-life balance', 'satisfaction with work-family balance', 'work-family enrichment', 'work-family facilitation', 'work-family support' 'call centre dynamics' and 'call centre competencies' and 'work engagement'.

Defining work-life balance

As indicated earlier, the working world of today when comparing it to several decades ago has a very different landscape. Many businesses today operate seven days a week, mostly to accommodate the limited time that everyone has to contend with due to the busyness of our lives. This in turn affects the quality time that people are able to spend with their families. Longer trading hours, which is very prevalent today, places different expectations on individuals in organisations and has given rise to problems that centre on work-life balance.

Work and personal life are the most significant domains of an individual and the integration of the two domains have been the focus of much academic research (Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw, 2003). Research on organisational and employee wellness has thus focused on the much debated issue of work-life balance (Potgieter and Barnard, 2010). Internationally, research has shown a greater interest in the area of work-life balance and similarly in the South African context (Mostert and Oldfield, 2011), which is why this study is so relevant.

Most research in this area also focuses on the relationship between gender and work-life balance, as well as issues relating to the relationship between work-life balance and individuals with parental responsibility (Potgieter and Barnard, 2010). A noteworthy influence on individuals within the South African context is the economic, political, societal and cultural circumstances, such as poverty, inequality and discrimination (Bhorat and Van der Westhuizen, 2010), that can shape how individuals view and are affected by work-life balance issues. While this may be true for South Africa and our unique heritage, it is no less true for individuals abroad (McNamara, Pitt-Catsouphes, Matz-Costa, Brown and Valcour, 2012), where much of the literature research on this very relevant topic has taken place (Potgieter and Barnard, 2010). Furthermore, with traditional familial structures changing due to more working mothers entering the workforce, dual career couples and even single earner families/parents, this is a particularly important area of study especially if happy and balanced employees are deemed to be more productive in the workplace (Luthans, 2008).

Work and life is neither simple and is now ever more demanding. With the advent of globalisation, the world economy and challenges that continual changes in technologies bring forth, individuals in societies and organisations have to contend with much more than they have done before (Valcour, 2007) and this intensification of demands that come from many spheres of life lead to further challenges of balancing work and family demands.

There are also increased, blurred or ambiguous boundaries individuals can experience and this is exacerbated by technologies that keep people in constant touch with what's happening in their world. Advancement in technologies and increase in Blackberry and I-phone usage, as well as accessibility to email accounts, add to the consistent stream of balls people have to juggle (Lauzan, Morganson, Major and Green, 2010).

When reviewing the literature on work-life balance, the clarity of the concept may be complex because of all the constructs through which work-life balance is studied and the many definitions that exist for the construct. The complexity that surrounds this construct is the lack of consensus that exists among researchers as to what work-life balance actually means (Ode-Dusseau, Britt and Bobko, 2011; Potgieter and Barnard, 2010). This is possibly due to the fact that balance, achievement thereof and satisfaction with work-life balance often means different things to different people as we all view our circumstances and experiences through our own perceptive lenses. Definitions of work-life balance have subsequently been widely debated and measuring of the construct equally so (Mostert and Oldfield, 2011; Potgieter and Barnard, 2010).

The concept of work-life balance seems to have originated from the study of conflict between work and family roles due to work overload that caused work-life problems to develop (Potgieter and Barnard, 2010). To try and understand and define work-life balance, many constructs have thus been coined to define it. It has been studied through numerous constructs such as compensation (deficiency of satisfaction in one sphere can be made up in another), resource drain (time to available to spend in one domain limits time available to spend in another), segmentation (work and non-work are two separate domains that have no influence on each other), spill-over

(domains can influence each other in either a positive or negative way), work-family conflict and work-family enrichment, work-family facilitation (Greenhaus et. al., 2003; Guest, 2002; Odle-Dusseau, et. al., 2011; Voydanoff, 2004) and more recently, the more holistic view of satisfaction with work-life balance has come to the fore (Valcour, 2007).

When reviewing work-life issues from a conflict perspective, the conflict model of understanding work-life balance (Rogelberg, 2007), basically stipulates that work and life roles are incompatible and are in conflict. Of the most widely used definitions on work-life balance and centred on the construct of work-life conflict is Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) definition that work-life conflict occurs when incompatible forces stress the experiences of an individual in both the work and family roles. This has reinforced the notion that work-life balance is mainly viewed from negative perspectives (Greenhaus et. al. 2003). Further researchers then started focussing on the bi-directional influences of the work and family spheres (Gutek, Searle and Klepa, 1991) and this resulted in a different focus based on the spill-over effects of work to family and family to work (Frone, Russell and Cooper, 1992).

With these negative views and assumptions on work-life balance, most organisation interventions have focussed on the reduction of work hours or implemented more flexible working practices (McNamara, et. al., 2012) as a manner in which to address work-life balance concerns (Potgieter and Barnard, 2010). Similarly other studies have focused on actual versus desired hours spent in the pursuit of work (McNamara, et. al., 2012; Odle-Dusseau, et. al., 2011; Valcour, 2007).

Other definitions indicated a different focus which resulted in work-life balance being viewed as a more holistic appraisal of balance that includes satisfaction of work and family roles that is consistent and compatible with an individual's life roles and priorities (Greenhaus and Allen; 2006). Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) views work-life balance as the successful achievement of role related obligations that are negotiated and collectively accomplished between an individual and his or her role-related partners in the family domain and cohorts in the work domain.

Greenhaus et. al. (2003) defined work-life balance as the distribution of an individual's resources and a positive commitment to the multiple roles that an individual experiences. In other words, it is the degree to which an individual is equally and actively engaged in and subsequently equally satisfied with achievements in work and family roles. They further go to state that there are three components to the work-life balance construct, which is identified as time balance (the amount of time dedicated to work and life roles); involvement balance (the level of psychological involvement in work and life roles); and satisfaction balance (the level of satisfaction experienced in work and life roles). The distribution of resources is done so equally.

More recent definitions and emphasis on the construct of work-life balance has indicated that the experiences of work and life are so intertwined and inseparable that the two have to be viewed together (Potgieter and Barnard, 2010). Kalliath and Brough (2008) also indicate that a more appropriate perspective on work life balance is that of achieving harmony between all life roles. Similarly, other views such as that of Kirchmeyer (2000), indicate that work-life balance is satisfaction that is experienced in all domains of life and that these domains require input in the form of energy, time and commitment (Potgieter and Barnard, 2010) and that these inputs must be equally spread across all life domains.

Role salience is also another perspective that researchers have taken to view work-life balance (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux and Brinley, 2005). Role salience basically refers to individual's meeting their own expectations and needs within their multiple roles and that individual's place different value priority on their work and life roles as they go through their different life stages (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus and Allen, 2006; Potgieter and Barnard, 2010).

While conflict and stress exist in the definitions of the work-life balance concept, not to be discounted are the benefits that individuals derive from participating in work and life domains (Aryee, Srinivas and Tan, 2005). This has spurred research to focus on the complementary aspect of how work and family experiences can enrich the lives of individuals through integration of the experiences across the two

domains. This is a more positive approach than a purely conflict approach to understanding work-life balance.

Barnett (1998) also noted that work-life balance is the combination of living work and family experiences through the two dimensions of compatibility and conflict, which leads one to appreciate these two dimensions go hand in hand. Frone (2003) also suggested that work-family interface should include aspects of both conflict and facilitation. Work-family facilitation is defined by the value attributed to the skills and experiences encountered while participating in work or home activities as they enrich, enhance or facilitate the ease of experiences or opportunities encountered in the home or work front.

Another definition provided by Landy and Conte (2008) stipulates that work-life balance relates to the satisfaction one experiences in one's role at work can affect the satisfaction one experiences in non-work roles and that the two aspects are related to the extent that non-work roles can also affect work roles. It is furthermore stated that an over emphasis in one aspect, for instance work roles, can lead to an under-emphasis in another aspect, for instance non-work roles. An individual experiences tension when experiencing demands or change in forces between both aspects.

Keeping this in mind, one can clearly see that work and non-work roles have influential roles to play in the overall life meaning of an individual and the subsequent satisfaction of balancing these roles.

Wieland (2011) also states that work has now shifted to accommodate the relationship between individuals and organisations and those boundaries between home and work life are continually tested. Keeping this in mind, we also need to consider that organisations are now the primary social institution that many individuals are a part of and that it can play some form of respite from non-work roles and demands. Organisations must subsequently keep top of mind that people they claim as assets to the organisation have distinct responsibilities of navigating work and non-work roles and they have to manage the boundaries between these spheres.

Lauzan et. al. (2010) stated that individuals who achieve a satisfactory work-life balance, can have positive implications for individuals and organisations alike. For an individual this positive implication is overall well-being and organisations can benefit from productive and performance focused individuals. This balance can be achieved through support from the work domain and supportive policies implemented to aide work-life balance. Furthermore, these policies must not only be in place at organisations, they must also be practiced so that employee perceptions of organisational support are increased (Lauzan, et. al., 2010; Lewis and Roper, 2007; O'Driscoll, Brough and Kalliath, 2004).

Organisations must also mainstream work-life initiatives and the old-worker and traditional norms of male only work models are outdated (Kossek, Lewis and Hammer, 2010). As our social norms change, other areas of our lives are affected as well and this interesting topic is noted in the Benner et. al. (2007) study. According to this study, the overall workforce of the call centre industry comprises a female contingent of employees that is more than half of the complement of people who work in this industry. These females are not only call centre consultants but also team leaders and managers in the industry. The impact of this can be significant as traditionally women were seen as the primary care-givers of households and they still hold many care-giving roles in the household despite more responsibilities in the workforce (Landy and Conte, 2008; Lewis and Roper, 2007; Milkie and Peltola, 1999).

Technological advances now mean that it is possible for an individual to perform from virtually any location. Similarly, globalisation and flexible working practices, together with changing and non-traditional familial structures mean that organisations now have to ensure that they meet the demands for work-life balance policies and practices. It is also imperative for organisations to recognise that a few approaches will need to be considered to help employees deal with different personal life obligations (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998) and that a "one size fits all" approach may not work in all instances.

With more and more women now entering the workforce, further issues arise, including the allocation of responsibilities of work. In family relationships, more responsibilities have to be distributed among other members of the family (Kazdin, 2000). An interesting point to note is that while women have now increased work responsibilities, their responsibilities on the home front have not decreased, which can bring about further complexities relating to satisfaction with work-life balance. Furthermore many households today cannot afford the support of domestic help due to the tough economic times that we live in. Having this help could alleviate some of the strain experienced and thus positively impact satisfaction with work-life balance.

Traditional gender roles have changed and employers now have to seriously think about initiatives and stand behind and support these initiatives, to help individuals with managing the boundaries between work and life (Kossek, et. al., 2010). Traditional male roles of care-giving have also changed as more men are also taking on some of the responsibilities in the home. With dual-career couples and single parenthood adding more complexities to managing work-life balance, this is certainly an interesting field of study. Thus central to this study is the effect of an individual's satisfaction with work-life balance as an evaluation of overall contentment and level of success with balancing the demands faced in one's work and personal life.

The most common antecedents of work-life balance have mainly been role conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), role demand, role/work overload (Aryee, et. al., 2005) and role salience (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), while the most commonly studied variables are gender differences, working hours, work-family initiatives and personality differences (Batt and Valcour, 2003). Support variables such as supervisor and organisation support are the most common mediating variables (O' Driscoll, et. al., 2004). The main outcomes studied are job satisfaction, organisation commitment (Aryee, et. al., 2005), turnover and absenteeism (Batt and Valcour, 2003), to mention a few that are pertinent to the organisation.

Satisfaction with work-life balance

Included in definitions of work-life balance is that of satisfaction (Kirchmeyer, 2000) or the holistic appraisal of balance. Satisfaction with work-life can be viewed from a

positive and negative perspective of balance. A positive balance thus equates to high levels of satisfaction, while negative balance equates to lower levels of satisfaction. This is particularly pertinent when viewing Marks and MacDermid's (1996) role theory and assessing the extent to which individuals feel satisfied in all roles that they play in life, both in work and family domains.

The interest of this study lies in satisfaction with work-life balance as defined by Valcour (2007), as an overall degree of contentment which results from the positive appraisal of successful achievement of meeting one's work and family role demands. This definition is fundamental to beliefs that some researchers hold, that is, individuals want to be able to experience satisfaction and success in their lives through the fulfilment of obligations they have in all areas of their lives (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000; Valcour, 2007).

Satisfaction with work-life balance thus has a cognitive and an affective component (McNamara, et. al, 2012; Valcour, 2007) to its definition. The cognitive component refers to the perception or appraisal of success that one experiences in meeting multiple demands from multiple roles, while the affective component refers to the emotional attachment to this appraisal of success. Satisfaction will thus be the resultant outcome of this assessment if individuals have successfully met these demands. This definition also rests on the premise that it is not centred on conflict and rather on the assumption that perceptions of low work-life conflict will result in more experiences of satisfaction (Valcour, 2007).

The construct of satisfaction with work-life balance is also distinguishable from other constructs such as work-family spill-over, enrichment and facilitation (Valcour, 2007). This means that experiences in one role does not affect the experience in another role. Satisfaction with work-life balance thus refers to the overall level of contentment that an individual perceives and feels as a result of demanding experiences in both work and family roles. Directionality in other constructs of work-life balance is also emphasised, from work to family or family to work, whereas satisfaction with work-life balance is a more all-inclusive construct and does not imply directionality (Valcour, 2007). As this construct is more holistic in its foundation, it does not look at individual aspects such as those suggested by

Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) three dimensions of inter-role conflict and Frone's (2003) four-fold taxonomy (Valcour, 2007).

Antecedents related to satisfaction with work-life balance

Stress is an accepted concept in literature, is an observable phenomena in some instances and our ability to cope with stress is limited due to the available resources we have at our disposal (Kazdin, 2000). Employers tend to focus more on the physical and safety factors relating to stress and less to psycho-social and emotional impact of unfavourable working conditions.

There are numerous research studies that show work stressors such as lack of control, long work hours, monotony and higher work demands add to higher work-family conflict (Kazdin, 2000; Rogelberg, 2007). These factors can be taxing on an individual's capabilities to manage the demands of work and personal life. Other factors relating to one's personal life, such as having more children, providing care for elderly relatives and having little family and organisational support can add to stress that individual's experience. However, work-based resources can also aid individuals in meeting multiple role demands (Valcour, 2007) and subsequently increase positive perceptions of work-life balance.

Work hours and satisfaction with work life balance

With a nine to five job no longer the relative norm for a career and many individuals putting in more hours as a clear expectation for excellent workplace performance, it would be interesting to study the relationship between work hours and satisfaction with work-life balance (Bruck and Allen, 2003; Valcour, 2007). Some studies suggest a negative relationship between work hours and work-life balance and this is clear in that more hours spent in one domain will lead to less available time spent in another domain (McNamara, et. al, 2012). The problem is that there are only a limited amount of hours and resources available that an individual can draw on with increasing demands in all domains of life, work-life conflict can occur. This means that the more hours a person works per week, the lower their satisfaction with work-

life balance as these extended work hours are perceived to interfere with their other life roles (McNamara, et. al, 2012; Valcour, 2007).

In contrast to this, there are other views that indicate that longer work hours can be associated with more complex and enriching work, which can promote the development of skills and abilities which can in turn impact career satisfaction (Valcour, 2007). These longer work hours can result in higher earnings which provide income for services such as domestic help, child-care services or bought-in meals, which could positively impact one's satisfaction with work-life balance as they support an individual in areas so that they can achieve this satisfaction. An important point to note is that a different level of employment such as managerial or professionally affiliated employee, could potentially impact this resultant satisfaction with work-life balance when associated with longer working hours (Valcour, 2007) versus non-managerial and non-professionally affiliated employees. In other words, lower levels of staff might not necessarily associate longer working hours with satisfaction with work-life balance.

Furthermore, globalisation has meant that many call centre operations for international organisations are housed in South Africa (Gauteng Enterprise Propeller, 2010), for instance, Lufthansa. This means that shift work such as fixed shifts (permanent assignment to a particular shift) and rotating shifts (movement of shifts over periods of time) are a reality and individuals in this industry in South Africa will experience. Compressed work schedules through extended work hours and shifts can allow for better harmony in balancing the demands of work and non-work roles (Kazdin, 2000).

Longer working hours could potentially impact the outcomes of satisfaction and individuals may feel that they are expending too much energy by virtue of time in the work domain, which subsequently affects the amount of time they are able to spend in non-work domains. Similarly, this might have an impact on work engagement or energy levels displayed in the pursuit of work (Batt and Valcour, 2003).

Job complexity and satisfaction with work life balance

Role stressors experienced that add to work stress are things such as role ambiguity (lacking clarity in the behaviours expected to perform excellently), role overload (when an individual has to fulfil too many roles all at the same time) and role conflict (when demands from various sources are incompatible and uncomplimentary) (Landy and Conte, 2008). Interpersonal conflict also adds to stress experienced at work, though the scope of this paper does not cover this type of conflict.

The impact of these stressors are important to study as withdrawal behaviours such as voluntary and involuntary intent to turnover is a consequence the organisation would want to understand and attempt to minimise, especially when considering the loss of top talent (Barnett and Hall, 2001). Similarly other organisational outcomes as they relate to satisfaction with work-life balance are potentially damaging to the organisation, such as low levels of work engagement (Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli, 2005; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Ford, Heinen and Langkamer, 2007).

According to the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (2010) report, call centre operators have criticised the close supervision and monitoring they experience. They also claim to experience high levels of stress when dealing with clients and some even work according to a script, which could possibly not give them much room to apply their own ideas in dealing with their clients. While this role stress has a clear impact on the individuals, it may well have an impact on the work stress they experience and subsequently the levels of work-life conflict. The level of job complexity as perceived by call centre operators can further impact the stress experienced. Job characteristics have long since been a subject of research interest and are relevant here in so far as it can influence satisfaction and the work performance of employees (Sims, Szilagyi and Keller, 1976). Of particular interest are the job characteristics that relate to having variety (a range of tasks to perform) and independence (having a say over your work schedule and job tasks).

For the purposes of this study, job complexity here refers to the ability to control certain factors experienced in one's job (Valcour, 2007), such as independence or independent thought or action. This ability to control, experienced by call centre

operators through their jobs can be compromised, especially if most of their calls are scripted, as indicated earlier.

Landy and Conte (2008) state that the demand-control (Karasek, 1979) model of understanding stress suggests that job stress arises when the job demand (job work load or intellectual abilities required for the job) and job control (which relates to the autonomy allowed in the job and the ability to use discretionary skills) is evident. According to the Gauteng Enterprise Propeller (2010) this couldn't be more true for those individuals in a call centre environment, which states that some work in this environment can be repetitive and individuals are closely monitored by systems and supervisors which implies low levels task variety and low levels of job autonomy.

In contrast to this, job complexity can offer individuals the relevant skills to handle a higher level of demands as they facilitate a different and more complex model of thinking (Valcour, 2007) that can be more cognitively challenging than less complex jobs. Furthermore, these skills could enable an individual to effectively manage their stress in the work environment and more effectively juggle the demands they experience in the non-work domain. Valcour (2007) further states that research related to job complexity can result in more effective parenting skills, which can subsequently impact the success of children in school. This then implies that individuals are able to transfer these skills into the non-work domain and might experience higher levels of work-life contentment and overall satisfaction.

Organisations should thus implement training and development initiatives as a strategic talent management priority, not only as they relate to changing technologies in the industry but for other areas as well. This can possibly improve the cognitive functioning of individuals even in what can seemingly be a very routine job, as individuals are able to carry out more complex tasks in the work domain and potentially in the family domain, resulting in higher levels of satisfaction with work-life balance.

Job complexity thus serves to further an individual's critical thinking, their ability to direct the self and gives an individual the opportunity to enhance their self-esteem and self-confidence (Valcour, 2007). Similarly, other studies have also shown

positive correlations between job complexity and job satisfaction, which can result in higher levels of satisfaction with work-life balance. Likewise, when viewing positive organisational constructs such as work engagement, research has shown associations between job complexity, engagement and energy levels, which in turn impacts work performance (Valcour, 2007) and satisfaction with work-life balance.

Control over work hours and satisfaction with work-life balance

Control over work hours can be viewed in a similar light as that of independence and independent thought or action as it relates to job characteristics. Control is generally the belief that one can exercise some level of influence in order to improve one's environment or to manage certain aspects of one's environment better (Thomas and Ganster, 1995). This sense of control then alleviates some stress that an individual may experience as they may be more inclined to manage aspects of their personal and work life and consequently be more satisfied in their endeavours to balance work and life domains. Control may not even be a vastly complex concept in that it implies that the simple ability to make a short personal telephone call during working hours may allow an employee to meet personal role demands and thereby give them a greater sense of satisfaction. More intricate to manage, especially within the rigid confines of a call centre environment, is the ability of an individual to choose breaks, vacations or even taking a few hours off to manage personal life demands. All these aspects have a direct influence on an individual's ability to manage and control their hours of work.

According to Valcour (2007), an individual's ability to control their hours of work relates to the multiple role demands individuals experience and can subsequently directly affect their satisfaction with work life balance. The ability to have autonomy over one's work hours increases one's ability to fulfil demands in work and one's personal life without suffering detrimental effects or experiencing negative consequences in either sphere (Thomas and Ganster, 1995; Valcour, 2007).

Control over one's work hours aids one's ability to manage the demands experienced from work and family life and thus increases one's capacity to meet multiple role demands (Valcour, 2007). Furthermore, control over work hours and

the ability for an individual to control their choices in influencing their time spent on work-related activities (McNamara, et. al., 20102) can be psychologically associated with more feelings of satisfaction and contentment in meeting role demands which can in turn strengthen overall satisfaction with work-life balance.

The ability to control and self-direct has a direct link to job satisfaction (Batt and Valcour, 2003; Thomas and Ganster, 1995) and by virtue of this association will have a negative impact on work engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Ford, et. al., 2007).

Emotional stability (neuroticism) and satisfaction with work-life balance

There are some studies that have been conducted to evaluate the relationship of personality variables on work-life conflict. Most research has been conducted on Type A personality types and negative affectivity (Bruck and Allen, 2003). Other researchers have included the study of the five-factor model of personality variables which represents the key underlying dimensions of personality and is commonly referred to as the "Big Five". The key personality dimensions included in this model are Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. Of these five dimensions, the most commonly studied ones as they are purported to have a stronger relationship with work-life conflict are Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Agreeableness (Bruck and Allen, 2003). For the purposes of this study, only the relationship of neuroticism (emotional stability) between satisfaction with work-life balance will be assessed.

Emotional stability is the opposite end of the continuum as associated to neuroticism, one of the Big Five personality factors (Bruck and Allen, 2003; Saucier, 1994; Valcour, 2007). Individuals who display high levels of neuroticism will have the tendency to be emotional, worry a lot and be easily upset. This implies that they may be intolerant of managing their stress effectively. Conversely, individuals who display higher levels of this characteristic on the opposite end of the continuum will be more emotionally stable and display characteristics of being even-tempered and calm in stressful situations. This implies that they will be able to handle stressful

situations better and are likely to manage their impulses when coping with stress (Bruck and Allen, 2003).

When reviewing it from the perspective of managing multiple role demands, it is clear that an individual with a penchant for neuroticism will not appraise situations more positively than someone who is more emotionally stable which means, that they may well have the tendency to experience lower levels of satisfaction with work-life balance (Bruck and Allen, 2003; Valcour, 2007). This is an important consideration when studying satisfaction with work-life balance as it has a direct impact on how the individual will perceive manageability of demanding situations.

Outcomes related to satisfaction with work-life balance

Attaining a satisfactory equilibrium between work and life with the constant demands that face individuals at work and in their personal lives, is a balancing act. It is valued by many employees (Valcour, 2007) and as such, core to what organisation's need to understand in order to provide workplaces where individuals can thrive. The perceived value attributed to this affects attitudinal organisational outcomes such as job satisfaction, affective commitment to the organisation and employee work engagement (Batt and Valcour, 2003; Ford, et. al., 207). To facilitate work-life balance, many organisations are implementing different types of policies (Aryee, et. al., 2005) with positive relationships to organisational outcomes. While academic research tends to focus on individual and organisational outcomes of job satisfaction and organisational commitment, this study will focus on work engagement as a more contemporary approach to understanding satisfaction with work-life balance.

Work engagement and satisfaction with work life balance

While job satisfaction and organisational commitment are widely researched from work-life balance perspectives, another construct, such as work engagement is also vital to study as it is an emerging and more contemporary issue within the field of organisational psychology. Work engagement is more focused on positive well-being of employees and this is aligned to the positive view of satisfaction with work-life balance. This recognises that satisfaction with work-life balance can also be

viewed from a positive perspective and thus be seen as an opportunity that individuals can use to grow and develop from (Potgieter and Barnard, 2010). As the study of satisfaction with work-life balance is a more positive and holistic construct, to study possible relationships between the two constructs make for an interesting area of research.

Many research topics have focused on negative issues of understanding the dynamics of people in their work environments. More recently, the focus has shifted to positive psychology with the focus not only being on understanding where things go wrong, but to work and capitalise on positive states of being (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter and Taris, 2008). Many of these studies on positive psychology come from great scholars such as Martin Seligman and Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (2000). Building on this idea of more studies on negative states, as the working world has evolved, job burnout has been the topic of many studies. In more recent studies aligned to studying positive states, work engagement has received focus as the opposite end of job burnout.

Work engagement can typically be defined as a positive state of mind associated with one's work that is characterised by vigour (high energy and resilience); dedication (associating and experiencing significance, enthusiasm and pride in one's work; and absorption (being engrossed and fully concentrating on one's work) (Bakker, et. al., 2008; Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova, 2006). Employees who are engaged in their work display a sense of high energy and could see themselves able to deal with multiple role demands successfully. Work engagement is also a prevalent and persistent state that individuals experience as opposed to a once-off reaction to a positive experience. While there may be other researchers that have differing views on what constitutes work engagement, most agree that work engagement does constitute displays of high levels of energy and strong identification with one's work (Bakker, et. al., 2008).

As a norm in today's competitive working world and society in general, organisations expect employees to display beyond average levels of performance and exceptionally high levels of standards. Employees are also expected to take accountability for their work and development within the work environment. This

means that individuals need to be fully immersed in what they do and see their work, not as stressful, but as challenging opportunities to show the value that they add to the organisation, as well as using their work as an opportunity to learn and develop as an individual (Bakker, et. al. 2008). A distinction must be made here that organisations are not expecting employees to be workaholics. There is a distinct difference between what constitutes a workaholic and what constitutes an engaged employee. A workaholic is seen as someone who works hard and disproportionately so as compared to others. They find it hard to switch off from work and consistently think about it. An engaged employee on the other hand is someone who is dedicated to their work, is involved in hard work but finds it fun, challenging, engrossing and not addictive (Bakker, et. al., 2008). Work engagement is also distinct from Type A personality behaviour.

Based on this understanding of work engagement, it is thus expected to have positive outcomes for the organisation and individual alike. Bakker et. al. (2008) also states that engagement is predicted by aspects of the job such as autonomy and personal dispositions, which was indicated earlier in the text as having relationships with satisfaction with work-life balance. Studying and gaining a deeper understanding of work engagement can make a difference in the life of an employee and give an organisation competitive advantage, which is why the relationship between the two constructs will be tested.

Research questions

Organisation and employee outcomes are at the heart of this research and the questions posed attempt to affirm and further understand the implications that work and job characteristics have on satisfaction with work life balance and the above stated consequences of this satisfaction. Based on the review of the literature above, the hypotheses in this study will focus on the following:

Hypotheses 1: Actual work hours will be negatively related to satisfaction with work life balance.

Hypotheses 2: Control over work hours will be positively related to satisfaction with work life balance.

Hypotheses 3: Job complexity will be positively related to satisfaction with work life balance.

Hypotheses 4: Satisfaction with work life balance will be positively related to work engagement.

METHOD

This chapter contains a description of the method and approach used in this research. It contains a description of the research choices used and arguments that support the use of these methods. This section also contains a presentation of the problems that occurred during the data collection phase and how this impacted on the analysis of the data.

Research design

Research designs provide a framework or blueprint that can be followed in order to carry out the research project (Hair, Babin, Money, and Samouel, 2003). In order to follow the simplest approach to addressing research questions and ensure that the rigour of scientific study is adhered to, a descriptive research design was chosen that was most relevant to the purpose of the study and would ensure that the project was carried out most efficiently.

Descriptive research designs are typically used to describe a situation, characteristics of a population or a specific phenomenon. In this instance, hypotheses are derived from theory and guide the research process as well as what characteristics need to be measured (Hair, et. al., 2003).

This research was not exploring a new area of research and not studying specific causality. While a correlation or connection between variables may exist, we are attempting to describe the phenomenon and have no control groups in place to

control the effect of other variables that may potentially have an impact on the relationship between variables. This also means that the research is non-experimental as we are not manipulating any causal variables (Hair, et. al., 2003; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003).

The data was collected with a survey questionnaire which contained specific items that respondents selected from. This method of collecting data typically provides information that is quantitative and can be statistically analysed (Hair, et. al., 2003; Saunders, et. al. 2003).

Descriptive research studies also provide the researcher with a description of specific characteristics or elements at a specific point in time. It does not measure characteristics over a period of time. Cross-sectional studies are indicative of the type of research that provides a snap shot at a point in time (Hair, et. al., 2003; Saunders, et. al. 2003). Characteristics are thus only measured once and then summarized statistically. A survey method using a questionnaire is typically used in cross-sectional studies and is an appropriate choice in this research as we are sampling a subset of an organisation's population, namely, the call centre.

The questionnaire was set up as a self-administered intranet link and respondents selected their responses from their computers. An email with a link to the questionnaire was distributed to all individuals in the call centre.

Sampling strategy

To generalize the findings of the research of the target population and because the sample was manageable in size, the survey questionnaire was sent to full sample of employees in the call centre of the participating organisation. This ensured that there was a higher level of confidence in the data being reflective of the characteristics of the sample and that inferences made were fairly accurate (Hair, et. al., 2003; Saunders, et. al. 2003).

This means that judgement sampling was chosen as a sampling method for the study (Hair, et. al., 2003; Saunders, et. al. 2003).

Participants

Due to the unique constraints that exist within call centre and financial services environments the industry was selected as an area of interest as it is the current industry within which the researcher is employed. Organisations in the financial services industry range over different types of core business activities, such as, accounting, auditing, insurance, banking, asset management, credit facilities and short to long term loans.

All participants in this study are client service agents or call centre agents and their roles typically require dealing with clients through communication methods such as telecommunications, email and in some cases, face to face consultations.

The majority of the participants were female, 67% (Table 1), with 57% only holding a matric level qualification (Table 2). 71% of the participants are also single (Table 3), which shows that they come from non-traditional familial structures, so indicative of the world we live in today. At least 50% of the participants are also on fixed term contracts (Table 7).

The average age of participants is 27 years of age (Table 5) indicating a fairly young sample. 51% of participants indicated that they had children (Table 4) with 78% of these indicating that they had children less than six years of age and 77% of respondents indicating that they were financially responsible for family members. The demographics of the participants are listed in the tables below:

Table 1

Participant gender split

| Gender | Number | Percentage |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Male | 87 | 33% |
| Female | 177 | 67% |

Table 2*Participant educational levels*

| Gender | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Less than matric | 4 | 2% |
| Matric | 151 | 57% |
| Diploma or certificate | 93 | 35% |
| Degree | 16 | 6% |

Table 3*Participant marital status*

| Marital status | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Single | 186 | 71% |
| Married | 78 | 29% |

Table 4*Number with children*

| Number with children | Number | Percentage |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| Number with children | 134 | 51% |
| Number of children u6 | 101 | 75% |
| Number of married with children | 55 | 41% |
| Number of single with children | 79 | 59% |

Table 5*Participant age*

| Age | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| ≤ 24 years | 79 | 30% |
| 25 to 29 years | 111 | 42% |
| 30 to 35 years | 48 | 18% |
| ≥ 36 years | 26 | 10% |

Table 6*Participant tenure*

| Tenure | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| ≤ 2 to 4 years | 80 | 30% |
| 5 to 8 years | 102 | 39% |
| 9 to 14 years | 56 | 21% |
| ≥ 15 years | 26 | 10% |

Table 7*Participant employment status*

| Employment status | Number | Percentage |
|---|---------------|-------------------|
| Fixed term or temporary contract | 132 | 50% |
| Part-time | 11 | 4% |
| Permanent | 121 | 46% |

An email with a link to the survey questionnaire was emailed to 450 call centres employees. Employees were allowed to complete the self-report questionnaire during work hours and all responses were recorded electronically. Strict confidentiality was maintained throughout the process and no individual could be singled out based on their responses. We received a total 264 and completed surveys from the participating organisation. This equates to a response rate of 58.6%.

Ethical considerations

Prior to surveying the participants, ethical clearance was obtained from the University's Ethics in Research Committee.

Consent to perform the research was obtained from the organisation surveyed. Detailed discussions took place with a key contact in the organisation and intended use of the information was made clear to the individual. Potential causes of conflict or risk to the organisation and participants were not encountered during the research process. The participating organisation did not want to be identified and all confidential measures were taken to ensure the organisation and participant privacy.

No individual was forced to participate in the research and each participant was informed of the purpose of the study as well as how and what the information would be used for. Furthermore, no individual was harmed, deceived, prejudiced or identified as a result of the research. While participants completed the questionnaire during work hours, the time taken to complete the questionnaire did not interfere with participants and their work. Refer to Appendix one for the informed consent letter that was distributed with the questionnaire.

Measures

Satisfaction with work-life balance

Satisfaction with work-life balance was measured using six items from Valcour's (2007) scale of work family balance. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The response categories ranged from *very dissatisfied* to *very satisfied*. An example of an item included is: "how satisfied are you with the balance between your job and personal life?" Reliability estimates for this construct in Valcour's (2007) study was 0.93.

The wording of the items was changed to refer to one's "*personal life*" as opposed to "*family life*". This was done to ensure relevance to all respondents, those with children or without, or those outside of the traditional familial structures.

Work hours

The measurement of actual work hours was constructed as the sum of how many hours participants work in a typical week and how many overtime hours participants work in a typical work week (Lu, Kao, Chang and Cooper, 2011; Valcour, 2007).

Participants were also asked to indicate the number of hours they spend in the pursuit of work related activities. These items included “*commute time*” and “*ideal number of work hours*”.

Control over work hours

Control over work hours was measured using five items Valcour (2007) and three from Thomas and Ganster (1995). Respondents were asked to indicate how much control they have over some aspects of their time spent at work. Response categories ranged from (1) *none* to (5) *a great deal*. An example of an item included is: “choice over when they begin and end their work day and work week”.

The alpha coefficient for this construct in the Valcour (2007) study was 0.72.

Job Complexity

Job complexity was measured using six items from the Job Characteristics Inventory (Sims, et. al., 1976), as used by Valcour (2007). The item wording was slightly modified to be more relevant to the sample. Participants were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale, the amount of complexity that their jobs entail. The response categories ranged from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *strongly agree*. Examples of items included are: “how much opportunity does this job give you to do a number of different things?” and “how much opportunity does this job give you for independent thought or action?” The alpha coefficient for this construct in the Valcour (2007) study was 0.74.

Work engagement

Engagement was measured using the nine item abridged Work Engagement and Well-being survey (Schaufeli, et. al., 2006). The items were scored on a seven point

frequency with the categories ranging from (1) *never* to (6) *always*. Scale items included perceptions of feelings of vigour, energy and enthusiasm; immersion in ones work and a sense of pride experienced while working. An example of an item included is: “at my work, I feel bursting with energy”. The alpha coefficient for this construct in the Schaufeli, et. al. study (2006) was 0.92.

Emotional stability (Neuroticism)

Neuroticism was measured through Emotional Stability, which is the opposite end of the neuroticism continuum on the subscale of Saucier’s (1994) Mini-markers. Respondents were asked to indicate on a frequency of one to nine how accurately four adjectives described them. The items respondents were asked to describe themselves include: “fretful”; “jealous”; “temperamental”; and “touchy”. Items for this scale were included as a control variable.

Demographics

In addition, demographic information was gathered at the end of the survey. This information related to gender, age, marital status, parental status, number of dependants, level of education attained, job tenure and level of job relating to manager or employee.

Response categories for marital status was coded as: “married”; “single”; “divorced” and “living together. These were then collapsed into two categories for analysis purposes, namely “married” (=1) and “single” (=2), as there was a marginal and insignificant difference in the percentage of responses.

Response categories for education level were coded as: “less than matric” (=1); “matric” (=2); “diploma or certificate” (=3). The response categories for “undergraduate degree” and “postgraduate degree” were collapsed in one category “degree” (=4) for analysis purposes as there was a marginal and insignificant difference in the percentage of responses.

RESULTS

This section presents the results of this study and details the different statistical analyses that were conducted. Factor analysis was conducted prior to conducting reliability analysis. The magnitude, distribution and correlation between the final scales are presented. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses. All statistical analyses were performed using Statistica 10.

Factor analysis

The main purpose of performing factor analysis is to summarise the information from a set of variables by uncovering the relationships between them in a set of underlying dimensions or factors.

To determine the number of factors that best represent the items analysed Scree plots were considered and Kaiser's criterion was applied. A scree plot, plots the eigenvalues in a simple plot line, while Kaiser's criterion only allows for the selection of factors for which the eigenvalues are greater than one, that is, the factor is only accepted if the variability explained by that factor is greater than the variability explained by a single item. Factors with an eigenvalue less than one are not retained and are regarded as insignificant. A factor loading of .35 was considered significant given the sample size in this study (Hair, et. al., 2003). Principal axis factor analysis was used.

Satisfaction with work-life balance scale

All six items loaded on a single factor with an eigenvalue greater than one. That explained 51% of the variance between the items. Loadings ranged from -.471 to -.829. Table 8 represents the factor analysis results, significant loadings are indicated in boldface type.

Table 8*Satisfaction with work-life balance scale*

| Items | SWLB |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| SWLB1 | -0.471 |
| SWLB2 | -0.786 |
| SWLB3 | -0.797 |
| SWLB4 | -0.829 |
| SWLB5 | -0.743 |
| SWLB6 | -0.598 |
| Eigenvalue | 3.074 |
| Individual variance (percentage) | 51.240 |

Note: *N*=264; SWLB=Satisfaction with work-life balance

Job control scale

Items measuring Control over work hours and items measuring Job complexity loaded onto one factor, with an eigenvalue greater than one. The factor, reflecting perceptions regarding the amount of control exercised over certain aspects of the job, explained 31% of the variance across the items. Factor loadings ranged from -.441 to -.667. Table 9 indicates the final factor structure, with significant loadings in boldface type.

Table 9*Job control scale*

| Items | JBCN |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| JBC1 | -0.451 |
| JBC2 | -0.590 |
| JBC3 | -0.458 |
| JBC4 | -0.563 |
| WHC1 | -0.441 |
| WHC2 | -0.586 |
| WHC3 | -0.665 |
| WHC4 | -0.667 |
| Eigenvalue | 2.502 |
| Individual variance (percentage) | 31.276 |

Note: *N*=264

JBC=Job complexity

WHC=Work hours control

JBCN=Job control

Emotional stability scale

One factor was extracted, with an eigenvalue greater than one, and a total variance of 30% accounted for. Loadings ranged from -.470 to -.608. Table 10 represents the final factor structure for the emotional stability scale. Significant loadings are indicated in boldface type.

Table 10

Emotional stability scale

| Items | EMS |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| EMS1 | -0.608 |
| EMS2 | -0.513 |
| EMS3 | -0.470 |
| EMS4 | -0.587 |
| Eigenvalue | 1.198 |
| Individual variance (percentage) | 29.949 |

Note: N=264; EMS=Emotional stability

Work engagement scale

One factor was extracted, with an eigenvalue greater than one, and a total variance of 45% accounted for. Loadings ranged between -.498 and -.817. All items were reverse coded. Table 11 represents the final factor structure for the work engagement items. Significant loadings are indicated in boldface type.

Table 11*Work engagement scale*

| Items | ENG |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| ENG1 | -0.575 |
| ENG2 | -0.660 |
| ENG3 | -0.750 |
| ENG4 | -0.760 |
| ENG5 | -0.498 |
| ENG6 | -0.817 |
| ENG7 | -0.744 |
| ENG8 | -0.596 |
| ENG9 | -0.580 |
| Eigenvalue | 4.068 |
| Individual variance (percentage) | 45.198 |

Note: *N*=264; ENG=Work engagement

Reliability analysis

A reliability analysis was performed on items of each summated scale determined by the factor analyses. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated. The reliability analysis indicated that the coefficient alpha was above the acceptable limit of 0.7 for each scale, with the exception of the emotional stability scale which was above 0.6, which is regarded as the lower level of acceptability (Hair, et. al., 2010). Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the satisfaction with work-life balance scale ($\alpha = .854$), job control scale ($\alpha = .777$) and the work engagement scale ($\alpha = .877$) evidences acceptable scale reliability. The emotional stability scale ($\alpha = .625$) met the lower limit of acceptability.

Table 12*Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation Analysis*

| Variable | M | SD | SWLB | JBCN | EMS | ENG |
|----------|-------|-------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| SWLB | 3.144 | 0.826 | (.854) | | | |
| JBCN | 2.821 | 0.729 | 0.374* | (.777) | | |
| EMS | 3.285 | 1.717 | -0.066 | 0.033 | (.625) | |
| ENG | 3.287 | 1.144 | -0.391* | -0.423* | 0.005 | (.877) |

N = 264 after casewise deletion of missing data; * $p < 0.05$
Cronbach's Alpha reflected on the diagonal
M = mean; SD = standard deviation

SWLB=Satisfaction with work-life balance
EMS=Emotional stability
JBCN=Job control
ENG=Work engagement

Descriptive Statistics

The magnitude and distribution of the scores were analysed by conducting descriptive statistics on the summated scales. Table 13 reflects the means (*M*), standard deviation (*SD*), skewness and kurtosis for the final scales.

Table 13*Descriptive statistics*

| Variable | N | M | SD | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|-------|----------|----------|
| Satisfaction with work-life balance | 264 | 3.144 | 0.826 | -0.293 | -0.039 |
| Job control | 264 | 2.821 | 0.729 | -0.106 | -0.675 |
| Emotional stability | 264 | 3.285 | 1.717 | 0.503 | -0.412 |
| Work engagement | 264 | 3.287 | 1.144 | 0.059 | -0.439 |

N = Number of respondents after casewise deletion of missing data
M = Mean; SD = standard deviation

Correlation analysis

Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was used to assess the strength of the relationship between variables (casewise deletion of missing data was used). The correlation analysis is presented in Table 12.

Satisfaction with work-life balance had a significant and positive relationship with job control ($r = .374$; $p < 0.05$) and a significant and negative relationship with work

engagement ($r = -.391$; $p < 0.05$). Work engagement had a significant and negative relationship with job control ($r = -.423$; $p < 0.05$), while emotional stability did not significantly correlate with any other variable in this study. Commute time, not depicted in the table (Range: lower quartile, 30; upper quartile, 60), indicated a significantly negative correlation with satisfaction with work-life balance ($r = -.148$; $p < 0.05$).

The number of hours worked in a week was not significantly related to satisfaction with work-life balance ($r = -.089$, $p = \text{n.s.}$). There was a significant and positive relationship between commute time and satisfaction with work-life balance ($r = -.159$, $p < .05$).

T-test analysis

T-test analyses were conducted to ascertain whether there were any significant demographic differences on satisfaction with work-life balance. No significant differences were found across gender, number of children, number of children under six, or having a spouse that works. There was a significant difference on satisfaction with work-life difference across those who had domestic support at home ($t = -2.26$, $p < .05$) and for those who did not have domestic support. There was also a slight difference in satisfaction with work-life balance for people who are married.

Regression analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis was performed to examine the relationship between the independent variables proposed to help predict satisfaction with work-life balance (the dependent variable). Variables were entered into the model in a series of steps. Step 1 represented the base model which included variables of gender, number of children and number children under the age of six, emotional stability, commute time and ideal work hours. Step 2 included the base model variable as well as work hours. Step 3 included the base model and job control. Step 4 included the interaction between work hours and job control and Step 5 included the interaction between work hours and gender. The change in the squared multiple was calculated in each step. All variables that were used in the interactions were centred prior to

conducting the model interactions to reduce multicollinearity, which can pose a problem if there is a correlation between two or more predictors in the model (Field, 2009; Pallant, 2007). The results of the hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 14.

Step 1 of the regression model indicated a significantly negative relationship between commute time and satisfaction with work-life balance ($\beta = -.148, p < .05$). With the addition of work hours in Step 2, work hours was negatively related to satisfaction with work-life balance, but commute time was still more significantly related ($\beta = -.152, p < .05$) to it. The change in R^2 was not significant.

In Step 3, with the addition of job control, a significant and positive relationship to satisfaction with work-life balance was indicated ($\beta = .337, p < .0001$). The change in R^2 was also a significant increase at 0.108. Step 4 added the interaction between work hours and job control. Job control still had a positive and significant relationship to satisfaction with work-life balance ($\beta = .336, p < .0001$). The change in R^2 was not significant. Step 5 was the final step in the model and included the interaction with work hours and gender. Job control was a significant positive predictor of satisfaction with work-life balance ($\beta = .333, p < .0001$). The change in R^2 was not significant.

Table 14

Hierarchical regression analysis of satisfaction with work-life balance

| Variable and statistic | Standardised betas | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Step 1 | Step 2 | Step 3 | Step 4 | Step 5 |
| Gender | -0.029 | -0.020 | -0.043 | -0.042 | -0.036 |
| Number of children | 0.009 | 0.013 | -0.006 | -0.007 | -0.004 |
| Number of children u6 | -0.055 | -0.050 | -0.016 | -0.015 | -0.018 |
| Emotional stability | -0.100 | -0.105 | -0.109 | -0.109 | -0.103 |
| Commute time | -0.148* | -0.152* | -0.097 | -0.098 | -0.092 |
| Ideal work hours | -0.057 | -0.037 | -0.027 | -0.024 | -0.021 |
| Actual work hours | | -0.081 | -0.057 | -0.147 | -0.147 |
| Job control | | | 0.337** | 0.336** | 0.333** |
| Work hours x Job control | | | | 0.090 | 0.115 |
| Work hours x Gender | | | | | -0.057 |
| F | 1.549 | 1.514 | 4.769 | 4.229 | 3.858 |
| df | 6, 206 | 7, 205 | 8, 204 | 9, 203 | 10, 202 |
| Multiple R ² | 0.043 | 0.049 | 0.158** | 0.158** | 0.160** |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.015 | 0.017 | 0.125 | 0.121 | 0.119 |
| Change in R ² | | 0.001 | 0.108 | -0.004 | -0.002 |

Note. $N = 213$ with casewise deletion of missing data; * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .0001$

A simple regression analysis was performed with work engagement as the dependent variable and satisfaction with work-life balance as the independent variable. The regression model explained over 15% of the variance in work engagement ($R^2 = .153$, $p < .0001$, $N = 264$). Satisfaction with work-life balance was a significant predictor of work engagement ($\beta = -.391$, $p < .0001$). This is consistent with the correlation analysis depicted in Table 12.

Job control was a positive and significant predictor of work-life balance ($\beta = .335$, $p < .001$). This finding shows support for both hypotheses 2 and 3, which stated that both control over actual work hours and job complexity would be positively related to satisfaction with work-life balance. Hypotheses 4 was not supported as satisfaction with work-life balance did not explain significant variance even though these variables were significantly correlated ($r = -0.391$, $p < .001$).

DISCUSSION

There are many definitions of work-life balance. Several constructs can be measured to infer an individual's appraisal of work-life balance. These include the work-family interface, work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, work-family facilitation and the directionality of these constructs, that is from work to family and family to work. This is very clearly indicative of the broad scope of the work-family and work-life literature. Likewise, the concept of satisfaction with work-life balance is also a very broad area of focus and in order to understand it, specific constructs were measured to identify its relationship to the construct.

The aim of this study was to gain further understanding into the effect of work hours and job control as it relates to an employee's satisfaction with work-life balance. The study also looked further into the impacts work engagement on overall satisfaction with work-life balance. This section will interpret and discuss the main findings of the study and where relevant, link them to findings in other studies.

Actual work hours and satisfaction with work-life balance

The relationship between hours worked in a week and satisfaction with work-life balance was found to be negatively related but not significantly so in this study. This

finding was consistent with the finding of that of Valcour's (2007) study which indicated a similar finding. Another study by McNamara et. al. (2012) similarly found a negative correlation between work hours and satisfaction with work life balance. These findings are all consistent with the resource drain perspective that indicates negative association of satisfaction with work-life balance when integrating different spheres of one's life when more hours spent in one area of life means that there is less time available to spend in another. In other words, if there are multiple demands experienced and minimal amount of time available to meet these demands, one is less likely to feel more satisfied in one's ability to meet all role demands. While this study only evaluated data received from self-report questionnaires, it would be interesting to couple this research with some qualitative interview information, to add more depth to the findings.

Interestingly, in today's working world, it is often necessary to work slightly longer hours and in many cases voluntarily so. This is mainly done in order for employees to successfully complete work tasks. With continuing economic uncertainty and the effect that downsizing can have on employees, families and societies alike, it is often found that this input of voluntary hours are done to sustain an above average level of work performance that is expected as the norm by organisations today. Furthermore, with the threat of job security in today's uncertain economic times, employees will often attempt to go this extra mile and forsake time that they spend with their families in order to ensure that job performance is met and that they ensure the security of their jobs, although these extra hours spent at work cannot be sustained for long periods of time. This can then impact satisfaction with work-life balance despite the 'bigger picture' view that working longer hours may mean to some employees as it is seen as a necessary means to ensure security for their families.

This sample was also largely comprised of single people (71%). This could also have significantly attributed to work hours not being largely negatively related to satisfaction with work-life balance, as it may have been if the majority of the sample was married and having more family responsibilities, which could be interpreted as not having the ability to spend as much time in the work domain as their single counterparts. Interestingly the sample was also a relatively young sample, with an

average age of 27 years old. This could be indicative of a generation that is highly career focused (Ford, et. al., 2007) than family focused and thus does not have a problem with putting in some extra hours in order to be noticed as an above average work performer. Despite over half the proportion of the sample in this study having children (51%) and even more of these having children under the age of six (75%), this did not seem to significantly impact the relationship between the number of hours spent in the pursuit of work and the individual's appraisal of their satisfaction with work-life balance.

Job control and satisfaction with work-life balance

While this study's results indicated that working a longer amount of hours can affect one's satisfaction with work-life balance, what was more significant in the resultant data was the effect that control over one's work hours and the complexity of one's job can clearly have an impact on one's appraisal of satisfaction with work-life balance. These constructs were analysed as one factor in this study and was retitled job control. It was found to be significant and positively related to satisfaction with work-life balance, a significant predictor of satisfaction with work-life balance. While control over one's work hours allows an individual the freedom and autonomy to manage their own capabilities to meet both work and family demands, it is not in the capacity of all employees to be able to do this, especially non-managerial staff and less so for call centre employees, where rigid schedules have to apply. Allowing some individuals this autonomy can also subsequently put strain on other individuals in the team and thus pose an imbalance in work-life satisfaction to those employees who have to pick up the workload from their colleagues.

This poses an interesting concept that is aligned to ideas such as self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence. This study found that individuals want to be able to operate at a more critical level of thinking and be able to direct their own pursuits at work with a wider range of tasks, with the emphasis on self-direction. This then in turn affects their functioning within their personal life as they are able to develop skills within the workplace that will enable managing tasks within is domain, such as more effective parenting skills. Subsequently this will have a positive impact on their perception of work-life balance.

Furthermore, increased job control can also impact their ability to sustain an above average level of work performance which, similarly to working extended work hours, can lead to a more positive appraisal of job security.

With job control tying directly into psychological resources and positively impacting satisfaction with work-life balance, one can also draw links to Viktor Frankl's (2008) accounts that man searches for meaning in his experiences and for reasons to live his life with meaning. Job control cannot holistically imply this but can afford individuals the opportunity for different levels of thinking and meaning that individuals can associate with their lives as a whole. The finding of this study was consistent with Valcour's (2007) finding in that control over work hours and job complexity, in the case of her study, was positively related to satisfaction with work-life balance. In another study by Batt and Valcour, it was found that control does tend to lead to less stress that an employee can experience at work, which could imply that they would experience more satisfaction with work-life balance.

Other studies also stated that a lack of control was linked to depression in call centre operators (Grebner, Semmer, Faso, Gut, Kälin, and Elfering, (2003) and that lower work-life conflict was attributable to higher control over work hours. By plausible implication, this could mean that job control could lead to lower work-life conflict and greater satisfaction with work-life balance.

Furthermore, job control also indicated a negative and significant relationship to work engagement, in other words, job control was a predictor of work engagement. In this case the results were interpreted that these individuals actually do not have much job control and this is why they may have low work engagement. This interpretation may be consistent with the idea that due to the type of work and work scheduling that typically occurs in a call centre environment.

Commute time and satisfaction with work-life balance

This study found a significantly negative relationship between commute time and satisfaction with work-life balance. This is consistent with the finding in Valcour's

(2007) study. Additional commute time here then implies that the more time individual's spend commuting to work, the more stress they are likely to experience, as time spent in traffic can be very stressful. This then means that the overall appraisal of satisfaction with work-life balance will be more negatively perceived.

This has clear implications for organisations when considering the location of work premises and its proximity to public modes of transport and the ease of navigating traffic for those that travel with their own transport. Additional to this, one can make further inferences that while the majority of the sample is single and most having young children, they are spending additional time commuting and transporting their children to day-care or school. This then exacerbates the frustration they can experience when commuting to work after taking care of personal responsibilities and can lead to lower satisfaction with work-life balance.

Individual factors and satisfaction with work-life balance

Further analyses indicated that married employees experienced less satisfaction with work-life balance than single employees. This could be attributed to the indication that a large percentage of their spouses are not working (62%). Furthermore, it is indicative that females experience less satisfaction with work-life balance than what their male counterparts do, though not significantly so. This lower level of satisfaction with work-life balance between males and females could also be attributed to the majority of the sample being females and they could be deemed the sole bread-winner of their household. They are also more likely still holding traditional familial roles without a lot of familial support. Despite this result, there is a possibility that the result may have been slightly skewed since the majority of the sample was females (67%) which implies that if they are experiencing less satisfaction, this would be evident as the sample is dominated by females. However, when comparing this sample to national demographics and national trends (Bhorat and Van der Westhuizen, 2010), it could be quite indicative of what is happening on a national scale within a South African context.

The study conducted by Thomas and Ganster's (1998) also showed that of 43% women experienced more work-life conflict, which could imply that they similarly would experience less satisfaction with work-life balance.

Interestingly, results also showed that those individuals who had domestic help showed a positive relationship to satisfaction with work-life balance, which was expected. In other words, the more domestic help one receives, here in the form of a domestic worker, the more likely satisfied we will feel with balancing our work and lives spheres.

This study did not show that having and raising children significantly affects satisfaction with work-life balance negatively. It indicated a small but positive relationship. Interestingly the study did show that having children under the age of six does have a negative relationship but not significantly so, to satisfaction with work-life balance. This finding is inconsistent with Valcour's (2007) study, which indicated that having more children would impact on resources to fulfil other roles and subsequently strain the individual in not meeting all demands and thus implies less satisfaction with work-life balance. However, not to be discounted is the small yet slight negative impact that having younger children can have. There is a clearer assumption that the younger the child, the more taxing this will be on the parent's resources and subsequently the less satisfied they will be with their work-life balance.

Work-life balance in the present study is indicated as important but quite possibly not for the seemingly traditional reasons that we would think. For instance, raising children could impose demands that imply depletion of resources to satisfactorily fulfil work and family roles. Due to the average age of the sample the motivations for satisfaction with work-life balance could very possibly be linked to generation theory or the life cycle stage of the employee. In this study the younger and single cohort seemingly experienced more satisfaction with work-life balance than their married counterparts.

This study, in contrast with many other studies which focused on a conflict model of balancing work-life demands, focused more on positive aspects as they relate to satisfaction with work-life balance. This is a more holistic view and approach to

understanding the work-life interface. While it is an extremely broad scope, it is an important area to research and understand, as it could inform operational aspects in business. The practical application of scientific research findings is a very important aspect to consider. If this is not considered and if it does not have practical application in the workplace, then one could imply that scientific research is just done for research sake.

On the last note for individual factors and pre-dispositions, this study found that emotional stability which is one the opposite end of the neuroticism continuum did not significantly correlate with any variable, despite being implicated in other work-life conflict studies such as that by (Bruck and Allen, 2003). Emotional stability was thus not a predictor of satisfaction with work-life, job control or work engagement in this study,

Work engagement and satisfaction with work-life balance

The second regression analysis and correlation analysis indicated a significant and negative relationship between satisfaction with work-life balance and the positive organisational behaviour construct of work engagement. The results thus indicated that satisfaction with work-life balance was a predictor of work engagement, but work engagement was not a predictor of satisfaction with work-life balance.

Work engagement is a very contemporary issue and not an exhaustive amount of research has been conducted to establish its relationship with the holistic view of work-life balance. The hypothesis that satisfaction with work-life balance was positively related to work engagement was thus not supported in this study.

Job control was also significantly correlated to work engagement but negatively so. One could infer a few things from the results. Firstly, these results could be indicating that high job control would lead to greater satisfaction with work life balance but they might not have high job control and they are potentially not as engaged in their work as they could be. Secondly the negative relationship of work engagement and satisfaction with work-life balance could support this notion. If they are not engaged with their work, they are less satisfied with their work-life balance.

Thirdly, they could be so engaged and display high levels of energy to ensure sustainability of job performance is observed by their managers that this is taxing on their reserves and affects the relationship between work engagement and satisfaction with work-life balance negatively. In other words, they might be too engaged that it takes too much energy to be engaged (Bakker, et. al., 2008). Or perhaps their work is not seen as fun, meaningful and engaging. Perhaps they do not identify with their work but they have to display levels of engagement and energy to ensure job security. One last possibility that could be indicative of the negative correlation is that the questionnaire items were not thoroughly understood by the participants or they were thinking about desired states rather than their current state at work.

Despite these results, much more research must be conducted to thoroughly understand the relationship between satisfaction with work-life balance and work engagement. As both these areas are emerging, contemporary and topical issues, it is bound to garner much more attention from researchers in the future.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper is not intended to fully understand all the variables that can affect the satisfaction with work life balance. The effect of perceived support variables, such as organisational support, for instance, was not measured.

This paper will not test individual factors such as personality traits or constructs relating to positive organisational behaviour constructs such as resilience, that can act as a mediating variable to individuals managing inter role conflict and subsequently affect satisfaction with work life balance. Outcomes of satisfaction with work life balance, such as absenteeism and intent to turnover are also not measured and are not in the scope of this paper.

Further evaluations of quality of work experiences and the quality work life balance as perceived by participants can provide a richer area of research in further studies. Measures of perceived overall wellbeing can further expand on this body of

knowledge of study in the call centre industry. The aspects of overall wellbeing to be considered could include aspects of physical health related outcomes, food choices, diet, exercise and the impact of sedentary lifestyles, which is a trending topic of research. Sedentary lifestyles and workplaces are particular interesting to study as the call centre environment is predominantly deskbound and the effect of this on overall wellbeing and the subsequent life satisfaction of call centre employees would be interesting to test.

Since work-life balance is a multi-dimensional construct that is most often studied from one dimension, a key limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the research design. In order to add a richer body of knowledge to the field of industrial and organisational psychology more longitudinal studies, which are minimal in this area of research, are needed with a larger variety of research methods, as opposed to just self-report tools that are completed at a particular point in time (Kazdin, 2000).

It may also be worthwhile investigating whether there are differences pertaining to demographics of individuals recruited in the specific sectors within the financial services industry and why these might occur. Specific differences to investigate would be whether qualification level and type and depth of knowledge required are different across the different sub-sectors, for instance banking versus asset management. It might also be useful to study whether satisfaction with work-life balance is altogether different between different industries and whether similar factors significantly affect it.

Most research in this area also focuses on gender and those with parental responsibility and their perspectives of work-life balance (Potgieter and Barnard, 2010; Kalliath and Brough, 2008). While this focus does have relevance today, studies should also consider a focus on a different yet relevant perspective such as that from Generation Y. Generation Y, who are entering the world of work as recent graduates, have cited work-life balance as an important consideration when joining an organisation (Sprague, 2008). An interesting and more relevant focus in the South African context could include cross-cultural perspectives on satisfaction with work life balance. Of particular interests could be the transformation of familial

structures into a more non-traditional structure and how this affects satisfaction of work-life balance as it relates to gender issues across cultures.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Considering the findings of this study, practical implications for managers in call centres are important to deliberate as this takes solutions back into the workplace with a solid scientifically researched base.

Since job control significantly correlated with satisfaction with work-life balance, redesign of work is an aspect to think about. This may be a slightly challenging task to perform, due to the implicit natures of call centres. Service availability is a key component of running an efficient and effective call centre. This implies that the call centre operators shift hours and time away from their desks need to be controlled. This can also be problematic, especially where there are twenty-four-seven call centre operations, which can subsequently give rise to other issues such as irregular work schedules and the consequences of compromising circadian rhythms.

Particularly relevant to the findings of this study is the significant impact of commute time on satisfaction with work-life balance. This is a relevant issue to all South Africans who have to face a significant amount of time travelling to and from work. This is time that could be better spent in managing both work and family life and implications for organisations to consider here are adjusting work schedules to accommodate not only core business hours but the work hours of employees. For instance, to manage service availability in a call centre, managers could have some people arrive at work earlier and leave work earlier and others arrive later and leave later. This then assists employees to manage their personal lives while organisations are assured that they have service to clients covered during core hours but also have employees available outside of these core hours.

Lastly, with research indicating that work-life balance is an important consideration (Sprague, 2008) for employees when deciding to join or remain with an organisation, it is crucial for managers in organisations to pay attention to how work-life balance issues arise and what they can do to help alleviate them.

CONCLUSION

There have been many studies over the last decade focusing on the work-family interface with many definitions of work-family balance and the aspects that make up this construct have evolved with these studies. This study added to this body of literature to expand on our understanding around this very relevant and topical issue as it relates to the fulfilment and satisfaction that we derive from roles that are central to our lives and our identities.

This study was also more contextually relevant to the prevalent expansion of the way the working world seeks to continually deliver excellent client service by virtue of having dedicated call centres to service and maintain client relationships. In addition, the study looked at the relevant issues that talent managers in organisations face as far as work engagement is concerned.

While work hours predicted satisfaction with work life balance, commute time and job control was shown to significantly predict satisfaction with work-life balance.

Satisfaction with work life balance did not prove to be a predictor of work engagement. Job control was also not show to be a predictor of work engagement.

More research is still required to add to this existing body of knowledge, especially on the relationship between satisfaction with work-life balance and work engagement. Research is specifically required to further identify the aspects that constitute work-life balance and satisfaction thereof and more specifically whether there are differences between specific industries. Lastly, the practical implications of understanding satisfaction with work-life balance is an important component to study as it takes research to the next level and that is to use it in implementing action plans to enhance the harmony satisfaction that we can experience between our work and family lives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix one: Informed consent

Appendix two: Items used from questionnaire

Appendix one: Informed consent

Hi

Thank you for participating in this survey. I am an Organisational Psychology Masters student at the University of Cape Town; completing my dissertation under the guidance of Professor Jeffrey Bagraim. My dissertation is about work-life balance amongst call centre employees.

This study has received approval from the Ethics in Research Committee of the Commerce Faculty at the University of Cape Town. I have also obtained have obtained permission from your organisation to contact you. Participation is voluntary, and you may choose to stop participating at any time. All responses are anonymous and strict confidentiality will be enforced throughout the research process.

The questionnaire should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Please answer all the questions as honestly as you can.

If you have any concerns, please contact me at shanaaz.parker@uct.ac.za or my supervisor at jeffrey.bagraim@uct.ac.za.

Thank you again for you participation.

Shanaaz Parker

Appendix two: Items from questionnaire

Work Hours:

- Do you do shift work? (y/n)
- How many hours do you work in a typical week, including breaks but excluding lunch and overtime?
- How many hours of overtime do you work in a typical week?
- How long does it take you to get to work (in minutes)?
- How many hours per week would you ideally like to work?

Emotional stability:

The following question relates to how accurately you can describe yourself?

- Fretful
- Jealous
- Temperamental
- Touchy

Work engagement:

- At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
- At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
- When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
- I am enthusiastic about my job.
- I get carried away when I am working.
- My job inspires me.
- I feel happy when I am working intensely.
- I am proud of the work that I do.
- I am immersed in my work.

Satisfaction with work-life balance:

- How successful do you feel in balancing your work and personal life?
- How satisfied are you with the balance between your job and personal life?
- How satisfied are you with the way you divide your time between work and personal life?
- How satisfied are you with how well your work and personal life fit together?
- How satisfied are you with your ability to balance the needs of your job with those of your personal life?
- How satisfied are you with the opportunity you have to perform your job well and yet be able to perform home related duties adequately?

Job control:

- How much choice do you have over when you begin and end each workday or each workweek?
- How much control do you have over when you take breaks and lunch times?
- How much choice do you have over when you take vacations or days off?
- How much control do you have over when you can take a few hours off?
- I have control over the pace of my work.
- I have opportunity for independent thought or action.
- I have the opportunity in my job to help other people.
- My job gives me the opportunity to do a number of different things.