

# **MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**

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## **FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

### **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

**THE IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A  
CASE STUDY OF NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL FOR THE FOOD AND  
ALLIED INDUSTRIES IN ZIMBABWE**

**BY**

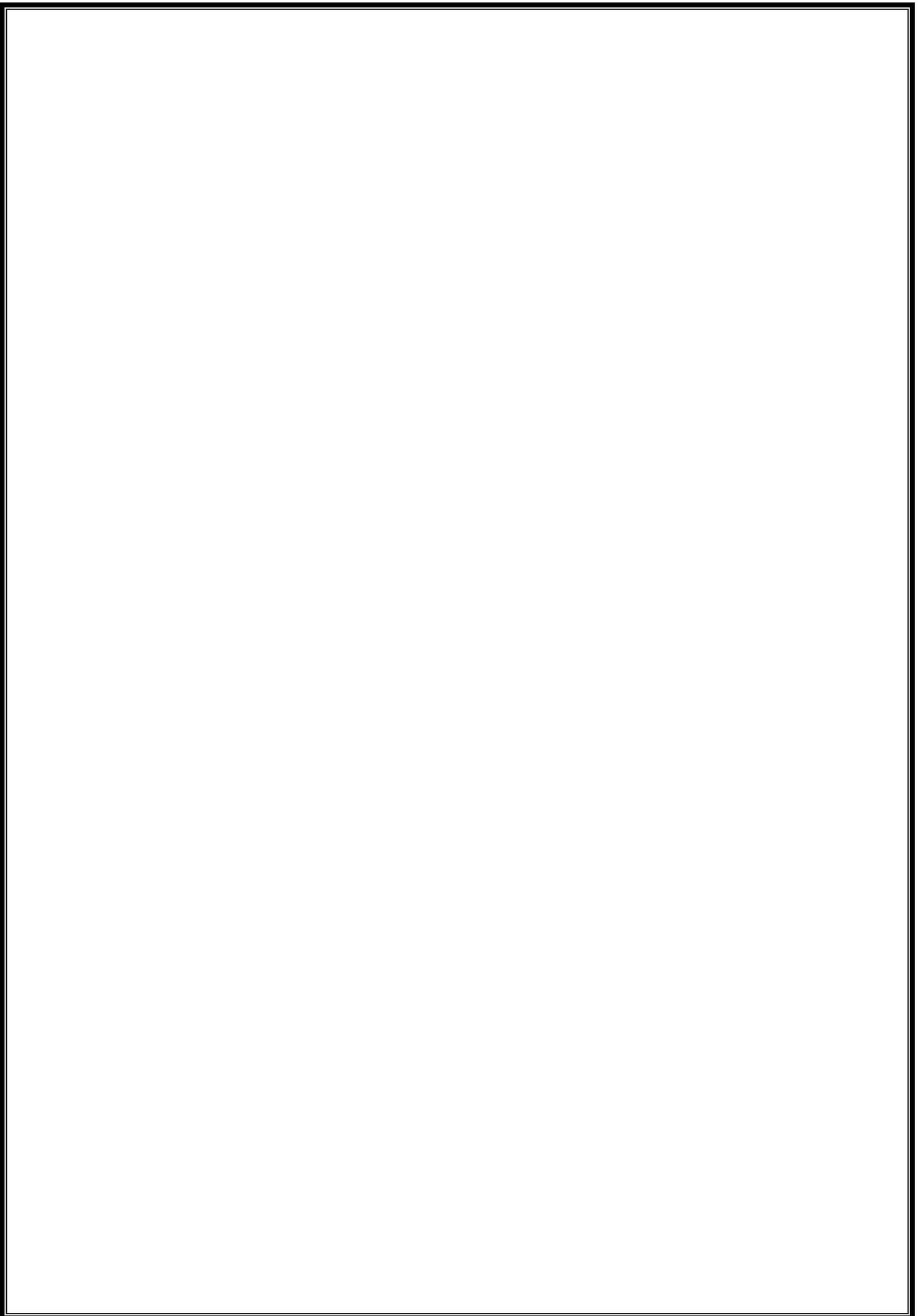
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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE BSC HUMAN  
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**TITLE OF THE DISSERTATION:** *THE IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE A CASE STUDY OF NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL FOR THE FOOD AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES IN ZIMBABWE*

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### APPROVAL FORM

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The undersigned certifies that he has read and recommends to the Midlands State University for acceptance; a dissertation entitled: ***THE IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE A CASE OF NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL FOR FOOD AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES IN ZIMBABWE.***

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The research sought to assess the impact of work-life balance on performance of employees. The major drive of the research was the necessity for it to demonstrate the value of work-life balance in nurturing accomplishment of organisational goals through employees. Research was carried out at the National Employment Council for the Food and Allied Industries Head Office. Using a qualitative descriptive research approach, the researcher collected data from a sample of 17 participants who were drawn from various categories which included senior management, middle management, and non-managerial. In selecting these participants, the researcher made use of purposive non-probability sampling. Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collection tool. Thematic analysis was adopted in analysing the data. Major inferences from the research revealed that the major drivers of work-life imbalance include gender, high work-load, long working hours and technology in the name of flexibility eradicating the chronological boundaries between home and work. Employees were left with little or no option but to succumb to the pressures posed by the organisation in a bid for the organisation to gain a competitive edge over its competitors such as NEC Agriculture and NEC Commercial which offer fairly lower rates unlike NEC food. This pushed Designated Agents to conduct more industrial inspections in order for the clients to feel they are being provided the service. Work life imbalance has catastrophic implications on employee performance, as quality of work is affected by tardiness, reduced morale, job satisfaction and motivation to perform. Findings revealed that when proper practices pertaining to work-life balance are adopted, they provide an inspiring effect on performance of employees and in enhancing of overall organisational productivity. Findings of the research indicated that regardless of the efforts put by NEC food staff to separate family and work sphere, the two remain interconnected or inseparable domains. Failure to sustain a balance between the families and work sphere remains the major source of physical and psychological strain for the participants. From the foregoing, recommendations were made for the management at NEC FOOD to involve employees in policy formulation and ensuring gender-mainstreaming in order for both males and females to benefit from these. When organisations invest in policies and practices pertaining to work-life balance and employee involvement this immensely assists in enhancing employee performance.*

## **DEDICATIONS**

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents Aaron and Mercy Chamunorwa who, through their toil and sweat, have made me who I am today. I am grateful and very much honoured to have such parents with such immeasurable love.

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## **Definition of Terms**

**Work-life balance:** is defined as good functioning and satisfaction both at home and at work with minimum role conflict. It may also be referred to as work-family balance (Clark 2000).

**Work-life imbalance:** Inability to balance work activities from those of personal (Aziz, Adkins, Walker, and Wuensch, 2010).

**Work-life balance strategies:** measures organisations put in place to help employees manage work responsibilities alongside personal needs. They help raise employee productivity at work and make the organisation more competitive (Vuksan, Williams, and Crooks 2012).

**Employee Performance:** an indicator of financial or other outcome of the employee that has a direct connection with the performance of the organisation as well as its achievement, (Anitha 2013).

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

NEC FOOD- National Employment Council for the Food and Allied Industries

NECs- National Employment Councils

WLB- Work Life Balance

QWL - Quality of work life

WFC - Work to family conflict

FWC - Family to work conflict

DA- Designated Agent

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Work-life stability dominates as a main subject for employed parents and organisational leaders. As a result of the love for their jobs employees put in a lot of hours at work and end up experiencing mental disorders like stress, depression as well as anxiety (Fullan 2000). In a bid to realise competitive advantage there are conflicting interests between employers and employees. As organisations are placing much pressure on employees to perform making them focus more on work and yet employees would have vast off-work responsibilities. This causes them to experience substantial stress as their other roles besides being workers are neglected. The rise in dual earner households has intensified the need for the equilibrium between work and life. When both spouses are employed this creates double loads for them as they have to exert effort in both domains. When these employees have children they tend to spend inadequate time with them some of the children end up displaying deviant behaviours as they would lack that nurturing especially from mothers (Johnson 2010).

Poor work life balance may lead to marital problems as when work is taking most of one spouses time the other one may attach labels such as “married to the job” especially if one spouse works longer hours and is unable to spend time with the other spouse. The challenges posed by lack of balance between work and life have pushed individuals to transform their work beliefs in pursuing a satisfying equilibrium amid work and outside the workplace. What has become progressively more evident and raised public alarms are the complications associated with trying to maintain a more fulfilling work-life balance. An exceptional way for managing human resources there needs to be a clear understanding of the bearing that work and life stability have on employee performance.

## **BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

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

Achieving a balance between work and life, in today’s world of work has become a rising global phenomenon to both employers and employees of most organisations. The motivating factor behind the research on work-family life balance is the recognition of the bearing that vast amounts of work have on the families and lives of workers. Quality service delivery is the order of the day in the business environments where competition is rampant and the weight in achieving it is placed on the workers (Uzoечи and Babatunde 2012). There has been a transformation in the way work is viewed as despite the divisions modelled by physiological, mental and other temporary demarcations it is now regarded as part of life. As organisations

and employees are stretching their working hours to accommodate customers who require services during times which are more favourable to them (Chandra 2012).

Demands outside the workplace are difficult to negotiate as they are unpredictable and can interfere with work obligations, for example when a child falls sick or when there is a funeral in the family. According to Aziz and Cunningham (2008) work-life balance emerged with the need to redressing gender based discrimination as female employees were treated less favourably. The birth of work-life balance can be accounted for by the need for organisations to deal with issues such as absenteeism and as well for an organisation to portray a good image of being socially obliged for its employee's wellbeing (Lewis 2007). According to Gregory and Milner (2009) the performance of employees may be affected desirably, because of the stability between work and life. Furthermore, for Greenhaus et al (2009), work-life balance has three key aspects, namely, time balance, involvement balance and satisfaction balance.

Work life balance was referred to by Chang, McDonald and Burton (2010) as the day to day managing and controlling of a person's job and events off the job, symbolising a sense of balance. According to Nwagbara and Akanji (2012) WLB is when individuals divide their lives into two domains and one of the domains would not be having a damaging effect on the other sphere. Furthermore, Karthik (2013) defined it as the ability of a person to balance himself or herself on a seesaw involving the two domains on different sides. Ghalawat, and Sukhija (2012) are of the conviction that WLB is a state where an individual defines for own self enabling him/her in effectively and efficiently controlling various obligations in the absence of feelings emanating from regret. On the perspective of other scholarly views WLB meaning is not necessarily achieving equilibrium (Sandhya, Choudary, Kumar, and Reddy 2011). The numerous definitions show that WLB is an ambiguous phenomenon.

Work-life equilibrium is how sound an individual is able to coordinate professional life as an employee and simultaneously able to manage their social life alongside in order to ensure achievement of a comprehensive personal satisfaction. Joshi et al (2002), regarded work-life stability as meaningful achievement of work-satisfaction and life satisfaction. Work life balance is not only restricted on looking at what an organisation does for an individual but also includes what an individual does for themselves. Therefore, when individuals are accepted and understood by employers and their families they gain contentment and help in

experiencing the true growth in their career and efficiency in service delivery. According to Kesting and Harris (2009) the concept of work-life balance involves individuals achieving a good and complete life with a sufficient amount of time being given to both the work and non-work domains. Work Life Balance is connected with concepts such as conflict, integration and balance, crossover and such programmes on the provision of flexible work, diversity management and wellbeing outcome (McDonald, McDonald, Townseid and Wharton 2012).

## **Work-Life Balance and Demographic Variables**

### **Gender**

Due to the differences in role expectations as influenced by gender ideologies and socialisation, women end up with multiple roles they have to assume such as being employees, wives, mothers, and homemakers who participate in household duties. Though it is very difficult to combine family and work women generally take responsibility. When women are able to manage the demands from both domains they consider this as a great achievement (Hochschild 1989). According to Lunderberg and Willemsen (2000) the bulk of responsibilities fall on women as they continue working in unpaid work after a day spent doing paid work their demands are more than that of men. While some women struggle with combining work with family life and quit their jobs others remain committed to paid work but hard for them to accomplish a high status at work or rise to a senior post. Some women would not be satisfied with their current status quo but the fear is that when they assume these responsibilities they may end up failing to achieve a balance, resulting in some female employees finding it better off to be self-employed or not employed at all, (Ahmad and Muhammad Tahir (2011).

Though the glass ceiling concept originally was for the workplace it has spilt over into the life's domains making it difficult for employed women to achieve work-life balance as when a child becomes sick it is the women who stays at home and the men go to work. The time women would be absent results in them having a backlog on their duties. Jacobs and Gerson (2004) revealed that some men are portraying they are involved in care giving obligations but the number of hours spent on them contrasts as a small number of men honestly would be assuming these responsibilities. The main issue is gender inequality as female employees are the ones regarded as ideal care givers (caring for disabled child, elderly parents and sick

relatives) making men free from these care responsibilities. This is a challenge for women worsening their work-life conflict and absence in organisational workshops that can help boost their performance while attending to care responsibilities. Therefore, they end up being labelled as not the ideal employees even their rise in the career ladder becomes difficult, (Thriveni and Rama 2012).

According to Fine-Davis, Fagnani, Giovannini, Hojgaard and Clarke (2004) the issue of balancing work and life has changed from being a problem of female employees only but now also for men. This is due to the changes in the social trends. Some men nowadays also want to attend their children's prize giving ceremonies, family fun days and sports days unlike the traditional men who were confined in spending a great deal of time working and would not participate in other family activities as they would always be at work (Debus and Unger 2017). Though men in most cases tend to prioritise work working long hours they would want to rise up the career ladder and become promoted, as through socialisation the men are expected to provide for the family. In the view of men work-life balance means being able to adequately provide for the family therefore in most times they tend to sacrifice home for work and are able to participate in more training programmes and after working hours' workshops as compared to their female counterparts (Levy 2012).

### **Marital Status**

Marital status has a huge bearing in terms of work-life balance, as portrayal of marriage in the African continent increases care responsibilities for women, as some may have members of the extended family living with them (Nwagbara and Akanji 2012). According to Schwartz (1989) women spend a lot of time off work fulfilling their biological roles of giving birth and breastfeeding children. This has a disadvantage in that if commitment at work is measured in terms of presence and availability at work rather than results, women become discriminated against when they take time off to attend to children. Some women end up delaying having children as they discover there is no good time to have children resulting in work-family conflict. For single employees who head families' due to death of parents and elderly brothers or sisters. It has been discovered that their responsibilities caused more work-life imbalance on them than those who were even married (Levy 2012).

Availability of an interpersonal and emotional supportive partner stimulates positive emotions, resulting in reduction in work-life conflict (Mennino, Rubin and Brayfield 2005).

In a study carried out by Levy (2012) it was discovered that the support workmates gave was incomparable to that provided by spouses. The issue that has become subject of discussion in debates is work-life balance of single parents, the problem with literature has been that the scholars tend to integrate single parents and those adults who are not married and term them both single regardless of the differing challenges of WLB experienced amidst them, (Nomaguchi 2012).

## **Antecedents of Work-Life Balance**

### **Work Intensity**

The multiple roles emanating from the different spheres especially when they exert a lot of pressure on individuals trigger poor balance between work and life. Each sphere has a certain amount of pressure that it exerts in a different way from the other one resulting in work-life conflict (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). The work and life spheres may place much demands on the individual at the same time, for instance there would a lot of work an individual is expected to perform and they are given deadlines, yet at home the employee would be needed to attend their child's graduation this triggers stress as there are contradictory requirements posed by the two domains. High demands placed on the employee for compliance in the work role affects commitment of the employee in family obligations and demands especially when the employee has little control over his or her work (Guest 2002). High job demands are regarded as the major drivers of the inequity between work and life (Ahmad and Muhammad Tahir 2011).

Employees who watch over the day to day operations of the organisation experience a greater amount of burdens emanating from workload as there is need to raise the revenue, improve their services and attract more customers, therefore resulting in them experiencing work life imbalance (Sarwar and Aftab 2011; Bedeian, Burke and Moffett 1989). When organisations command total compliance for its employees increasing their work-load and giving employees deadlines which are unrealistic, to an extent that they fail to fulfil the expectations from other spheres of life. Work would be regarded as a greedy institution as it would command maximum compliance for its members at the mercy of other domains (Cosser 1974).

The tightening of budgets whereby organisations are not providing employees with adequate resources this piles up pressure for the employee for instance in NECs councillors need to approve all the payments and this may create delays in purchasing of stationery, this means

that when there is no more bond paper. This poses challenges to the Designated Agents which would need to create case records to submit to the labour court. This means that this work would wait piling on the already present huge amount of work-pressure. Causing inconsiderably enormous pressure on employees to perform causing work-life imbalance as the organisational demands would be overshadowing the employees' family life (Nayeem and Tripathy 2012; Debus and Unger 2017). When employee workload immensely increases, work-life balance becomes poor as employees become overburdened by massive work responsibilities (Göksoy and Akdağ 2014).

### **Time Schedules**

The competitive work environment has put immense pressure on organisations to improve the performance of managers and staff, causing employees to work long hours to meet the demands, (Ben-Ner and Lluís 2011; Ansari 2011; Allan, Loudoun and Peetz 2007). The most important asset that organisations may possess that gives them sustainable competitive advantage over other organisations is having employees who go an extra mile. The higher the frequency of long working hours the less personal and family time an employee has off the workplace (Andreassen, Hetland, and Pallesen 2010). Therefore some employers in organisations regard family as problematic as the obligations they demand are regarded as a distracting factor to productivity as some employees may fail to work long hours rushing to pick up their children from school (Treiber and Davis 2012). The working hours have been increased and the age of retirement has been raised these issues affect work-life balance as instead of the ageing population to stop working and spend time with their families or on other activities they are confined in the sphere of work (Beauregard and Henry 2009). Having employees to spend a lot of hours at work means the hours are being subtracted from family time therefore resulting in work-family conflict. (Allan, Loudoun, and Peetz 2007). Therefore, long-working hours immensely contribute to work-life imbalance as more time would be given to work at the expense of family-life.

### **Technology**

The coming in of new technology has collapsed the boundaries between the work and life domains and this makes employees' to work a lot of hours even off the workplace and this has posed a lot of challenges not only on employees but also on organisational leaders, (Chawla and Sondhi 2011; Musuru, Korican and Krajnovic 2013). Waller and Ragsdell (2012) exposed that the emails though they enable a twenty-four-hour day communication

they have undesirable influences on work-life balance of personnel as they would need to spend much of their time at home responding to work-related emails. In the same light those who would have received the emails can feel that there is immense need to reply immediately after receiving the email (Kim and Wiggins, 2011). Consequently, the area of life that the majority neglects is a balance between work and family (Chawla and Sondhi 2011). Employees have to handle more volumes of work causing more interruptions into personal life as emails can be accessed as long as there is internet connection despite location.

## **Consequences of Work-Life-Balance**

### **Employee Motivation**

When employees achieve work-life balance they become highly motivated to perform. This has numerous benefits not only do they contribute to improvement in the wellbeing of employees but they are also motivated to perform (Edwards and Rothbard 2000). Motivated employees put in their best creativity and innovation without having to sabotage an organisation by not using the skills they have to the advantage of the organisation. Poor work- life balance immensely results in an employee being demotivated thus fail to perform above the expected standard and this affects the achievement of the organisations aims, (Baral and Bhargava 2010; June, Kheng, Qayyum 2012 and Mahmood 2013). When employees and employers are able to have a work and life equilibrium the positive emotions posed by it spillover into the workplace, this also improves employee morale, encourages teamwork, results in excellent service delivery. When employees feel the organisation considers their welfare fostering supportive cultures, recognising that their lives are not confined to the workplace they become immensely motivated and this reduces turnover intentions and enhances service delivery.

### **Employee Efficiency**

There are numerous benefits that arise from work-life balance these include a reduction of employee errors, increased innovation and employees not only perform because they should, but perform exceptionally as they do not feel that there is an area of their life which would be pulling the twines harder than the others (Ilgen and Schneider 1991). Therefore, when an organisation puts in place policies and programs that encourage work-life balance this enhances employee efficacy and there is a high return on investments on the part of the organisation. When employees attain work-life stability this even improves the way they

handle customers as they become more satisfied. Customers do not need to wait for longer periods of time to be served and even in terms of feedback it becomes prompt (Lash 1999). This also has a benefit on the organisation as this helps in boosting the productivity of the organisation as they do not need to spend mass of their time monitoring employees and this also reduces costs associated with mistakes.

### **Work-Life Conflict**

#### **Employee Turnover**

Work-life conflict triggers employee turnover which is an ulcer to organisations. It has huge financial costs for the organisation, causing alarming rates of accidents and destruction in operations (Johansen 2013; Hom, Mitchell, Lee and Griffeth 2012; Abii, Ogula and Rose 2013). When there is poor work life balance and the organisation may not be making any necessary steps to deal with this imbalance it may end up losing skilled personnel to other organisations. The loss of employees to other companies affects the performance of the remaining ones as their morale is reduced especially when the one who would have left was a good supervisor. This also affects quality of services provided not only because the morale of the remaining employees is affected but also because those who would have left may have been skilled personnel this leaves the organisation with unskilled employees resulting in the quality of products and services to be affected due to loss of expertise (Tebeian, Froese, Peltokorpi; Varma and Hiltotsuyanagi-Hansel 2018).

#### **Employee Absenteeism**

When employees fail to balance the demands springing from work and life they may react to this by absenting themselves from work (Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton 2000). Employee absenteeism affects organisational productivity and also in terms of costs associated with absenteeism (Avery, Volpone, McKay, King and Wilson 2012). When there is poor work life balance some employees may be present but not putting any effort therefore work and life conflict also result in presenteeism as employees would be present at work but not being productive (Sliter, Sliter and Jex 2012). Especially when employers fail to recognise this imbalance this frustrates the employees. Employees may indulge in unscheduled absenteeism in-order to cover for their family obligations as they fail to be provided with adequate time off work. This has adverse effects on performance of employees as this means that they are unable to meet targets and also demoralising the remaining employees as they end up being

overworked taking up the roles of the absent staff, resulting in poor service to customers (Senel and Senel 2012).

### **Work-Life Balance Initiatives**

Organisations that invest in proper work life balance strategies that assist employees in achieving balance between the work and home domain achieve a competitive advantage through its personnel. Organisations can come up with flexible working arrangements, these include flexibility in working hours, part-time work, telecommuting and job sharing (De Cieri and Bardoel 2009; Lyness et al 2012). These initiatives assist employees in better managing these spheres. They may also assist in attracting rare skills in industry, retention of the skilled personnel and reduction in health care costs which are associated with medical leave and absenteeism rates. Because of these strategies there is also improved customer experience. A direct relationship exists between the quality of work by employees and their personal and family life therefore it is key for organisations to adopt work-life balance strategies (Malik 2007; Levy 2012).

### **Flexible Work-Arrangements**

The level of satisfaction among flexible employees is higher than of those who are not involved in flexible working. Russel et al (2009) argued that flexible working has been seen to have multiple benefits as it also assists in the reduction of pressure emanating from work. They further went on to say if not properly managed it causes more conflict between work and life especially the arrangement of employees who work from home as this is related to more increased work pressure as the domain of work and life would have been brought under one roof. The probability that one domain receives more attention is higher as the employee can get carried away having an undesirable effect on the stability of work and life (Kelliher and Anderson 2010). This results in poor employee performance, as in some instances when the employee would now carry out the obligations from the other sphere doing household chores they may become tired and fail to put enough concentration on their work. Flexibility in this view is regarded as a mechanism which helps in reducing the selected hours an employee can work. Drake et al (2011) postulated that some employers end up resorting to casualisation of employment contracts for the employees, forcing employees to work through unappealing shift arrangements.

The beauty of the flexitime working arrangement is that it allows personnel to choose the hours they would work in order to cater for their work obligations as they are only expected to avail themselves at work for a particular time. In flexi time arrangement employees maintain the prerogative to manage the time they would want to spend at work and their needs as well. This gives the employees responsible autonomy (Barney and Elias 2010). There has been a rise in popularity of the phenomenon flexible working, and companies which implement such arrangements giving the assurance to employees that the organisational leaders care about their well-being for instance policies on family leaves, therefore employees perform their best (Baral and Bhargava 2011). The morale and commitment of the personnel is boosted when they are able to choose a flexible working arrangement that suits them contributing to maintaining healthy work and life stability (Wadsworth et al 2010; Carlson et al 2010; Jang, Zippay and Park 2012). Flexible working has been seen as a plus to the employees because they are better able to have good mental and physical health and to achieve work and life equilibrium.

### **Job Sharing**

Job sharing concept enables employees to work more flexibly and this improves their performance, as duties of one individual would be covered by two people or more (Rogers and Finks 2011). Job sharing enables employees' time to attend to care responsibilities outside the workplace such as caring for the children and elderly. These employees are able to work part time and attend to other obligations outside the works sphere, improving their work and life balance and performance at work as they would not be overburdened by work-responsibilities as they are shared, (Gholipour et al 2010) There are numerous benefits associated with job sharing for employers, as this will help the organisation in retaining skilled staff who bring immense value to the organisation, as they would not be overloaded by tasks as the work is shared. Implementation of the job-sharing practice results in the decrease on absenteeism rate, meaning that there would not be lost production. The presence of stability in personnel's life between their occupation and personal life motivates employees to put in more effort, increasing productivity benefitting the organisation, (Roggers and Finks 2011).

### **Flexible Scheduling/Hours**

Flexible scheduling involves employees' ability to choose the best hours of work they would want to work or when they are most productive, without the organisation setting for them strict times to work. Flexible working hours help in enhancing organisational productivity as the stress levels of employees are reduced as they are able to gain autonomy, (Kamau, Muleke, Mukaya and Wagoki 2013; Netemeyer, Maxham, and Pullig 2005; Galea, Houkes and De Rijk 2013). Flexible working hours help improve employee efficiency as they are able to perform without being frustrated, they help achieve equilibrium between work and life. In flexible working hours' employees have the right to schedule and organise the amount of time allocated to each role. The employees gain a better social life; those who are married and have children are able to spend more time with their spouses and children leading to happy homes (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux and Brindley 2005). On the other hand, there is telecommuting which gives workers the freedom to decide where they would want to work from. It is ideal when the environment employees would want to work from has internet connection.

Gryzwacz and Carlson (2007) postulated that despite the understanding or failure to understand work-life balance issues in an organisation its repercussions are difficult to ignore. Failure for employees to achieve fulfilling work and life stability their work is undesirably affected. This study is therefore aimed at investigating the influence of work-life balance on performance of employees at NEC FOOD. Its major aim being to gain an understanding of experiences as well as expectations of employees in a bid to identify the source of work-life imbalance, its effect on employee performance as well as suggest ways in which organisations can assist personnel to achieve better work-life balance and improve their performance and wellbeing.

Most of the studies from Nigeria and Pakistan although the researchers used different methodologies the results findings are the same work-life balance has a positive impact on performance of employees and work-life imbalance has a negative influence on employee performance.

### **An overview of the National Employment Councils in Zimbabwe.**

National Employment Councils in Zimbabwe are governed by the Labour Act Chapter 28:01. National Employment Councils are organisations aimed at improving the relationship between the employers and employees through assisting them in collective bargaining processes. NECs assist the employers and employees in dispute resolution through arbitrations and conciliations as well as upholding their rights and preventing disputes through conducting industrial inspections which guide, educate and ensure compliance of employers in the line. Employees working for these National Employment Councils are most prone to work-life imbalance as they focus massively on serving the clients through ensuring that harmonious relations are created between employees and employers in the industry.

N.E.C Food was formed in 1998 and is located at number 1 Sunderland Avenue, Belvedere, Harare. The regional office is located at number 1-1A along five street, corner Masotsha Ndlovu Avenue in Bulawayo. In April 2016, it managed to open another office in Masvingo. There are three major trade unions which are registered in terms of the law under N.E.C Food these are the United Food Allied Workers Union of Zimbabwe (UFAWUZ), Federation for Food and Allied Workers Union of Zimbabwe (FFAWUZ) and Zimbabwe Food and Beverage Allied Workers Union (ZFBWU). There are also seven employer organisations under NEC Food which are National Bakers Association of Zimbabwe (NBAZ), Brewing and Distilling Employers Association, Food Processing Employers Association, Meat, Fish, Poultry and Abattoir Employers Association, Grain Millers Association of Zimbabwe (GMAZ), Sweets and Confectionery Employers Association and Sugar Refining Employers Association.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In Zimbabwe the term work-life balance is still a topical issue, though mired by the limited Zimbabwean scholarship. As a result, this research aims to bridge this gap by defining work-life balance from a Zimbabwean perspective, through studying the NEC Food. No substantial previous studies have been conducted on the National Employment Councils in Zimbabwe particularly on the impact of work-life balance on employee performance. Most studies carried out in this industry focus on collective bargaining and dispute resolution. Many of the individuals who work in this industry are permanent workers but most of the NECs are

under-staffed resulting in the employees working overtime. These Individuals often appear to have little time for non-work related commitments. Their families, personal health, socializing with friends, maintenance of their houses and their hobbies do not receive the necessary attention, which cause an imbalance between work and personal life. The organisation NEC Food is understaffed as indicated by the executive committee annual report (2017). Although the organisation is understaffed, its membership density has increased as well as its target. This exposes employees to high work-intensity, resulting in them having to work long hours and taking work home jeopardising their personal life as work is always overshadowing the other sphere of life. The nature of the work-environment is characterised by pressure, long-working hours and emotional labour yet these employees have personal life and families which also require undivided attention. The lack of work-life balance poses negative effects on wellbeing of employees' as they tend to suffer from stress, depression and fatigue. Institutions, who fail to include quality of work-life issues when introducing systems for improving productivity, will experience massive exodus of quality employees to other institutions (Cascio 2006). If this problem remains unsolved the company may lose employees through death, mental illness and also the reputation will be tarnished. The foregoing has triggered the researcher to investigate on the impact of work-life balance on employee performance.

## **Research Objectives**

**The study sought to achieve the following objectives:**

### **Main Objective**

- To examine the impact of work-life balance on employee performance.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To examine the influence of work-life balance on general wellbeing of employees.
2. To identify the major antecedents of work-life balance for employees working at National Employment council for Food and Allied Industries.
3. To investigate the impact of company policies and procedures on work-life balance.
4. To identify the major consequences of work-life balance on employee performance and organisational productivity.

5. To recommend ways of enhancing work-life balance practices amongst employees at National Employment Council Food and Allied industries.

### **Research Questions**

- 1 How does work-life balance influence the general wellbeing of employees and what influence does it have on employee performance?
- 2 What are the major antecedents of work-life balance for employees working at National Employment Council for Food and Allied Industries?
- 3 What are the major consequences of work-life balance on employees working at National Employment Council for Food and Allied Industries and organisational productivity?
- 4 How do company policies and procedures impact on Work life balance?
- 5 What strategies can be put in place that can best help enhance proper work-life balance?

### **Significance of the Study**

Data collected could therefore be valuable to the Human Resources Practitioners. The research is also of great importance to the institution, Midlands State University, since other researchers would be able to access this research thereby gaining knowledge on the phenomenon. Findings from the study are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge specifically in Zimbabwe. This study will also benefit NEC Food as it will assist management to have a better understanding of the concept of work-life balance.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In order to have a detailed appreciation of the whole concept of work life balance in the National Employment Councils the research is guided by Guest's (2002) Spillover Theory.

#### **Spill Over Theory**

Spill-over theory by Guest (2002) postulates that the conditions under which spillover occurs between the work and family micro systems can either be positive or negative. If work-life interfaces are rigidly structured in time and space, then spill over in terms of time, energy and behaviour is negative. When flexibility occurs which permits individuals to integrate and

overlap work and life responsibilities in time and space this leads to positive spill over which is instrumental in achieving healthy work life balance.

According to Guest (2002), the contextual factors that determine the equilibrium between work and life include the various demands that emanate from work, the culture at work and in the home, placed in the work and home settings. Furthermore, he went on to highlight the individual determinants these involve the importance that the individuals place on home or work. The other individual factors include gender and age, coping, personality, energy, individual control and career stage.

The nature of work life balance was defined both objectively and subjectively. The objective pointers include working hours and hours of uncommitted or free time outside the work sphere. Subjective indicators refer to the states of balance and imbalance. Guest (2002) noted that balance may be stated when there is equal weight being given to both work and home or, when home or work dominates by choice. When there is interference of one sphere of life with another, spillover occurs. Also, numerous outcomes of work life balance which include personal satisfaction and wellbeing at work, home and life as a whole, performance at work and home, influence on other employees at work, family and friends. This shows that an inability of an individual to balance work and family/life by giving more attention to another sphere may result in negative spillover leading to deterioration in employee performance as they end up losing concentration at work and making a lot of mistakes. Spillover theory defines borders as not only encompassing those psychological categories but also tangible boundaries that divide the times, place and people associated with work versus family. The research discussed the relationship within the theoretical framework, using the Spill over theory by Guest (2002). In addition, the relevance of the theory to explain the influence of work- life balance on performance of employees was brought out.

## **Research Methodology**

According to Kothari (2004) research procedure is used to thoroughly fix the research problem and is the art of identifying how the research is conducted. It represents a range of phases assumed by a researcher in conducting study along with the logic behind them. The steps implemented in this study included research approach, sampling procedure, sample frame and sources of data. These are steps under research methodology and they provide clarity and logic behind choice of practises of the research study.

## **Research Approach**

This is very critical as it helps to enrich the trustworthiness of outcomes in as far as the effect of work-life balance on worker's performance is concerned. The researcher employed qualitative research approach. Bryman (2012) postulated that qualitative method to the investigation is registered by a comprehensive description from interpretation and integrates several dimensions. In this regards Kothari (2004) affirms that qualitative method to an investigation is generally concerned with subjective analysis of attitudes, behaviour and knowledge of the participants. Rahman (2016) is of the conviction that qualitative research method is a canopy term which shelters quite a number of informative methods aiming at decoding, explaining and describing the natural world. The elasticity of the qualitative study method gave room for penetrating further when responses required for clarification. In-depth information was ideal to answer the study problem and objective, therefore this justified the use of qualitative study approach.

## **Research Design**

According to Bryman (2012) research design is a background for collection and analysis of information. Kumar (2011) further defines research design as an idea for carrying out a study with the determination to control the factors that can restrain the trustworthiness of the study results. The issue of work-life balance may at no time be confined to a simple text book or baseless speculation. As such it was of great importance to get actual material from workers and institutes that had work-life balance practices as an important component in their actions from a more real-world perspective. A case study was employed in this study. Thukar (2009) explained case study as an extensive examination of a single institution. Yin (2013) maintains that the strength of case studies lies on its ability to explore contemporary sensation through comprehensive background analysis of inadequate number of circumstances and their

relationships. The researcher incorporated this research design because it offers a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study that would not be possible to obtain by use of other designs. A case study permitted the researcher to arrive at valid findings, conclusions and recommendations.

### **Sampling**

Kumar (2011) defined sampling as an exercise of choosing small sample from a larger cluster of population to become the basis of foretelling an event of anonymous specific evidence, significance from total population.

### **Sample Frame**

The research was undertaken at the National Employment Council for Food and Allied Industries Head Office with a sample frame of 18 participants. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000) defines sample frame as the total population from which the participants are drawn from. In this regard the sample frame refers to the NEC Food staff participants from various departments and designations in the organisation and the total staff

### **Sample Size**

Sample size is essential as it defines the extent to which the sample represents the population. It has been defined by Bryman (2012) as any subgroup of sampling units selected from the total population. In this regard, it represents a precise number of selected participants to be used in carrying out the investigation. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholas and Ormston (2013) argued that qualitative research produces rich and comprehensive information and as such the sample size should be kept rationally small. Table 1 below demonstrates the sample size which was prepared prior to carrying out this investigation at NEC FOOD.

**Table 1: Sample Frame and Target Size**

PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE FRAME	SAMPLE SIZE
Senior Management	1	1
Line Management	3	3
Designated Agents	4	4
Non-Managerial Staff	10	10
Total	18	18

### **Sampling Procedure**

The researcher used purposive sampling. As argued Bryman (2012) it refers to a deliberate procedure whereby a researcher recognises specified entities with abundant information, knowledge on the phenomena under study. Punch (2010) enlightens that purposive sampling is a calculated course with some emphasis in mind. This method gave the researcher room in choosing the contributors that provided the best information to answer research aims. This enabled the researcher to select the participants with pertinent features that enabled exploration and considerate of the study. In this regard, the researcher targeted all the employees because they were actively involved in the daily operations of the organisation and they were victims of work-life imbalance in some point in time. The part of purposive comes out on the part of the researcher purposely selecting NEC Food and Allied Industries as the organisation suitable for the study excluding the NEC Food Lodges and Villas.

### **Sources of Data Collection**

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources in collecting data. The rationale behind the use of both secondary and primary data was to fill the gaps of either source of data.

### **Primary Data**

According to Kothari (2004) primary data is the original data gathered for the first time. The primary source of data offers first hand and dependable information from the participants in the actual world. In other words, it brings about first-hand and unswerving evidence of a

particular matter at hand. The researcher was able to develop in-depth-information by gaining more questions when one question was answered hence improving the scope of answers. Although, numerous approaches can be engaged to implore primary data, the research embraced interviews in gathering primary data, which was drafted in line with the objectives of this study.

### **Secondary Data**

According to (Bryman 2012) it refers to the readily available natural information which was collected by a person for a specific determination but can be used again for a different reason. In other terms secondary data states that to already collected data which is gathered sources like journals, books and newspapers, NEC FOOD employee files, monthly reports and annual reports among other secondary sources. The researcher used company policies and procedures, staff meeting minutes, monthly reports and employee files, journals and books in this research. This helped the researcher in verifying, making clearer aspects relating to the research.

### **Research Instrument**

Creswell (2014) defines research instrument as a data gathering device which is intended to gather precise information in a study. In obtaining primary data the researcher used semi-structured interviews.

### **Interviews**

Creswell (2014) defines interview as a planned collecting meeting between the interviewer and the interviewee where the interviewer is not restricted to adhere to the specific order of the questions. The main advantage of semi-structured interviews was that, it allowed the researcher to ask open ended questions allowing the researcher to explore further and get detailed information on the research topic. According to Smith (2015) in semi structured interviews the interview does not have to follow the arrangement on the agenda nor asked in accurately the same way of each respondent. This ultimately led to thick descriptive data from participants. Rich information pertaining to the influence of work-life balance on employee performance, the researcher used the same questions for management and employees in conducting interviews in order to compare the responses. This assisted the researcher for it did not limit the researcher field of investigation since flexibility was

essential. The researcher could understand reactions properly and clear misunderstandings. The researcher was very privileged as permission was granted to use the organisation landlines to interview NEC Food employees in Masvingo and Bulawayo. The telephone interviews were fruitful and the researcher obtained the information needed. This had an advantage on the researcher as telephone interviews overcame the geographical barriers and the researcher was able to get first-hand information without having to incur costs travelling costs.

Some Interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. Though the interviews needed patience and skill as the researcher gave the respondents' time to finish a question before moving on as the most interesting questions needed some time and the researcher obtained richer and fuller answers. The researcher used minimal probes especially when the interviewees were entering an interesting area to help them continue the researcher used phrases such as "can you tell me more about that" and "how you felt about that". The researcher monitored the effect of the interview on the respondents when the respondents felt uncomfortable with a particular line of questioning and this was expressed through non-verbal behaviour or the type of reply they gave. The researcher was ready and managed to respond to this by backing off and trying again more gently or deciding it would be inappropriate to push this area with the respondent.

The interviews were fruitful and the researcher acquired the information needed. The researcher was able to observe and record participants 'exceptional perspective as it narrates to the study. The instrument permitted the contributors to provide first hand, first-person account. Interviews gave the researcher a personal contact with participants, as compared to questionnaires, as they allowed higher response rates and the researcher was able to guide the participants where clarity was needed. Nevertheless, it was not all rosy for having to use interviews as matters of confidentiality and anonymity posed difficulties during presentation of findings.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis required a lot of time and concentration as the researcher collected a lot of qualitative data. Data analysis is defined by Babbie and Mouton (2001) as a process in which the collected data is in an arranged style brought together and assumed to a meaning. The researcher made use of the thematic analysis method. Guest (2012) indicated that thematic analysis is among most popularly used methods in analysis of qualitative study. This method puts emphasis on investigating, recording and analysis of the main themes within the information. Clarke (2006) postulated that thematic analysis is carried out through coding. Coding is a process carried out in six phases in order to come up with reputable results, with patterns with meanings. Thematic analysis comprises of the following stages; adaptation with the data which involves transcription of data, generation of initial codes were data reduction and data complication is carried out, searching for subjects amid the codes, through revision of themes by explaining and providing names to the subjects and finally producing a report. The drive behind the researcher's choice to use thematic analysis method emanated from its nature of providing a flexible way of analysing data. Thematic analysis permits a number of practical backgrounds to be involved as noted by Clarke (2006).

## **Ethical Considerations**

All research assumed was carried out after an effective approval by NEC FOOD Senior Management and participants' consent. When dealing with subjects the researcher ensured a high level of professionalism. Bryman (2012) defines ethics as a self-regulatory value that offers guiding principles in carrying out a study. Richie et al (2013) highlighted that ethics play a pivotal role in the research exercise and reflection that run through research from reporting, designing and beyond. The collected data was used for purely academic purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity of contributors was highly maintained. White (2000) defined ethics as the moral ideologies and values that administrate the way an individual or group conducts its activities. Ethics are of supreme importance particularly in conducting the study. In trying to reduce Therefore the researcher put a lot of effort in trying to reduce informalities by following these ways in order of execution:

- The researcher sought permission to authority prior to the research.
- The study purpose was communicated to the participants
- Permission to use organisational telephones was sought from the Senior Manager.

- Privacy and confidentiality was maintained.
- The researcher ensured that the interviews did not disrupt any relations within the organisation.

The findings from the research were not falsified or modified; they reflect the exact research findings. In attaining information, the research did not use bribery or force, participants participated voluntarily. Anonymity of the participants was maintained as the researcher used numbers instead of their names.

### **LIMITATIONS**

The researcher faced a challenge that when the research was conducted the Senior Designated Agent who would have been a key informant was not present as he had gone to chair an exemption hearing in Bulawayo. The researcher aimed at interviewing 18 employees to come up with a sound overall conclusion on the influence of work and life stability on performance of employees.

### **DELIMITATIONS**

The research was specifically limited to NEC Food and Allied Industries and it covers period from January 2018 to October 2018. The information gathered during the research was strictly connected to the study topic” The impact of work-life balance on employee performance” with a sample size of size of 18 participants.

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This section offers a detailed explanation of the key findings of research achieved from participants during the data collection process, collected through semi structured interviews. The demographic characteristics will be presented using descriptive tables and information will be analysed using thematic analysis. The interviews sought to explore the influence of work-family equilibrium on the performance of NEC Food works. The section also highlights on key main characteristics of participants in line with the research objectives.

Table 2 below shows response rate of the research participants and this is expressed as a percentage. Before data collection the researcher came up with a sample size of 18 participants targeting the following respondents namely: one (1) Senior Manager, four (4)

Designated Agents, three (3) Line Managers and ten (10) non-managerial employees. Out of a sample size of (18) eighteen participants (17) seventeen participants managed to take part in this research. Interviews were conducted to all the participants. However, 1 Designated Agent was not present as he had gone to chair an exemption hearing in Bulawayo. This brought the Designated Agents response rate to 75%. Therefore, the table 2 (two) above integrates participant's response rate expressed as a percentage, the overall response rate summing up to a total of 94%.

**Table 2: Total Response Rate Summary**

<b>Respondents Category</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Target sample size</b>	<b>Achieved Population</b>	<b>Percentage interviewed</b>
<b>Top Management</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Middle Management</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Designated Agents</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Non-Management</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>94%</b>

**Source: Field research findings (October 2018)**

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Descriptive tables were used to provide explanations pertaining to demographic characteristics of the participants in the study. The majority of the participants their age range was between 31 to 40 years this range had 10 participants coming to a percentage of 59%. Followed by Five (5) who were under the age of 30 consisting of 29% of the respondents. There was one participant in the range 41-49 the remainder was one participant in the range 50 years and above. In terms of marital status from the findings, most of the participants were married these were Twelve (12) making up 71% of the respondents, 4 were single and One (1) was widowed. In terms of the educational qualifications, most participants had degrees giving these were Ten (10), Four (4) had master's degrees while only Three (3) were ordinary

level certificate holders In the organisational hierarchy most participants were under the category of non-managerial staff comprising Ten (10) participants. Thirteen (13) participants were involved in off-work responsibilities of caring for elderly, children and sick adults.

The tables 3a and 3b show detailed demographic characteristics of all participants. The demographic characteristics used in this research were sex, age, and marital status, education and off-work responsibilities.

**Table 3a: Demographic Characteristics**

PARTICIPANT NUMBER	AGE	SEX	MARITAL STATUS	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	AGE OF CHILDREN	EDUCATION	JOB TYPE	LENGTH OF SERVICE	OFF-WORK RESPONSIBILITIES
1	Below 30 years	Male	Single	0	0	Degree	Non-Managerial	Less than 5 years	None
2	31 to 40 years	Female	Widowed	2	15-18-2	Degree	Non-Managerial	11-20 years	Elder care
3	31 to 40 years	Male	Married	2	6-14-2	O'Level	Non-Managerial	11-20 years	Childcare
4	50+	Male	Married	3	2-5 6-14 15-18	Degree	Senior Management	11-20 years	None
5	31 to 40 years	Male	Married	3	6 to 14-3	Master's Degree	Line Management	Less than 5 years	Child care, caring for sick adult
6	31 to 40 years	Female	Married	2	2-5 6-14	Master's Degree	Designated Agent	Less than 5 years	Elder care
7	31 to 40 years	Male	Married	3	Under 2 years 6-14 15-18	O'Level	Non-Managerial	11-20 Years	Child care
8	Under 30 years	Male	Single	0	0	Degree	Non-Managerial	Less than 5 years	Eldercare
9	31 to 40 years	Male	Single	0	0	Degree	Designated Agent	Less than 5 years	Eldercare
10	31 to 40 years	Male	Married	3	Under 2 years 2-5 6-14	Master's Degree	Designated Agent	Less than 5years	Eldercare
11	31 to 40 years	Female	Married	1	Under 2 years	Degree	Line Management	6 – 10 years	Caring for Sick adult
12	Under 30 years	Female	Single	0	0	Degree	Non-Managerial	6 – 10 years	Child care and Elder care

13	Under 30 years	Female	Married	0	0	Degree	Non-Managerial	Less than 5 Years	Elder care
14	Under 30 years	Male	Single	0	0	Degree	Non-Managerial	Less than 5 Years	None
15	41 to 49 years	Male	Married	3	6-14-2 15-18	Degree	Non-Managerial	Less than 5 years	None
16	31 to 40 years	Male	Married	3	Under 2 years 2-5 6-14	Masters Degree	Line Management	Less than 5 years	Elder care
17	31 to 40 years	Male	Married	4	2-5 6-14 15-18	O'Level	Non-Managerial	11-20 years	Childcare

Source: field research findings (2018)

**Table 3b: Demographic variables of the study.**

Category	Gender		Age				Marital Status			Education			Length of Service			Off-Work responsibilities(Care)		
	M	F	- 30	31- 40	41- 49	50+	S	M	W	Master's Degree	Degree	O'Level	-5	6- 10	11- 20	Child care	Elder Care	Sick adult
Senior Management	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Designated Agents	2	1	-	3	-	-	1	2	-	2	1	-	3	-	-	-	3	-
Line Management	2	1	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	2	1	-	2	1	-	1	1	2
Non-Managerial	7	3	5	5	1	-	4	5	1	-	7	3	5	1	4	4	4	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>17</b>		<b>17</b>				<b>17</b>			<b>17</b>			<b>17</b>			<b>15</b>		

## Employee Wellness

The researcher sought to examine the effects of work and life balance on employees' physical and mental health and how it influences their performance at work and outside the works sphere. In line with the objective "to examine the influence of work life balance on general wellbeing of employees; the participants were asked to explain their previous encounters about work-life imbalances and how they had affected their health.

This study found out that the psychological wellbeing is affected when there is a negative spillover between work and personal life impairing their concentration at work. Seven (7) respondents from the non-managerial revealed that they had a time when they suffered from stress, depression, high blood pressure, back aches and headaches. They additionally reported they were many times where work was overshadowing them to an extent that they overlooked their social lives leading to stress and burnout, as they did not have enough time to rest. One of the participants from the line management revealed that employees at NEC suffered from depression as a result of loneliness and disconnection which entered their life through working excessively and it furthermore led to conflict with his family members. This finding confirms the views raised by Spillover theory by Guest (2002) that forms the crux of the theoretical framework as there is negative spillover, therefore in this instance the sphere of work is interfering with the life's sphere taking an undesirable toll on employees' general wellbeing and resulting in poor concentration at work. In this regard one informant revealed:

*"Stress yakambowanda zvokuti ndaitemwa nemusoro mukadzi wangu akarwara kwenguva, ende ndaingwe ndasiiwa ndega kubasa DA vanga vaenda kuHarare kumalabour court hearing, saka zvainetsa kuti nditore off nokuti office yaizosara yakavharwa, apa basa ranga rakawanda zvainge zvisina kumira zvakanaka, ndaiti pressure yekumba nekubasa"* (there was a time when I suffered from immense stress and developed severe headache when my wife fell sick for a while , it was a difficult time for me because I was expected to be at the office as there was a lot of pressure and the Designated Agent had gone to Harare for labour court hearings so it was difficult to take leave ,this

was a difficult time for me as there was pressure from home and work(*Participant 3*)

The above finding indicates that a lot of pressures coming from home have negative effects on the mental wellbeing of the employees. The finding from the research is similar to findings by Mckluzyk (2013) that excessive demands from home will spillover to employee performance at work. Study findings provide evidence that when there are high degrees of work life conflict it will result in depression, lack of concentration at work and stress.

The study findings symbolise that work-life imbalances posed undesirable effects on health. Three participants who acquired their degrees while working reported of having being diagnosed of depression and high blood pressure. Furthermore, two (2) participants revealed they had several demands from school like assignments, in-class tests and dissertations which also demanded their attention. This posed a challenge to them because they were only given days off during examinations. In addition, to school workload these participants had familial obligations as they were married and involved in care responsibilities such as caring for the children and sick adults. Ross and Huber (1985) indicated that education had a positive impact to those who have already attained but, straining to those who are still in the process and with care responsibilities. The following narratives below are evidence for the effects work-life conflict has on employee's wellness:

*"I had times when I suffered from immense stress when I was acquiring my master's degree, I would need to spend the day at work, then go to school and sometimes carry work home yet I would also have assignments. I also needed to cook for my family it was very hectic and stressful especially when one area was not producing the desired results". (Participant 6)*

One of the participants went on to add that,

*"I was regularly diagnosed of high blood pressure when I was acquiring my Masters degree it was really a tough time as I needed to be in Gweru for School to attend my block and there would also be a lot of pressure emanating from work"(Participant 5)*

*“When I was acquiring my degree I understood that women have a hard time, thoughts to quit my job bottled up but because I would have no other source of income as I was funding myself, I could not quit.*

The respondent went on to say

*“My husband’s brother who was sick moved in with us and I spent the day at work and had a lot of minutes to type as in January there were a lot of meetings, “I had to attend lectures after work but I ended up absconding in order to arrive home early and cook as well as make sure my bamunini (Husbands younger brother) has taken his medication.”(Participant 11)*

The above findings immensely reflect the difficulties employees face while trying to balance work and life. Since the personnel need money they cannot afford to quit on their jobs and focus on school only though it causes strain on their health. Similarly (McPherson and Reed 2007; Harris and Pringle 2007 and Curtis 2007) indicated that financial reasons were one of the main causes why students combine study and work.

Five (5) participants from the non-managerial indicated that there was existence of role conflict as councillors placed heavy demands on them stretching their working hours. One of the line managers confirmed this through indicating that when there are preparations for full council meetings and executive council meetings there will be a rise in sick leaves as employees would be suffering from stress due to pressure. Furthermore, the participant revealed that employees were exposed to a lot of pressure and were prone to suffer from work-related depression which was predicted by occupational burnout. This denotes that when there is work-life imbalance employee’s health is affected and also productivity of the organisation is disturbed as employees who experience job burnout are less likely to be productive. Burnout has fully mediated the relationship between job strain and depression (Hakanen 2007; Lin 2012; Ahola et al 2014).

The clinical signs and symptoms of burnout include chronic fatigue, emotional distress, cognitive dysfunction, depression, and exhaustion (Soderstrom, Ekstedt, Torbjorn, Nilsson, and Axelsoon 2004). Therefore it becomes difficult for employees to perform as they would be exhausted. as they suffer from health issues including depression and psychosomatic problems as they are generally caused by burnout. Similar to observations in previous research (Geuns and Demerouti 2003; Babakus, Yavas and Ashill 2009; Paryani 2014) WLB

and stress are entangled concepts, a weak balance between work and personal life can lead to several negative consequences, including physical consequences such as headache, back pain, tiredness, light-headedness and, and psychological consequences which include stress and burnout.

One participant from management pointed out that when there were overwhelming demands at the workplace, the participant worked late and failed to have time with family and revealed that:

*"I suffered from stress, physical strain, sometimes rise in emotions, I felt it in my shoulders, and I did not have peace of mind, the painful part was arriving home late while my children had fallen asleep, sometimes my blood pressure even went up as I couldn't cope with the increasing demands". (Participant 2)*

Three (3) participants revealed the more hours they worked the more work-life imbalance and deterioration in their health, impairing their concentration at work leading to poor job satisfaction. Two (2) participants revealed they had developed, eye, back and neck problems because of sitting on one posture and using computers for a long-time. These problems are attributed by poor workplace ergonomics. However, Bliese and Halverson (1996) in their study found no significant effect of working long hours on men's or women's mental health. This is a slightly different finding to that identified in this research as this study found out that long working hours result in work-life imbalance and affects employee mental health as employees reportedly suffered from stress, anxiety and some even reported of being absent-minded as they were unable fulfil demands at home because of work resulting in decrease in morale.

Four (4) participants stated that they usually become stressed because they feel they are under a lot of pressure at work and family also requires time especially when there would be deadlines they end up prioritizing work as the fathers are expected to provide for the family. Nevertheless, some confessed that this imbalance was taking an undesirable toll on their marriages as one (1) respondent revealed;

*"I felt demotivated and ended up putting frustration on my family yet they would not have done anything wrong but would just be requiring spending time with me". (Participant 16)*

One of the significant findings was that work-life imbalance not only affected employee's physical and mental health but also their social wellbeing as they end up having conflicts with their partners. Marital discord and decreased life satisfaction are likely to occur to individuals because of work-life imbalance (Perrone, Aegisdottir, Webb and Blalock, 2006). A study that analysed work-family conflict and marital outcomes found that conflict that occurred in the marital-familial sphere was positively related to psychological distress, which is related both directly and indirectly to marital outcomes through marital interactions, for instance greater hostility, less warmth and supportiveness (Fredriksen-Goldsen and Scharlach, 2001). This consequence can occur from negative spill-over or even because of absence of the family member as a result of work demands.

Therefore, the responses show that increased demands on time have been found to cause stress and issues with work-life balance. The heavy work demands faced by employees also result in higher levels of stress, which negatively impacts workers' physical and psychological wellbeing, (Malik, McKie, Beattie and Hogg, 2010). As one participant revealed he ended up developing hand problems because of role overload. High work load or the amount of work an individual is responsible for may result in fatigue, anxiety or other adverse psycho physiological consequences that can impact an individual's ability to find work-life balance (Bell, Rajendran and Theiler 2012).

However, one participant specified that had never been a victim of work-life conflict. The respondent made special mention to spousal support and revealed this support played a significant role in ability to manage stress levels. As the participant revealed that:

*"I have never been unable to concentrate or lost sleepover worry because of work-life imbalance as I have a very supportive wife she tries her best I cannot lie she is always encouraging me and also assisting me (Participant 5)*

The study revealed that spousal support can mitigate some of the adverse effects posed by work-life conflict. This current finding resonates well with studies of Rincy and Panchanatham (2011) that discover that the emotionally supportive role is usually played by the wives to cushion against the work stress of their husband resulting in radically improved both psychological and physical wellbeing and subsequently enhanced satisfaction level,

loyalty and commitment to work roles. Therefore, the results symbolise that spousal support mitigates role strain and improves employee general wellbeing. This finding is in line with previous literature by (Matsui et al 1995; Lee and Choo 2001; Erdwins et al 2001; Eby et al 2005; Kirrane and Buckley 2004; Glasser et al 2004), spousal support can be instrumental or emotional and has also been found to affect cortisol and mood levels. This symbolises that when employees receive support from spouses this reduces work-life conflict and this in turn improves their mental wellbeing as they are provided with interpersonal support.

Work-life balance goes beyond just finding the important sphere to prioritise between the work sphere and personal life sphere. Work life balance further influences the physical, social and mental wellbeing of personnel. This can be seen through the way the employee performs and the output produced, when there is proper balance between work and life the wellbeing of employees improves and they are able to work more efficiently. Six (6) participants from the non-managerial showed great discontent on the effects posed by work-life imbalance as they brought out that it not only had an effect on their psychological well-being but also on their performance at work. Therefore, this shows that when there is an imbalance between work and life the wellbeing of the employees is affected which in turn affects the performance of the employees at work, especially those who would suffer from stress this impairs their concentration. This finding resonates well with literature on work-life balance and employee wellbeing by (Khattak et al 2011; Ismail and Hong 2011; Geurts and Demerouti 2003 and Mckluzyk 2013) employees cannot meet the expectations of their companies mainly due to the physical, mental and organisational burnouts they are facing. Stress has a huge bearing on deterioration of employee performance as work demands not only had mental, caused physical strain on employees. (Jayanthi, and Vanniarajan 2012). Therefore, one of the major drivers for poor performance for employees in the service sector is stress emanating from the inability to balance between the demands emanating from work and life.

### **Antecedents of Work life balance**

Under this theme the researcher sought to find out the major drivers which cause work-life balance and work-life imbalance. In line with the objective above, participants were asked on how the demands outside work were influencing their performance.

### **Gender and Work-Life Responsibilities**

Three (3) female participants revealed that by just being a woman carries a lot of burdens as they highlighted that they were living in a patriarchal society. Furthermore, they publicized that an ideal wife was regarded as one who was able to manage home demands thus; they ended up overburdened by responsibilities from the work and home domains. One (1) non-managerial participant shared a view that women's work was more than that of men and made special reference to the numerous demands they continued to perform after work after they had fulfilled the demands of paid work. Another participant expressed,

*“I am against the idea of men participating in household chores even though my husband is unemployed, it is my duty to cook for him and attend to the home obligations before going to work”. (Participant 13)*

The above findings expose that socialisation of women makes them more responsible for domestic chores as they feel that it is their responsibility and that the male counterparts participating in them would have demeaning effect on their pride. This current finding conformed with the study findings by Mundy (2012) that some married women who have husbands who are unemployed immensely praise them and avoid looking forward to them participating in house work to preserve their pride as men and also in fear of that if they are seen to be failing to manage the home sphere well the husband may not allow them to go to work. This is a major driver of work life imbalance as this amplifies the burden of women as they would want to portray the images of perfect homemakers.

Three (3) female participants from the non-managerial staff also expressed their frustration due to the second shift having a significant bearing on employee performance at work. The study found out that work-life balance dimensions differed based on gender. Mavin (2001) argues that realistically women have more unpaid work duties and thus need different work patterns. One of the participants also suggests that the perception of balance is different for wives and husbands, due to traditional gendered occupational differences. In African countries in particular due to the gender ideologies and social construction women have multiple roles as compared to their male counterparts in paid work Lockwood (2003). According to Clark (2000) work family border theory and the Spillover Theory by (Guest 2002), women are daily cross borders of work and life, making them more vulnerable to work life imbalance as the demarcations are slowly dissolving. One of the significant finding was

that females indulge more in household chores as compared to males. As two informants revealed;

*“I have a double burden and when I am at work I have to perform and when I get home I am also responsible for cooking, washing the dishes and helping my children with homework it’s really hectic for me and I end up reporting late for work the following morning” (Participant 6 female)*

*“I take care of my grandmother and my elder sisters children before I go to work I have to clean the house, cook and bath the children as we have no house help and because I spend a lot of time doing these duties and sleep late I end up spending the whole day tired and this impairs my performance” (Participant 12 female)*

The findings above illustrate that female employees have a lot of responsibilities and this has a huge bearing on their performance, as they would have put in a lot of energy in the home sphere. This finding is consistent with results reported by Chen (2012) that women have to assume several household tasks perform and as well care responsibilities of having to take care for the elderly and their spouses. Thus this becomes a challenge for them to fulfil the obligations at home and work effectively. The reason behind this is that women generally undertake the bulk of childbearing responsibilities (Porter and Ayman 2010; Gregory and Milner, 2009). This means that due to the biological make up of they are expected to bear and also care for the children, this undesirably causes work-life conflict. This has a negative bearing on employee performance at work as in the evening; they tend to sleep late attending either attending to the children or the household chores resulting in them being fatigued.

According to the gendered organisation theory by William Acker (1980) women are disadvantaged because of the disembodied category of the ideal employee one free from non-work for example family interruption; female employees have greater non-work obligations to family than does average man. The current arrangement of gender roles leaves men freer from the responsibilities of child care and domestic tasks, and thus able to concentrate on their working lives, while women have to contend with the difficulty of joining work and family roles. This is further supported by Hochschild and Machung (1989) as they indicated that child rearing typically falls on the shoulders of working mothers after they arrive home

from their “first shift” job Hochschild makes the argument that women face a stalled revolution, although their opportunities and rights outside of the house has changed but norms about child raising have not updated therefore the burden continuously falls on women.

One (1) participant indicated that although there are training programs and workshops that benefit employees mostly they are conducted after working hours. The male counterparts tend to win the prize unlike women who would need to attend families and dependencies. This has a negative bearing on the performance of the female employee at work as females would be away attending home obligations, reducing their rising in the career ladder as chances of promotion are slim. Unlike men they at greater lengths sacrifice home for work as they are available to attend workshops, meetings, even away from home, as they do not go for maternity leave but for a breastfeeding mother this would not be possible for the females to go for days away from home (Haworth and Lewis 2005; Jennings 2007). This symbolises that when work schedules are tight to an extent that they do not permit women to take care of their families, they feel disappointed, unhappy and frustrated.

On the other hand, their male counterparts feel more contented when they achieve more at work Men usually work longer hours as they are perceived as a measure hard work, ability, quality of work and an actual factor in determining promotion as they would be regarded as more committed, than women who continue to bear the major responsibility for housework and child care, irrespective of their working status (Bianchi et al., 2000). Social influences that support the notion of man as breadwinner, not caregiver, make it difficult for men to make serious time commitments to parenting putting the burden on women affecting their work-life balance and rise in the career ladder.

### **Gender and Child-Care Responsibilities**

Child care is associated with women biologically, because of its connection with childbirth and breast feeding, because women more frequently care for children. The assumptions that child care is done by women and child care is not done by workers come into conflict when the woman with a new child is also a worker This gender difference in work patterns and responsibilities provides the context for the interpretation of the comments of men and women on their work-life balance. Jenkins (2000) observes that issues like child rearing, the

need to balance multiple roles, have consequences on health and family relationships. Women still primarily take care of domestic tasks, irrespective of their employment status. So, many women employees continue to face difficulties in balancing these two forces (Hyman and Summers 2004). In this light one participant revealed;

*“the demands outside the workplace are immensely negatively affecting my performance it is difficult for me to balance especially now I’m a new mother and i also want to express milk and spend some time with my new bundle of joy, therefore i end up coming late to work as I would have spent half of the night attending to the baby this affects my performance as I would be tired the whole day it becomes difficult to concentrate”.* (Participant 11)

The finding therefore suggests, that the existing familial and societal setup, overburdened the possibility of women to balance their work and life roles. Female employees with younger children were the most vulnerable as they ended up reporting for work fatigued impairing their performance at work. This finding resonates well with the study by Reddy, Vranda, Ahmed, Nirmala and Siddaramu, (2011) carried out in India and it revealed that work family conflict and family to work conflict were found to be more among the women having the eldest child between 6 and 10 years old. Gamble and Huang (2015) in the same light explained that women are most likely to be involved in conflicts between their family life and work and women tend to be more concerned about family instead of work especially if the woman has young children at home. Therefore, it can be observed that women are mostly affected by demands outside the workplace as they assume bulk as they are not only responsible for childbearing but as well taking care of the children. The observation concurs the inter-domain model which indicates that women suffer more from work-life imbalance especially those with younger children as the younger the child means the higher demand for care.

However work-life balance is not only a women’s issue but men also are affected when there is poor work life balance. Two (2) male participants revealed that they had children aged between two months and one year therefore they had several times were they had to wake up in the middle of the night attending to the crying baby as they felt obliged. One participant revealed;

*“The demands at work are affecting me in terms of time as I am an outgoing and sociable person, I also need to spend time with my children but because many a times I work over the weekend this reduces the amount of time I spend with them (Participant 7)*

Despite gender differences three (3) male participants acknowledged that the time they had to spend with their families was not enough as work took bulk of their time. It can be observed that men are also affected in terms of work-life balance and because fewer men participate in household chores do not make them free from all off work responsibilities. As three male participants indicated they were involved in care responsibilities for their children and were obliged to pick and drop them at school each day. The other Two (2) male participants went on to reveal of having taken time off to attend to their children when they fell sick, as this would impair their concentration at work. This shows a serious sign of commitment men have to care responsibilities. Therefore this study departs from the study findings by Jacobs and Gerson (2004) that some men are portraying themselves as being involved in care responsibilities, but a small number would be honestly assuming these duties, as men in the research study expressed commitment to care responsibilities.

In unison both genders observed that the boundary that separates work and leisure is blurred putting them at greater risk of a negative spillover from the domains. The spillover of work into family life showed that both men and women did not have enough time to spend with their families and moreover work pressures affected quality of family life. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Pocock and Clarke 2005; Greenhaus 2003). Both genders opined that a supportive work environment is helpful in achieving work life balance. Theories range but the combination of working more hours and feeling more responsible for breadwinning can create an unhealthy level of anxiety and stress for some men (Forman 2018). Martins, Eddleston and Veiga (2002) found that women’s career fulfilment was undesirably affected by work-family conflict throughout their lives whereas men showed adverse effects only later in their career. From the findings it can be observed that the major cause of work-life imbalance for women is highly attributed to the second shift they perform and for men because of the long working hours they work in order to demonstrate as being more committed affecting their work life balance.

## **Work Intensity**

Staff shortage and high work load are considered major causes of poor work life balance as they result in role overload, which in the opinion of some participants resulted in increased workload. Two participants indicated that there was role overload in the organisation. Role overload occurs when an individual takes on too many roles at one time. High levels of overload mean that an individual has too many role demands and obligations, but is unable to perform them all effectively (Barnett and Baruch, 1985). Three (3) of participants highlighted that overtime was also allegedly necessary to cover for the shortage of staff due to recruitment difficulties. Two (2) participants from the management revealed the organisational incapacity to recruit extra staff due to the volatility of the business environment and thus voluntary overtime was the preferred option rather than recruiting extra staff. However, one (1) participant revealed

*“the amendment No 5 of the labour Act (Chapter 28:01) increased Designated Agents workloads hence the need to make necessary adjustments by comparing costs of bringing in new Designated Agents with those of poor service delivery” (Participant 10)*

One (1) participant from the senior management went on to say,

*“We have resorted to recalling Designated Agents from the Eastern and Southern Regions as the Designated Agents in these areas experience a lesser amount of work burden as they have fewer clients...”*

The participant went on to explain

*“In the Southern Region meetings are held only twice a year and in the Eastern there are no Collective Bargaining Agreements meeting sittings at all whereas at the head office meetings are the order of the day as there can be 4 meetings in a week. They experience a lot of work-pressure as they not only attend meetings but as well attend to large volumes of cases and inspections”.(Participant 4)*

The above results indicated that when there is high workload there an employee fails to achieve a balance between work and life and also service quality is immensely affected. The research concurred with the findings of Kim and Stoner (2008) that employees who

experienced high levels of emotional exhaustion in high pressure environments were more prone to experience lack of personal accomplishment at work. This shows that employees stationed at the head office are more prone to experience poor work-life balance as compared to those in the regions therefore reducing their efficiency as they are overburdened by workload, managing multiple tasks at the same time this means that they will have less time in other activities outside the works sphere.

### **Nature of Organisation**

Selected Designated Agents concurred that the nature of the organisation attracted massive pressure and was understaffed. They further stated that most of the times the workload was heavy as and they ended up taking additional work home contributing to making their work-life balance harder. Two (2) participants from non-managerial staff highlighted that they had to fulfil the demands made by councillors adding to their already high workload as two (2) reported on several occasions were councillors requested for copies of sectorial minutes ranging from January to September yet in a month at least 16 (sixteen) meetings are held per sector and NEC Food has 7 sectors. Furthermore, one participant from the line management highlighted this was beyond their control as NEC is managed by Trade Unions and Employer Organisations and they may both make unanimous demands and employees need to fulfil them fairly. Often, employee work-life balance is poor when the work pressure is high (Miryala and Chiluka 2012). This means that increased workload for employees' means there is more energy and time devoted to work and less on non-work life, resulting in work-life conflict.

Three (3) of participants revealed that employers made heavy demands on them with regards to both quantity and quality of output. Furthermore, one (1) of respondents indicated that employees are expected to submit weekly, consolidated weekly, operational statistics monthly, half yearly and consolidated yearly reports. Therefore this puts much more strain on the employees as they were experiencing a lot of pressure already and were given deadlines for submission of these reports this results in employees working longer hours.

One participant from the senior management stated that NEC FOOD employees were working very long hours. When asked to explain he stated that this was as a result of the number of meetings conducted in a week, the accounting department would need to pay the councillors before they attend the meeting, Designated Agents would be chairing the

meetings and the Secretariat would be taking minutes. The respondent went on to say that this lines up tasks for the employees as the task they would be attending to multiple demands which arise yet they would have other work scheduled for them resulting in employees working overtime. A considerable amount of research showed that work demands such as number of hours worked, workload and shift work were positively and strongly associated with WFC (Burke, 2002; Higgins and Duxbury, 2001; Higgins and Duxbury, 1992; Saltzstein et al., 2001; Voydanoff, 1988). The findings thus review that the more hours employees spend at work the less time they spend on other off-work responsibilities.

Two (2) participants reported they were victims of long-working hours, One of the participants who had served the organisation for more than eleven years stated that,

*“we used to work for 48 hours per week but now we are working more than this is, when there are meetings be it CBAs, exemption, committee meetings and strategic planning workshops councillors are paid in advance therefore creating need for me to work-late uploading the payments for the councillors to approve as no payment can be successful without the approval of the councillors” (Participant 2).*

The other participant from the non-managerial indicated that when it is time for Audit they usually work even during public holidays to ensure all files would be in order before the auditors come they would not want to be found wanting. This means that the more hours they spend at work the less time they spend home. Extended work hours and excessive workloads can influence work-family conflict and is the direct antecedent to work-family conflict (Spector 2007).

There are various explanations for this associated with affluence, the growth of single parent families, the privatization of family life and the lack of local resources and facilities. In addition, the pressures and demands of work, reflected both in longer hours, more exhaustion and the growth of evening and weekend work leave less scope for “quality” family time. Two respondents expressed their views on the issue of long working hours;

*“we are working long hours on draft rulings as these require a lot of research as such this organisation is a high pressure organisation and we understand it*

*is understaffed, this increases pressure on us and is facing financial challenges due to the economic situation and as DAs even during the day we are required to do a lot of errands, chair collective bargaining meetings and also write minutes therefore I end up going home late because of role overload.”(Participant 10)*

*“As DAs we are expected to conduct conciliation hearings and some of them may last longer than anticipated and if the parties fail to agree and i sign a certificate of no settlement I would need to receive both parties’ submissions thoroughly read them and come up with a ruling I end up working long hours as i would want to reduce my workload and expedite the ruling”*

*(Participant 9)*

Respondents confirmed they were increasingly separated from family and leisure activities in an ever-increasing climate of long work hours and intensity. This means that the more the hours’ employees spend at work the less time they spend with their families as there would be a negative spill over between work and life. The findings were able to correspond with Guest (2002) spill over theory which forms the theoretical basis of this research that spillover occurs when there is interference of one sphere of life with another therefore in this instance there is negative spillover of work into the life’s sphere. However, none of these employees indicated that they wanted to stop working late. This was because of the favourable rate at which overtime was calculated. It was suggested by one manager that the positive impact of working long hours for the individual money outweighed health concerns and work-life balance concerns for most employees. Furthermore, the research findings indicated that the wellbeing of workers is being negatively affected as they sacrifice to work long-hours in a bid to secure their jobs. These findings also resonate well with the view by (Scherer 2009) who indicated that many employees feel under a lot of pressure to work longer hours to preserve their jobs. Additional working hours subtract from home time, while high work pressure the end result may be fatigue, anxiety or other adverse psycho-physiological effects that can impact the quality of home and family life (White et al (2003).

## **Technology**

The advancement in technology has resulted in coming in of mobile phones and internet that have caused organisations to keep in touch with their employees despite the hour as they can even contact the employees at night (Morgan 2003). The issue of technology further intensifies work demands on the part of the employees and this inevitably causes work-life imbalance and stress (Bhagwagar 2009). One participant from the non-managerial indicated that the issue of technology has caused the employees to be always engaged on the job and they can be called for duty even over the weekend the employee is expected to be engaged on the job almost at all times. This finding shows that the traditional distinctions between work-life and family-life have disappeared, as even when an employee is at home he or she would continue working. One-line manager indicated that in selection of employees they consider the flexibility of an employee if they are able to report for duty at any point in time they are called as the NEC is a high pressure organisation. This causes poor work life balance as the worker cannot be free from work even during weekend. This finding resonates well with the views by Yasbek (2004) that in some organisation during the process of selection they place much emphasis on the attitudes displayed by the prospective employee more particularly whether the employee is flexible enough. This therefore results in lack of work-life balance for the engaged employees as this means that work would be taking most of the individuals' time.

Five (5) respondents in the research study highlighted that the existence of numerous methods such as emails, even social platforms such as Whatsapp and laptops enable them to accomplish their work obligations even beyond the physical boundaries of their office. This has a disadvantage on the work-life balance of these employees as this means that the employees are obliged to respond to the emails, even after working hours and during weekends. Researchers have found that employees who consider their work roles to be an important component of their identities will be more likely to apply these communication technologies to work while in their non-work domain (Narayanan and Narayan).

Findings further demonstrate the applicability of the spillover theory as it suggests there is a blurred boundary of work and life as a result of technological control causing a negative spillover. This type of control, as Bakker argues, replaces the more direct, authoritarian control, or simple control, such as managers and bosses. Communication technologies in the temporal and organisational aspects of work have changed, defining a "new workplace" in

which employees are more connected to the jobs beyond the boundaries of the traditional workday and workplace (Boyd, Bakker, Pignata, Winefield, Gillespie and Stough 2011). The more this border is blurred, the higher work life imbalance is self-reported by employees, Gladies and Kennedy (2011). As literature by Azeem and Akhtar (2014) reveals the theory of technological control suggests employers and employees often communicate and continue to work during "off hours" or even periods of vacation. The use of technology increased confusion as participants indicated it ended up defeating its purpose of easing the work by causing more work pressure.

Technology permitted employees to work each and every time and this caused an extension in the work day. This resulted in employees complaining as they had to carry work home. The physical and chronological borders of work changed and work progressively has a greater influence on personal and family life as one participant revealed;

*"Most of the times the workload is heavy, and the organisation has provided us with laptops and cell phones and this has a disadvantage of that even when you are home, they can call you or you end up working at home or thinking of work even at home because the pressure is just too much.(Participant 10)*

As evidenced by the research findings above technological changes have led to changes in expectations of instant communication and this is causing employees to have work-life conflict as they are always having work in mind. Four participants noted that they received, and dealt with, a large and growing number of emails on a daily basis. It was discovered that emails contribute to information overload as a result of how easy it was to copy an email to a large (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz and Shockley 2012). Technology poses much danger in terms of work and life balance as Three (3) participants revealed they were faced with backlogs after periods away from the office. According to a study for the Centre for Work-Life Policy, 1.7 million employees in the United States as a result of globalisation they regard their jobs and working hours as excessive. Communication systems which include voicemail and email have affected organisations and it was reported that their use had immense potential of increasing working hours (Burke and Cooper 2008). Therefore, technology has not only brought the desirable influences of helping in flexibility but it has posed more danger as the borders of work would no longer be clear, resulting in work-life imbalance.

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

The researcher sought to find out the implications of work-life imbalance on employees' performance at work and organisational productivity.

### **Poor Service Delivery**

Two participants from the managerial indicated that, work-life imbalance compromised service delivery as it reduces employee morale, motivation and job satisfaction. The length of working hours potentially influences productivity as indicated by the responses provided by management they expressed great concern on long working hours as they believed they had detrimental effects on productivity. Furthermore, one of the Designated Agents revealed that the rate of productivity declined as hours increased. The literature in this field includes studies by Stead et al. (1997) focusing on influence of excessive hours in managerial performance and decision making. They found that workload and long working hours are associated with impaired cognitive processing and decision making. This was related to the incapability of an individual to deal with ambiguity. This therefore shows that when employees are exposed to long working hours their performance suffered as they would become exhausted due to working continuously. This finding concurs the results of the qualitative study on long hours` cultures by The Institute for Employment Studies. They found out that individual performance suffered when longer hours were worked. Human Resource Managers noted that they had seen instances of individuals being worn-out, struggling to make decisions and wasting time when they were working excessive hours, (Kodz et al., 1998).

Two (2) respondents highlighted that long working hours had some destructive influences on individuals and the employer. They further highlighted that long working hours resulted in tiredness which harmed productivity. Absenteeism and time lost at work due to personal matters negatively affects employee performance on their job tasks as well as behaviours toward their co-workers and supervisor (Belita, Mbindyo and English 2013). This means that the quality of service delivered is compromised. As indicated by one of the respondents

*“Some employees work over the weekend and come Monday they will be exhausted; it becomes difficult for them to deliver above expectations as they would be tired amounting to poor service delivery.” (Participant 10)*

*“Employees who are overworked are less likely to pay close attention to the tasks they will be executing; they are more likely to take dangerous shortcuts to get things done in time...”*

The respondent went on to say

*“Employees who are under the pressure of unrealistic deadlines and production demands tend to follow the rules more closely and avoid such problems. These employees tend to deliver less quality work and this negatively affects the company's productivity” (Participant 8).*

Through a closer analysis of the above findings employees exposed to high workload and long-working hours find it difficult to perform. As it is difficult for them to exert the same amount of effort they were putting in the morning or earlier at work as humans they get tired unlike robots. In another study by Styhrea (2011) cited in Kaliannan, et al (2016) results brought out that individuals who have poor work life balance due to work-intensity, long hours and job insecurity as examples were at greater risk of developing reduced level of job satisfaction as compared to others. One participant from the line management indicated that work-life balance effects were evidenced from the poor service delivery as they received letters from councillors complaining that the Disposal of cases was taking too long and the trade union would have to seek for notification, as the DA would not be aware of cases brought before them because of stress from poor work-life balance.

The research findings also expose that the quality of service delivered suffers when fewer employees are available to serve customers and the customer satisfaction would be low resulting in them complaining. This finding is consistent with the explanation by (O’Connell et al 2010 and Lee, Huang, and Ashford 2018) that economic downturn, intense competition and ever changing technology have placed a great deal of pressure on companies to perform and on employees to increase their output. Organisations deal with these tough economic times by cutting expenditure, reducing staff levels and intensifying workloads for remaining employees. The economic environment is also influencing employees to work long hours because of the rapid unemployment rate employees try by all means not to complain despite the discontentment they would have to maintain the employment relationship (Lee, Huang and Ashford 2018) .Therefore this symbolises that when an organisation is short-staffed the available employees become exposed to undesirable amounts of work-pressure, employees

would just be present at work but not being very productive as they would be tired badly affecting organisational productivity.

### **Low Morale**

Two (2) participants revealed that when there is work-life imbalance the employees lose their morale and there is increased absenteeism. This therefore symbolises that a workforce that is present and healthy accomplishes more as revealed by the narratives below;

*When employees feel dissatisfied they do not invest much on work as they would be discontented and the level of unscheduled absenteeism increases leading to less productivity.(Participant 16)*

*When the employees experience work life imbalance they lose the drive to perform and interest to go an extra mile”. (Participant 12)*

In today's economic reality, the root cause of low employee morale is lack of work-life balance. In such an environment, employees tend to focus more on their career choices, a sense of personal well-being and financial future (Kamau, Muleke, Mukaya and Wagoki 2013). Behaviour of an individual employed by an organisation is immensely determined by employee morale, which is defined as the feelings of a person exhibited by confidence, cheerfulness, discipline, and willingness to perform assigned tasks (Qayyum 2012). While a number of traditional managers tend view low morale as intangible, its significance and influence on productivity and profits are measureable and disturb organisational goals. Work life imbalance leads to low morale resulting in employee disengagement, (Bedeian, Burke, and Moffett 1989). Less engaged employees are less productive, less customer-focused and prone to withdrawing their efforts and adopting counterproductive behaviour. As one respondent revealed;

*“Work-life imbalance causes reduction in morale of employees, the personnel will display signs which include insubordination, conflicts with co-workers, disorganised working environments*

The respondent went on to say

*The employees tend to routinely complain about apparently insignificant work related issues, and also increased complaints from customers in regards to the employee's behaviour.”(Participant 5)*

The above findings indicate that low morale can be the fuel that feeds the fires of employee discontent, poor performance, and absenteeism. As confirmed by (Prater and Smith 2011) that with low morale comes a high price tag through employees performing dismally, the organisational productivity is undesirably affected. Therefore, not only does low morale impact employee performance undesirably it also affects the production levels of the organisation and the corporate image as customers would always be complaining on the quality of service.

### **Low Employee Motivation**

Work life imbalance affects immensely employee performance Two (2) participants revealed that there were a number of times when they would complain in front of clients, about how they are least paid among the 48 NECs yet they were the busiest. One participant reported working overtime had undesirable influence on the employees as this meant they made more mistakes when they worked long hours. One participant from the line management indicated that employees were resistant to any attempt to reduce hours, because of the effect this would have on their earnings capacity. When employees are not motivated their performance is reduced as the employees would lack inspiration therefore affecting their quality of services. Employees who are less motivated are less likely to put in their best performance (Hartman 2017). Lack of work and life equilibrium reduces the motivation of employees (Jayanthi, and Vanniarajan 2012). De-motivated employees are unable to put in their best performance, as they do not even devote additional time to performing tasks in the organisation resulting in poor quality of work and absenteeism increases (Jansen, Kant, Amelsvoort, Kristensen, Swaen and Nijhuis). When employees feel one sphere is demanding more without taking into consideration the other spheres. This causes the employee to be demotivated as there is a negative spillover as highlighted by Guest (2002) spillover theory and when employees are demoralized this leads to unexcused and unplanned absences and prolonged lateness and poor customer services and costs for the organisation.

## Stress

Three participants revealed that they found it very difficult to relax and pay attention to organisational tasks. One participant said;

*“stress causes me to think illogically and make very poor decisions as compared to when I am in normal state.”(Participant 15)*

Four participants indicated that burnout, sleep deprivation and mental distancing were some of the consequences they faced when there was conflict between the work and family domains. They highlighted that these had grave consequences on employee performance. Employees in service organisation are subjected to high degree of work related stress, which is the major reason for employees' poor performance at the job, (Noor and Maad 2008). Implications for organisations are clear: work-life conflict can have destructive effects on employee performance (Mwangi Lucy Wambui 2017). This therefore symbolises that effects of work-life conflict on employees' performance and organisational productivity are not favourable.

These findings indicated that stress on an employee not only affects employee performance as One participant revealed that work stress impaired his judgement posing challenges in compiling draft rulings. One line manager indicated in the same light that they had received complaints on the handling of the Das cases as he indicated that the trade union as they expressed discontent to an extent that they wrote a letter to the management.

This means that the organisational reputation is affected and as well organisation as productivity it declines. As a consequence of the stress that they are going through, there will be a reduction in the productivity and creativity of the workers translating to a reduction in the estimated profit margins for the organisation. Stressed employees they rarely get enough sleep at night and are always sleepy or extremely tired when they report to their work stations they may end up driving customers away as they would be very frustrated and impatient. Stressed employees are also on record as being very impatient and ill-tempered (Frone 2003).

The research findings indicate that participants are often exhausted Five (5) participants from the non-managerial reported to be constantly restless even when they get to work as there would be a lot of requirements from the home domain and these ended up falling over into the work domain having negative implications on their work performance. This is also supported by research findings by Geurts and Demerouti (2003) work-to-family interference has significant and negative effects on job satisfaction. Employees who continue working

even when they get home their relations with spouse, children are more likely to be affected. The research findings bring out that work life balance is an important factor on employee performance. This is in line with a study by Oswald (2012) who states that work life balance on employees of an organisation impact employee productivity of an organisation.

Employees end up compromising one area. The results from this study do not provide strong support for the outcomes of the studies by Galinsky et al. (1993) and Premeaux et al. (2007) of not finding any significant relationship between work-life balance of employees and performance of their respective organizations. Similarly, studies conducted by Frye and Breaugh (2004) and Goff et al. (1990) yielded similar results, that is, no relationship between two phenomena. Yet in this study it has been discovered that work-life balance has a huge influence on organisational productivity, its presence results in improvement in employee morale and customer retention and increased organisational ability to attract talented employees. Therefore when there is poor work life balance employees tend to absent themselves (unscheduled absenteeism). Absenteeism and time lost at work due to personal matters negatively affect employee performance on their job tasks as well as helping behaviours toward their co-workers and supervisor. This means that the quality of service delivered is compromised and organisational productivity declines.

### **Organisational Policies Influence on Work-Life Balance**

The researchers aim was to investigate the influence organisational policies had on work life balance.

#### **Vehicle Policy**

One of the top managerial participant indicated;

*“The vehicle policy was effected on 9 October 2015 and the objective of the policy is to strive to achieve and maintain equity in terms of employee benefits, entitlements and compensation that NEC Food employees derive from the use of a company vehicle.”(Participant 4)*

One participant from the line management indicated that the vehicle policy assisted, in terms of time management as the participant was able to arrive at work and home in time unlike when the respondent used to commute yet the participant lived far-away from the workplace. A participant from the Designated Agents category indicated that the policy helped in

carrying out organisational duties such as delivery of notifications for conciliation hearings within a short space of time. The respondent further said the policy assisted the participant to be able pick up his children from school and also visit his wife in Mutoko were she worked as the vehicle benefit came with monthly fuel coupons allocation.

The above findings indicate that the vehicle policy assists employees in better managing their work and life balance. As apart from using the vehicles to pursue the organisational errands they are allowed to use the company vehicles for personal errands within the stipulated radius. According to the NEC Food and Allied policy manual (2016:18) “the council will meet expenditure in respect of insurance, fair wear and tear related to maintenance, licensing as well as fuel and oils consumption and in the event of accident or breakdown the accountant seeks three quotations from approved accident repairs services and the finance committee approves then accountant arranges payment”. This saves employees in terms of money as the organisation caters for the expenses of the vehicle and this reduces their worry improving their performance at work and at home as they are able to arrive home earlier and spend time on off-work responsibilities helping them achieve work life stability.

### **Funeral Policy**

The research found out that the policies such as the funeral assistance policy in the organisation had a positive impact on the balance between their work and life spheres as revealed by the narratives below;

*“NEC believes that in the unexpected event of death of an employee and dependence, it is obligated to ensure that the deceased are afforded a decent burial, in pursuance of this the NEC has put in place the funeral assistance policy.*

The participant went on to say

*The NEC holds a non-contributory funeral policy for all its employees with Old Mutual and the key facets of the policy include a cash death benefit of \$5,000-00 and Nyaradzo platinum package for the casket and groceries.”(Participant 4)*

One participant from the Designated Agents revealed that the funeral policy helps employees to have peace of mind, as it eases financial burden on the deceased family as the organisation takes care of that. One female participant from the non-managerial indicated that she lost her

husband in 2017 and the organisation helped her immensely through the funeral policy as she was given cash to cater for the funeral expenses and as well one-month bereavement leave. This therefore shows that the organisation has some policies which assist in avoiding spillover of problems from home to work.

### **School Fess policy**

Two participants from the non-managerial indicated that the school fees policy assisted them gaining economic stability and they did not have to worry about their children's fees. One participant from the non-managerial contended that employees below grade C5 were not entitled to school fees allowance. The participant went on to say those in C5 and above who were single were benefitting through the school fees allowance yet in the participants view saw as if there was no need yet those below had a need but were not eligible.

The above findings indicate that the employees who were entitled to the school fees allowance benefit benefitted immensely as this reduced their stress as the organisation catered for the costs. Whereas for the employees who were not entitled to such benefits they were disgruntled resulting in poor work and life balance, resulting in stress and decreasing their performance at work. According to Tapasya and Urvika (2017) the behaviour of an individual is governed by the expectation of behaviour which expect him/her therefore when these policies fail to bring the desired results it becomes a challenge.

### **Training**

Five of participants indicated how they had benefitted from the training policy as all employees were eligible. Three participants indicated that the organisation organised training programs which help employees in terms of work-life balance. As revealed by the narratives below;

*“Training and development is important in helping employees balance the demands from work and outside the work-place, the organisation usually hires consultants who are experts to countervail the dangers and contingencies associated with work-life imbalance and strategies to counter them.  
(Participant 12)*

*“the programs have impacted my performance positively as I am now able to plan as we had a workshop on planning and organising, before this program we used to mix conciliation hearing dates that is when we then requested the organisation to purchase a notice board and it did and therefore helping us as Designated agents to know the programs lined up”. (Participant 10)*

*“Before the wellness training it was very cumbersome and I would fail to meet deadlines especially of submitting reports and this would frustrate me but I was very fortunate that we had a training on health and wellness facilitated by CIMAS and were we were taught on how to manage work and personal demands so I am able to manage pressure or stress and this has improved my performance. (Participant 1)*

The results indicate that training programs aimed at work-life balance strategies assists employees, in being more organised and find work enjoyable and as well reducing health cases. Before this policy employees would fail to meet deadlines and submit weekly and monthly reports even the employees would find it difficult to display a happy countenance, they even complained in front of clients of how they are overworked as the other areas of their lives were at the mercy of work. Similarly, LeCheminant and Merrill’s (2012) concluded that employee performance is improved when organisations conduct health promotions for their employees. Wellness program facilitated by Cimas helped employees break their work into manageable tasks so they could balance work and social life therefore after the program they were able to manage pressure and stress and performance improved as they were able to feel patriotic about the organisation and become ambassadors. According to Ferrero (2014) when managers are interested in the wellbeing of their employees, through organising training programs regarding the wellness of the employees. When employees participate this minimises turnover intentions increasing their job satisfaction.

### **Other Organisation Policies**

In response to the question how is the company handling the imbalance between work and life responsibilities of employees’. One participant in response indicated that the organisation provides advance pay to cater for problems which need money which an employee would not have expected. Another participant indicated that general loans policy assisted the participant the time the participants house was being built it eased the burden and the loan was payable

over a flexible period of time and reducing the participants stress. Two participants revealed that the organisation has created and anchored a corporate culture of treating employees as family. Therefore, when an employee falls sick, gives birth, loses a close relative the organisation sends its representatives and they are provided with fuel coupons or the necessary requirements in assistance. One participant revealed medical aid policy had helped the participant a lot in terms of work-life balance as the respondents family was also covered. The participant was also able to go to the gym so and had benefited physically as well. Another participant from the management indicated that the organisation had removed encashment of all leave days as a work-life balance initiative and despite grade no employee was to have more than 10 ten days employees were expected to go on leave and handle other responsibilities outside the workplace.

The above findings indicate that the organisation is concerned about employee wellbeing as the policies assist the employees in attaining equilibrium between work and life. These strategies also help in improving performance of employees as they become more committed as they are assured that the organisation cares about their welfare reducing their intention to quit. This finding is complimented by the views of (Shrestha, 2007) that error rates are reduced, health is improved and higher productivity when there is creation of a harmonious working environment. These policies are positively influencing work-life balance of the employees as they do not deliberately absent themselves in-order to attend to their personal business but the policies give them room to attend to activities outside the work sphere. In Baicker et al. (2010) research it was concluded that when organisations invest on wellness programs there is high return on investments as medicine costs decline as well as costs associated with absenteeism.

### **Role of Employees in Policy Formulation**

In response to the question on the role employee's played in drawing work-life balance policies, nine (9) participants revealed that policies were imposed on them, they did not play any role in policy formulation. Some participants indicated that policies were formulated by the Executive committee which involved the NEC Chairman, General Secretary, and HR Committee Chairman therefore it became difficult for employees to be involved. Furthermore, it was revealed that line management were excluded in policy formulation and they just assumed the duty of making sure the policies were effectively implemented. The six employees indicated that it would be difficult for them to benefit from the policies as they are

not even aware of them as they do not receive the necessary education on their importance. Furthermore, one participant highlighted that the organisation may have very good policies which help employees in achieving work-life balance but they fail to benefit from these because they would not be communicated. Giving employees room to bring out their opinions is of great significance as they are able to feel their views are considered of great importance, as communication that does not allow staff to respond can lead to morale problems (Dye and Garman, 2006). According to Oludayo et al. (2015) there are higher chances of undesirable results to surface when management does not accommodate employees, he puts much emphasis on the importance of employee involvement in WLB decision making.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The purpose of the study was to analyse the influence of work-life balance on employee performance of employees at NEC FOOD. It was evident from the research findings that efforts to draw borders separating the work and life sphere were immensely frustrated. Work-life balance affected mostly affected female employees as they also had to perform in unpaid domestic work when they got home from their paid jobs. Whilst their male counterparts put in more hours at work and as a result often suffered more from physical strain, due to the much hard labour they put in at work. This meant that the quality of service delivered would be compromised as work life imbalance takes an undesirable toll on employees lives both males and females as it is a global phenomenon.

Participants in the study were in one accord that the major drivers of work life imbalance at the organisation were emanating from staff shortage, heavy workloads and long working hours. The implications created from failure to maintain a balance between the spheres resulted in poor performance and lower commitment on the job. It was also noted that the consequences of the work-life balance often resulted in the participants suffering from psychological issues as stress, depression, anxiety and fatigue, lower job satisfaction and lower family satisfaction. Work–family conflict and family-work conflict were as a result of the incompatibility between these two spheres.

The study also found out that the organisation had policies which positively affected work-life balance as employees wellbeing was considered through the medical aid policy as also their spouses and dependants were covered. This positively affected their performance at work as this improved their morale and commitment to work. Nevertheless, the discrepancies in other policies such as the school fees allowance which did not cater for all the permanent employees had an undesirable influence on work-life balance, resulting in other employees feeling less important therefore negatively affecting their performance at work.

Employers have a larger responsibility to ensure that they try to mitigate the challenges caused by work-life imbalance as ignorance of these will backfire through employee productivity deterioration and inefficacy as well as reduced customer satisfaction having significant negative consequences on overall organisational productivity.

## **Recommendations**

### **The researcher makes the following recommendations-**

- Management is advised to recruit more employees to lessen the burden for the present ones and ensure quality service delivery. This has been also supported by the research findings which argue that the one of the causes of work-life imbalance is a result of high workload which is caused by understaffing of the NEC.
- Management is advised to build an onsite childcare to lessen the burden on lactating mothers and women with children of a younger age.
- Management is advised restrict encashment of all leave days in order to allow the employees to be involved in non-work responsibilities.
- It is recommended that management be trained on the importance of work-life balance and various benefits of providing WLB practices.
- Management is advised to propagate for equality even in employees utilising of WLB policies and programs therefore every employee should benefit and the discrepancies should be removed as work-life balance is a reality to all employees despite gender, educational qualification and grade.
- There is need for a conducive organisational climate for the encouragement of effective work-life balance.

- It is important to invest in WLB programs that will positively impact employee performance and include various work-life balance programs such as flexible starting time, flexible finishing time, job sharing, compressed working hours or part time employment and sabbaticals.
- Management in the organisation should strive to involve employees in policy formulation especially on issues to do with work life balance as it has implications on their well-being and employee performance.
- Dialogue between managers and employees to ensure that information regarding the availability of work-life balance policies is encouraged.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Interview Guide for Management and Non-Managerial Employees

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NEC FOOD EMPLOYEES

Dear Participant

*I am Samantha Chamunorwa student registration number R153249J, a final year student at Midlands State University studying Bsc Human Resource Management Honours Degree. As a requirement in attaining my honours degree, I should carry out a research on pertinent HR related issues in industry and as such I designed an interview guide to solicit information relevant to the following topic: **The Impact of work-life balance on employee performance: A case of National Employment Council: Food and Allied Industries.** May you kindly assist me by completing this research form. All information obtained from you will be kept with highest degree of confidentiality and be assured that this research is carried out for purely academic purposes.*

Your cooperation is profoundly appreciated.

#### Section A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please tick in the appropriate box in the spaces provided

1. Age Group

Under 30 years  31 to 40 years  41 to 49  50+

2. Marital status

Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed

3. How many children do you have?

None  1  2  3  More than

4. How old are your children?

Not applicable  Under 2 years  2-5 years  6-14 years  15-18 years

5. Level of your education

ZJC level  O' Level  A' Level  Certificate  Diploma  Degree

Master's Degree  Other-----

6. Please tick the organisational level you fall under

Operational  Supervisory  Management

7. Number of years in the organisation

Less than 5 years      6-10 years      11-20 years

8. Please tick if you have any of the responsibilities as primary career?

Child care  Elder care  Caring for sick child or adult  none

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

- 1) How important is the work-life balance aspect to employees and your organisation?.
- 2) In your own opinion, what do you think are the major causes of work life imbalance?
- 3) What are your previous encounters about your work life imbalance did they have an effect on your health?.
- 4) How are the demands outside the workplace influencing your performance at work?.
- 5) What challenges are posed by work-life imbalance on employee performance?
- 6) How is the organisation affected when there is imbalance between work and life?
- 7) How is the organisation handling the imbalance between work and family life.
- 8) What are some of the policies present in your organisation that are used to avoid spillover of problems from home to work and vice versa?.
- 9) How have these policies helped the organisation to avoid spillover of problems from home to work and vice versa?
- 9) What role do employees play in drawing these policies?
- 10) What are your recommendations for the organisation to improve on work-life balance?





**National Employment Council  
for  
Food and Allied Industries**

**NEC FOOD**

**Head Office**  
No. 1 Sunderland Avenue  
P.O. Box 1313, Belvedere Harare  
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Email: necfood.co.zw

**Family villas**  
170 Robert Mugabe Rd  
**Eastlea, Harare**  
Tel: +263 4 778918-924/931  
Web: www.familyvillas.co.zw

**Regional Office**  
1-1A Fife Street  
P.O. Box 1748  
**Bulawayo**  
Tel: +263 9 886336/7

8 October 2018

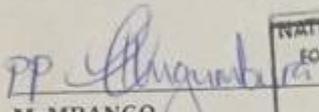
Department of Human Resource Management  
Midlands State University  
P. Bag 9055  
Gweru

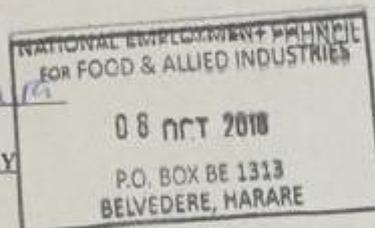
Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: CONFIRMATION OF STUDENT RESEARCH CARRIED OUT AT NEC FOOD**

This letter serves to testify and confirm that Samantha Chamunorwa Registration number R15349J collected data at National Employment Council for Food and Allied on 3 October 2018. It was part of her research work she was doing in fulfilling the requirements of her BSc Honours Degree in Human Resource Management with Midlands State University.

Yours faithfully

  
M. MPANGO  
GENERAL SECRETARY





MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY  
 P. Bag 9055  
**Gweru**  
 Telephone: (263) 54 260568/260596 Ext 2158  
 Fax: (263) 54 260311/260388  
 Website www.msu.ac.zw

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE  
 MANAGEMENT**

Date... 25/09/18 .....

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

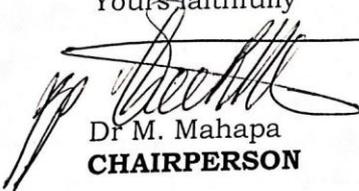
**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH AT  
 YOUR ORGANISATION.**

This letter serves to inform you that... CHAMUNORWA SAMANTHA .....  
 Registration number... R153249J ..... is a bonafide student in the Human  
 Resource Management Department. She/he is carrying out an academic  
 research on... THE IMPACT OF WORK LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEES .....  
 ... PERFORMANCE CASE OF NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL FOR .....  
 ... FOOD AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES .....  
 .....

Please assist him/her by allowing him/her access to your organisation so  
 that he/she can use it as a case study. The research is for academic  
 purposes only and findings will not be published anywhere. Your privacy  
 and confidentiality is guaranteed.

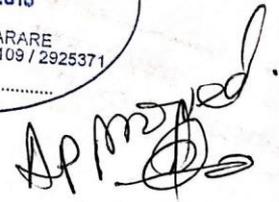
Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

  
 Dr M. Mahapa  
**CHAIRPERSON**

NEC FOOD  
 GENERAL SECRETARY  
 03 OCT 2018  
 BELVEDERE, HARARE  
 TEL: (04)772625 / 2900109 / 2925371  
 Sign: 

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY  
 DEPT. OF HUMAN RESOURCE  
 MANAGEMENT  
 25 SEP 2018  
 CHAIRPERSON  
 PRIVATE BAG 9055 GWERU  
 TEL: 054-260417/260491/260476

  
 2/10/18