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Assessing the impact of work-life balance on employee performance

By

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DECLARATION

I Michelle Kundai Marufu declare that

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect that work-life balance (WLB) has on employee performance in a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) in Johannesburg, South Africa utilising mixed-methods for comprehensive findings. The quantitative phase, involving a survey of one hundred and fifty (150) non-managerial employees, achieved a 94% response rate, demonstrating strong engagement and providing robust data on employees' perceptions of work-life balance and its effect on their performance, job satisfaction and productivity. Descriptive statistics highlighted that a significant number of employees appreciate the flexible work arrangements provided by the organisation and recognised them as beneficial for enhancing job satisfaction and reducing work-related stress. However, inferential statistics revealed a strong negative correlation between excessive work hours and employee performance, suggesting that longer working hours adversely affect job satisfaction and increase stress levels. The qualitative phase included semi-structured interviews with ten (10) managerial staff, which were thematically analysed to delve deeper into the strategies employed to enhance work-life balance and the barriers faced in their implementation. Key themes identified included the challenges of aligning organisational culture with work-life balance initiatives, the effectiveness of flexible working arrangements and the critical role of managerial support in fostering a conducive work-life balance environment. The findings suggest that while the NPO is committed to supporting work-life balance, there are areas requiring improvement, such as reducing working hours and enhancing support structures for stress management. The study highlights the importance of effective work-life balance strategies in boosting employee morale, reducing turnover and enhancing overall organisational productivity. Recommendations for the NPO include strengthening flexible working arrangements, improving communication about work-life balance programmes and investing in manager training to better support employees in balancing work and personal life. The implications of these findings extend to other organisations seeking to enhance employee performance through improved work-life balance, highlighting the need for supportive policies and a culture that prioritises employee well-being.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The equilibrium between work and personal life has emerged as a significant determinant of employee success in contemporary work environments. As organisations emphasise enhancing productivity and efficiency, employees frequently find it challenging to achieve a healthy balance between their professional obligations and personal life. Vyas (2021) highlights the escalating difficulty, indicating that inadequate management of work-life balance can result in stress, burnout, and diminished job satisfaction, ultimately compromising overall performance (Birtalan, 2021). Conversely, Lee and Chen (2022) asserts that a well-structured work-life balance can elevate employee motivation, augment job engagement, and lead to enhanced organisational outcomes. In this setting, human resources managers are essential in formulating policies that promote a sustainable workforce and enhance performance by reconciling work-life balance with employee perfomance.

This study aims to examine the influence of work-life balance on employee performance, using a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) as a case study. This project will investigate how flexible work arrangements, task management, and organisational assistance affects employee productivity and job satisfaction. The study will investigate the correlation between improved work-life balance and enhanced efficiency, decreased absenteeism, and greater commitment. Additionally, it will identify the obstacles employees encounter in attaining balance and evaluate how organisations might adopt successful measures to alleviate these concerns.

1.2 Background of study

Work-life balance (WLB) has become increasingly important as the global workforce faces changing societal and economic demands. Marekai, Smith, and Jones (2020) stress that, while the concept of work-life balance is not new, its importance in improving employee performance, job happiness, and general well-being has grown. Historically, work-life balance was viewed predominantly as a female issue, involving balancing both workplace and domestic responsibilities (McMurtie & Crane, 2020). However, over time, it has been realised that the challenges of managing work and family life affect both men and women equally (Curington, 2023). This shift parallels broader societal trends, such as the development of dual-income households, a growing millennial workforce, and shifting family patterns (Taylor, 2021). A healthy work-life balance is critical for increasing employee engagement, lowering stress, and enhancing attention especially in the NPO environment. Poor work-life balance, on the other hand, has been linked to burnout, absenteeism, decreased motivation, and lower productivity.

For organisations, there is a strong correlation between work-life balance and employee performance, as poor work-life integration frequently leads to disengagement and high turnover.

South Africa's diversified workforce and economic challenges make work-life balance especially important (Barkhuizen, 2020). The typical 9-to-5 workweek is giving way to flexible hours, virtual work, and the gig economy (Chaudhuri, 2021). While these developments provide greater flexibility, they also introduce new problems, particularly for personnel in high-demand industries (YuLife & IPSOS, 2023). Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) further complicate this landscape as they often rely on volunteerism and under-resourced staff who experience blurred boundaries between professional duties and personal life (Habib, 2019). The struggle to balance social impact mandates with employee well-being highlights a unique challenge for NPOs in South Africa where limited funding and high community expectations intensify work-life pressures (Tshikululu Social Investments, 2021).

Employees in South Africa's non-profit industry have an even more difficult time establishing work-life balance. Smith and Jones (2022) point out that the NPO sector is frequently typified by low resources, strong emotional demands, and a mission-driven emphasis. These factors can lead to fatigue, role conflicts, and a lack of organisational support can also exacerbate matters even further (Maslach, 2022; Shin & Enoh, 2020). Working in social justice, community development, and health services adds to the emotional toll, potentially affecting employee effectiveness and overall performance (Andeyo, Maslach, & Shin, 2020).

Despite these limitations, South Africa has developed a number of methods to promote WLB in both the business and non-profit sectors. Flexible working hours, health initiatives, and remote work opportunities are becoming popular options (Curington, 2023; Peter & Kavitha, 2020). However, their effectiveness is still contested, as some programs fail to fulfil the special demands of sectors such as non-profit organisations (Maslach, 2022; Mseba, 2024). Non-profit organisations frequently struggle to devote resources for complete staff well-being programs, reducing the impact of such initiatives (Gadzali, Peter, & Kavitha 2023).

According to a 2024 study conducted by the SA Depression and Anxiety Group, roughly one-third of South African employees in the NPO sector feel burnout, underscoring the critical need for appropriate work-life balance legislation. The purpose of this research is to closely explore and better understand the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in a specific South African non-profit organisation. It will identify important barriers to WLB, such as workload, emotional demands, and organisational limits, and evaluate the efficacy of current methods. By addressing these concerns, the research will

provide insights into enhancing work- life balance in NPOs, enabling improved employee well-being and organisational success.

1.3 Problem statement

Although work life balance (WLB) has been widely researched in corporate and western contexts, there remains a critical lack of evidence on how it influences employee performance within non-profit (NPO) environment in South Africa. Employees in this sector operate under distinctive pressure which is caused by donor dependence, limited financial resources, high emotional labor and blurred boundaries between personal and professional lives (Kinnunen, Feldt, & de Bloom, 2020; Luksyte, Spitzmueller, & Wang, 2022). These challenges enhances difficulties in achieving WLB and yet little is known about how such imbalances affect employee productivity, commitment and long term sustainability in NPO settings in South Africa. While global literature suggests that WLB is associated with positive such as improved satisfaction, retention and performance, its direct correlation with employee performance in resource constrained mission-driven not for profit organizations have not been empirically tested. This is problematic as this creates uncertainty as to whether WLB in the South African NPO sector enhances or undermines employee performance as reflected in the competing hypothesis of positive and negative correlation (Baral & Bhargava, 2021). There is also limited understanding of the specific factors inhibiting WLB in South Africa in themes such as structural constraints, cultural expectations , operational demands and managerial strategies being implemented to mitigate these challenges. Hence, the problem that this study seeks to address is the lack of context-specific empirical evidence on the relationship between WLB and employee performance in South African NPOs, factors that inhibit its attainment and the strategies that may enhance both employee well-being and organizational performance. By answering the following research questions and formulating objectives which are aligned to them, the study responds to an urgent need to strengthen organizational resilience the non-profit sector where employee performance is directly linked to delivery of essential social and developmental services.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of work-life balance on employee performance at a selected NPO in South Africa.

1.5 Research Questions

- What are the key factors that inhibit the achievement of work-life balance at the selected NPO in South Africa?
- To what extent are the strategies being implemented to enhance work-life balance effectively improving employee performance at the selected NPO in South Africa?

1.6 Research Objectives

- To examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance at a selected NPO in South Africa.
- To determine the factors inhibiting the achievement of work-life balance at a selected NPO in South Africa.
- To explore the effectiveness of strategies being used to enhance the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance at a selected NPO in South Africa

1.7 Hypothesis

- Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a positive correlation between work-life balance and employee performance.
- The Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no positive correlation between work-life balance and employee performance.

1.8 Significance of study

1.8.1 Significance to the student

Participating in this research project allows the student to advance academically, develop skills, and apply theoretical knowledge in practice. This research provided the researcher with hands-on experience in research technique, data analysis, and academic writing, which improved their capacities as a researcher and practitioner in the field. Furthermore, successful completion of this study adds to the student's academic achievements, assisting their promotion within the academic community and maybe opening doors to future research possibilities or career advancements. Furthermore, by exploring the complexity of work-life balance and its impact on worker performance, the student broadens their grasp of psychological concepts within real-world contexts, expanding their professional expertise and preparing them for future undertakings in their field.

1.8.2 Significance to organisations

This research is essential for HR managers as it provides critical insights into the impact of work-life balance on employee performance, satisfaction, and retention rates. By employing the tactics outlined in the study, HR managers can augment employee engagement, diminish turnover, and improve overall productivity (Haar, Russo, Suñe, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2019). The findings can assist HR managers in developing a more supportive work environment by implementing policies like flexible working hours and wellness programs, which can enhance work-life balance and performance (Kelliher, Richardson, & Boiarintseva, 2020). Furthermore,

by tackling work-life balance concerns organisations can reduce turnover-associated expenses, such as recruitment and training, while enhancing employee retention (Haar et al., 2019). HR managers can utilise the study's findings to formulate policies that enhance employee well-being, hence fostering the organization's long-term growth and success (Beauregard & Henry, 2019).

1.8.3 Significance to employees

As a result of this study, employees stand to benefit in a variety of ways. Employees who are more flexible in managing work and personal responsibilities may have a higher quality of life and overall well-being (Allen, Johnson, Kiburz, & Shockley, 2019). Furthermore, by aligning work schedules with personal needs, people may establish healthier relationships with family and friends, leading to increased contentment both within and outside the office (Moen, Pedersen, Hill, Yeung, & Flood, 2021).

1.8.4 Significance to society

The societal ramifications of this research are substantial. An enhanced work-life balance within the workforce fosters a healthier and more content society (Haar et al., 2019). Mitigating stress and burnout in employment may lessen the burden on healthcare systems and social support services (OECD, 2020). Furthermore, when individuals can harmonise their professional obligations with personal interests, they are more inclined to participate in community events, volunteerism, and other types of civic engagement, hence promoting social cohesion and collective welfare (Putnam, 2020). This research, by advocating for work-life balance, could provide beneficial ripple effects across society, improving the overall quality of life for individuals and communities (Kelly, Moen, & Tranby, 2020).

1.8.5 Filling an empirical research gap in South Africa

The predominant empirical evidence regarding work-life balance and its influence on employee performance is derived from studies conducted outside of South Africa (Kulathunga, Nguyen, & Preena, 2023; Preena & Preena, 2021). This study seeks to address this gap by offering contextually pertinent empirical facts regarding South Africa. The research generates insights pertinent to the South African workforce, hence augmenting the application and relevance of work-life balance policies within the local organisational context.

1.9 Limitations

1.9.1 Geographical limitation

This study specifically examines the backdrop of work-life balance in the South African workforce. Cultural, economic, and social variables may prevent findings and conclusions from being immediately applicable to other regions or countries.

1.9.2 Sector limitation

The research is undertaken inside the non-profit sector, which may possess distinct characteristics and challenges relative to other sectors, such as private enterprises or governmental organisations. Consequently, the results may not be applicable to entities beyond the non-profit sector.

1.9.3 Demographic limitation

The study focusses on the viewpoints and experiences of South African employees as a whole, rather than on specific demographic groupings like gender, age, or educational background. As a result, the findings may not fully capture the complexities of work-life balance concerns faced by some demographic cohorts.

1.9.4 Methodological limitation

The study employed a mixed methods approach, incorporating surveys and interviews to collect data and formulate results. The limitations inherent in the selected technique, including sampling biases and data collection constraints, may affect the generalisability and reliability of the findings.

1.9.5 Organisational size limitation

The study focusses on a single non-profit organisation. The results may not fully represent the experiences of employees in larger or smaller organisations, or those with differing resource capacities and organisational structures.

1.9.6 Language limitation

The research was done in English, potentially excluding non-English-speaking persons and organisations from participation or representation in the study.

1.9.7 Cross-cultural limitation

Despite efforts to account for South Africa's cultural variety, cultural differences within the population may still influence perceptions and experiences of work-life balance in ways that the study does not fully reflect.

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the issue that the study aimed to address. The study's backdrop and theoretical framework were articulated, addressing the problem statement and delineating the research purpose, questions, and objectives. The study's significance is delineated, and its shortcomings are acknowledged. The subsequent chapter examines the literature about work-life balance and employee performance.

1.11 Brief overview of the study per chapter

This study is arranged into five chapters, deliberately structured to provide a clear and full exploration of the research subject, methods, results, and implications.

Chapter 1: The initial chapter serves as the study's introduction, addressing the backdrop, research problem statement, research aims and objectives, questions, and the study's importance. It additionally highlights the study's limitations and concludes with a summary of the chapter.

Chapter 2: This chapter provides an overview of how work-life balance affects employee performance. The chapter starts with a historical framework for work-life balance. Starting with a worldwide perspective and narrowing it down to South Africa, it discusses the theoretical frameworks that guide the concept of work-life balance and its impact on employee performance. It also emphasises the constraints that limit the effectiveness of work-life balance on employee performance. Finally, the chapter discusses techniques for improving the influence of work-life balance on employee performance.

Chapter 3: This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology that was used achieve the research objectives. It outlines the research paradigm, approach, philosophy and methodology. Other important aspects of research methodology contained in the chapter are research design, population and sampling. It further indicates that data collection, research instruments and data analysis. The chapter also outlines the study's adherence to ethical standards.

Chapter 4: Chapter four presents the results, interpretation and discussion of the research findings.

Chapter 5: The last chapter provides a summary of the research findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study. It further highlights the contribution of the study to the body of knowledge as well as government policies.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the research topic, providing foundational context for the study. It outlined the motivation behind selecting this topic and presented the background information pertinent to the research. The significance and rationale for conducting the study were discussed, establishing its importance within the field. Additionally, the limitations were delineated, defining the study's scope and boundaries. The chapter concluded with a summary of the thesis structure, offering an overview of each subsequent chapter. This introductory chapter sets the stage for the forthcoming literature review on the impact of work-life balance on employee performance (Chapter 2)

CHAPTER TWO: OVERVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

2.1 Introduction

The current chapter provides an overview of literature review on the impact of work-life balance on employees' performance. A review of literature essentially provides the basic nest for crafting arguments, identifying theories and principles that guides the work-life balance discourse. A systemic approach of conducting literature review was employed to effectively harness the various underlying perspectives of the impact of work-life balance on employee performance in South Africa. While extensive research on work-life balance exists in developed economies (Abioro, Oladejo, & Ashogbon, 2018; Sirgy & Lee, 2018), its contextual implications for South Africa and particularly within the non-profit (NPO) sector remain underexplored (Stander, De Beer, & Rothmann, 2019; Van Lill & Taylor, 2022).

2.2 Historical context of work-life balance

The necessity for work-life balance arose during the Industrial Revolution, when extended working hours in factories became prevalent (Ananda, 2023). The rigorous work schedule resulted in significant health problems and restricted personal time, necessitating a call for improved working conditions (Taylor, 2021). Furthermore, the emergence of labour unions significantly contributed to the promotion of workers' rights, encompassing reduced working hours and enhanced safety conditions (Singh et al., 2024). Notable labour legislation was implemented to tackle these concerns, including the Factory Act of 1833 in the UK, which governed child labour and established restrictions on working hours (Shadrack and Pillay, 2023; Thompson, 2019).

Valery, Jansen, and Foster (2024) assert that the inception of the eight-hour working movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries underscored the increasing focus on work-life balance. Post-World War II, societal transformations profoundly influenced work-life equilibrium. The conventional family structure, characterised by a sole provider, usually the male head of the household, commenced its evolution (Moen, 2020). An influx of women into the workforce resulted in a rise in dual-income households. This transition required a reassessment of work and familial obligations, as both genders balanced professional and domestic roles (Bocean, Popescu, & Radu 2023). The post-war economic boom also influenced alterations in work culture, placing greater focus on consumerism and relaxation (Susanto, Prasetyo, Suryanto, & Wirawan, 2022). The implementation of policies, including paid maternity leave, flexible working hours, and childcare assistance in numerous countries during the latter half of the 20th century, sought to aid working families and foster a more favourable work-life balance (International Labour

Organisation (ILO), 2021; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020; World Health Organisation (WHO), 2019). As can be seen in the review of the historical context, most of the literature focuses on Europe and America and there is scant attention to African context where structural inequalities, informal employment is pervasive, and the society is stratified into diverse socio-economic layers. Little attention is given by literature on how colonial legacies; post-colonial labour markets and socio-economic transitions have shaped work-family dynamics in African contexts. In the South African context, empirical evidence does not point out the apartheid history and subsequent labor reforms introduced a unique work life-life arrangement that is scarcely addressed in global narratives. A gap therefore exists where historical developments elsewhere can be translated in to South African labour market where informal labor complicates traditional notions of work-life balance.

2.3 Conceptualising work-life balance

According to Dwivedi, Joshi, and Srivastava (2022), work-life balance has experienced significant adjustment over the years, owing to broader socioeconomic transformations and changes in workforce composition. Initially, the concept gained popularity among working mothers in the 1960s and 1970s who had to balance job and childrearing (Eshun, Adu, & Mensah, 2023). These initial worries were particularly acute until corporations such as Deloitte and Touche began to modify internal workplace rules in the United States, offering maternity leave, flexitime, and employee support programs (Eisyah, Ibrahim, & Tan 2023).

In response to dynamic changes in the workplace, both public and private sector organisations are encouraged to prioritise work-life balance in order to increase employee performance. Oktafien (2023) defines work-life balance as a set of three metrics. The first indicator is time balance. Individuals can achieve time balance by dividing their time between work and home. The second indication is participation balance. This refers to the psychological involvement in both personal and professional tasks (Gadzali, 2023). The third metric is the satisfaction balance. It demonstrates how satisfied people are with their employment and family duties. Individuals must consider all three areas to achieve a comprehensive balance. According to the current study, in order to achieve work-life balance, employees must have enough time to respond to their personal requirements, such as rest and entertainment, as well as their families' joys and concerns (McMurtie & Crane, 2020).

According to Ihwughwavwe and Shewakramani (2024), these family-friendly programmes were initially aimed at women but later expanded to meet the needs of all employees, regardless of gender. This shift was motivated by the awareness that work-life balance is a global issue rather than a gender-specific one. By the 1980s, men were also expressing their challenges with

managing work and personal duties, indicating a substantial cultural shift (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). Maracki (2023) notes that by the end of the 1980s, work-life balance had become a key concern for both male and female employees.

The concept of work-life balance is always evolving, as evidenced by current study. Clark (2021) contends that the growing prominence of remote work and other technological advancements have blurred the distinction between one's professional and personal lives.

Furthermore, Smith and Johnson (2022) suggest that the COVID-19 epidemic has expedited the adoption of flexible work arrangements, emphasising the significance of policies that promote work-life integration for a varied workforce.

These trends highlight the need for inclusive and adaptable work-life balance policies. Choudhury, Foroughi, and Larson (2020) found that organisations that implement flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and comprehensive employee assistance programmes have greater levels of employee satisfaction and productivity. Furthermore, Gupta and Sharma (2020) highlight the importance of organisational culture in encouraging work-life balance, stating that supportive leadership and a healthy workplace environment are essential for the successful implementation of these policies.

Thilagavathy and Geetha (2023) argue that the concept of work-life balance has evolved from a problem for working mothers to a basic issue for all employees. This progression mirrors broader societal changes and stresses the importance of inclusive, adaptable, and adaptive workplace policies that meet the diverse requirements of today's workforce. The constant challenges provided by technical breakthroughs and global events, like as the COVID-19 epidemic, underline the importance of continuous adaptation and support for work-life balance in current work contexts.

While these conceptualizations provide useful frameworks on how work life balance should be measured across cultures and industries, existing models assume certain workplace benefits such as child care, parental leave or flexible schedules. These work-place benefits are not tested by literature to be in existence in South Africa.

2.3.1 Conceptualising employee performance

Xin et al. (2024) contends that employee performance is a complex construct that includes the activities and behaviours of individuals directed towards the attainment of organisational objectives. Chung, and van der Horst (2020) propose that employee performance encompasses a functional system in which workers endeavour to accomplish tasks and yield favourable outcomes. Scholars such as Hermina and Yosepha (2019) and Medina Garrido et al. (2023) underscore the significance of employee behaviour, asserting that it is a crucial element of

performance. Behaviour specifically denotes the behaviours employees execute to complete tasks, so connecting performance to behavioural engagement and favourable consequences. Ramawickrama, Opatha, and PushpaKumari (2020) characterise employee performance as a collection of behaviours that facilitate the achievement of organisational objectives. This term emphasises the importance of conduct in attaining organisational goals. Likewise, Xin et al. (2024) defines employee performance as the degree to which an individual fulfils responsibilities to meet organisational standards, emphasising the importance of performance assessment.

Furthermore, Gupta and Sharma (2020) contends that employee performance is progressively shaped by technology innovations and the necessity for ongoing education, whereas Lee, Gerhart, and Becker (2021) emphasise the significance of employee engagement and motivation in enhancing performance results. Performance evaluation can be conducted using two principal methodologies: results-oriented performance evaluation and behavior-oriented performance evaluation (Gupta & Sharma, 2020; Hermina & Yosepha, 2019; Pradhan & Jena, 2017). Result-oriented assessments concentrate on the outcomes attained by employees, whereas behaviour-oriented evaluations examine the activities and behaviors demonstrated during the attainment of those outcomes. Both methodologies are crucial for a thorough comprehension of employee performance and its impact on organsational success. The brief above shows widespread research on employee performance that emphasizes productivity and efficiency but do not integrate personal well-being and family responsibility where extended family and community roles influence employee performance especially in African contexts. This is a gap that indicates that there is need for empirical research on how employee performance measurement can be bridged with work-life balance concepts.

2.4 Work-life balance and employee performance nexus

Though work-life balance is essential for job satisfaction and employee performance, it is not commonly believed that all employees hold the same views on the subject. Different men and women value this balance differently (Greenhaus & Allen, 2023). There have been several scholarly discussions around the concept of work-life balance and its impact on employee performance. For example, Albrecht (2022) contends that, given the dynamism of modern work, which is supported by a wealth of knowledge and intellect, many employees have become obsessed with their work and hence workaholics. This has hampered their ability to attend to critical family matters, resulting in additional situations that eventually affect their work performance. Other scholars have tracked the debate within the health setting. According to Bello and Tanko (2020), in the lack of work-life balance, employees are more likely to experience work-related stress. This has the potential to lead to depression, which manifests as

a loss of interest in work, low morale, and decreased job satisfaction. Musaeni, Bhebhe, Matowanyika, and Sifile (2020) did research on the impact of Zimbabwe's socioeconomic circumstances on work-life balance and employee performance. The study looked at how employees in Zimbabwe's banking industry dealt with stress caused by financial difficulties. It was determined that several banking employees had failed to meet the increasing financial demands at home as a result of the economic crisis, and thus were unable to perform well at work because they were constantly stressed about school fees, monthly groceries, and a lack of funds to care for their extended families. A research study in South Africa found that black female academics in Gauteng province suffer both personal and professional obstacles that interfere with their work-life balance, such as family duties, patriarchal norms, and a lack of recognition (Muthala & Pillay, 2023). Another study conducted by Munyeka and Maharaj (2022) revealed that female ICT professionals in South Africa experience different work-life balancing concerns, with 21-25-year-olds demonstrating the highest ability to successfully mix work and family obligations. In other words, the study findings shows that the battle to preserve work-life balance in varied environments is true. In the absence of adequate measures, businesses and employees would most likely have to invest considerably in balancing the two.

An examination of the empirical evidence above on work-life balance and performance is inconclusive and often contradictory. While some report positive associations, some are neutral and even point out negative correlations, suggesting that contextual variables such as gender, sector, and organizational culture moderate the relationships. Existing literature in South Africa has focused on narrow populations such as women in academia and those in the ICT industries with little attention to cross sectoral or gender inclusive narratives. Again as indicated above, very few studies interrogate how organizational policies interact with socio-economic realities influence work-life balance and employee performance and this points to a critical gap in the South African context.

2.5 Factors Impacting on Work-life balance

One of the most important challenges many professionals face is work-life imbalance, a prevalent issue where integrating professional obligations with home life becomes increasingly arduous. This is characterised as a conflict that occurs when the demands of one's employment, including time, energy, and focus required to fulfil duties, collide with the requirements of one's family life, or vice versa (Munyeka & Mahalaji, 2022). This can lead to significant stress and burnout, which positively affects personal well-being.

Medina-Garrido, Biedma-Ferrer, and Ramos-Rodriguez (2023) assert that work-life imbalance frequently occurs when professional obligations intrude onto personal time and energy.

Prolonged working hours, elevated workplace stress, stringent deadlines, and a perpetual work culture fuelled by technology contribute to this situation. Employees often engage in reading emails, answering calls, or performing business chores during personal or family time, which interrupts personal activities, diminishes quality time with loved ones, and obstructs the pursuit of hobbies and interests (Greenhaus & Allen, 2023).

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance has grown progressively difficult due to various variables. This is exacerbated by elevated job demands, poor work-life balance, and inadequate company assistance (Munyeka & Maharaj, 2022). In hybrid or remote work settings, where the distinction between professional and personal life is frequently obscured, individuals may encounter difficulties in defining clear boundaries. This may lead to stress and mental distress stemming from the challenge of balancing personal and professional obligations (Rizwan & Sivasubramanian, 2023; Haller, 2024). This ongoing balancing act highlights the intricacy of attaining work-life equilibrium in contemporary professional environments.

The imbalance between work and life incurs substantial costs and several major repercussions. Valery et al. (2023) contends that individuals who frequently alternate duties with minimal intervals of rest may have heightened stress levels. This stress can impact cognitive functions, decision-making, and overall job performance (Ayande, 2023). Extended exposure to elevated work demands without adequate relaxation and recovery can lead to burnout, marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023). Burnout adversely impacts professional performance and extends into personal life, diminishing overall quality of life (Maslach & Leiter, 2021). Moreover, work-life imbalance can negatively impact both physical and mental health, leading to sleep disruptions, anxiety, sadness, and many stress-related health concerns. Strained personal relationships and diminished life satisfaction further account for the adverse effects of work-life imbalance (Dwitanti et al., 2023). It is apparent from the evidence above that most studies emphasize health care, hospitality and finance in developed economies and findings are uneven and contextually limited. The following factors can also influence work life balance.

2.5.1 Industry Characteristics

Some industries have characteristics that can impair employees' ability to balance their professional and personal life. For example, in healthcare, personnel commonly works unpredictable hours and shifts, which can drastically disrupt personal routines and limit time for family and leisure activities (Harrington & Lloyd, 2022). Similarly, personnel in the hospitality business frequently work long nights and weekends, making it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance (Mackenzie, Brown, & Smith, 2023). These irregular work

schedules have a negative impact on both physical health and job happiness (Rothman & Clunies-Ross, 2021). In these industries, the demanding nature of the work, along with unpredictable hours, emphasises the challenge of striking a balance between professional duties and personal well-being (Schulte, Martin, & Thompson 2024). In contrast, industries with more predictable schedules, such as government and education, may provide more opportunity for work-life balance through consistent working hours and scheduled time off (Johnson and Lee, 2023; Williams & Allen, 2022). High job stress and psychological demands are common in industries such as banking, emergency services, and legal, where personnel are frequently under pressure and have short deadlines (Marecki, 2024). This tension can have a negative impact on personal well-being and make it difficult to relax after work. Wolor, Smith, and Johnson (2020) discovered that organisations in these industries must develop effective stress management programs and foster a supportive work environment to counteract the detrimental effects on work-life balance.

Industry-specific characteristics have an impact on work-life balance dynamics. Industries with competitive settings and clear career advancement paths may encourage individuals to put work over personal life in order to advance professionally (Greenhaus & Powell, 2023). Industries that provide flexible career paths, remote work choices, and part-time chances for progress, on the other hand, can help people strike a better balance between their professional and personal goals (Kumar & Sarkar, 2023). This study was conducted in a non-profit organisation (NPO). According to Johnson(2020) , an NPO is an organisation that advocates for a certain social cause, such as education, research, science, or religion. NPOs are accountable to their sponsors, volunteers, founders, and communities, and the actions they implement contribute to increased public trust in the organisation (Medina-Garrido et al., 2023). Unlike companies, non-profit organisations utilise all of their earnings to achieve their objectives rather than giving them to shareholders, members, or staff. Most nonprofit projects are time-sensitive; they work with targets and deadlines while striving to achieve the sponsor's objectives and standards. NPOs frequently have many projects running concurrently, with positions filled by the same or different people. For example, one person may be the District Coordinator for one project while also working as a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in another. Long hours and greater workload are typically unavoidable in this setting. Employee health can be damaged by long working times, and employees may stop engaging in healthy routines that offset the effects of a demanding setting, such as missing workouts while ordering takeaway instead of cooking meals at home (Delisle, 2020). Clearly from the review above, there is an emphasis on health care, hospitality and fiancé in developed economies but rarely do they capture complexities within sectors and across roles. In the South African context, NPOs operate under unique donor driven pressures and role multiplicity and yet there is scarcity in literature on this. Public

service entities like education, policing and health care in South Africa experience workload strain but there is little empirical evidence that connects these sector specific pressures to employee performance outcomes.

2.5.2 Changing Family Structures

Medina-Garrido et al. (2023) assert that the evolving dynamics of family structures, including the increase of dual-income households, single-parent families, and greater female workforce participation, have transformed the approach to work-life balance by contemporary businesses. Traditionally, gender norms prescribed that men served as the principal earners while women assumed caring responsibilities (Sandberg & Thompson, 2023). With an increasing number of women entering the workforce and the diversification of family patterns, it is essential for businesses to adapt to these developments (Johnson, 2020). Smith and Johnson (2023) emphasise that work-life balance has transitioned from a luxury to a need, particularly as varied family structures contest the conventional nine-to-five work schedule. Organisations that neglect to revise their policies to accommodate dual-income households, single parents, and alternative family structures jeopardise productivity, employee morale, and talent retention (Andeyo, 2020). The necessity for adaptable work arrangements, including remote work choices and flexible hours, has become essential for cultivating a supportive work environment that enables employees to efficiently balance their professional and personal duties (Mseba, 2024). Organisations implementing family-oriented policies, including flexible work hours and on- site childcare, not only address the changing requirements of their employees but also secure a competitive edge in the labour market (Erwina, 2024). Kumar (2023) contends that providing flexibility mitigates employee burnout, elevates job satisfaction, and promotes overall productivity, hence benefiting an organization's financial success. These policies can decrease healthcare expenses and minimise turnover, since employees are more inclined to remain with an organisation that addresses their personal needs (Munyeka & Mahalaji, 2022). Organisations that adapt to evolving family arrangements by implementing inclusive and flexible work policies are more likely to achieve long-term success and sustainability in a competitive market (Kumar, 2023). It is apparent that international literature has focused on work-life balance on dual income households as well as feminist perspectives such as gender equality in advanced economies. These international studies have a weakness in that they under-paly the influence of extended kinship obligations, eldercare and multi-generational households which are prominent in African societies. In South Africa, due to low socio-economic realities, working individuals are expected to financially and emotionally support extended families and this places additional demand on work-life balance. As literature shows, this aspect remains un-explored.

2.5.3 Technological Changes

Technological improvements have brought about enormous and astonishing changes in the workplace. Walker (2022) claims that tasks have become simpler, faster, safer, and more convenient. Previously, it was widely assumed that new technology would reduce work hours and provide employees with more rest and leisure time (Thilagavathy & Geetha, 2023). However, technological innovation has left many people, particularly professionals, with little spare time for anything other than paid labour and pleasure (Siwale, Moyo, & Chirwa, 2021). Employees can now work remotely thanks to advances in high-speed internet, mobile devices, and collaboration software. The transformation has allowed for a more flexible work-life balance, but it has also introduced obstacles, such as the expectation to be always available and the difficulty of disconnecting from work (Mdletshe, 2024). According to a Pew Research Centre (2023) survey, technology has made 70% of South African workers feel more productive, but 46% report that it has increased the demands on their availability outside of working hours (Pew Research Centre, 2020).

According to Bencsik and Juhansz (2024), continual connectedness to cellphones, computers, and other digital devices has led to a problem known as "digital burnout," in which employees experience stress and tiredness as a result of the pressure to be available at all times, regardless of the hour. The widespread use of digital communication platforms has increased the pressure by producing a sense of information overload and ongoing obligation (Duan, Lin, & Zhang, 2023; Vyas, 2022). The constant connectivity creates a loop of tiredness, limiting employees'

ability to detach and recharge, endangering both mental health and overall job happiness (Lee & Park, 2024; Mdletshe,2024).

According to Bencsik, Juhansz, and Kovacs (2024), this persistent dilemma impacts not just the workforce but also the broader society structure, prompting an increase in calls for burnout- reduction techniques such as digital detoxing and wellness programs. As businesses grapple with the consequences of digital overload, many are recognising the importance of promoting a work-life balance, implementing policies that encourage disconnection from technology outside of working hours (Munyeka & Maharaj, 2022; Shadreck et al., 2023). Research has shown that these programs can dramatically reduce stress, boost mental well-being, and improve overall productivity by allowing employees to recharge and restore control over their work and personal time (Lee & Park, 2024; Vyas, 2022). The above literature shows the paradox of connectivity and most evidence as shown above comes from contexts where the digital infrastructure is stable where corporate communication relies on professional digital platforms. This differs with the South African context where informal platforms such as WhatsApp are primary work tools and it becomes complex with power

outages which induces unstable internet connectivity which therefore disrupt work flows. These are realities that are over-looked in global literature. This leaves the induced availability pressures and the extent to which they impact job performance remain unexplored.

cognitive performance and creativity, as they are not burdened by job-related stressors. When employees are not burdened by work obligations, they may think more creatively and tackle difficulties with a renewed perspective.

Roberts and Hughes (2021) observed that organisations demonstrating a robust commitment to employee work-life balance saw enhanced productivity and greater adherence to quality assurance requirements. This indicates that a balanced staff is more adept at upholding high standards and attaining long-term organisational objectives.

Furthermore, the advantages of work-life balance transcend individual performance. A favourable work-life balance enhances organisational culture by promoting trust, loyalty, and employee morale, hence decreasing turnover rates (Wicasono et al., 2024). When employees perceive support in their personal life, they exhibit increased motivation to actively contribute to the company's success. Furthermore, organisations that cultivate a reputation for endorsing work-life balance are more likely to attract elite candidates during recruitment, as job applicants increasingly prioritise flexibility and employee welfare (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). Consequently, organisations ought to regard the investment in work-life balance as a strategic necessity to improve employee happiness and business results (Roberts & Hughes, 2021). As eluded in the above section, a flexible work schedule generally points out to improved employee performance. However the challenge is that there is little empirical evidence pointing to SMMEs and NPO in the South African context.

2.5.4 Economic factors

Economic factors significantly influence the dynamics of work-life balance inside businesses. Mdletshe (2024) contends that during economic recessions, organisations may encounter financial strain and market constraints that need cost-reduction strategies, such as layoffs or decreased work hours, which can profoundly affect employee morale and stability. Such situations frequently elevate the workload for the remaining personnel, exacerbating job demands and stress levels. Furthermore, employees may feel pressured to extend their working hours or assume extra duties to maintain their job security, thereby undermining their work-life balance (Mwiikisa, Ndlovu, & Banda, 2023). The pressure to excel amid employment insecurity can result in heightened stress and diminished well-being, adversely impacting both personal and professional spheres (Davis, 2021).

The African Development Bank (2022) estimates that South Africa's real GDP grew by 0.2%

in 2019. The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implemented containment measures to curb the virus's transmission were substantial. Real GDP contracted by 8.2% in 2020, attributable to reductions in manufacturing, mining, communication, and construction sectors (SARB, 2024). The economic climate has led to a proliferation of entrepreneurs. Employees have pursued entrepreneurial endeavours to satisfy their financial requirements. In recent years, the gig economy has expanded considerably, with temporary contracts and freelance work supplanting regular employment. The proliferation of digital platforms like Uber, Airbnb, Taxify, Upwork, and Fiverr has substantially facilitated the emergence of the gig economy (Kessler, 2018). The gig economy enables individuals to diversify their income streams, with many opting for gig work to augment their principal earnings (Katz & Krueger, 2019).

Employees have engaged in side hustles to augment their principal income. A side hustle can augment an employee's income and alleviate stress by enhancing financial security (Smith, 2019). Nonetheless, reconciling full-time and part-time employment sometimes leads to extended work hours, thereby diminishing time available for leisure, family, and hobbies. This disparity heightens the likelihood of burnout and adversely affects productivity and health (Williams, 2022). Moreover, the management of numerous duties elevates stress levels, adversely affecting mental health and overall well-being (Davis, 2018). The time and energy devoted to a side hustle might adversely affect an employee's focus and performance in their primary work, resulting in potential conflict with the employer (Taylor, 2021). Existing literature links recession and financial insecurity to longer hours and side hustles but there is limited integration into how these dynamics affect the day to day work flow and productivity. Side hustles in South Africa constitute informal or gig work and the consequences of combining them with formal employment and the dual burden they cause are under-explored in literature especially trade-offs between income supplementation and the erosion of recovery time.

2.5.5 Globalisation's impact

The concept of globalization has resulted in significant changes in the way businesses work, notably with increased interaction across time zones. As businesses expand globally, they frequently expect people to be available to colleagues, clients, and consumers in drastically diverse geographical zones. This requirement can greatly prolong the usual workweek, forcing employees to start earlier or finish later to fulfil foreign meetings and deadlines (Johnson & Lee, 2023).

Furthermore, the expectation of employees to be available around the clock can contribute to chronic stress and poor job satisfaction by interfering with personal and family time. Thompson,

Smith, and Davis (2022) found that such demands are associated with higher rates of burnout and lower overall well-being among workers. Although global market integration has boosted economic development and opportunities, it also poses substantial obstacles in properly managing staff workloads (Blessing, Smith, & Johnson, 2020). Companies experiencing globalisation pressures are increasingly understanding the significance of developing stronger work-life balance policies. These may include more flexible working arrangements, time off in lieu of overtime pay, or support services to help employees handle international schedule without compromising their own health or family obligations (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 2022). Global literature emphasizes multi-national corporations and advanced economies which emphasize cross time zone challenges. Usually in South Africa, business processing outsourcing and export sectors expose employees to nightshifts, misaligned schedules and extended working days and little research exposes these structural pressures to measurable declines in employee well-being and their performance. The neglect of smaller enterprises which face international client pressures without the privilege of resources of larger firms affirms this gap in literature.

2.5.6 Health and well-being

A harmonious work-life balance is crucial, as persistent imbalance can lead to chronic stress, adversely affecting employee health. Chronic stress is a prolonged and persistent form of stress that results in the deterioration of physical health, including mental strain (Oktafein, 2021). Shadreck, Pillay, & Vyas (2023) contend that prolonged working hours, high-stress situations with little time for relaxation, and challenges in managing professional and personal obligations might result in health concerns such as hypertension, myocardial infarctions, and a weakened immune system. Similarly, work-related anxiety and melancholy, arising from an insufficient equilibrium between personal and professional life, can induce considerable emotional distress (Udin, 2023). These concerns may affect overall employee well-being, potentially resulting in diminished organisational productivity, increased sickness absence, and lowered job performance (Taylor & Morris, 2021).

Recognising these significant health hazards, numerous organisations are currently investing in wellness programs aimed at improving work-life balance for their employees. These programs exhibit considerable diversity but often encompass activities such as flexible work hours, remote work alternatives, stress management workshops, and health and wellness services that promote physical exercise and improved nutritional practices (Dwitanti et al., 2023). Organisations are discovering that these efforts not only mitigate the prevalence of stress- related health concerns but also bolster employee morale and loyalty, ultimately resulting in a more engaged and productive workforce (Msebi, 2024). Clarkson, Smith, and

Johnson (2021) assert that businesses with extensive wellness programs get a return on investment through diminished healthcare expenses, reduced attrition rates, and an enhanced corporate image, hence attracting top personnel in competitive employment markets.

Literature widely highlights associations between work-life balance, chronic stress and reduced job satisfaction. International studies rarely clarify the causal direction between declining health and deteriorating performance and the critical challenge for South Africa is the access to support services, cultural stigma, mental health makes the examination of such factors on job performance complicated as lack of access means lack of measurement and hence causality is under-reported.

2.5.7 Legal Frameworks

The European Union (EU) has been in the forefront of developing regulatory structures to protect workers from the negative consequences of long working hours. According to Tamunomiebi and Oyibo (2020), the EU's implementation of the Working Time Directive is a critical policy tool for ensuring people have appropriate rest and working hours remain within permissible boundaries. Under this directive, weekly working hours, including overtime, are limited to 48 hours (European Union Report, 2021). Furthermore, it requires employees to rest for at least eleven consecutive hours in any 24-hour period, as well as twenty-four consecutive hours per week (Siwale, Moyo, & Chirwa, 2021). Another critical provision is the right to at least four weeks of paid annual leave per year, emphasising the value of work-life balance and employee well-being (EU Report, 2022).

These legislative measures are especially important in areas with demanding work schedules like healthcare, transportation, and hospitality, where employees frequently experience high levels of occupational stress and burnout (Siwale et al., 2021). By enforcing these restrictions, the EU hopes to reduce work-related stress and the physical and emotional strain associated with excessive working hours (Hediningrum, 2023). According to studies, such legislative provisions improve work-life balance, resulting in lower rates of burnout and improved job satisfaction across diverse industries (Valery et al., 2023).

In South Africa, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) establishes key labour rights to prevent worker exploitation and promote fair working conditions. The BCEA limits maximum working hours to 45 hours per week, with overtime capped at 10 hours per week, ensuring that employees are not subjected to excessive workloads (Department of Employment and Labour, 2023). Furthermore, the Act requires rest periods and paid leave rights, such as yearly leave, sick leave, and maternity leave, in accordance with international labour norms. Research demonstrates that such policies not only protect employees, but also improve

organizational outcomes by lowering absenteeism and employee turnover, encouraging a more engaged and productive workforce (Msebi, 2024; Brown, 2020). While legislative frameworks provide structural safeguards, they fail to address enforcement gaps particularly in developing countries such as South Africa. Critical to this is the level of informality found in the South African labor market where most people fall outside the BCEA protective framework. Even so, resource constrained Organisation cannot easily implement the work-life balance policies and still be productive and sustainable and little studies have interrogated work-life balance and how BCEA impacts it.

2.5.8 Employee autonomy

Autonomy in work scheduling is increasingly acknowledged as a significant aspect for enhancing employees' work-life balance (Valery et al., 2023). Organisations permit employees to select their work schedules and locations, so facilitating a more adaptable work approach that accommodates individual lifestyle requirements and personal obligations. Common practices encompass flexible working hours that permit employees to modify their start and end times, alongside telecommuting, which allows individuals to operate from home or other remote sites (Marecki, 2024). This feature provides employees the option to balance their job commitments with personal obligations, such as childcare or caregiving for relatives, as well as pursuing higher education. The capacity to regulate their own schedules enhances job happiness, reduces stress, and elevates employee engagement by fostering a sense of significance (Fischer, 2020).

Moreover, the transition towards increased autonomy is helpful not only for employees but also for organisations. Seletsho and Matjie (2024) contend that allowing employees to organise their work settings and schedules frequently enhances productivity. This is ascribed to a reduction in wasted time, enhanced concentration during work periods, and a decline in turnover rates. Organisation that use flexible work arrangements frequently report enhanced creativity and customer responsiveness, both of which are essential for corporate success in today's fast-paced market settings (Kim & Seo, 2021). Consequently, granting employees greater autonomy is increasingly recognized not merely as an operational mechanism to enhance human well-being, but also as a strategic initiative for organizational success (Fischer, 2020). There are a lot of benefits in employee autonomy. However, autonomy is not universally experienced as employees in lower skill or operational roles lack flexible work schedules resulting in unequal distribution of autonomy across the organization. Empirical evidence does not speak to how autonomy interacts with socio-economic pressures of low income earners and contexts where workloads remain inflexible for the large segments of the workforce.

2.5.9 Corporate culture

Corporate culture influences how organisations approach and implement work-life balance. A well-being culture is one that focusses on the results obtained rather than the number of hours spent doing so; this enhances employee health while increasing productivity (Clarkson et al., 2021). This technique can considerably reduce stress and avoid burnout by creating an environment in which employees feel valued and supported by their employer. In other words, this can result in the formation of a dynamic and innovative workforce, driven by overall motivation (Chen, 2022).

When businesses promote employee well-being in their corporate culture, they frequently enjoy lower absenteeism and higher engagement, resulting in higher retention rates (Shadreck & Pillay, 2023). A positive business culture that promotes work-life balance benefits not only employees, but also workplace performance and image. As a result, these organizations frequently become the top employer of choice, recruiting the greatest personnel looking for workplaces that improve their entire quality of life (Muhammed, 2023). This deliberate emphasis on caring for people and putting employee wellbeing at the centre of company culture resonates with research that indicates a strong corporate code affects favorable organizational outcomes over time (Chen, 2022). The above studies focus on outcomes and investigations in large international corporate organizations that are for profit. Although findings point out to corporate cultures that enhance work-life balance, there is little empirical evidence in the South African public sector, SMEs and NPO settings that point out that there is appositive correlation between work life balance and productivity.

2.6 The role of work-life balance in enhancing employee performance and organizational success

Research regularly demonstrates that a healthy work-life balance profoundly impacts employee performance and organisational success (Gendecker & Greenbalt, 2022). Employees who achieve a harmonious balance between professional and personal life enjoy less weariness and stress, hence improving their capacity for concentration and problem-solving. Gendecker and Greenbalt (2022) discovered that employees with sufficient downtime demonstrate enhanced.

2.7 Gender Issues in Work-Life Balance

Equitable work-life balance policies are critical for creating a diverse and inclusive workplace that caters to the requirements of both men and women (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). Traditional gender stereotypes frequently assign disproportionate domestic and childcare tasks to women, limiting their career growth chances (Shadreck et al., 2023). Similarly, males may feel pressured to favour long work hours above personal connections. As a result, gender-

neutral work-life policies are critical for allowing both men and women to prosper professionally and emotionally while balancing family responsibilities (Watson, 2020).

Organisations with inclusive policies that promote work-life balance for all genders have higher employee satisfaction and retention. Flexible work hours, maternity/paternity leave, and child or elder care support help all employees live a balanced life (Watson, 2020). Employees in such organisations are better able to balance their professional and personal responsibilities, resulting in enhanced morale, increased productivity, and a lower risk of burnout (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020).

Furthermore, prioritising gender equality in work-life balance programs can assist organisations attract diverse talent, resulting in increased creativity and new solutions (Sandberg & Thompson, 2023; Watson, 2020). Organisations that promote gender-neutral work- life policies not only contribute to a more equitable workplace, but also benefit from a more engaged and productive workforce. However, there are gaps in literature concerning gendered analysis on work-life balance and scholarly input on this theme is limited. First, most of the studies are global and western-centric. Second, they adopt a western feminist approach that does not capture the complexities of extended families and cultural expectations that are valued in most African settings. Last, men's roles in caregiving and inter-sectionality of gender are underexplored leaving a gap in literature that needs further exploration.

2.8 Elder and Child Care Support in Work-Life Balance

Assistance for the elderly and child care is an essential element in fostering a workplace that allows individuals to balance their professional and caring obligations. Muzaeni et al. (2020) contend that meeting the caregiving requirements of employees, especially those in the "sandwich generation" (adults responsible for both children and elderly parents), can markedly alleviate stress and enhance concentration. Offering alternatives like on-site childcare, financial assistance for external care providers, or adaptable work schedules enables employees to address familial obligations without undermining their job performance (EU Report, 2021). Organisations providing extensive elder and child care assistance generally experience reduced staff stress, resulting in enhanced job satisfaction, improved morale, and increased employee loyalty (Bocean et al., 2023). These advantages not only improve employee welfare but also diminish absenteeism and augment productivity, rendering these initiatives a prudent business investment (Gupta, 2023). By implementing family-friendly policies, organizations convey their commitment to employee well-being, thereby attracting top talent who priorities family stability. It is interesting to note that even when organizations recognize the need for elderly and child care support on work-life balance, organizational policies remain ad-hoc and their effectiveness not widely reported. Literature assumes formalized care support, yet most South

African employees rely on community or informal care systems and this signals a gap that need further investigation.

2.9 Mental Health Awareness in the Workplace

In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on the relevance of mental health in the workplace. Many organisations have incorporated mental health support into their wellness initiatives to improve overall employee well-being (Wolor et al., 2020). These programs acknowledge that mental health is just as important as physical health in creating a healthy, productive work environment. Many organisations are implementing resources such as counselling services, mental health days, and manager training to identify and address mental health issues (Mseba, 2024).

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2022), mental health refers to an individual's ability to reach their full potential, handle stress effectively, and perform productively. Prioritizing mental health at work can result in increased engagement, lower burnout, and enhanced job satisfaction (American Psychological Association, 2022).

Organisations that provide Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), for example, assist employees in dealing with work-related pressures and preventing mental health concerns from worsening (Mseba, 2024). Investing in mental health programs benefits both employees and organisations. According to research, organisations that value mental health have fewer absenteeism, higher productivity, and better employee retention (Dwitanti, Hasan, & Lee, 2023; Mseba, 2024; Nguyen, Smith, & Taylor, 2022). Employees who feel supported in managing their mental health are more likely to be engaged and perform well (Greenberg, Milligan, & Ashworth, 2022). Furthermore, organisations with effective mental health support systems are better placed to attract top talent who value a supportive, well-being-oriented workplace (Greenberg et al., 2022). However, there are still some gaps on mental health awareness at workplaces in South Africa. In literature, most reports are descriptive and lack evaluative stance to check whether metal health interventions translate into measurable outcomes for employees and businesses. Existing models do not address the barriers that exist in employees seeking mental health support and this needs further investigation and practical recommendations for organisations in South Africa.

2.10 Individual Differences and Work-Life Balance

Personal attributes, including personality traits, professional ambitions, and familial obligations, also affect how employees perceive and navigate work-life balance (Bocean, 2024). Individuals with significant job participation or those in demanding careers may find it challenging to reconcile professional and personal obligations (Valery et al., 2024). Conversely, professionals

Personality factors profoundly influence individuals' approaches to work-life balance. Type A personalities, defined by their competitiveness and urgency about time, frequently struggle to disengage from work, resulting in work-life conflict (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Conversely, Type B persons, characterised by their easygoing demeanour and resilience to stress, generally find it simpler to sustain a healthy work-life balance (Costa & McCrae, 2021). Traits like conscientiousness, which fosters organisation and accountability, might enhance individuals' ability to manage multiple tasks efficiently, whereas neuroticism may intensify feelings of possessing robust support structures and proficient time management abilities are typically more adept at managing the demands of both professional and familial responsibilities.Work-life imbalance (Costa & McCrae, 2021). As evidenced by the studies above, there is limited empirical evidence on the role of individual traits and professional ambitions interact with resource constrained environments such as the NPO in South Africa. Current literature makes generalizations across sectors leaving a gap on how individual coping mechanisms function in high-demand and poorly resourced environments such as NPOs in South Africa.

2.11 Generational Differences in Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is perceived differently across generations, and understanding these disparities is critical for establishing policies that address various employee requirements. Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), for example, frequently value career stability and may prioritise lengthy working hours as part of their professional identity (Wolor et al., 2020). However, as they approach retirement, many Baby Boomers demand additional flexibility and leisure time (AARP, 2023).

Generation X (born 1965-1980) has well adapted to technological developments and prioritises work-life balance, emphasising autonomy and flexibility in their professions (Brough,2020). They value quality above quantity in their work hours and are particularly concerned with family time and wellness activities (Pew Research Centre, 2020; Harper, 2023). Millennials (born 1981-1996) have transformed the workplace through their need for flexibility, purpose-driven work, and congruence with personal values (Lyons & Kuron, 2023). However, their desire for meaningful careers can often result in extended working hours and difficulty detaching from work, particularly given the widespread use of technology (Twenge, 2022). Boyd and Ellison (2021) found that integrating work into daily life via smartphones and social media can make it difficult to achieve a work-life balance. Generation Z (born after 1996) prefers flexibility, inclusion, and mental health help in the workplace (Gallup, 2023). As digital natives, they excel in balancing work and personal life by utilizing technology to improve employee performance and communication (IBM, 2023). This generation expects

businesses to give services that promote both professional development and mental health. Understanding these generational perspectives is vital for organizations to design policies that fit the different demands of their workforce, ensuring that employees from all generations may achieve a lasting work-life balance. Generational differences entail diverse expectations at work for different roles. Representative literature above shows that extensive studies have been done on generational attitude towards work-life balance. However, a gap exist in contextualizing these differences in the NPO environment and countries where employees can enact preferences based on their generational culture and how these differences can be addressed by existing policies in an environment where NPOs are not driven by profit.

2.12 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Boundary Theory and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, which together provide comprehensive lens for examining work-life balance (WLB) and its influence on employee performance within the context of South African NPOs. Boundary Theory (Rothbard & Friedman, 2001) explains how employees negotiate the separation or integration of work and personal roles, with effective boundary management shown to reduce stress, mitigate burnout, and enhance job satisfaction and well-being (Allen et al., 2019; Chen, Wu & Demerouti, 2020). This aligns with the research objective of determining factors that inhibit WLB as poorly managed boundaries can lead to role spillover and conflict undermining both individual well-being and organisational outcomes. Complementing this, the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) highlights the balance between job demands, such as workload and emotional pressure and resources, including organisational support and flexible policies, in shaping employee performance. By framing WLB initiatives as critical resources, the model helps explain findings of improved job satisfaction, reduced stress, and increased engagement, which in turn foster higher productivity, lower turnover, and stronger organisational reputation (Maslach, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2022; Mertens, 2020). The integration of these theories not only addresses the objective of examining the relationship between WLB and performance but also provides a framework to assess the effectiveness of strategies in resource-constrained NPOs, where cultural norms and structural limitations may moderate boundary permeability and access to supportive resources. Thus, the combined use of Boundary Theory and the JD-R model ensures a theoretically grounded, contextually relevant framework for understanding how WLB initiatives can enhance employee performance and organisational sustainability in South African NPOs.

2.13 Boundary Theory

The boundary theory, first proposed by Rothbard and Friedman (2001), investigates how people manage the distinction between their professional and personal lives in order to achieve balance. According to Chen, Wu, and Demerouti (2020), people who believe that flexible work arrangements, such as flexitime, require less effort to maintain their boundaries are better able to transition between their work and personal roles, allowing them to satisfy expectations in both areas. However, when boundaries are unclear, role spillover can occur, which means that demands from one domain influence the other, resulting in stress and conflict. On the other side, the "flexibility within" idea allows individuals to tailor their transitions to their specific needs, resulting in a more balanced and less stressful experience (Allen et al., 2019). The way in which people maintain these boundaries is critical to their physical, psychological, and social well-being. According to Allen et al. (2023), employees who are successfully able divide their professional and personal lives are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and suffer less stress. Setting clear boundaries between work and personal time is critical. For example, employees who set out particular periods for work and non-work activities are less likely to experience overlap, which can reduce role interference and increase overall well-being (Allen et al., 2019). Employers can help this process by establishing rules like flexible work hours or remote work alternatives, which allow employees to tailor their work schedule to their own needs.

Kossek et al. (2021) stress the significance of organisational culture in fostering successful border management. Organisations that encourage employees to establish and maintain clear boundaries between work and personal life can increase employee engagement, which enhances employee perfomance (Chong et al., 2020). This support can take the shape of regulations such as flexible working hours or fostering a culture in which employees are encouraged to unplug from work outside of regular hours. Organisations that cultivate such an environment can boost employee well-being and performance (Kossek et al., 2021).

However, when the boundaries between work and home life become excessively permeable, the implications go beyond individual well-being and affect organisational dynamics. Increased border permeability can reduce employee perfomance, engagement, and job satisfaction (Jones et al., 2021). Persistent access to work can foster an environment of excessive work, contributing to burnout and decreasing employee productivity.

To solve these difficulties, organisations and people must take proactive measures. Organisations can develop rules that promote work-life balance and respect for personal time (Gajendran & Harrison, 2023). This could include establishing explicit after-hours contact guidelines, encouraging staff to withdraw from work, and providing stress management

services. Individuals can manage boundary permeability by establishing clear limits on work-related communication, allocating time for both professional and personal activities, and Employing relaxation strategies to reduce job-related stress (Smith, Walker, & Tracy, 2023). Individuals can reduce the detrimental impact of boundary permeability on their overall quality of life by putting their well-being first and creating appropriate boundaries. NPOs are resource limited organizations and much of the literature espouses how these theories are tested in western contexts. Although boundary theory highlights how individual manage transitions between work and personal life, current scholarship does not address how organizational culture moderate boundary permeability in resource limited NPOs (Dwitanti et al., 2023).

2.13.1. Leadership influence in boundary management

Leadership is essential for setting and upholding boundaries in organisations, especially in non-profit organisations (NPOs), because staff frequently encounter significant emotional demands and pressures stemming from constrained resources (Clark & Roberts, 2020). In these environments, leaders who exemplify effective boundary-setting practices and cultivate a culture that emphasises work-life balance enhance both employee well-being and organisational performance (Gartner et al., 2021). In South African non-profit organisations, when resource limitations are more evident, the leadership's role in overseeing work-life balance becomes increasingly vital. Studies indicate that when leaders establish explicit expectations for work hours and honour personal time, they mitigate burnout, augment job happiness, and bolster retention (Hall & Richter, 2019; McFarlane, 2018).

Human Resources (HR) managers are crucial in facilitating boundary management and promoting work-life balance. HR managers may facilitate the successful communication of leadership activities and ensure alignment with employee demands through the formulation and execution of policies (Kossek et al., 2021). Davidson et al. (2022) assert that the implementation of policies such as flexible working hours, regulations regarding after-hours communication, and stress management resources is essential for fostering a healthy work-life balance, especially in high-demand settings like South African NPOs. These policies are linked to reduced employee stress and enhanced organisational commitment (Kossek et al., 2021). Human Resources managers act as intermediaries between employees and management, promoting transparent communication on work-life balance concerns.Studies indicate that feedback systems, including employee surveys and regular check-ins, assist HR managers in identifying obstacles to achieving balance and advise leadership of essential policy modifications (Wang et al., 2020). This continuous dialogue guarantees that boundary-related policies stay adaptable and sensitive to evolving concerns, particularly the growing influence

of technology on work-life balance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2020). For instance, HR may suggest restricting after-hours work or offering training to employees on how to disengage from work to safeguard personal time (Wang et al., 2020). This proactive strategy is crucial for enabling employees to set clear boundaries and avert burnout. Furthermore, HR managers are tasked with fostering a supportive workplace that enables individuals to uphold their personal limits. Human Resources can provide training on time management, stress alleviation, and resilience, thereby equipping staff with strategies to effectively navigate the demands of their professional and personal life (Kabat-Zinn, 2018). In South African non-profit organisations, where employees frequently endure emotional stress due to their profound commitment to their profession, the prioritisation of mental and emotional well-being by human resources is especially crucial (Grant, 2020). Research indicates that these initiatives alleviate stress and enhance organisational culture, promoting employee engagement and retention (Ayande, 2023; Marecki, 2024;Richards et al., 2020).

HR managers have a pivotal role in facilitating work-life balance and boundary management inside organisations, especially in resource-limited contexts such as South African non-profit organisations. HR managers collaborate with leadership to develop policies, programs, and feedback systems that assist employees in harmonising their personal and professional life, thereby promoting the long-term welfare of employees and the overall efficacy of the organisation (McFarlane, 2018). Ongoing assessment of policies and the allocation of resources such as counselling and stress management programs contribute to maintaining a productive and engaged workforce while protecting employees' mental and emotional well-being. Literature above widely acknowledges the influence of leadership in promoting boundary management in work-life balance, there is scarce evidence on how leadership practices in South African NPOs which are characterised by highly demand deliverables to impress funders, high emotional demands, resource scarcity uniquely shape employee well-being and retention respond to work-life balance. The gap in studies are in scarcity of literature that assesses whether conventional leadership practices can be effectively adapted to foster work-life balance or whether alternative models are required to address contextual challenges.

2.14 Strategies to Support Work-life balance as Stipulated in the Boundary Management

2.14.1 Establishing Physical Boundaries

Establishing physical boundaries is a critical component of good boundary management. This may require creating a dedicated workspace at home that is separate from spaces associated with personal interests. This technique helps people mentally move between roles and stay focused during set work hours (Clarkson et al., 2021).

In addition to physical limits, individuals can benefit from establishing temporal boundaries

that specify work hours and specified times for personal pursuits and recreation. Establishing a defined timetable helps individuals allocate time and energy to both job-related duties and leisure pursuits, enabling a balanced approach to time management and preventing work from intruding into personal time (Gajendran & Harrison, 2023).

2.14.2 Effective Communication

Communication is essential for effective boundary management in both personal relationships and professional settings. Explicit communication of boundaries and expectations with family, friends, and coworkers fosters mutual understanding and respect for individuals' necessity to balance work and personal life commitments (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2018). By openly addressing these boundaries, individuals can foster a supportive environment in which their needs are recognised and respected, hence mitigating conflicts and stress associated with boundary management.

Encouraging open communication and transparency on border-related matters is essential for organisations to facilitate efficient boundary management. Encouraging employees to express their needs and concerns about work-life balance allows organisations to pinpoint areas for enhancement and customise their policies and practices accordingly. Organisations can foster a supportive atmosphere that respects and values limits by requesting employee feedback and aggressively addressing their concerns (Thompson et al., 2023).

Moreover, establishing limits regarding communication channels, such as email and messaging platforms, is crucial for preserving work-life balance (Thompson, Allen, & Spector, 2020). Formulating explicit protocols on the utilisation of these channels can assist individuals in regulating responsiveness and availability beyond specified work hours. To cultivate a constructive work atmosphere, numerous South Africans are establishing explicit guidelines for after-hours communication and honouring employees' personal time. Vodacom South Africa has established policies that honour employees' out-of-office hours and prohibit non-urgent business communications outside of these hours, thereby fostering boundary management and alleviating work-related stress (Kossek et al., 2021). This can enhance well-being by reducing the intrusion of work-related communications during personal time. However, these practices are seen being practiced in well-resourced capacity driven organsations such as Vodacom and key reports in SMMEs as well as under-funded NPOs is missing. This means that these strategies are potent in corporate environments and not in organizations with limited technological and financial capacity. Hence more investigations on the efficacy of these strategies are needed in resource constrained environments.

2.14.3 Organisational Support for Boundary Management

Organisations can reduce the negative consequences of boundary management by fostering a supportive atmosphere through work-life balance policies and programs that increase individual well-being and overall organisational efficiency (Lee & Park, 2022). A healthy work-life balance lowers employee burnout, increases job satisfaction, and boosts retention (Clark & Roberts, 2020). Employees that attain this equilibrium are more motivated, engaged, and productive (Kossek et al., 2021).

Offering increased flexibility in work arrangements, such as remote work and flexible hours, is an important tactic that businesses may utilise to encourage good boundary management. These solutions allow employees to better balance their personal and professional life, reducing stress, increasing job satisfaction, and improving overall performance (Thompson et al., 2020; Kossek et al., 2021). Many South African organisations, notably in the technology and financial sectors, provide flexible working hours and remote work opportunities. This enables individuals to plan their work schedules around personal commitments, resulting in a healthy work-life balance. Organisations such as Deloitte South Africa and Discovery have adopted hybrid work models, giving employees the flexibility to work where and when they want (Chong et al., 2020).

Furthermore, incentivising regular breaks and holidays helps to minimise burnout, promote psychological well-being, and boost employee perfomance (Halbesleben & Wheeler 2018). These tactics ultimately result in increased creativity, morale, and job performance.

Investing in distant work infrastructure, such as providing the required technology and resources for effective digital workplaces, is another important approach for organisations to assist border management. Organisations may assure long-term performance by providing staff with the tools and training they need to stay productive in remote locations. This dedication to flexibility and remote work not only promotes employee satisfaction but also attracts highly trained individuals who appreciate work-life balance, hence enhancing performance and promoting creativity (Chong et al., 2020; Kossek et al., 2021). Whilst studies have confirmed the advantages of flexible work arrangements in emote corporate environments, there is little empirical evidence in South African NPO environments on such. Such practices requires that there be funding, infrastructure and donor reporting requirements. There is scant literature describing organizational support for boundary management on mission driven environments where emotional labored and resource scarcity are prevalent, leaving a gap in which there are no reports on how boundary management strategies can enhance performance in the South African NPO environment.

2.14.4 Implementation of policies and work practices

Hinrichs (2023) asserts that organisations play a vital role in facilitating successful boundary management among their personnel. Organisations can foster an environment that supports employees' personal and professional development by implementing policies and practices that prioritise work-life balance, enabling remote work, promoting regular breaks and vacations, encouraging open communication, and establishing a culture of respect for boundaries. By implementing these initiatives, organisations can enhance the well-being and employee perfomance of their employees while concurrently promoting a positive and sustainable workplace culture (Chong et al., 2020).

Policies such as paid parental leave, sick leave, and mental health days are more prevalent. For example, Standard Bank provides staff with mental health days in addition to their standard leave, acknowledging the significance of mental and emotional well-being in maintaining performance (Hinrichs, 2023). However, literature tends to generalize the contexts and in which these policies operate leading to the adoption of policies from well-resourced and capacitated environments into under-funded developing context and this leads to misalignment due to lack of feasibility testing in socially oriented environments and therefore a gap is introduced as there is no evaluation of whether these policies are practical, equitable and performance –enhancing in the NPO environment.

2.14.5 Training and Development on Boundary Management

Organisations that provide boundary management training and development courses are taking a proactive approach to equipping employees with the skills and information they need to effectively traverse the challenges of work-life balance. These programs are intended to offer individuals with practical ideas and tactics for creating and maintaining clear boundaries between their professional and personal life (Smith et al., 2023).

Workshops on time management are an important component of these curricula. These courses teach employees how to prioritise tasks, create realistic goals, and efficiently allocate time to ensure that both work-related and personal activities are given appropriate attention. Employees who acquire time management skills can increase their productivity while reducing feelings of overwhelm and stress (Clarkson, Martin, & Rockwell, 2020).

Stress reduction strategies are another important component of boundary management training programs. These courses teach employees how to detect indications of stress, practise mindfulness and relaxation techniques, and build effective coping strategies for work-related demands. Organisations may create a healthier and more resilient workforce by providing employees with stress-management tools, hence boosting overall well-being and job

satisfaction (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2018).

Effective communication skills for creating boundaries with coworkers and supervisors are also emphasised in boundary management training programs. These programs teach employees assertiveness and dispute resolution skills, allowing them to confidently convey their demands and preferences for work-life balance. Employees can reduce misunderstandings and disputes by promoting open and courteous communication inside the organisation (Thompson et al., 2023).

Furthermore, boundary management training programmes may include workshops on defining boundaries in the context of remote work and digital communication. As the incidence of remote work continues to rise, employees need help on establishing boundaries between business and personal life while working from home and handling the issues of constant connectivity and digital overload (Lee & Park, 2022). Pressure to meet donor outcomes and objectives puts NPO employees under immense pressure often working longer hours. Training would be important in enhancing time management, stress reduction and assertive communication. Literature has reported poor boundary management and stressed the need to receive training in this regard. However, there is limited literature reporting on whether boundary management training can indeed improve resilience, reduce burn-out and directly influence employee performance in the NPO environment, something that needs attention in literature of performance management.

2.14.6 Creating a Supportive Work environment

Establishing a supportive workplace that prioritises work-life balance and honours personal boundaries is essential for improving employee satisfaction and dedication. This environment enables employees to prioritise their lives and set clear boundaries without the apprehension of adverse repercussions. By prioritising employee well-being, organisations cultivate a more efficient and effective work environment (Gajendran & Harrison, 2024). At the core of this supporting environment is trust, enabling employees to confidently balance personal activities and professional obligations. Organisational leaders are crucial in cultivating trust through transparency and respect for employees' needs and boundaries (Thompson et al., 2023). Flexibility constitutes a vital component of a nurturing working culture. Providing alternatives like as shortened workweeks, remote work, and flexible schedules allows employees to achieve a more effective balance between professional and personal life. When organisations address the evolving requirements of their employees beyond the workplace, employees attain enhanced job satisfaction and overall well-being (Clarkson et al., 2020). This flexibility fosters a culture that emphasises employee well-being, assisting people in managing their personal and professional obligations in a balanced and sustainable way.

Furthermore, organisations must furnish resources and support to aid employees in attaining work-life balance, including mental health services, employee assistance programs, and wellness initiatives. These materials empower people to prioritise their well-being while simultaneously progressing in their careers. Organisations can enhance employee satisfaction, improve retention, and cultivate a positive and empathetic workplace culture that benefits both individuals and the organisation by fostering a culture that respects personal lives, promotes trust, provides flexibility, and supports employee well-being (Smith et al., 2023). Key to a supportive working environment such as volunteer labor, donor accountability measures and wellness programs among other strategies. However, their effects on employee productivity are under-studied as wide literature explores traditional support tools such as trust, flexibility and well-being leaving wellness programs to enhance productivity.

2.14.7 Continuous monitoring and evaluation of boundary management practices.

To promote work-life balance and employee well-being, businesses should set up a review system to analyse the effectiveness of their boundary management strategies. Regular evaluation enables organisations to enhance their policies and discover misalignments between employee requirements and present practices (Lee & Park, 2021). Surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one discussions can provide helpful input on employees' opinions of work-life balance and the obstacles they have in keeping work and personal life separate (Thompson et al., 2023). These insights are crucial for analysing the success of current policies and identifying opportunities for improvement (Gajendran & Harrison, 2023).

In addition to receiving qualitative input, businesses can utilise objective indicators like productivity metrics, absenteeism rates, and turnover rates to evaluate the impact of boundary management strategies on organisational outcomes. Organisations acquire a more thorough picture of their initiatives' efficiency in creating work-life balance by combining quantitative data points with subjective feedback from employees (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2018). This data-driven approach guarantees that decisions to change policies or procedures are influenced by both employee views and measurable outcomes, resulting in more successful solutions (Patel, 2022).

This method also indicates a proactive commitment to employee well-being,which has been linked to increased engagement and job satisfaction (Kossek et al., 2021). Continuous communication with employees during the appraisal process is critical for retaining confidence.

Organisations promote transparency and reaffirm their commitment to work-life balance by releasing data analysis results, describing any modifications or improvements adopted, and displaying how employee feedback influenced decision-making (Smith et al., 2023). This not only boosts employee morale, but it also fosters a culture of continual development and responsiveness, which is critical for building a work environment in which people can thrive both professionally and personally (Chong et al., 2020). Regular examination and improvements to boundary management methods are critical for supporting employee well-being and promoting a healthy, productive workforce (Patel, 2022). While studies advocate for continuous monitoring through surveys and performance metrics, there is little evidence on whether South African NPOs possess capacity to carry out such evaluations systematically. Existing literature also under-report how resource scarcity, informal work structures, and donor driven outcomes affect boundary management practices.

2.15 Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The Job Demands-Resources (JDR) theory, proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2016), asserts that the interplay between job demands and job resources profoundly affects employee well-being, performance, and work-life balance. Job demands, including workload, emotional strain, and time pressure, can result in burnout if not mitigated by sufficient resources. Conversely, employment resources, including support from colleagues and supervisors, autonomy, and opportunities for development, assist employees in efficiently managing pressures and enhance motivation, engagement, and performance (Bakker et al., 2023). Recent studies underscore the significance of resources in mitigating the detrimental consequences of workplace expectations, indicating that a disparity where demands surpass resources may result in stress, diminished work-life balance, and decreased performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023; Lima et al., 2022). Moreover, allocating adequate resources can assist employees in effectively balancing personal and professional responsibilities, hence improving overall well-being and organisational performance (Hakanen & Roodt, 2022). The JDR model hihhlights the necessity for organisations to cultivate a supportive environment that enhances resource availability to maximise employee performance and work-life balance (Bakker et al., 2021). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model offers a comprehensive framework for analysing the correlation between work-life balance and employee performance, particularly within non-profit organisations (NPOs) in South Africa. This study's primary objective investigates the correlation between work-life balance and employee performance, drawing on the JD-R model's premise that excessive job demands, coupled with inadequate resources, lead to employee stress and diminished performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). As individuals encounter increased expectations without enough assistance, their ability to sustain a good

work-life balance diminishes, ultimately affecting their job performance. Job resources, including autonomy, social support, and opportunity for professional development, function as critical mitigators of the adverse impacts of job demands. The JD-R model posits that these resources enhance engagement and well-being, therefore resulting in increased motivation and job satisfaction (Wang et al., 2023).

The study's second objective, is aimed at identifying variables that hinder the attainment of work-life balance, is directly linked to the absence of these resources. Insufficient social support from colleagues and superiors, together with a lack of career development chances, can intensify work-related stress, resulting in an imbalance between employees' professional and personal life. Organisations that do not supply sufficient resources are more prone to employee disengagement and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). This emphasises the need of fostering a friendly workplace to assist individuals in attaining a balanced work-life equilibrium. The final objective of the study examines the efficacy of techniques designed to improve the correlation between work-life balance and employee performance, directly aligning with the JD-R model's advocacy for proactive interventions. Interventions including job redesign, flexible work hours, and employee development programs help mitigate job stress and equip people with the necessary resources for effective performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). Providing flexible work arrangements enables employees to effectively balance home commitments with work obligations, hence diminishing work-family friction and improving overall job satisfaction and performance (Van Wingerden et al., 2018). Wellness programs, leadership training, and skill development initiatives have demonstrated efficacy in alleviating stress and enhancing employee engagement (Guglielmi et al., 2018). These tactics correspond with the study's aim of evaluating work-life balance initiatives, illustrating how organisations can improve both employee well-being and performance through specific interventions. Alongside organisational initiatives, personal attributes like resilience and self-efficacy significantly influence the relationship between job demands and employee outcomes. Studies indicate that persons with elevated resilience and self-efficacy are more adept at managing job demands and sustaining a healthy work-life balance (Chong et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2019). These personal attributes allow individuals to effectively manage stress and sustain elevated performance levels, even under significant workplace demands. The study aims to identify the elements affecting work-life balance by examining the influence of personal traits on the efficacy of organisational tactics

Moreover, leadership style and organisational culture can profoundly affect employees' perceptions and responses to job demands and resources, hence influencing their work-life balance and overall performance (Bakker et al., 2020). An encouraging leadership approach that fosters open dialogue, delivers emotional assistance, and presents growth possibilities can aid employees in effectively navigating their work-life difficulties. The JD-R model offers an in-depth analysis of the impact of work-life balance on employee performance. It highlights the significance of regulating job expectations and providing adequate employment resources to promote engagement, well-being, and job satisfaction. However, literature has not tested if the JD-R Model captures the lived realities of NPO employees in the developing world in balancing personal and professional work. This creates the need to report on validation of the models applicability in fragile organizational ecosystems such as NPOs in the African context.

2.16 Research gaps

The preceding assessment of literature demonstrates that, despite substantial study on work-life balance and employee performance, several gaps exist in the discourse. To begin, much of the existing literature focusses on developed economies, with few studies looking at how work-life balance affects employee performance in developing nations with vastly different socioeconomic conditions and workplace cultures. According to Kelliher, Richardson, and Boiarintseva (2019), the majority of work-life balance research takes place in Western contexts, leaving developing countries under-represented. Similarly, Smith and Brown (2021) claim that socioeconomic characteristics influence workplace practices, but little emphasis has been paid to their impact in non-Western settings. Furthermore, while previous research has looked into the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction, few studies have offered empirical evidence of its direct impact on employee perfomance, innovation, and long-term organisational performance (Erwina, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2022). According to Jones, Carter, and Hughes (2020), work-life balance is frequently associated with employee well-being, but its measured implications on productivity have received less attention. According to Lee and Chen (2022), more research is needed to measure the impact of work-life balance efforts on organisational performance metrics. As a result, less is spoken about ways to strengthen the link between work-life balance and employee success. According to Williams (2023), businesses must develop unique techniques to handle industry-specific work-life balance difficulties.

Another gap is the sectoral focus of previous studies, as most research focusses on corporate environments, leaving a lack of understanding into businesses with non-traditional work structures, particularly healthcare, education, the gig economy, and non-profit organisations YuLife & IPSOS, 2023). According to Gómez and Ruiz (2018), work-life balance research is primarily focused on traditional office settings, leaving out industries with irregular work

patterns.

A critical review of the literature reveals that current debates on work-life balance (WLB) and employee performance remain heavily biased towards developed economies, thereby failing to account for the vastly different socio-economic conditions, labour markets, and workplace cultures of developing nations. This Western-centric focus neglects African contexts, where structural inequalities, extended family obligations, and fragile economic conditions fundamentally reshape the meaning and practice of WLB (Kelliher, Richardson & Boiarintseva, 2019; Smith & Brown, 2021). Equally problematic is the narrow framing of WLB primarily in relation to job satisfaction or employee well-being, while its measurable implications for productivity, innovation, and long-term organisational sustainability remain underexplored (Erwina, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2022). This neglect weakens the empirical and theoretical link between WLB and performance, leaving unanswered questions about how employee success can be strengthened through balance-focused strategies. Furthermore, the literature demonstrates a clear sectoral bias: most research privileges corporate and formal business settings, with limited attention to industries with atypical or irregular work structures such as healthcare, education, the gig economy, and particularly non-profit organisations (NPOs) (YuLife & IPSOS, 2023; Gómez & Ruiz, 2018). The omission of NPOs is especially significant, given that employees in this sector face unique pressures donor dependency, high emotional labour, resource shortages, and blurred professional-personal boundaries which may amplify the consequences of poor WLB on performance. In South Africa, these challenges are compounded by contextual realities such as multigenerational household responsibilities, informal caregiving demands, high unemployment, digital inequality, and the paradox of constant connectivity, none of which are adequately captured by existing global frameworks. Moreover, while flexible work policies, wellness programmes, and reduced workweeks are widely promoted in the literature, there is insufficient empirical evidence on their effectiveness in resource-constrained, mission-driven organisations, where such interventions may operate very differently (Thompson, Reynolds & Foster, 2021; Zhao & Li, 2023). Thus, the current literature fails to explain how WLB initiatives can be adapted to fragile, underfunded NPO environments, nor does it address the long-term organisational risks of neglecting employee balance in institutions that are vital to social and economic development. This neglect creates a significant knowledge gap, making it imperative to investigate WLB in South African NPOs, both to enrich global theory with non-Western perspectives and to generate practical, evidence-based strategies that can enhance employee performance in one of the most critical yet overlooked sectors of society.

Patel (2020) argues that employees in the gig economy confront concerns in achieving work-life balance, although research into effective interventions for this sector is limited. Furthermore, there has been little research into the efficacy of specific work-life balance policies, such as remote work, reduced workweeks, and wellness programs, in increasing employee performance across various organisational contexts (Gupta, 2023). In addition, Thompson, Reynolds, and Foster (2021) contend that, while flexible work arrangements are becoming more prevalent, their impact on employee performance differs by industry and job type. Zhao and Li (2023) argue that additional empirical study is needed to examine the long-term effects of work-life balance policies in a variety of organisational situations. Addressing these gaps provides a more thorough understanding of how work-life balance programs can be customised to varied organisational environments.

2.17 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents literature regarding the influence of work-life balance (WLB) on employee performance. The chapter concentrated on the literature around employee performance and work-life balance, specifically within South African non-profit organisations (NPOs). The chapter topically addressed the three main objectives of the study: Analysing the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, determining the factors inhibiting the achievement of work-life balance and exploring the effectiveness of strategies being used to enhance the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance at a selected NPO in South Africa

The chapter also integrated concepts from Boundary Theory, which focusses on how individuals navigate the boundaries between work and home life, and the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) model, which examines how job resources might alleviate the adverse impacts of job demands. By integrating these theoretical frameworks, the chapter offered a thorough comprehension of the dynamics affecting work-life balance and employee outcomes within South African non-profit organizations. As a result, the gaps in literature highlighted in this review were used to formulate the problem statement, research questions, objectives and hypothesis in chapter 1 to assist in the exploration of the effect of work life balance on employee performance.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the study's methodology, detailing the research design, study site, target population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures. The methodology, research design and the instruments are aligned to the following research questions, objectives and hypothesis:

Research Questions

- What are the key factors that inhibit the achievement of work-life balance at the selected NPO in South Africa?
- To what extent are the strategies being implemented to enhance work-life balance effectively improving employee performance at the selected NPO in South Africa?

Research Objectives

- To examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance at a selected NPO in South Africa.
- To determine the factors inhibiting the achievement of work-life balance at a selected NPO in South Africa.
- To explore the effectiveness of strategies being used to enhance the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance at a selected NPO in South Africa

Hypothesis

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a positive correlation between work-life balance and employee performance.

The Null Hypothesis ($H_{0)}$: There is no positive correlation between work-life balance and employee performance

Employing an explanatory sequential design, the research is divided into two phases:

- **Phase One (Quantitative):** Collects empirical data to identify patterns and relationships within the research problem.
- **Phase Two (Qualitative):** Explores and contextualises the quantitative findings to provide a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

This structured approach ensures methodological rigor and coherence, offering a

comprehensive perspective that enhances the study's contribution to the field.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The current study is based on a pragmatic research paradigm. The following reasons justifies the pragmatic paradigm. The adoption of a pragmatic paradigm is most appropriate for this study because it enables the integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches in addressing the stated research questions and objectives. Examining the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, as framed by the hypothesis testing, requires quantitative measurement through surveys and statistical analysis which reflects the positivist strand of pragmatism. Identifying the key factors that inhibit the achievement of work-life balance within the selected NPO necessitates a qualitative exploration of employee experiences and organisational practices which aligns with interpretivist reasoning. Evaluating the extent to which strategies aimed at enhancing work-life balance are effectively improving employee performance calls for a combined analysis of measurable performance indicators and subjective perceptions of strategy effectiveness, thus requiring methodological flexibility. Pragmatism is therefore the most suitable paradigm, as it accommodates both positivist and interpretivist perspectives to generate findings that are statistically valid, contextually grounded, and practically applicable to the socio-economic realities of South African NPOs (Creswell & Creswell, 2020; Saunders et al., 2022). As Creswell and Creswell (2020) explain, a research paradigm represents a foundational framework that guides the process of inquiry, shaped by ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired), and methodology (the strategies for data collection and analysis). While positivism assumes that reality is objective and best studied through empirical and quantitative methods (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021). Interpretivism emphasises the socially constructed and subjective nature of reality, privileging qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2018) and pragmatism combines the strengths of both traditions by advocating for a flexible, problem-driven approach that prioritises the production of actionable solutions to complex organisational issues (Babbie, 2020).

In the context of this study on work-life balance and employee performance, choosing the appropriate data collection and analytic methodologies was crucial. To successfully leverage the benefits of both paradigms, the current study took a pragmatic approach that combined both methodologies. This is significant because it provides a thorough understanding of how work-life balance influences employee performance from both quantitative and personal viewpoints.

3.3. Research Philosophy

This study is underpinned by a pragmatic research philosophy, as the nature of the research questions and objectives necessitates both the measurement of quantifiable relationships and the exploration of contextual, lived experiences within the selected NPO. The hypothesis-driven element of the study requires a positivist lens to statistically test the correlation between work-life balance and employee performance, while the exploration of inhibiting factors and the effectiveness of strategies calls for an interpretivist orientation that captures subjective insights from employees and managers. Pragmatism thus provides the most suitable philosophical stance, as it bridges these two traditions by privileging methodological pluralism and focusing on generating solutions to complex, real-world organisational challenges (Saunders et al., 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2020). In the South African NPO context, where structural constraints, funding limitations, and socio-economic dynamics uniquely shape the work-life balance discourse ,a pragmatic approach ensures that the research not only produces statistically valid findings but also yields contextually grounded recommendations that are directly applicable to practice.

3.4 Research Methodology

Research technique refers to the systematic and structured strategy that researchers use to plan, carry out, and interpret a research project (Creswell, 2023). The choice of a technique is critical for guaranteeing and dependability of their findings, thereby increasing the credibility and validity of the study's results. The current study used a mixed method research methodology.

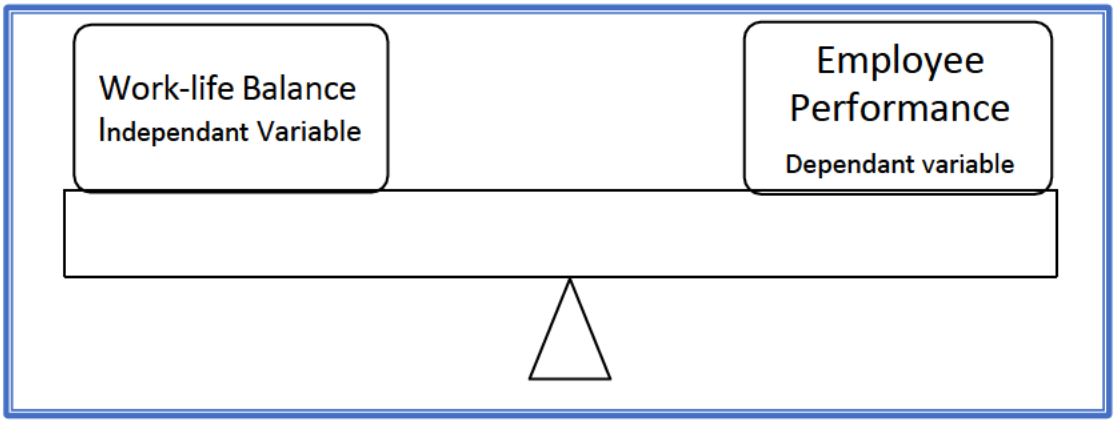
3.4.1 Mixed methods

This study utilised a mixed-methods strategy, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research procedures to thoroughly investigate the research subject. Mixed-methods study utilised the advantages of both methodologies, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021). This technique facilitated triangulation through the integration of several data sources, hence augmenting the reliability and validity of the research findings (Johnson et al., 2021).

This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve a comprehensive knowledge of the research objectives. The initial inquiry examined the association between work-life balance and employee performance, using quantitative analysis to evaluate the relationship between the independent variable (work-life balance) and the dependent variable (employee performance) (shown in Figure 3.1). This investigation entailed assessing the correlation between these variables utilising Likert scale items (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree). For example, enquiries like “I occasionally worked later than usual to manage my

workload" and "I sometimes failed to meet deadlines" were formulated to quantitatively assess patterns and correlations (Appendix A). This study employed statistical analysis to obtain generalisable conclusions about the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. Recent research draws emphasis the positive association between employee well-being and organisational success, underscoring the importance of this investigation in a quantifiable setting (Krekel, Ward, & De Neve, 2019).

Figure 3.1 *Dependant and Independant variable*



Based on the research objectives and the mixed-methods approach employed in this study, the following hypothesis was formulated

H1: There is a positive correlation between work-life balance and employee performance. Specifically, employees who experience a higher level of work-life balance will report higher levels of productivity, job satisfaction, and lower absenteeism rates compared to those with poor work-life balance.

H2: There is no positive correlation between work-life balance and employee performance. Specifically, employees who experience a higher level of work-life balance will report higher levels of productivity, job satisfaction, and lower absenteeism rates compared to those with poor work-life balance.

This hypothesis aims to explore the relationship between the independent variable, work-life balance, and the dependent variable, employee performance, by examining how variations in work-life balance impact various performance metrics (Krekel, Ward, & De Neve, 2019).

The second research question investigated the factors that impeded the attainment of work-life balance within the organization, necessitating a qualitative approach to examine the underlying reasons behind these barriers. Open-ended questions such as *"Can you describe a specific instance when you had to work on holidays or weekends?"* and *"Discuss an occasion when you missed a significant family event due to professional obligations"* enabled participants to share personal experiences that hindered their ability to balance work and personal life. These

narratives provided contextual insights into the challenges employees faced. Additionally, inquiries about coping mechanisms and support systems (e.g., *"What strategies or support systems did you utilise?"*) shed light on existing gaps in the organization's approach to promoting work-life balance.

The third question assessed the effectiveness of strategies implemented to enhance work-life balance and improve employee performance. Gathering perspectives from both employees and management regarding these strategies facilitated an evaluation of their perceived impact. For example, management interview questions and qualitative employee inquiries such as *"How did you perceive the effectiveness of the current strategies implemented to enhance work-life balance?"* helped determine whether these measures had a meaningful effect on employees' work-life balance and performance. Employees' responses to open-ended questions, such as sharing experiences of working during holidays or weekends, offered deeper insights into the practical functioning of these strategies.

This study employed insights from both employees and management to achieve a thorough understanding of work-life balance difficulties and their effects on employee performance. This study employed a mixed-methods strategy to facilitate a thorough analysis by integrating the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative methodologies yielded observable, generalisable data regarding the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, facilitating statistical study of patterns and correlations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021). Qualitative techniques provided profound insights into employees' lived experiences, revealing the contextual and emotional dimensions of work-life balance difficulties that quantitative data alone could not elucidate (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2021).

3.5 Research Design

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2021), a study design outlines the step-by-step process for achieving the research objectives. It is essentially a road plan outlining the study's trajectory. According to Babie (2020), a research design is a defined plan or framework that directs the entire research process from problem definition to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It acts as a guideline for addressing research questions and fulfilling the study's goals. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), a well-crafted research design guarantees that the study is systematic, logical, and methodologically sound, as well as addresses potential biases and limits. While there are different research designs available depending on whether the study is quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods, the current study took a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Thus, the choice of research

design is crucial since it affects the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the findings.

3.5.1 Sequential Explanatory Research Design

The sequential explanatory research design is a mixed methods technique comprising two separate phases: a quantitative phase succeeded by a qualitative phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). During the initial phase, quantifiable data is gathered and analyzed to discern patterns, trends, or correlations. The outcomes of this phase are subsequently utilized to guide the second phase, during which qualitative data is gathered to furnish more profound insights and elucidations for the quantitative results. This design was especially beneficial in the present investigation, as the objective was to quantify the extent of a phenomena and comprehend the underlying reasons or mechanisms. The sequential strategy guarantees that the qualitative phase enhances and expands upon the preliminary quantitative findings. In the quantitative phase (Phase one), several inferential statistical approaches were employed to evaluate the correlation between work-life balance and employee performance:

1. The **Pearson correlation coefficient** was employed to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between work-life balance variables such as flexibility and stress levels and employee performance outcomes such as productivity and job satisfaction (Field, 2018).
2. **Multiple regression analysis** was used to examine the causal effects of work-life balance factors on employee performance. This technique also controlled for confounding variables and identified significant predictors (Mseba, 2024).
3. **T-values and P-values** were calculated to assess the statistical significance of the regression results. A P-value less than 0.05 indicated a significant relationship. These techniques provided a framework for understanding the impact of work-life balance on employee performance, ensuring the reliability and validity of the study's findings (Barkhuizen, 2020; Sadat et al., 2024; YuLife & IPSOS, 2023).

The quantitative results were then utilised to create questions for the qualitative phase, which delved further into employees' perceptions and experiences.

Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative phases, the study gave a full understanding of the impact of work-life balance on employee performance. This strategy produced both quantitative and contextual insights. In essence, the sequential explanatory design was successful in ensuring that the findings were both statistically significant and practically applicable. Figure 3.2 shows how the sequential explanatory design was applied in this study.

Figure 3. 1

Sequential Explanatory Design



Adapted from Creswell (2020)

3.6 PHASE ONE (1)

3.6.1 Quantitative Approach

The initial phase of the study employed a sequential explanatory research methodology, utilising a survey questionnaire to gather quantitative data. This section outlines the systematic approach implemented to attain the study objectives. Creswell (2021) asserts that the quantitative approach adheres to a methodical and objective methodology, guided by statistical evidence to fulfil study objectives. The utilisation of a quantitative survey in this study was warranted as it served to elucidate the relationships among variables to comprehend, forecast, and regulate the occurrences. Data collection was streamlined by defined methods, objectives, samples, and research instruments , as it involved specific enquiries requiring clear answers from participants.

3.7 Population and Sampling

In a research study, the population refers to the total collection of people, objects, or events who have a common trait and are of interest to the researcher (Babie, 2020). It is the larger group from which a sample is drawn, and it determines the scope of the research. The current

study, which examined the impact of work-life balance on employee performance, included employees from a selected NPO in South Africa. The population was chosen based on the research objectives and individual characteristics. A well-defined population ensures that the study's findings are relevant and applicable to the group under investigation.

3.7.1 Sampling

Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2020) describe sampling as the process of picking a subset of individuals or units from a population to represent the whole group. This strategy is essential for guaranteeing that research findings are applicable to the wider community without necessitating the examination of the complete cohort. It is therefore prudent for the researcher to select a subset from the population that is representative in order to conserve time, reduce expenses, and address logistical constraints. This study utilised sampling to enable the researcher to infer inferences about the population from the data gathered from the sample. Thus far, the sample must accurately represent the population to guarantee the validity and generalisability of the findings. There are two primary categories of sampling techniques: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling utilises mathematical methods to pick individuals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021). Each individual in the population possesses an identical probability of selection. Probability sampling strategies include random sampling, cluster sampling, multistage sampling, and stratified sampling. In non-probability sampling, participants are chosen based on non-random criteria, such as convenience or judgement, which includes purposive selection and snowball sampling. The present study employed both probability and non-probability sampling methods.

3.7.2 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised of 500 non-managerial employees of a non-profit organization (NPO) based in Johannesburg, South Africa. These employees were involved in various operational roles within the organization, contributing to its mission of community development and support.

3.7.3 Sampling Strategy

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve a comprehensive understanding of work-life balance and employee performance at the selected Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) in South Africa.

For the quantitative component, stratified random sampling was used to select 150 non-managerial employees. This technique involves dividing the population into distinct subgroups or strata based on relevant characteristics, such as departments, age groups and gender then randomly selecting samples from each stratum (Babbie, 2020; Deaton &

Cartwright, 2018). This approach ensured that each subgroup was adequately represented, enhancing the sample's representativeness and allowing for reliable and impartial inferences about the entire staff population.

The stratified random sampling strategy was chosen for its advantages, including precise results, subgroup comparisons, and optimal resource allocation (Yin, 2018). This approach aligns with the research objectives, particularly in examining the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, determining the factors inhibiting work-life balance and exploring the effectiveness of strategies to enhance this relationship.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling will be used to select a subset of employees and managers for in-depth interviews. This approach will provide rich, contextual insights into the experiences and perceptions of work-life balance and employee performance at the NPO. The qualitative data will complement the quantitative findings, offering a more nuanced understanding of the research phenomenon.

By combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of work-life balance and employee performance at the selected NPO, ultimately informing strategies to enhance employee well-being and organizational performance

3.7.4 Sample Size Considerations

The primary objective was to assess all 150 non-managerial staff, however data was successfully gathered from 141 participants, constituting about 94% of the target population. Krieger (2023) asserts that a high response rate reduces the likelihood of non-response bias, hence enhancing the sample's representativeness and the findings' generalisability. Kohut (2020) contends that response rates under 60% are associated with a significant risk of participation bias, potentially compromising the veracity of survey findings. The significant response rate (94%) establishes a robust basis for deriving meaningful and precise findings regarding the non-managerial workforce inside the chosen NPO.

3.7.5 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In this quantitative research, the establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria is fundamental to defining the study population, safeguarding participant welfare, and enhancing the validity of research findings. By carefully selecting participants based on specific criteria, the study ensured that the data collected was both relevant and reliable.

3.7.5.1 Inclusion Criteria

The following criteria were used to determine eligibility for participation in the study:

Non-managerial employees actively engaged in the organization's daily operations; Employees holding non-managerial positions who are directly involved in the day-to-day functions of the organization were included. This criterion ensured that included participants had firsthand experience with organizational processes, workplace dynamics, and operational challenges. Their insights were essential in understanding the perspectives of non-managerial employees regarding workplace factors, policies, and practices (De Vaus, 2021).

Employees with at least six months of tenure within the organization: Employees who had been with the organization for at least six months were included to ensure they had sufficient experience with workplace policies and practices. This criterion helped in obtaining insights from individuals who had a well-developed understanding of organizational culture and processes (De Vaus, 2021).

Employees willing to voluntarily participate in the study: Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Employees who agreed to take part provided informed consent, ensuring ethical research practices. Voluntary participation helped to ensure that responses were genuine, reducing the risk of coerced or biased data.

3.7.5.2 Exclusion Criteria

To maintain the study's focus on non-managerial employees and ensure the integrity of the findings, the following exclusion criteria were applied:

Managerial and supervisory staff: Employees in managerial or supervisory roles were excluded because the study aimed to capture the perspectives of non-managerial employees. Including managerial staff could have introduced biases, as their views and experiences differ significantly due to their leadership responsibilities and decision-making roles.

Employees on extended leave during the data collection period: Employees on extended leave (e.g., maternity leave, medical leave, or long-term unpaid leave) were excluded because their absence from daily operations during the study period could limit their ability to provide current insights (De Vaus, 2021).Their exclusion ensured that participants had active, up-to-date experiences within the organization.

3.8 Sample size table:

Table 3.1

Sample size

Population	**Questionnaire only**
Non Managerial employees from the organisation (Operations and support employees)	150
Total	**150**

Justification of sample size

The quantitative section of the study included 150 employees to provide a statistically significant sample size, which improves the findings' reliability and generalisability. According to Saunders et al. (2022), a sample size of 30% or more of the target population is generally regarded as adequate for quantitative research. As a result, selecting 150 people from a population of 500 represented 30% of the total workforce, indicating that the sample was statistically acceptable.

A sample of this size was adequate to gather varied perspectives while being feasible in terms of data collection and processing (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2021). Furthermore, greater sample sizes reduce sampling errors, biases, and allow for valid statistical comparisons (Saunders et al., 2022).

Furthermore, 150 individuals were chosen to represent various departments, job responsibilities, and experience levels within the organisation, ensuring thorough data coverage (Bryman, 2022). This sample size is also consistent with earlier studies in organisational research, where moderate to large samples of 100 to 200 respondents improve the validity of quantitative analysis (Hair et al., 2020).

3.9 Data collection

The collecting of data is an essential component of the research process, serving as the basis for scientific inquiry. It involves the methodical collection of data from many sources, such as surveys, interviews, observations, experiments, and existing records, to investigate research topics, confirm hypotheses, or analyse certain phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The precision and reliability of gathered data profoundly affect the validity and credibility of study results. Consequently, utilising stringent and systematically organised data gathering techniques is crucial for preserving the integrity and reliability of the results (Saunders et al., 2022).

In the current study, data collecting was crucial to achieving research objectives since it provided the researcher with the empirical evidence needed to analyse, interpret, and draw conclusions about the phenomena under examination. Through rigorous data collection techniques, the researcher acquired important information, found patterns or trends, and discovered linkages between variables, ultimately leading to the growth of knowledge and understanding in the subject (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021). According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), well-executed data gathering techniques encourage objective analysis and allow researchers to make informed decisions based on evidence rather than supposition or speculation, increasing the reliability and rigour of study results. According to Saunders et al. (2022), employing adequate data gathering procedures ensures the credibility and validity of the research findings. In the present study, data was collected via a survey questionnaire, ensuring that the research method was both efficient and structured for gathering full responses.

3.9.1 Research instruments

Research instruments include various tools and methodologies employed by researchers to collect data during a study. These instruments may manifest as surveys, questionnaires, interviews, observation procedures, tests, or any other measurement tools customised to the precise requirements and goals of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Each research instrument is crafted to extract information from participants or sources pertinent to the research topic, yielding important data to address research questions, test hypotheses, or investigate phenomena of interest. This study employed questionnaires to produce quantitative data. Questionnaires generally comprise organised collections of enquiries delivered to respondents in printed or digital form, facilitating uniform data acquisition from a substantial sample size.

Case study research is guided by key principles which includes in-depth analysis (interviews), contextualization (South African NPO), multiple data sources (150 participants) and flexibility (triangulation). In this study, these principles informed the selection of research

instruments, with questionnaires and interviews chosen to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Questionnaires provided a broad overview of the phenomenon, collecting quantitative data from a larger sample of non-managerial employees, while interviews gathered in-depth, qualitative insights from a subset of employees and managers. By combining these methods, the study achieved a rich and detailed understanding of work-life balance and employee performance at the selected Non-Profit Organization (NPO) in South Africa, allowing for triangulation, contextualization, and in-depth analysis. This approach enabled the study to capture a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, grounded in the specific context of the NPO, and contribute to a deeper understanding of work-life balance and employee performance in the NPO sector.

3.9.2 Questionnaire

According to Brace (2018), a questionnaire is a research instrument or survey tool used to collect data by presenting a series of structured questions to respondents. It typically consists of a set of pre-defined questions with standardised response formats, such as multiple-choice, Likert scales, or open-ended questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Questionnaires are administered to individuals or groups, and their responses are analysed to gather quantitative or qualitative data, depending on the research objectives (De Vaus, 2021).

3.9.3 Questionnaire Design and Structure

The questionnaire utilised in this study was meticulously designed to align with the research objectives, literature review, and the conceptual framework pertaining to work-life balance and employee performance. It is a self-developed instrument comprising two main sections ;

3.9.3.1 Section A: Demographic Information

This section attempted to collect demographic data, which would assist contextualise the responses and allow for subgroup analyses. The demographic variables in this section are intended to capture relevant aspects that may have influenced the study's findings. Participants were asked to provide information regarding the following:

The participants were divided into four age groups: 18-25 years, 26-34 years, 35-44 years, and 45 years and above. This variable helps us understand the sample's age distribution and how different age groups would have responded to the research questions. Participants were asked to choose between Male and Female, which allowed for an investigation of whether gender differences influenced the research results. Marital status was recorded in four categories: single, married, divorced, and widowed, offering insight into how relationship status may have influenced replies to specific questions.

Participants were also requested to specify their educational qualification, which ranged from

Matric to PhD, as well as their area of specialisation. This enabled for a more in-depth examination based on education level and area of competence. Furthermore, the length of service within the organisation was a critical variable, classified as 0-1 year, 1-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-10 years, and >10 years. This data assisted in understanding how organisational experience may have influenced perceptions and responses.

Furthermore, participants indicated the number of children or dependents they supported, with options ranging from one to five or more. This information was useful in determining the work-life balance and obligations that might have influenced respondents' opinions. Finally, a binary yes/no question questioned whether the person was actively pursuing more education, which helped determine whether ongoing education influenced respondents' attitudes or behaviours. By gathering these demographic information, the study was better able to investigate disparities between subgroups and detect patterns in the data depending on key features (Bryman, 2022; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.9.3.2 Section B: Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance

This section comprised 30 items designed to assess various aspects of work-life balance and their impact on employee performance. The items were structured to capture the frequency and intensity of experiences related to workload, job satisfaction, organizational support, and personal well-being. Participants responded using a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

The items addressed the following dimensions:

Workload and Time Management: Items 1–3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 15, 18, 20, and 21 explored aspects such as working beyond regular hours, managing deadlines, and the necessity of energy supplements.

Autonomy and Flexibility: Items 4, 10–12, and 23 assessed the ease of accessing leave, shift flexibility, and opportunities for remote work.

Work-Family Conflict: Items 5, 14–16, and 28 examined the interference between professional responsibilities and family obligations.

Job Satisfaction and Motivation: Items 17, 19, 22, and 24 evaluated feelings of depression, stress, recognition, and adaptability to new work methods.

Organizational Support: Items 25–27, 29, and 30 focused on support from colleagues, training on work-life balance, organizational culture, assistance for dependent care, and the availability of resources.

In addition to the quantitative items, five open-ended questions (Items 31–35) were included

to enrich the data. Open-ended questions enabled participants to provide comprehensive and elaborate responses, offering the researcher a deeper understanding of their thoughts and experiences. Creswell and Poth (2020) emphasise that this depth is essential for uncovering underlying motivations and complex behaviours that may not be captured by closed-ended questions. The five open ended questions asked at the end of the questionaire invited participants to share personal experiences related to:

1. Working beyond usual hours.
2. Working on holidays or weekends.
3. Missing significant family events due to work.
4. Failing to meet deadlines.
5. Feeling overwhelmed with work tasks.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Becker and Duffy (2020) stated that participants were guaranteed that the material gathered would be utilised exclusively for academic reasons, with rigorous compliance to privacy and confidentiality rules upheld throughout the process. Participants were apprised that their involvement in the study was voluntary, and they possessed the right to withdraw at any time without repercussions or penalties. Smith and Johnson (2022) say that participants were deliberately directed to exclude their names or any unique identifiers in their comments, so guaranteeing total anonymity.

The questionnaire was crafted to be user-friendly, featuring explicit instructions at the outset to assist participants. Nguyen et al. (2021) assert that participants were directed to select (√) only one response per question to guarantee the precision and uniformity of the data. The language employed in the questionnaire was clear and unambiguous, designed to reduce any confusion and enhance ease of completion (Taylor & Green, 2023).

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, all participants received a comprehensive explanation on the study's goal, the procedures involved, and the potential risks or advantages associated with their involvement. Meyer and Thompson (2021) argue that participants were apprised of the procedures implemented to safeguard personal data, including the utilisation of secure systems for data storage and the pledge to uphold the confidentiality of all responses. No personally identifying information was gathered, and all responses were aggregated and anonymised for analysis (O'Connor & Lee, 2022).

Furthermore, participants were afforded the chance to enquire about the study and were supplied with contact information for any queries or clarifications. McCarthy et al. (2023) assert that participants were informed of their right to access the study findings upon completion, should they indicate interest. The informed consent approach guaranteed that participants comprehended their rights and the ethical norms established to safeguard them during the study, as highlighted by Parker and James (2022). Davis et al. (2021) say that participants' responses were managed with the highest regard and diligence, and all possible measures were taken to mitigate any potential discomfort or injury during their involvement.

3.11 Data quality

3.11.1 Validity

Validity in this mixed-methods study was ensured through multiple strategies tailored to both quantitative and qualitative components. Internal validity, which assesses whether observed effects can be attributed to the studied variables rather than extraneous factors, was strengthened by using structured surveys with standardized measurement scales, controlling for confounding variables, and ensuring consistent data collection procedures (Sullivan, 2021). Construct validity was addressed through factor analysis and reliability testing, confirming that survey items accurately represented theoretical constructs such as work-life balance, stress, and employee performance (Hair et al., 2020; Bryman, 2022). External validity, or the generalisability of findings, was enhanced by selecting a representative sample of employees through probability sampling, ensuring that the results reflect the broader population of the selected NPO and allowing applicability to similar organisational contexts in South Africa (Saunders et al., 2022). Ecological validity was ensured by integrating qualitative interviews that captured employees' lived experiences, providing insights into the practical realities of work-life balance in a resource-constrained NPO environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Additionally, internal validity in the qualitative component was strengthened through member checking, where participants verified the accuracy of interview interpretations. Collectively, these strategies confirm that the study's findings are credible, reliable, and contextually relevant, effectively addressing the research questions and objectives.

3.11.2 Validity in questionnaires

To enhance validity in semi-structured interviews, the researcher implemented several key strategies. Firstly, the researcher ensured the appropriateness and relevance of the interview questions by aligning them closely with the research objectives and ensuring they effectively captured participants' perspectives and experiences (Bryman, 2022). To ensure validity, the

questionnaire was designed to include very few open-ended questions that allowed for rich, detailed responses, maximizing the potential for obtaining meaningful data (Brinkmann, 2022).

3.11.3 Reliability of questionnaire

Reliability in this mixed-methods study was ensured through multiple strategies tailored to both quantitative and qualitative components. For the questionnaire, internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a widely recognised metric established by Cronbach (1951), which measures the inter-item correlation within a scale to determine the degree to which all items jointly assess the same construct (Vaske, Beaman & Sponarski, 2020; Taber, 2018). Alpha values closer to 1 indicate high reliability, signifying that the questionnaire items consistently measure constructs such as work-life balance, stress and employee performance and while low values suggest potential deficiencies in item construction (Hair et al., 2020). To further enhance reliability, the survey employed clear and unambiguous language, accompanied by explicit instructions to ensure comprehension and a pilot study was conducted to identify and correct potential ambiguities or inconsistencies before full-scale administration (Boateng et al., 2018; Mohajan, 2020). A representative sample was selected through random probability sampling, ensuring that responses were not biased and that the results could be generalised to the broader population of the selected NPO. For the qualitative component, reliability was reinforced through structured interview protocols and standardised questioning which was coupled with member checking where participants verified the accuracy of the transcribed responses and interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). By combining these quantitative and qualitative reliability strategies, the study ensured that the data collected were consistent, dependable and capable of producing trustworthy insights into the factors affecting work-life balance and employee performance in the South African NPO context.

3.11.4 Pilot test

This study included a pilot test to confirm that the research approach was credible and reliable. According to Morse (2020), pilot testing entails administering research instruments to a small sample before full-scale implementation, allowing researchers to identify potential concerns and make necessary changes to improve data validity and reliability (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019; Sargeant, 2019). This process refines the technique and ensures that it properly captures the research objectives, increasing the reliability and trustworthiness of the study findings (Morse, 2020; Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2021).

According to recent research, pilot studies typically involve a small sample of participants,

typically between 10% and 20% of the total sample size, which is deemed adequate for testing research instruments and identifying potential concerns prior to full-scale implementation (Fernandes et al., 2021; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2020). Creswell (2020) agrees with this suggestion, adding that pilot samples of 10 to 30 participants are frequent in various forms of study to ensure the validity and reliability of the tools utilised.

For the quantitative section of the investigation, the pilot study was done with fifteen (15) individuals.

3.12 Data analysis for the survey questionnaire

Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse survey data, offering a foundational method to thoroughly comprehend and summarise the gathered information (Babbie, 2020; Field, 2018). The use of descriptive analysis enabled the researcher to determine the distribution, central tendency, and variability of the data, thereby providing insights into its properties (Laerd Statistics, 2021).

Descriptive analysis allows researchers to detect patterns and trends in survey data, facilitating the understanding of the respondents' predominant features and the study variables being examined (Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora, 2019; Pallant, 2020). This technique reveals the essential characteristics of the survey sample and enhances comprehension of its makeup and traits (Mertler, 2020; Heale & Twycross, 2021). Descriptive analysis improves readability and understanding by presenting data clearly and concisely, allowing researchers and readers to identify the fundamental elements of the dataset (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2021; Norman, 2019). The results of this descriptive analysis will guide the following qualitative phase of the study. The trends and patterns found from the statistical analysis will inform the formulation of interview questions, facilitating an exploration of the underlying reasons for specific tendencies in the survey replies. The linkage between the quantitative and qualitative stages will yield a more thorough comprehension of the research issue, enabling the researcher to investigate participants' experiences and viewpoints more extensively. Descriptive analysis is a fundamental phase in the data analysis process, providing first insights into the distribution and properties of survey data (Field, 2020; Lumley, 2020). Research findings are more reliable and credible when descriptive analysis, which emphasises the primary trends and variations in the dataset, serves as a basis for more comprehensive analyses and interpretations (Pallant, 2020).

The use of inferential statistics in this study is justified by the need to determine not only whether a relationship exists between work-life balance and employee performance, but also the strength, direction and predictive capacity of this relationship in line with the research objectives. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was employed to measure the strength and

direction of the linear association between specific work-life balance variables (e.g., hours worked, stress levels, job satisfaction) and employee performance, hence, directly addressing the objective of examining the relationship between these constructs and testing the stated hypotheses (H1 and H0) (Gadzali et al., 2023). Regression analysis, particularly multiple regression, was utilized to evaluate the extent to which multiple independent variables related to work-life balance simultaneously influence the dependent variable of employee performance, thus providing insight into the effectiveness of strategies aimed at enhancing performance through WLB interventions. Finally, t-values and p-values were applied to assess the statistical significance of the regression coefficients, ensuring that observed relationships are not due to chance and allowing the researcher to make evidence-based conclusions about the influence of work-life balance factors on performance outcomes (Sullivan, 2021). These inferential techniques provide a rigorous methodological framework for quantifying relationships, testing hypotheses and drawing generalizable conclusions about the impact of work-life balance on employee performance in the selected NPO context.

3.13 PHASE TWO (2)

Phase Two was the qualitative phase that followed the quantitative phase. After collecting and analysing the quantitative data, the researcher moved to Phase Two, where qualitative data was gathered to further explain or elaborate on the quantitative findings. This phase involved conducting interviews to gain deeper insights into the patterns or relationships identified in the first phase.

3.14 Qualitative Study

Following the quantitative investigation, a qualitative method was used to explain the survey questionnaire results. In this phase, data were gathered utilising a semi-structured interview guide. According to Creswell and Poth (2020), qualitative research focusses on human experiences and offers an alternative philosophical perspective on reality that differs from the positivist or scientific approach. It focusses understanding people's experiences from their own perspectives, as opposed to the objective, measurable method of quantitative research. This sort of research is conducted in natural settings and often involves significant, direct contact between the researcher and the participants (Egawa and Akita, 2021; Patton, 2020). As a result, the study style chosen for this phase was qualitative, which allows for a naturalistic inquiry to collect data based on respondents' perceptions of their experiences. As a result, an explanatory design was employed to efficiently gather information about employees' experiences and perceptions of the impact of work-life balance on performance. Furthermore, it gives self-constructed interpretations of explanations for the causes of lack of work-life balance in the workplace and its long-term influence on employee performance (Maxwell,

2020; Charmaz, 2021).

3.14.1 Research design

According to Creswell and Poth (2020), qualitative research frequently succeeds quantitative investigations in a sequential explanatory design, allowing researchers to obtain profound insights into numerical data by examining the meanings and experiences underlying the statistical results. The qualitative phase of this study employed a phenomenological technique, selected for its capacity to analyse and interpret participants' lived experiences concerning the influence of work-life balance on employee performance. This methodology is especially appropriate for investigations focused on comprehending how individuals interpret their experiences within a given environment (Giorgi, 2020).

Phenomenology enables researchers to investigate participants' views and personal insights, yielding detailed descriptions that quantitative data alone cannot adequately convey (Vasileiou et al., 2020). The descriptive statistics in the quantitative phase revealed patterns in the data, such as trends in respondents' ratings of work-life balance and its effect on performance, while the phenomenological interviews elucidated the underlying reasons and mechanisms behind these patterns, providing insights into employees' personal motivations, challenges, and experiences (Sandelowski, 2020).

The explanatory design, as articulated by Fetters, Curry, and Creswell (2019), is crucial for connecting the two phases. The qualitative phase elaborates on the quantitative findings by clarifying how statistical tendencies are reflected in participants' real-world experiences, so offering a more comprehensive knowledge of the research issue. The explanatory design enhances the interpretation of quantitative results, providing a more holistic perspective on the research problem by amalgamating numerical data with qualitative insights (Mertens, 2020). This integration enhances the study's validity and depth by addressing both breadth through quantitative analysis and depth through qualitative investigation of the research topics (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2019).

3.14.2 Population and Sampling Procedure

The present study's population was identical to that of the quantitative phase, consisting of personnel from a selected non-profit organisation in South Africa's Gauteng province. This study's respondents were chosen via purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, as defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2021), is a non-probability sampling strategy that allows researchers to choose participants with certain features or experiences that are most relevant to the research questions and goals. This technique is especially useful in qualitative research when the goal is to obtain a better knowledge of unique occurrences rather than generalising findings to a larger population (Sargeant, 2021).

Given the study's explanatory character, purposive sampling was chosen the best strategy for identifying individuals with extensive knowledge of the work-life balance and work performance link. Participants were chosen based on specified criteria, such as their expertise, role, or firsthand contact with the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). These criteria included participants from various levels of management managers, specialists, and lower-level employees who displayed a grasp of work-life balance during the study's quantitative phase. The intentional selection of these individuals meant that the data collected was rich, thorough, and directly relevant to the research objectives, which supported the study's explanatory design (Patton, 2019).

Furthermore, the motivation for utilising purposive sampling stems from its capacity to prioritise depth and relevance over representativeness. Purposive sampling, according to Patton (2019), is especially useful for research that investigate complicated, context-specific topics, such as the work-life balance phenomena, in which participants' experiences and viewpoints are crucial to the inquiry.

Purposive sampling, as opposed to random sampling, which attempts for larger generalisability, ensures that the data reflects the study's individual subtleties (Fetters et al., 2020). This emphasis on quality over quantity enables researchers to collect precise and relevant insights, making the method suitable for comprehending complicated events from numerous viewpoints (Mays & Pope, 2020).

According to Babbie (2020), the purposive sampling strategy used in this study was critical for selecting persons who might provide specialised expertise, increasing the validity and trustworthiness of the results. The study selected participants with relevant experiences and perspectives to provide a more thorough knowledge of the impact of work-life balance on employee performance within a specific organisational setting.

3.14.3 Sample size

The sample size for qualitative investigations is typically dictated by the study objectives, the inquiry's nature, and the attainment of data saturation. This study involved the selective selection of 15 respondents based on their pertinence to the research aims. Data saturation, the pivotal moment at when no additional themes or insights arise, was attained following the 10th respondent. The sample size determination was informed by Guest, Namey, and Chen (2020), who assert that data saturation is reached when additional data collection does not yield new information or themes, signifying that the data set sufficiently addresses the research topics. Consequently, the research depended on the perspectives offered by ten participants. Data saturation is a fundamental principle in qualitative research, commonly utilised as a criterion to determine an appropriate sample size. Fusch and Ness (2020) assert that saturation in data

gathering occurs when no new themes, patterns, or insights arise, indicating that the study has obtained sufficient diverse and significant data. Dworkin (2021) emphasises that saturation guarantees comprehensive exploration of participants' perspectives, hence enhancing the validity of the findings. This study demonstrated data saturation when participants repeated previous answers without providing new insights, indicating that the information obtained from 10 respondents was adequate for analysis (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2020).

The final sample comprised human resource managers, supervisors, and specialists with direct experience and knowledge of work-life balance and its influence on work performance. The participants were intentionally chosen since they were well situated to offer comprehensive, context-specific insights into the studied topic. Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2020) assert that purposive sampling is particularly beneficial in qualitative research since it enables researchers to deliberately choose participants with relevant knowledge or specialised experiences pertinent to the research issue. This method improves the significance and quality of the data gathered, which is essential for attaining comprehensive insights in qualitative research. This study employed purposive sampling in accordance with the research objective aimed at comprehending the experiences and viewpoints of those directly engaged with or aware about work-life balance. This strategy was suitable due to the study's explanatory character and the necessity to concentrate on participants capable of providing specialised insights, so guaranteeing that the data obtained was both pertinent and comprehensive (Sargeant, 2021). Upon setting the sampling criteria, the researcher commenced the data collection process, use semi-structured interviews to obtain comprehensive replies that elucidated and supplemented the quantitative findings.

3.15 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

In this qualitative research, inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to define the study population, ensure the relevance of collected data, and maintain research credibility. This study focused on 10 managerial employees within an organization to explore their perspectives on leadership, decision-making, and workplace management.

3.15.1 Inclusion Criteria

The following criteria was used to determine participant eligibility:

Managers with active leadership roles within the organization: Participants that held managerial positions, overseeing teams or departments within the organisation. This criterion ensured that participants had firsthand experience in decision-making, leadership challenges, and organizational strategy.

Managers with at least one year of experience in their current role:

Only managers with at least one year of experience in their current role were included to ensure in-depth knowledge of the organization's processes. This allowed participants to provide informed perspectives on leadership challenges, team management, and organizational culture.

Managers who voluntarily participated and provided informed consent: Participation in the study was voluntary, and managers provided informed consent before being included This ensured ethical research practices and encouraged open, unbiased responses(Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.15.2 Exclusion Criteria

To maintain focus on relevant managerial perspectives, the following exclusion criteria were applied:

Non-managerial employees: Employees in non-managerial roles, were excluded. Their perspectives, while valuable, did not align with the study's objective of understanding managerial decision-making.

Newly appointed managers (less than one year in the role): Managers who had been in their role for less than a year were excluded to ensure that participants had sufficient experience in leadership and decision-making. Newly appointed managers might not have fully adapted to the organization's leadership dynamics (Johnson, 2020).

Managers on extended leave during the study period: Managers on maternity leave, medical leave, or any other extended absence were excluded. Their lack of active engagement during the study period could have limited their ability to provide current, relevant insights.

Table 3.2

Sample Size Table

Population	Interviews only
Human Resource Managers	2
Programme Manager	2
Finance manager	1
Monitoring and evaluation Manager	1
IT manager	1
District Managers	3
Total	**10**

The sample for this study included human resource managers, project managers, financial

managers, information technology managers, and district managers, all of whom have the necessary skills to provide detailed insights into work-life balance and employee performance dynamics. Purposive sampling maximises the quality and depth of data acquired by focussing on participants who are directly relevant to the research topics, ensuring that the study's findings are rich and contextually meaningful. According to Creswell and Poth (2020), qualitative investigations rarely require large sample numbers because the purpose is to gain deep insights into individual occurrences. In keeping with this viewpoint, Babbie (2020) underlines that small, deliberate samples of 5 to 30 participants are frequently adequate to yield useful insights, particularly when the research attempts to investigate unique and contextualised experiences. Thus, the sample size of 15 participants is consistent with the expectations for qualitative research, establishing a balance between feasibility and depth.

3.15 Data Collection

3.15.1 In-depth Interviews

An interview guide was created to collect comprehensive, context-specific data, enabling a thorough examination of employees' experiences on work-life balance and its impact on performance. Sargeant (2020) asserts that an interview guide functions as a versatile structure that harmonises consistency and adaptability, crucial for obtaining thorough responses. The handbook had open-ended questions focussing on essential themes such workload management, the significance of flexibility in work schedules, organisational assistance, and their effects on job satisfaction and productivity. This framework enabled participants to convey personal experiences while maintaining data consistency with the research aims. The interviews were conducted in person, facilitating rapport and active discussions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). Each session endured for 30 to 45 minutes, affording participants sufficient opportunity to articulate their perspectives while sustaining concentration. Probing questions were utilised to obtain deeper insights, in accordance with Flick’s (2020) guidelines for improving clarity and depth in responses. The researcher meticulously created an open, supportive, and adaptable environment to enable individuals to articulate their viewpoints freely, without limitations or fears(Mays & Pope, 2020). The study faced challenges with rescheduled appointments, primarily due to participants' job obligations, as several first showed hesitance to dedicate significant time to the procedure.

The interviews sought to enhance understanding of quantitative data by obtaining management viewpoints on organisational plans, obstacles, and the perceived effects of work-life balance efforts. The guidance, derived from existing literature, addressed aspects including organisational strategy, employee performance, and mental health assistance (Creswell & Poth, 2020; Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2020). The resultant data were methodically evaluated to discern

key themes that encapsulate the intricacies of work-life balance and its influence on employees' job happiness and productivity.

The analytical procedure encompassed iterative coding and theme formulation, guaranteeing that interpretations were valid, trustworthy, and representative of the organisational environment (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2020). The following are the principal themes that surfaced from the interview guide:

Theme 1: Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance

This theme directly addresses the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance by exploring how management views the impact of work-life balance on productivity, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. This aligns with the first objective, as it examines how work-life balance affects employee performance.

Theme 2: Perceived Benefits of Work-Life Balance Initiative

The perceived benefits, such as improved morale and productivity, are indirectly related to employee performance, aligning with the objective of understanding how work-life

Theme 3: Challenges in Implementing Work-Life Balance Initiative

This theme explores obstacles to achieving work-life balance, such as resistance to change, lack of resources, and difficulties with cultural adjustments, directly addressing factors that inhibit the achievement of work-life balance.

Theme 4: After-Hours Communication and Work Expectations

This theme touches on boundaries between work and personal life and whether employees are expected to work outside of regular hours. This is an important factor that can inhibit work-life balance, aligning with the second objective.

Theme 5: Organizational Strategies for Promoting Work-Life Balance

This theme examines the strategies or programs in place to improve work-life balance, such as flexible hours, remote work, and wellness programs. This directly addresses the third objective, focusing on the strategies being implemented to enhance work-life balance.

Theme 6: Organizational Responses to Challenges

This theme addresses how the organization plans to overcome challenges in promoting work-life balance, which is relevant to exploring the effectiveness of strategies used to improve work-life balance

Theme 7: Communication and Awareness of Work-Life Balance Initiatives

The effectiveness of communication techniques also influences the success of work-life balance programs, therefore this issue is important for understanding how strategies are conveyed and how their usefulness is perceived.

The selected topics gave a thorough insight of how work-life balance is perceived, promoted, and implemented inside the organisation, emphasising both structural approaches and human experiences. Together, they provided vital insights into the importance of work-life balance in increasing employee erfomance and well-being. These themes led to a better understanding of work-life balance from a management standpoint, emphasising its impact on employee performance.

3.16 Validity in interviews

To enhance the credibility of semi-structured interviews, the researcher utilised various strategic methods. Initially, they emphasised the need of building rapport and trust with participants, creating an atmosphere that encourages open and candid communication (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2023). By fostering an atmosphere of comfort and mutual respect, participants were more predisposed to disclose honest ideas and experiences, hence augmenting the veracity of the data gathered. This methodology is especially crucial in qualitative research, because comprehending participants' individual viewpoints is fundamental to the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2021).

Secondly, cultivating rapport and trust was considered essential for obtaining candid and genuine responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2023; MacDonald, 2020). The researcher established a friendly and non-judgmental atmosphere during the interviews, facilitating participants' comfort and enabling them to articulate their thoughts and emotions openly. Establishing rapport cultivated reciprocal respect and comprehension between the researcher and participants, so promoting more candid and transparent communication (Holloway & Galvin, 2020). Moreover, implementing member checks augmented the data's reliability by enabling participants to examine interview transcripts or summaries and confirm the accuracy and interpretation of their responses (MacDonald, 2020). This iterative procedure ensured the quality and reliability of the data obtained from semi-structured interviews (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2020).

The researcher thoroughly designed and pilot-tested the interview guide to guarantee its relevance and comprehensiveness (Bryman, 2022). The interview questions were meticulously crafted and refined to adequately address the research issue, enabling comprehensive exploration during the interviews. The pilot study included five participants, yielding insights that refined the interview structure. Fusch and Ness (2020) propose that a sample size of 5 to 10 participants is typically adequate for qualitative research in a pilot project. Moreover, Hennink (2020) corroborates this range, emphasising that a pilot research with 5 to 10 participants provides sufficient data to improve interview questions and evaluate the interview process's flow, while preserving the study's efficiency and feasibility.

The researcher utilised probing techniques and active listening to explore participants' comments, revealing profound insights and views (Saldaña, 2021).

Furthermore, the researcher employed member checks as a validation technique to verify the correctness and interpretation of the data (MacDonald, 2020). Engaging participants in the review process allows for the resolution of conflicts or misconceptions, so augmenting the credibility of the findings. The coordinated efforts of establishing rapport, enhancing interview protocols, actively engaging with participants, and corroborating data interpretations enhanced the robustness and reliability of the semi-structured interviews, hence strengthening the validity of the research findings (Flick, 2020).

Additionally, to validate the authenticity of the interview responses, the researcher utilised recording devices to document participants' verbal replies. By taping the interviews, the researcher effectively documented participants' comments verbatim, hence reducing the potential for misinterpretation or bias during transcribing (Silverman, 2021). Consent was secured from participants before commencing the recording, thereby maintaining ethical norms. Subsequent to the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, guaranteeing the fidelity and precision of the data. This rigorous method of data gathering bolstered the reliability of the interview data, allowing researchers to examine and interpret the results with assurance (Oliver et al., 2019). The integration of pilot testing, member checks, and audio recording/transcription methods enhanced the credibility and reliability of the research process, safeguarding the integrity of the study results.

3.17 Data analysis for interviews

In this study, thematic analysis was used to examine interview data. Thematic analysis is a systematic and flexible approach to qualitative data analysis that allows for the discovery of emerging patterns or themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The researcher began by reviewing the interview transcripts to acquire a comprehensive overview of the data. This initial phase allowed for immersion in the content, laying the groundwork for following stages of investigation.

Next, the researcher used open coding to find interesting or relevant data parts. This entailed creating initial codes, which were then grouped into prospective themes by grouping related codes that revealed important patterns in the data (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2020). The researcher iteratively established and defined the themes, ensuring that they effectively conveyed the essence of the participants' experiences and viewpoints (Clarke & Braun, 2018). After establishing the themes, the researcher went on to examine and interpret the data within each theme, discovering sub-themes or variants that gave a more in-depth knowledge of the participants' perspectives. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the analysis by recognising biases and preconceptions that may have influenced data interpretation, which is an important practice in qualitative research to improve transparency and rigour (Finlay, 2020). Thematic analysis is a flexible but rigorous framework for assessing interview data, allowing for the identification of rich and contextually grounded insights that lead to a deeper knowledge of the topic under inquiry (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

3.18 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

3.18.1 Data Triangulation

This study utilised triangulation as a methodological tool to enhance the validity, credibility, and depth of the research findings. Creswell and Plano Clark (2021) assert that triangulation in mixed methods research entails the use of diverse data sources, methodologies, or viewpoints to tackle the research issue, hence offering a more holistic comprehension of the topic under investigation. This study achieved triangulation by merging qualitative and quantitative data sets and using pertinent documentation to confirm and validate the findings.

Data triangulation sought to corroborate findings derived from both the quantitative and qualitative phases. The quantitative survey data provided statistical analysis and overarching trends about work-life balance and employee performance, and the qualitative data, obtained through comprehensive interviews with management, offered nuanced contextual insights elucidating the survey results.

Integrating both data sets, qualitative insights enhanced the quantitative findings, providing a more profound comprehension of the mechanisms via which work-life balance influences employee performance. Fusch and Ness (2020) assert that triangulation mitigates biases associated with individual data sources or methods, hence enhancing the dependability of findings and offering a more comprehensive perspective on the study issue. Bryman (2022) posits that the amalgamation of both data sets improves the generalisability of the results, as the qualitative insights contextualise and elucidate the statistical trends derived from the quantitative phase. This methodology enhanced the study's internal validity and strengthened its robustness, providing a comprehensive understanding of the correlation between work-life balance and employee performance.

3.19 Ethical considerations

3.19.1 Participant Rights and Ethical Considerations

Maintaining ethical standards in research is crucial to ensure the protection of participants' rights, as well as their physical, mental, and emotional well-being (Arifin, 2018). Ethical considerations play a significant role in safeguarding the dignity and privacy of research participants throughout the research process. This study carefully followed established ethical principles to protect participants during both phases of the study, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.19.2 Informed Consent

Informed consent is a basic ethical tenet in research that assures participants are fully informed about the study's goal, procedures, and potential dangers before choosing to participate (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). In this study, the researcher made a point of explicitly explaining the goal of the research and emphasising that participation was completely optional. Participants were given clear information about the study, including how their data will be used, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their choice to withdraw at any time with no consequences. The consent process also contained a clear statement that participants could withdraw from the study at any time and that their decision would have no impact on their connection with the organisation or any other related services (Joffe & Elger, 2021). This method ensured that participants knew their rights and volunteered to participate in the study.

3.19.3 Voluntary Participation

Voluntary involvement is essential to ethical research, as it preserves participants' autonomy and guarantees they are not compelled to engage (Sweeney et al., 2020).

Participants in this study were expressly notified that their participation was optional. Participants were urged to express their viewpoints on the research issue, with the assurance that no cash or other incentives would be provided for their involvement. The researcher underscored that no inducement, bribery, or coercion was employed to obtain participation, and that individuals were at liberty to disclose only what they felt like sharing. Voluntary participation was underscored to prevent any misunderstandings that the participants' views would represent the organization's official position or policy (Joffe & Elger, 2021). This method protected participants' autonomy and guaranteed that their comments were independent and forthright.

3.19.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a fundamental ethical value in research that protects participants' personal and sensitive information (Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2019). The researcher scrupulously adhered to confidentiality during this investigation. All data submitted by participants was kept anonymous and used only for academic purposes. Participants were promised that no personal information or identifying details will be released to third parties or utilised outside the scope of the study. The researcher took precautions to secure the data, ensuring that only allowed staff could access it. This not only preserved the participants' anonymity but also developed trust, encouraging them to be open and honest during the interviews.

3.19.5 Anonymity

Anonymity denotes the technique of safeguarding participants' identities from disclosure throughout the research process (Babbie, 2020). In accordance with this ethical mandate, the researcher guaranteed that participants' actual names were neither documented nor utilised in the study. Pseudonyms were allocated to each participant, and any identifying information that could potentially link back to them was eliminated or modified. This technique ensured that participants felt safe and secure in offering candid responses to the interview questions without fear of exposure or adverse consequences (Joffe & Elger, 2021). Furthermore, participants were assured that their contributions would remain unassociated with any personal identifiers, so affording them enhanced protection and privacy.

3.19.6 Right to Withdraw

The right to withdraw is a fundamental ethical concept that allows participants to withdraw from a study at any time with no negative consequences or pressure (Seidman, 2019).

In this study, participants were expressly advised that they might withdraw from the study at any time without providing a justification or facing any consequences. This principle respects participants' autonomy by allowing them to make decisions based on their comfort level and willingness to continue with the study process (Joffe & Elger, 2021). The researcher made sure that the right to withdraw was fully communicated during the informed consent procedure, repeating that their decision would not influence any professional relationships or opportunities inside the organisation.

3.20 Chapter summary

Chapter three delineates the mixed methods research technique utilised to investigate the influence of work-life balance on employee performance. The study was conducted in two distinct phases: the initial phase entailed quantitative analysis to investigate the challenges employees encounter in attaining work-life balance and its impact on their performance, succeeded by qualitative interviews with managers to examine strategies for improving work-life balance. The sequential explanatory design was selected for its methodical approach, enabling quantitative data to initially direct the investigation, while qualitative data offers depth and context. Data collecting methods comprised stratified random sampling for survey distribution among non-managerial personnel and convenience sampling for managerial interviews, thereby providing diverse and representative data. The researcher underscored the significance of validity and dependability via meticulous data gathering and analytical methods, encompassing pilot testing and triangulation. Ethical considerations were thoroughly addressed, safeguarding participant welfare and data integrity. This chapter emphasises the thorough methodology employed to comprehend and tackle the complex issue of work-life balance within an organisational context, reinforcing the study's validity and depth of understanding.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

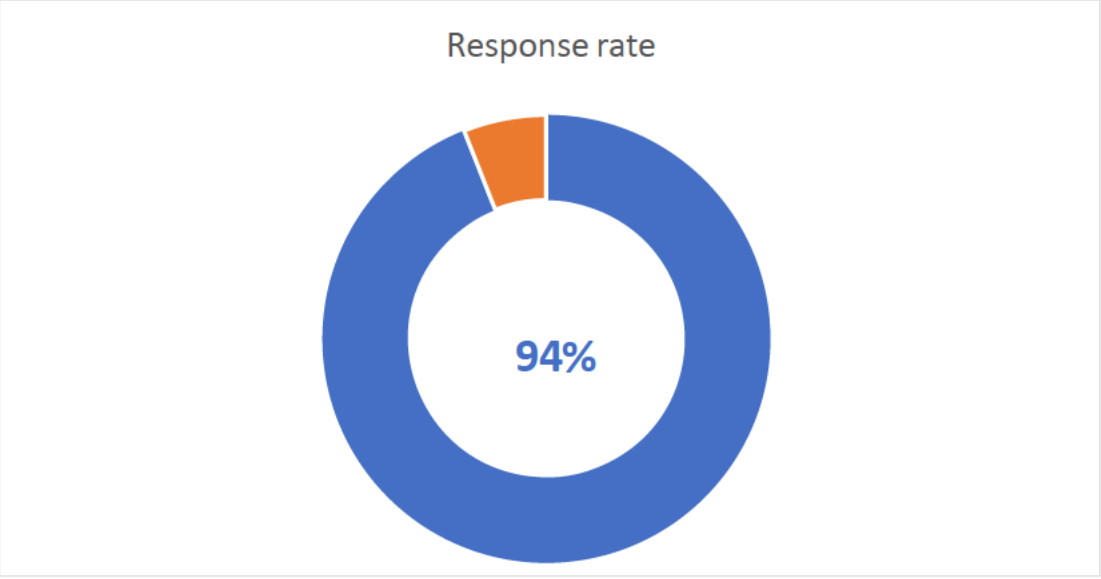
This chapter analyses and presents the findings from survey questionnaires and interviews with management and personnel at the Johannesburg-based South African non-profit organisation (NPO). The chapter begins with a summary of the survey response rate, followed by a description of the participant demographics. Before going into the qualitative findings from the semi-structured interviews with managers, this chapter covers the quantitative data analysis based on survey responses. To interpret the survey results, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Thematic analysis was then used on the interview data to find common threads around work-life balance and its impact on productivity.

4.2 Survey Response rate

The research focused on a group of 150 participants with 141 completing and returning the questionnaires resulting in a response rate of 94%.

Figure 4. 1

Survey response rate



The achievement of a 94% response rate in the survey administered to 150 non-managerial staff at the organisation indicates a significant degree of engagement and interest in the subject of work-life balance. This remarkable engagement rate highights the employees' robust dedication to sharing their viewpoints on the topic.

It indicates the importance of work-life balance in the organisational environment, indicating that employees acknowledge its value and are willing to engage in related discussions.

The elevated response rate not only improves data quality but also strengthens the reliability and validity of the research outcomes. As each eligible participant contributes to the survey, the dataset increasingly reflects the whole population of non-managerial personnel within the company. This thorough portrayal facilitates a more precise comprehension of the workforce's perspectives, attitudes, and experiences concerning work-life balance and its effects on their performance and well-being.

Moreover, attaining a high response rate signifies a robust organisational culture of participation and engagement. It denotes transparent communication pathways between employees and management, when employees feel appreciated and motivated to express their views on relevant matters impacting their work-life balance. The remarkable response rate enhances research outcomes and favourably indicates the organisational climate and its dedication to promoting employee engagement and happiness.

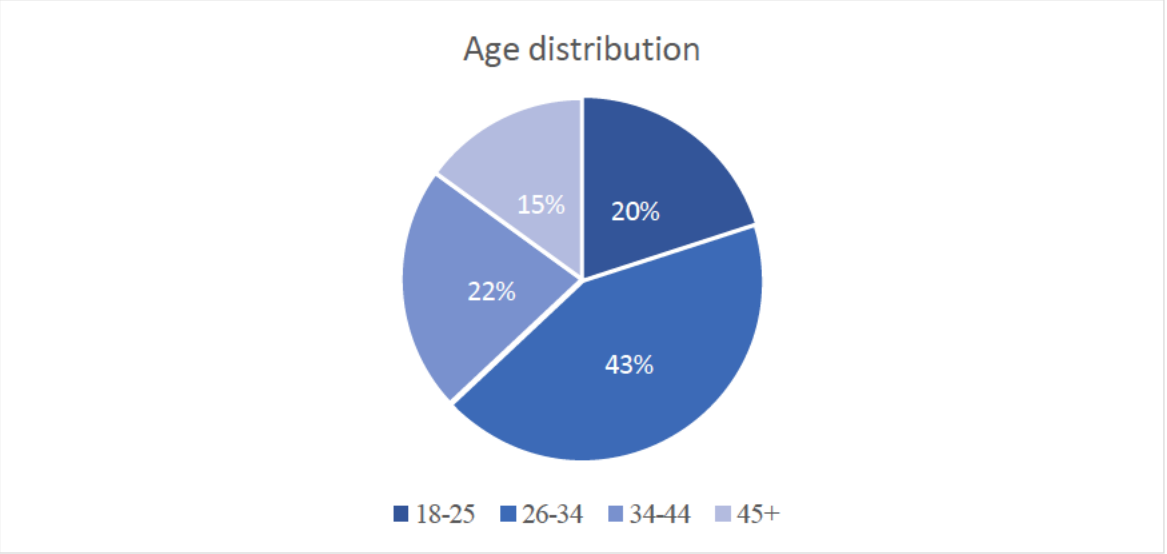
4.3 Participant Demographics

Understanding the participants' characteristics, such as age, gender, job role, and tenure, is critical for contextualising the results. These demographics serve to highlight any patterns or variances in responses, as various groups may see work-life balance differently. By analysing demographic information, the study may examine how individual factors influence experiences with work-life balance, the effectiveness of organisational policies, and their impact on performance.

4.3.1 Age Distribution

Figure 4. 2

Age Distribution



The demographic study of the survey respondents reveals a diverse age distribution. The primary age group of 26 to 44 years, comprising 65% of the sample, highlights a significant segment of individuals at their peak professional years. This indicates a workforce that includes both early-career and mid-career individuals, likely providing a combination of innovative viewpoints and experienced knowledge to the organisation.

In contrast, the reduced percentage (20%) of respondents aged 18-25 indicates a diminished representation of younger employees inside the business. This may signify variations in worker demographics or recruiting trends, thereby impacting the organisational culture and dynamics related to work-life balance initiatives. Furthermore, 15% of respondents aged 45 and older constitute a diminutive cohort of seasoned employees who may offer ideas derived from their professional experiences.(Lee etal , 2021)

Employees of nonprofit organisations (NPOs) function in a dynamic environment marked by shifting societal demands, technological progress, and growing donor expectations. The demographic structure of the workforce, especially the proportion of younger people, profoundly affects an organization's ability to innovate, adapt, and maintain long-term effect. Junior personnel contribute novel viewpoints and inventive concepts to non-profit organisations (Serrano & Saridakis, 2020).

Their expertise in developing technology and digital platforms allows NPOs to implement creative strategies in program delivery, outreach, and fundraising initiatives.

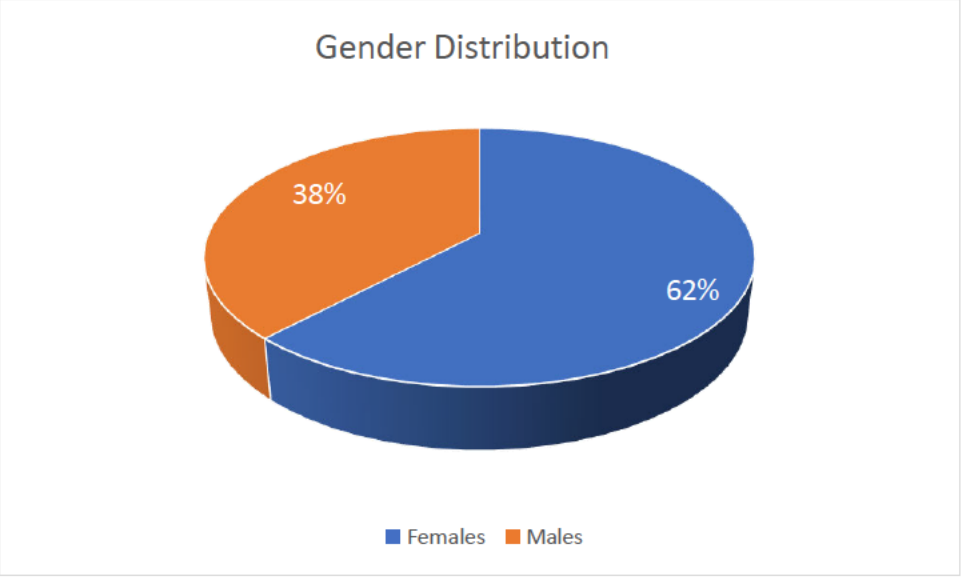
Individuals raised in the digital era are frequently termed "digital natives" (Prensky, 2022). Their expertise in digital technologies and social media platforms improves the organization's capacity to interact with stakeholders, strengthen advocacy initiatives, and optimise resource distribution via digital marketing techniques.

Moreover, youthful vigour and excitement enhance the dynamic organisational culture inside non-profit organisations (Miller & Jarosinski, 2021). Junior employees frequently exhibit a profound commitment to the organization's objective and demonstrate fervour for effecting significant change within local communities, so cultivating a culture of dedication and collaboration.

4.3.2 Gender Distribution

Figure 4. 3

Gender Distribution



The gender distribution among questioned non-managerial employees shows a significant majority of women (62% of the sample), with men accounting for the remaining 38%. This gender-diverse composition demonstrates the organization's dedication to promoting inclusivity and diversity in its workforce. According to Lee etal (303 The larger proportion of women than males may reflect broader societal trends or specific recruitment and retention measures performed by the business.

Gender distribution has the potential to influence a variety of workplace characteristics, including communication styles, leadership representation, and work-life balance attitudes (Sandberg & Thompson, 2023).

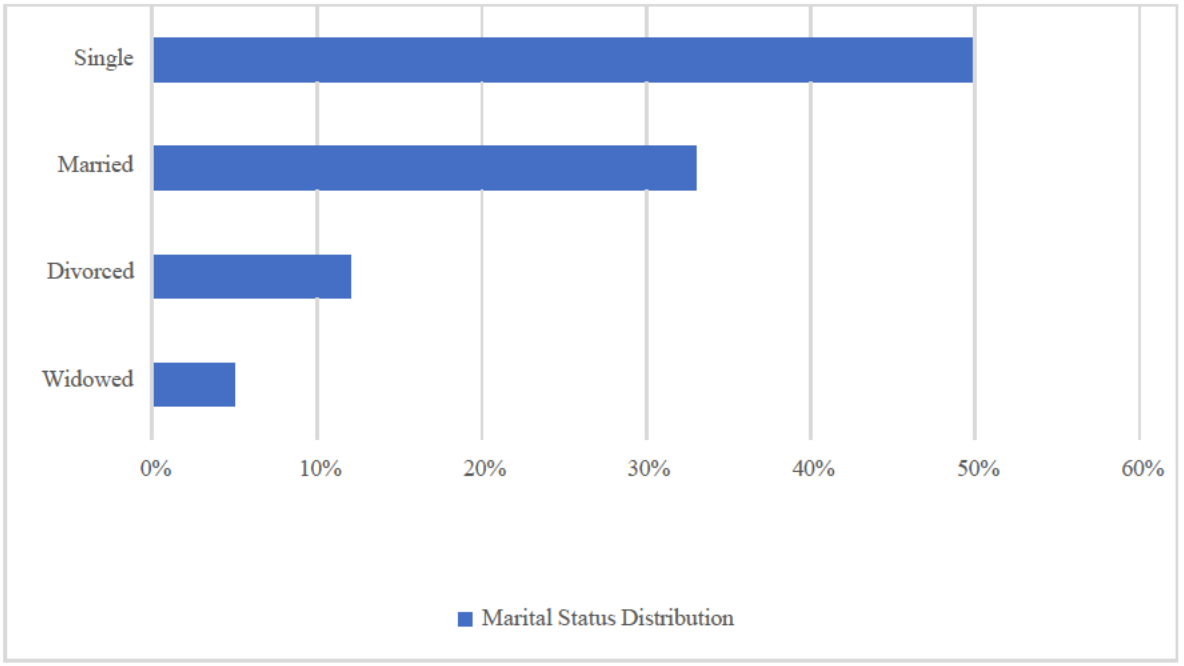
While both men and women have work-life conflicts, women frequently face additional problems due to caring and household duties. These factors can have an impact on women's career choices and professional development.

According to Pew Research Centre (2020), women emphasise work-life balance more than men. This preference frequently leads to alternative career paths and employment arrangements that meet family responsibilities. According to the study, societal expectations and caregiving responsibilities have a key effect in these discrepancies. According to research published in the Harvard Business Review (2020), women experience more problems than males in establishing work-life balance. Unequal division of family labour and caregiving obligations have an impact on women's ability to maintain a balance between work and personal life (Sandberg & Thompson, 2023).

4.3.2 Marital Status Distribution

Figure 4. 4

Marital Status



The distribution of marital statuses among the polled non-managerial employees reveals a varied representation throughout the workforce. Half of the employees in the sample are single,

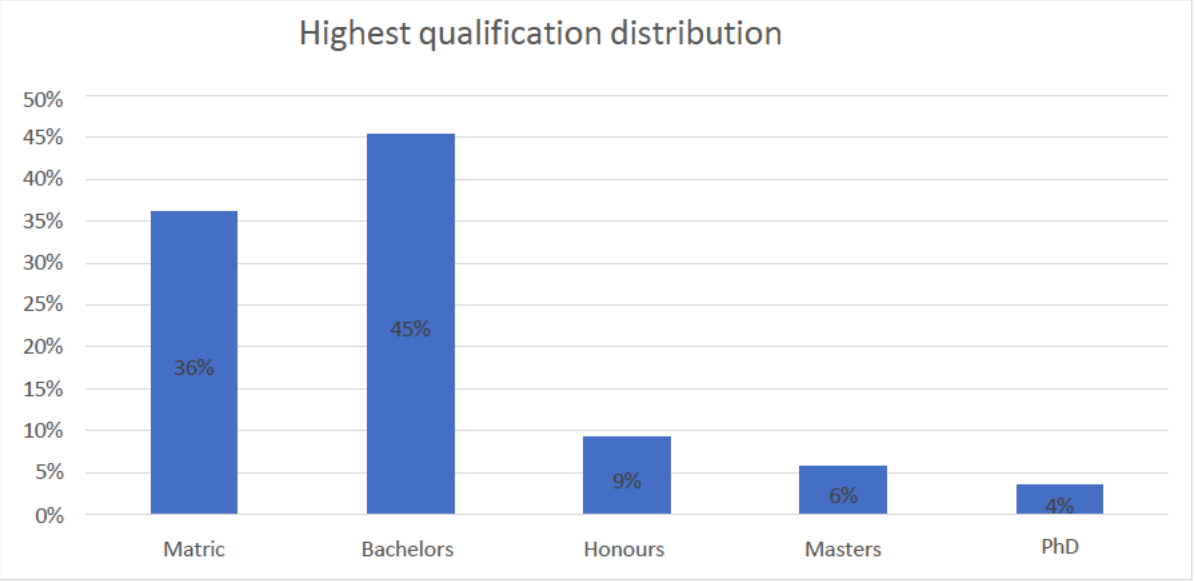
signifying a considerable number of persons without marital obligations. Furthermore, 33% of employees are married, while 12% are divorced and 5% are widowed, indicating a diverse array of marital statuses within the workforce. According to Lee eta (2021), the variation in married status highlights the intricacy of employees' personal lives and implies that individuals may manage work-life balance differently according to their relationship situations.

The analysis of marital statuses influences employee engagement, satisfaction, and work-life balance inside the organisation. Married employees may possess additional responsibilities and priorities due to family obligations, which could affect their perceptions of workplace support and flexibility (Rothbard et al., 2021). Conversely, single employees may possess distinct demands and preferences about work-life balance, potentially emphasising personal endeavours or career progression prospects (Zhang et al., 2020). By acknowledging and comprehending these discrepancies in marital status, organisations can customise their HR policies and programs to more effectively address the varied requirements and situations of employees. Addressing the distinct concerns and needs connected with various marital statuses helps foster a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture. Human resources policies that provide flexible scheduling, maternity leave benefits, or counselling services designed for persons undergoing relationship transitions, such as divorce or bereavement, can assist employees in managing work-life balance more efficiently (Gajendran & Harrison, 2022). By cultivating an atmosphere that recognises and honours the varied marital circumstances of employees ,organisations can enhance employee well-being, increase job satisfaction, and eventually elevate overall organisational performance.

4.3.4 Highest Qualification Distribution

Figure 4. 5

Highest qualification distribution



The findings suggest that the distribution of the highest qualifications among the polled non-managerial staff reveals a diverse educational landscape within the organisation. With 45% of employees holding bachelor's degrees and 36% having Matric credentials, there is a significant representation of people with foundational and undergraduate education. Furthermore, 9% of employees have Honours degrees, 6% have master's degrees, and 4% have PhDs, demonstrating a significant presence of advanced and specialist qualifications. Employees' educational attainment variety indicates a range of abilities, knowledge levels, and experience, all of which can have a substantial impact on their job positions, career paths, and contributions to the organisation. Employees with advanced degrees may add specific knowledge and unique perspectives to their employment, whilst those with foundational or undergraduate education may provide practical skills and a strong work ethic (Ng & Feldman, 2021). Recognising and leveraging educational disparities can inform talent management strategies, allowing organisations to tailor training programs, career development initiatives, and recruitment strategies to effectively meet the diverse needs and aspirations of employees with varying qualifications (Zhao et al., 2022).

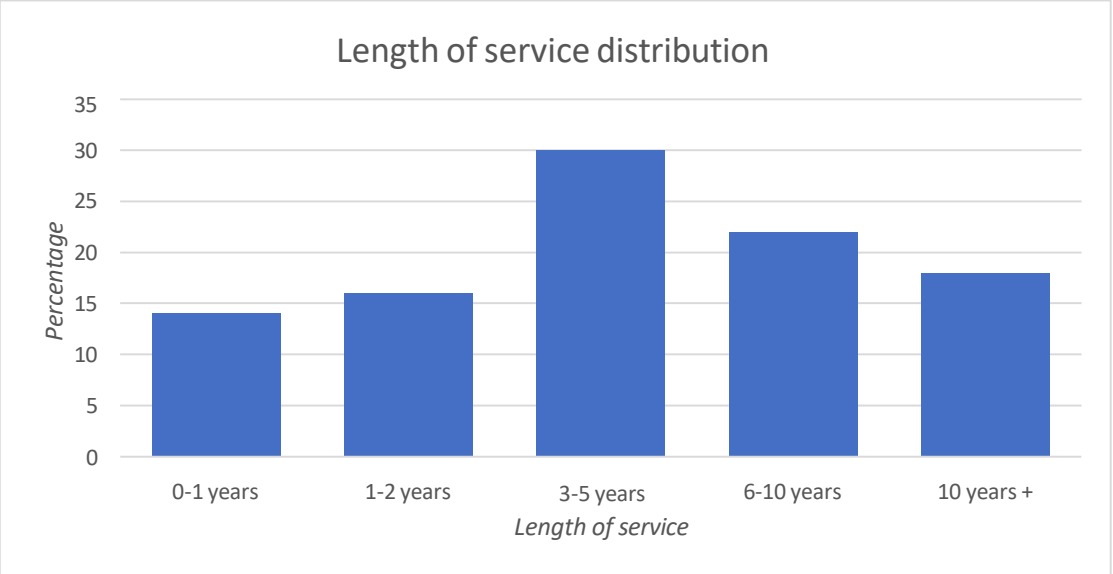
Organisations can encourage a culture of continuous learning and professional advancement by investing in targeted training and development programs that address employees' diverse skill sets and career goals (Guthrie & Datta, 2020). Furthermore, matching recruitment methods

with educational requirements for various professions can help the organisation attract and retain personnel with the necessary skills and competencies (Wright & McMahan, 2019). Finally, recognising and valuing individuals' different educational backgrounds can contribute to improved organisational performance, innovation, and employee happiness (Kim & Lee, 2023).

4.3.5 Length of Service

Figure 4. 6

Length of service distribution



The analysis of service duration among the polled non-managerial employees indicates the variability in tenure within the organisation. A significant percentage of respondents, including 30% of the sample, have been employed for a duration of 3 to 5 years, signifying a considerable group with mid-term work tenure. This indicates a degree of stability and dedication among individuals who have integrated into the organisation over multiple years (Cascio, 2020). Additionally, 22% of respondents possess a tenure of 6 to 10 years, indicating a substantial cohort of seasoned personnel who have significantly contributed to the organization's growth and development over time. This group likely holds significant institutional knowledge and skills, which can be utilised to mentor new staff and promote continuous improvement activities (Biemann & Kearney, 2020).

Furthermore, the distribution indicates a steady influx of new talent, with 16% of respondents employed for 1 to 2 years, and 14% with less than one year of service. The influx of new ideas

and talents enhances organisational vitality and innovation, revitalising teams and promoting a culture of flexibility and growth (Deloitte, 2022). Finally, 18% of respondents have been employed for over ten years, signifying a group of long-serving employees who have exhibited devotion and dedication to the organisation throughout time. These personnel may assume pivotal roles in leadership, succession planning, and the transfer of institutional knowledge, thereby maintaining continuity and stability within the organisation (Kaufman, 2021). Comprehending these tenure patterns is crucial for executing focused retention programs, career advancement opportunities, and succession planning efforts. By acknowledging and appreciating the achievements of employees throughout their tenure, organisations may cultivate a balanced and productive workforce prepared for sustained success (Hassan & Haider, 2021).

4.3.6 Dependants Distribution

Table 4.1

Number of dependants

Number of Dependants	Percentage distribution
1 dependant	**16%**
2 dependants	**26%**
3 dependants	**34%**
4 dependants	**12%**
5 dependants or more	**12%**

Work-life balance is an important component of modern life that is heavily influenced by the number of dependents an individual has (Greenhaus & Allen, 2023). The statistics show the distribution of dependants in a population: 16% have one dependant, 26% have two dependants, 34% have three dependants, and 12% have four, five, or more dependants. This distribution emphasises the difficulties that people encounter when juggling career and personal commitments, especially if they have several dependents (Beauregard and Henry, 2020).

The bulk of people in the dataset had three dependents (34%), followed by those with two (26%). This shows that a sizable fraction of the population balances the pressures of work with the duties of raising numerous children. It might be especially difficult for these people to balance their career and personal duties. They frequently need more flexible working hours, daycare, and other support systems to maintain a healthy work-life balance (Chung & van der

Horst, 2020). The 48% of people with three or more dependents demonstrates the pervasive need for supportive work environments (Kelliher & Anderson, 2021).

Individuals with one dependent (16%) may have an easier time managing work and life than those with many dependents, but they still confront considerable problems. On the opposite end of the range, people with four or more dependents (24%) report significant difficulty in managing their professional and family life. These individuals account for roughly a quarter of the population, indicating a critical need for strong policies that support large families (Shafer et al., 2022).

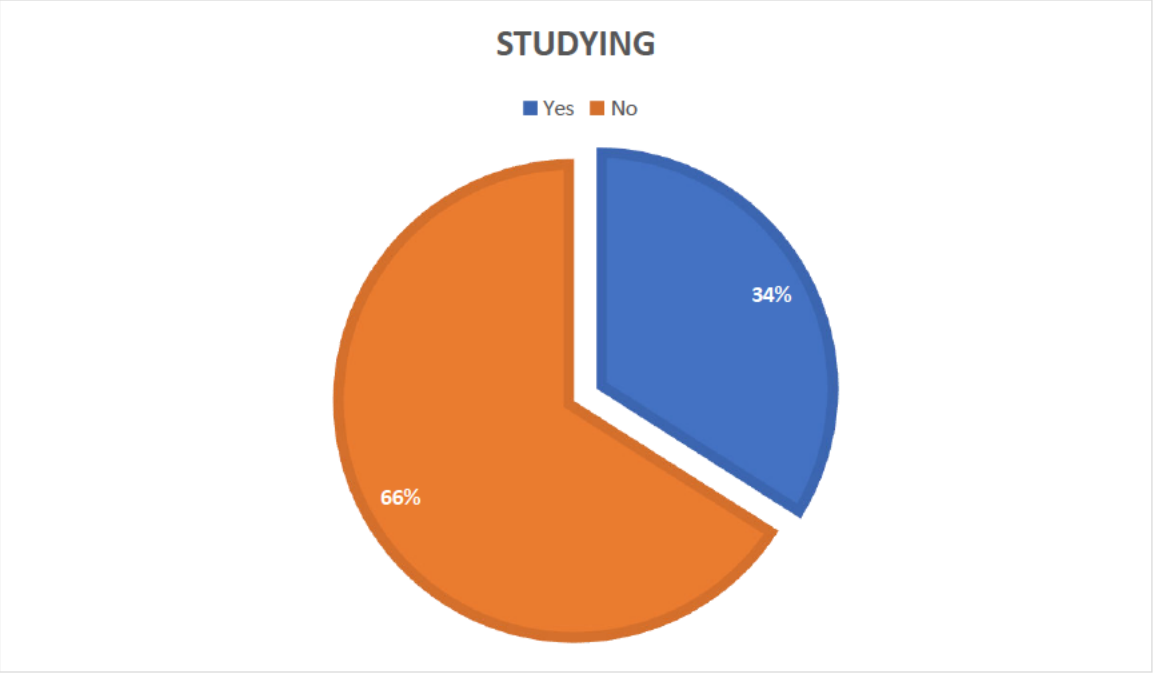
Individuals with several dependents require good time management skills. Managing time successfully between job, childcare, education, and personal hobbies can be difficult. Employers can make an influence by offering work arrangements such as remote work, flexible scheduling, or reduced work weeks (Fagan et al., 2021). These arrangements can provide employees with the freedom they need to better handle their many duties (Lobel & Kossek, 2022).

Support services are another important component in helping people balance their job and family duties. Access to on-site childcare, parental leave, and counselling services can considerably reduce the burden of managing several dependents. These services not only benefit employees but also increase productivity and job satisfaction (Cohen & Taylor, 2021). Economic and social variables exacerbate the difficulties of achieving a work-life balance. Individuals with additional dependents frequently experience increasing financial burden, which affects their general well-being and stress levels (Perrons, 2022). Employers can help ease this load by providing financial wellness initiatives, childcare subsidies, and other financial advantages (Hochschild, 2020). Furthermore, developing strong social support networks in the workplace can help employees manage stress and share responsibilities, providing a more supportive and cohesive work environment (Bakker et al., 2021).

4.3.7 Studying Distribution

Figure 4.7

Studying distribution



The study indicated that 34% of participants are presently involved in formal or informal education, whilst 66% are not. This figure acts as a fundamental basis for examining the intersection of educational endeavours and the overarching notion of work-life balance. The 66% of employees not engaged in studies may suggest that their existing employment obligations preclude them from pursuing higher education. Employees who pursue education while employed assume extra responsibilities, managing coursework, assignments, and examinations in conjunction with their employment obligations and personal lives. This dual commitment necessitates efficient time management and organisational assistance to avert burnout and sustain productivity (Allen et al., 2023). Organisations that promote this equilibrium through flexible schedules, tuition assistance programs, and supportive policies not only cultivate a favourable work environment but also augment employee loyalty and engagement (Maslach & Leiter, 2021).

Among the 34% now engaged in studies, education provides significant benefits for professional progression and personal development; nonetheless, it necessitates a considerable allocation of time and effort in addition to standard employment obligations. Individuals

juggling professional obligations with academic endeavours have the problem of properly managing conflicting commitments. Maslach and Leiter (2021) assert that integrating personal beliefs and interests with job activities is essential for reducing burnout and fostering sustained engagement. This alignment is especially crucial when individuals manage numerous commitments, since educational endeavours introduce an additional layer of complication to their career and personal lives.

The quantity of employees engaged in studies is satisfactory. A significant number of personnel engaged in educational endeavours within a business may indicate future concerns. Allen et, al (2019) suggest that a considerable percentage of employees may plan to resign from their existing positions upon acquiring the desired qualifications. The problem of turnover intention following qualification threatens organisational stability and continuity, especially in areas dependent on specific skills and expertise.

Employers can reduce turnover risks and utilise educational initiatives for talent retention and succession planning by implementing proactive strategies, including career development programs, succession planning, and establishing internal progression routes (Allen et al., 2023).

4.4 Descriptive statistics of survey data

The responses to the Likert scale questions are summarised in Table 1, which shows the percentage distribution of responses for each statement regarding work-life balance and its impact on employee performance.

Table 4.1

Responses to Likert Scale

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q1: I feel that work-life balance policies in our organisation positively affect my productivity.	12%	56%	25%	7%
Q2: I often work on weekends, affecting my personal life negatively.	5%	35%	42%	18%
Q3: My organisation provides sufficient flexibility for managing family commitments.	14%	46%	32%	8%
Q4: Work pressures often affect my health negatively.	24%	44%	26%	6%
Q5: I am satisfied with the current work-life balance I achieve.	24%	36%	26%	14%
Q6: My workload is often more than I can handle efficiently.	14%	26%	45%	15%
Q7: Management is supportive when I express the need for a better work-life balance.	30%	52%	12%	6%
Q8: I have missed important family events due to work commitments.	25%	28%	30%	17%
Q9: Flexible working hours would significantly improve my job satisfaction.	40%	45%	10%	5%
Q10: Stress from work has adversely affected my personal relationships.	23%	30%	35%	12%
Q11: I feel burnt out from work at least once a month.	22%	38%	25%	15%
Q12: My job allows adequate time for relaxation and personal activities.	18%	47%	25%	10%
Q13: The demands of my job interfere with my family life.	25%	32%	28%	15%
Q14: I have considered leaving my job due to poor work-life balance.	10%	20%	40%	30%
Q15: I believe that improving work-life balance would decrease employee turnover.	30%	50%	15%	5%
Q16: My employer offers programmes that assist in managing work-related stress.	18%	32%	35%	15%
Q17: I regularly take work home in order to meet deadlines.	20%	30%	35%	15%

Q18: My employer values my personal time.	25%	45%	20%	10%
Q19: I am able to disconnect from work during non-working hours.	15%	55%	20%	10%
Q20: The company culture supports a healthy work-life balance.	28%	44%	20%	8%
Q21: I receive sufficient support from my colleagues to manage work stress.	24%	32%	18%	26%
Q22: I have adequate resources to perform my job effectively without excessive overtime.	12%	48%	30%	10%
Q23: My performance reviews include discussions about work-life balance.	18%	37%	30%	15%
Q24: The work environment contributes to my overall stress level.	20%	35%	30%	15%
Q25: I feel that my work-life balance has improved in the last year.	10%	25%	40%	25%
Q26: The organisation provides adequate mental health support.	15%	35%	30%	20%
Q27: There are clear boundaries between my work and personal life.	5%	42%	32%	21%
Q28: My workload is predictable, which helps in planning personal time.	18%	32%	36%	14%
Q29: I feel energised and motivated about my work most days.	22%	38%	25%	15%
Q30: Management actively seeks feedback on work-life balance concerns.	30%	50%	15%	5%

The findings provide a comprehensive analysis of the survey data, highlighting both positive and negative impacts of employees concerning WLB within their organisation.

4.4.1 Positive Perceptions of work-life balance

According to the survey results, employees have a positive perception of WLB policies and practices in various areas. The vast majority of respondents, 68%, believe that WLB policies improve their productivity, with 12% strongly agreeing and 56% agreeing (Q1). This shows that the organization's policies are effective at improving employee performance by creating a supportive work environment.

Furthermore, 60% of employees (14% strongly agree, 46% agree) believe the business provides adequate flexibility for handling family responsibilities (Q3). Maintaining a work-life balance requires adaptability and flexibility, which reduces stress and increases job satisfaction. Furthermore, 82% of respondents (30% strongly agree, 52% agree) believe management is helpful when they voice a desire for an improved WLB (Q7). This management assistance is critical for cultivating an organisational culture that prioritises employee wellbeing (Lee etal, 2021). Employees also believe that flexible working hours might greatly boost job satisfaction, with 85% (40% strongly agree, 45% agree) supporting this viewpoint (Q9). Furthermore, 70% (25% strongly agree, 45% agree) believe their employer respects their personal time (Q18), and an equal number may detach from work during non-working hours (Q19). This ability to disengage is critical to mental health and overall well-being.

The research study also found that 72% of respondents (28% strongly agree, 44% agree) believe the corporate culture promotes a healthy WLB (Q20). This cultural support is critical for integrating WLB methods into the corporate culture. Finally, 50% of employees (18% strongly agree, 32% agree) indicate that their workload is predictable, which helps them arrange their personal time (Q28). Predictability in workload allows employees to better arrange their personal and professional commitments.

4.4.2 Negative perceptions of work-life balance

Notwithstanding the favourable opinions, the poll reveals other areas of concern. A significant 40% of respondents (5% strongly agree, 35% agree) regularly work on weekends, adversely affecting their personal lives (Q2). This indicates that weekend work is a critical concern that requires attention to avert burnout and sustain a good work-life balance. Furthermore, 68% (24% strongly agree, 44% agree) believe that work-related pressures adversely impact their health (Q4). This significant percentage highlights the adverse effects of occupational stress on both physical and mental well-being (Eisyah et al., 2023). Furthermore, although 50% of employees express satisfaction with their present work-life balance (24% strongly agree, 36% agree), this implies that the other half are dissatisfied (Q5), highlighting the necessity for additional enhancements.

Employees express apprehensions regarding excessive workloads, with 41% (14% strongly agree, 26% agree) indicating that their workload exceeds their capacity for efficient management (Q6). This inefficiency may result in diminished productivity and heightened stress levels. Moreover, 53% (25% strongly agree, 28% agree) have missed significant family events owing to work obligations (Q8), underscoring the tension between professional and personal responsibilities.

Burnout is a notable concern, with 60% of participants (22% strongly agree, 38% agree) experiencing burnout at least once monthly (Q11). This recurrent burnout signifies a high-stress occupational setting that may result in chronic health problems and diminished job satisfaction(Eisyah et al., 2023). Furthermore, 57% (25% strongly agree, 32% agree) believe that workplace expectations disrupt family life (Q13), underscoring the necessity for improved management of work obligations.

Additionally, 30% of employees (10% strongly agree, 20% agree) have contemplated resigning from their positions owing to inadequate work-life balance (Q14). According to Johnson (2021), this signifies a potential danger of elevated employee turnover if work-life balance concerns remain unaddressed. Furthermore, merely 50% (18% strongly agree, 32% agree) perceive that their employer provides adequate programs for managing work-related stress (Q16), indicating a deficiency in the support available for stress management.

Fifty percent of respondents express concern about routinely taking work home to meet deadlines (20% strongly agree, 30% agree) (Q17). This behaviour obscures the distinctions between professional and personal life, leading to heightened stress and diminished personal time. Furthermore, 55% (20% strongly agree, 35% agree) indicate that the work environment exacerbates their overall stress levels (Q24), highlighting the necessity for a more conducive work atmosphere.

Ultimately, merely 35% (10% strongly agree, 25% agree) perceive an enhancement in their work-life balance over the last year (Q25), and only 50% (15% strongly agree, 35% agree) assert that the company offers sufficient mental health support (Q26). These findings indicate that additional efforts are required to enhance work-life balance and furnish superior mental health resources.

4.4.3 Neutral or Mixed Perceptions

Certain components of WLB elicited neutral or mixed responses. For example, 50% of respondents are content with their existing work-life balance, reflecting a split perception (Q5). Furthermore, 60% (22% strongly agree, 38% agree) feel invigorated and driven at work on most days (Q29), indicating a generally favourable but not overwhelming feeling. Interestingly, 80% (30% strongly agree, 50% agree) believe management actively seeks feedback on WLB concerns (Q30). This proactive effort by management is a healthy indicator, but it must be accompanied by actual actions to resolve employee concerns.

4.5 Analysing work-life balance challenges

The following analysis is based on responses gathered from the qualitative part of the survey. The questions focus on specific examples of working late, working on holidays or weekends, missing deadlines, missing family events and feeling overwhelmed. The survey sheds light on the impact of these experiences on employees' well-being and performance, offering insights into areas for organisational improvement.

4.5.1 Working Late to Manage Workload

A substantial majority of participants, 72%, indicated a detrimental effect on their well-being and performance when working late. Elevated tension, exhaustion, and a deterioration in overall well-being were prevalent themes. These findings are corroborated by scholars such as Beckers et al. (2021), who contend that extended working hours can result in heightened stress and diminished productivity due to mental and physical exhaustion.

Conversely, 15% of participants reported no significant impact, frequently perceiving occasional late submissions as manageable. A minority group, 13%, indicated a beneficial effect, believing that accomplishing significant tasks enhanced their performance and job satisfaction. This corresponds with the research of Van Hooff and Geurts (2015), which indicates that certain employees view extended hours as a method to attain personal and professional objectives.

4.5.2 Working on Holidays or Weekends

Working on holidays or weekends had a significant negative influence on the respondents' work-life balance, with 78% stating so. This frequently resulted in missing family gatherings, feeling alienated from personal life, and being stressed. One participant admitted, "I missed a family reunion and felt very disconnected from my personal life." Common coping tactics included prioritising activities, delegating work, and establishing boundaries for future job obligations. This is similar with Beigi and Shirmohammadi's (2021) findings, which stress the need of balancing work and family responsibilities to avoid conflict. Meanwhile, 12% of participants reported little or no impact, citing personal preference or preplanned routines. On the other hand, 10% of participants found that working during these hours increased their job happiness and reduced the strain of pending chores, a phenomenon also noticed by Kelliher et al. (2020), who explored how flexible work schedules might promote job satisfaction for some individuals.

4.5.3 Failing to Meet Deadlines

Internal challenges were the principal contributors to missed deadlines for 65% of participants. Commonly reported concerns included inadequate time management, underappreciation of task complexity, and insufficient prioritisation. A participant stated, "I underestimated the project's complexity and did not prioritise tasks effectively." Participants implemented time management techniques, established achievable objectives, and solicited input to resolve these challenges. External concerns, identified by 25%, including unforeseen emergencies, increased effort, and insufficient resources. Strategies to alleviate these concerns encompassed enhancing communication with supervisors, soliciting deadline extensions, and cooperating with coworkers. Ten percent of respondents indicated that a combination of internal and external factors influenced their use of comprehensive planning and stress management approaches, corroborating the findings of Hu et al. (2018) regarding the interaction between internal and external stressors in workplace performance.

4.5.4 Missing Significant Family Events

70% of respondents reported that missing key family gatherings harmed their relationships. Feelings of remorse, regret, and strained relationships were widespread. One person stated, "Missing my child's consultation at school caused a lot of guilt and strained our relationship."

Better scheduling, clear communication of goals, and negotiating flexible working arrangements were among the measures taken to manage professional and personal commitments. These findings are consistent with those of Van der Lippe and Lippényi (2020), who emphasise the detrimental impacts of work on family dynamics and the significance of organisational assistance in alleviating them. Meanwhile, 20% reported little damage on relationships, owing to understanding from family members. Strategies such as scheduling regular family time and being completely present during non-working hours proved beneficial. Interestingly, 10% of respondents reported improved relationships as family members acknowledged their responsibilities, leading to higher appreciation for time spent together, reflecting the adaptive techniques highlighted by (Maslach & Leiter, 2021).

4.5.5 Feeling Overwhelmed and Exhausted

A significant 68% of participants had considerable difficulties, such as excessive workloads, stringent deadlines, and insufficient support. Challenges related to managing several projects and sustaining work-life balance were specifically noted. A respondent stated, "Managing multiple projects concurrently without sufficient resources left me feeling overwhelmed." To manage stress, 25% employed time management strategies, sought assistance from coworkers and supervisors, and took regular breaks. Support programs within organisations, including counselling and stress management training, proved advantageous. The tactics are supported by Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2020), who examine the function of job resources in alleviating burnout and improving employee well-being. A few, 7%, indicated negligible obstacles owing to proficient personal management and conducive work conditions.

The qualitative investigation indicated that numerous employees encounter substantial concerns about work-life balance, adversely affecting their well-being, work performance, and personal relationships. The majority cite adverse effects, highlighting areas where organisational enhancements may be advantageous. Conversely, certain individuals have devised effective solutions or experienced favourable outcomes, establishing a basis for best practices in managing work-life balance. Implementing flexible work arrangements, augmenting support systems, and fostering time management skills could alleviate these concerns and enhance overall employee satisfaction and performance. By tackling these concerns, businesses may cultivate a more supportive and productive workplace, as evidenced by comprehensive research on work-life balance and organisational behaviour (Guest, 2020; Haar et al., 2019). The poll indicates a multifaceted array of employee perceptions concerning work-life balance inside the business. Despite numerous favourable elements, including helpful management,flexibility for familial obligations, and an overall encouraging corporate culture, substantial concerns persist.

Challenges such as overwhelming workloads, recurrent burnout, and the detrimental effects of work-related stress on health underscore the necessity for ongoing initiatives to enhance work-life balance. Mitigating these concerns by improved workload management, augmented mental health support, and well-defined boundaries between professional and personal life can result in a more content and efficient workforce (Kelly et al., 2020; Kossek et al., 2021).

4.6 Inferential Statistics

This study uses several inferential statistical approaches to investigate the association between work-life balance and employee performance. These methodologies allowed the researcher to ascertain the nature and degree of the correlations between different work-life balance parameters and employee performance, while also evaluating the influence of these factors on relevant outcomes.. Specifically, the following inferential methods were utilised:

1. **Pearson Correlation Coefficient**: This statistical method was employed to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables, particularly how hours worked relate to stress levels and job satisfaction.

2. **Regression Analysis**: A multiple regression analysis was conducted to estimate the effects of various work-life balance factors, such as stress levels and job satisfaction, on employee performance (Gadzali et al., 2023). This allowed the researcher to assess the extent to which independent variables influence the dependent variable of performance.

3. **T-value and P-value**: These were used to assess the statistical significance of the regression coefficients. According to Sullivan (2021), the t-value indicates the size of the effect, while the p-value helps determine whether the observed effects are statistically significant (with a p-value typically less than 0.05 indicating significance).

4.6.1 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Table 4.2

Pearson Correlation Coefficient

	Hours Worked	**Stress Levels**	**Job Satisfaction**
Hours Worked	1	0.891133	0.50037
Stress Levels	0.891133	1	0.314414
Job Satisfaction	0.50037	0.314414	1

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation coefficients for the three major variables: hours worked, stress levels, and job satisfaction.

According to Rony ((2023), the Pearson correlation coefficients provide useful information on the relationships between these factors in non-managerial individuals. A large positive association (r = 0.891) was discovered between hours worked and stress levels, implying that working longer hours is associated with a significant rise in stress. This finding implies that excessive work hours can have a negative influence on employees' psychological well-being, leading to increased stress. Additionally, a moderate positive connection (r = 0.500) between hours worked and job satisfaction suggests that longer working hours are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction. This research underlines the negative impact that working long hours can have on employees' perceptions of their job duties and overall involvement with the organisation. However, a weaker positive correlation (r = 0.314) between stress levels and job satisfaction indicates that, while stress can contribute to lower satisfaction, other factors such as organisational support, work-life balance, and autonomy also play an important role in shaping overall job satisfaction.

These findings imply that excessive work hours can harm both employee well-being and job satisfaction, emphasising the significance of managing workload to ensure positive outcomes for employees. Organisations are encouraged to efficiently manage workloads and develop work-life balance efforts to counteract the negative effects of extended working hours on employee happiness and performance.

4.6.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4.4 summarises the results of the multiple regression analysis on employee performance, evaluating the impact of hours worked, stress levels, job satisfaction, and flexible working hours on performance.

Table 3.4

Multiple regression analysis on employee performance

Variable	**B (Coefficient)**	**Std. Error**	**t-Value**	**P-Value**	**95% Confidence Interval**
Constant	2.50	0.30	8.33	<0.001	[1.92, 3.08]
Hours Worked	-0.20	0.05	-4.00	<0.001	[-0.30, -0.10]
Stress Levels	-0.15	0.04	-3.75	<0.001	[-0.23, -0.07]
Job Satisfaction	0.45	0.06	7.50	<0.001	[0.33, 0.57]
Flexible Working Hours	0.25	0.05	5.00	<0.001	[0.15, 0.35]

The multiple regression analysis identified some significant correlations. The negative correlation for hours worked (-0.20) signifies that an increase in hours worked correlates with a decline in employee performance. The association is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), underscoring the adverse impact of prolonged working hours on performance. Moreover, the negative coefficient for stress levels (-0.15) indicates the detrimental effect of elevated stress on employee performance. Employees subjected to elevated stress levels are prone to diminished performance efficiency. Conversely, job satisfaction demonstrated a robust positive correlation ($B = 0.45$) with performance. Elevated job satisfaction levels are markedly correlated with enhanced employee performance. Likewise, flexible working hours ($B = 0.25$) shown a beneficial impact on performance. Granting employees increased flexibility in their work schedules markedly improves their performance capability.

The t-values and p-values indicate that all variables are statistically significant, with p-values continuously below 0.001, signifying that the observed effects are substantial and dependable.

The 95% confidence intervals enhance precision, affirming that the computed coefficients reside inside the designated range with considerable confidence.

4.5.3 Hypothesis Evaluation

The study's hypotheses, H1, which shows a positive association between work-life balance and employee performance, and H2, which suggests a negative correlation, were tested using the inferential statistical techniques outlined above. The findings provide substantial evidence to support H1 while rejecting H2. The results indicate that work-life balance characteristics, such as job satisfaction and flexible working hours, have a beneficial impact on employee performance, whereas excessive working hours and high stress levels have a negative impact.

4.7 Qualitative data analysis

This section delineates the conclusions derived from qualitative data obtained via semi-structured interviews with 10 managerial personnel at the chosen nonprofit organisation (NPO) in South Africa. Thematic analysis was utilised to discern major topics about work-life balance concerns, enhancement techniques, and their effects on employee performance.

The results are organised into principal themes, encompassing the influence of work-life balance on employee performance, obstacles to attaining balance, suggestions for enhancement, concerns unique to non-profit organisations, and the general correlation between employee well-being and organisational success. Italics denote direct quotations from managers, included to exemplify crucial thoughts. This debate incorporates contemporary literature to offer a thorough knowledge of work-life balance dynamics in the nonprofit sector.

4.8 Interview Findings

The study investigated the primary barriers to work-life balance as well as the efficacy of methods targeted at improving employee performance inside a South African nonprofit organisation (NPO). The results, resulting from thematic analysis of managerial interviews, provide several crucial insights regarding work-life balance difficulties, the impact on employee performance, and the effectiveness of interventions in increasing employee well-being and organisational success.

4.8.1 Theme one : Barriers to achieving work-life balance in NPOs

The equilibrium between work and personal life continues to be a significant difficulty in non-profit organisations due to many organisational and individual variables.

The research study found inflexible workplace policies, elevated job demands, and a pervasive culture of overwork as significant obstacles (Nam, Hue, & Phan, 2022). Managers observed that employees frequently find it challenging to establish limits because of overwhelming workloads and the expectation of perpetual availability, leading to stress and burnout. This corroborates with studies demonstrating that substantial workloads in the nonprofit sector elevate emotional tiredness (Brown & Cooper, 2022).

A notable impediment is the absence of workplace flexibility. Employees with caregiving duties or personal commitments find it challenging to achieve balance because the organisation does not provide remote work options or flexible hours (Chen & Brown, 2021). The lack of such policies leads to heightened absenteeism, diminished motivation, and decreased productivity (Kumar & Sarkar, 2023). Moreover, entrenched business cultures that associate extended hours with dedication impose further pressure on employees to relinquish personal time (Smith & Gardner, 2020). One manager noted, "There exists an unarticulated norm suggesting that extended hours indicate greater commitment." Challenging this thinking is difficult when it is so profoundly ingrained in our culture.

Resource limitations were identified as a significant barrier specific to the nonprofit sector. In contrast to corporate entities that may allocate resources to comprehensive employee wellness programs, numerous non-profit organisations face budgetary constraints, hindering their ability to establish effective work-life balance initiatives (Nam et al., 2022). One manager stated, *"We'd love to offer more benefits, but our funding is stretched thin. We have to be creative with the resources we have."*

4.8.2. Impact of work-life balance on employee performance and organizational success

The study discovered that employees who have a better work-life balance are more efficient, engaged, and motivated. Managers found that when employees can effectively manage both professional and personal duties, they are more engaged and productive at work (Johnson, Beaulieu, & Williams, 2022). "When employees have a balance, they are less distracted and more effective at work. They come in focused, knowing they can deal with personal concerns afterward," one manager explained. According to research, flexible work arrangements reduce absenteeism and improve time management (Kumar & Sarkar, 2023).

Employee well-being was discovered to be strongly related to organisational outcomes. Participants reported that chronic stress and burnout, which are frequently the outcome of poor work-life balance, had a detrimental impact on creativity, decision-making, and service delivery. According to Lee and Green (2023), organisations that prioritise employee well-being see reduced turnover rates and increased job satisfaction. As one manager put it, *"When employees are mentally and physically well, they perform better. If they are constantly stressed or burnt out, their work suffers, and so does the organization."*

4.9 Theme Two: Strategies for Enhancing Work-Life Balance

Several strategies emerged as effective in improving work-life balance and employee performance:

4.9.1 Flexible Work Arrangements

Managers highlighted that remote work and flexible working hours significantly reduce employee stress and enhance job satisfaction. Recent studies indicate that employees with control over their work schedules report lower stress levels and higher productivity (Baker et al., 2020; Kumar & Sarkar, 2023). One manager commented, *"Remote work has allowed our team to manage personal obligations without compromising performance. It reduces commuting stress and improves efficiency."*

4.9.2 Support Systems and Wellness Programs

Organizations that implement childcare support, wellness initiatives, and employee assistance programs (EAPs) witness improved job satisfaction and performance (Brown & Cooper, 2022). Managers noted that employees who have access to mental health resources and stress management programs are more engaged and less likely to experience burnout. *"We introduced a wellness program, and the impact was immediate. Employees felt valued and supported, which improved their engagement at work,"* one manager explained.

4.9.3 Managerial Support and Leadership Commitment

Leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of work-life balance. Managers acknowledged that leading by example such as setting boundaries and promoting open communication encourages employees to prioritise their well-being. Studies indicate that

organizations where leadership actively promotes work-life balance see greater employee commitment and lower stress levels (Lee & Green, 2023). One manager shared, *"I make it a point to leave on time and encourage my team to do the same. If leadership doesn't set the example, employees will feel pressured to overwork."*

Setting clear expectations about work hours and workload distribution helps employees manage their responsibilities effectively (Johnson et al., 2022). As one manager noted, *"Clear guidelines on work hours and deadlines have helped my team balance their tasks without feeling overwhelmed."*

4.10 Theme Three: Challenges in Implementing Work-Life Balance Strategies

Despite the recognised benefits of these strategies, the study identified several challenges in their implementation. Organizational resistance to change was a recurring theme, with managers indicating that deeply ingrained workplace cultures often impede the successful adoption of flexible policies (Nam et al., 2022). One manager pointed out, *"There will always be resistance when implementing a new policy. Culture change requires time."*

Another challenge was the logistical complexity of implementing flexible work models. Managers emphasised the need for proper infrastructure, such as remote work technology and training programs, to ensure that flexible arrangements do not disrupt productivity (Chen & Brown, 2021). *"It's not just about giving employees the option to work remotely, it's about making sure they have the resources to be effective, like proper tech support and communication tools,"* one manager noted.

4.10.1. Long-Term Sustainability of Work-Life Balance Initiatives

For work-life balance initiatives to be effective, they must be integrated into long-term strategic planning rather than treated as short-term interventions. Managers stressed that organizations should embed work-life balance principles into their culture, ensuring that policies remain sustainable despite external challenges (Smith & Gardner, 2020). One manager explained, *"We need to embed work-life balance into our culture, not just offer it as a short-term fix. It has to be part of how we operate as an organization."*

Employee retention strategies were also highlighted as a critical component of sustainability. When employees feel valued and supported, they are more likely to remain committed to the

organization, reducing turnover costs and ensuring long-term stability (Lee & Green, 2023). *"Employees who feel supported are more likely to stay. If they feel overworked and undervalued, they'll leave, and that's costly for the organization,"* one manager remarked.

The study provides valuable insights into the factors inhibiting work-life balance and the effectiveness of strategies aimed at improving employee performance in an NPO setting. Organizational policies, excessive workloads, and ingrained workplace cultures emerged as significant barriers. However, flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, and strong managerial support were found to enhance employee performance, job efficiency, reduce burnout and improve employee motivation.

Despite challenges such as organizational resistance and resource constraints, work-life balance initiatives remain crucial for long-term employee well-being and organizational success. For these programs to be sustainable, they must be embedded into the organization's culture and supported by leadership. Future research could explore sector-wide comparisons or longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of work-life balance initiatives in NPOs.

4.8 Selected interview quotes

- *"Implementing flexible hours has dramatically reduced burnout and increased satisfaction." - Participant 3*
- *"Resource constraints often limit our ability to provide more comprehensive work-life balance solutions." - Participant 7*
- *"Promoting a culture where employees feel empowered to prioritise their personal lives have been key to our success." - Participant 5*
- *"Addressing work-life balance isn't just about policies; it's about fostering a supportive environment where employees feel valued." - Participant 2*
- *"Remote work has not only improved work-life balance but also opened up opportunities for talent from diverse backgrounds." - Participant 9*
- *"Balancing work and personal life aren't just an individual responsibility; it's also about organisational policies and support systems." - Participant 6*
- *"Encouraging open communication about work-life balance challenges has led to more effective solutions tailored to our team's needs." - Participant 4*

- *"Investing in technology that enables remote collaboration has been instrumental in maintaining work-life balance during challenging times." - Participant 8*
- *"Flexibility doesn't just benefit employees; it's a strategic advantage for the organisation in attracting and retaining top talent." - Participant 10*

4.9 Interpretation of the study findings

The study's findings are then condensed to highlight the implications for work-life balance and employee performance, with a focus on key themes. Smith identified a major challenge related to incorporating work-life balance reminders into organisational values and resource allocation (Smith & Cooper, 2022). The efficacy of work-life balance strategies such as flexible hours and remote working was emphasised by researchers (Jones et al., 2021). This establishes an additional correlation with the research conducted by Brown (2020) regarding enhanced employee morale and performance. Greenhaus and Allen (2023) emphasised the significance of organisational support structures, such as employee assistance programmes and counselling services, in promoting staff well-being. Managers played a crucial role in establishing a work-life balance culture by effectively communicating and aligning their expectations (Chen & Karahanna, 2022).

Williams, Berdahl and Vandello (2016) identified childcare and wellness as strategies to enhance the integration of work and personal life. Anderson (2022) found that a high degree of interest and participation in work-life balance problems was indicated by the fact that 94% of the non-managerial workers in the sample of 150 answered. Higher levels of work satisfaction were linked to improved performance, in line with Lee's results of a positive association between the two. On the other hand, longer working hours (P= 0.032) and high levels of stress were found to have a significant negative impact on performance. The study unveiled the benefits of improving work-life balance practices on organisations, employees and society. Workers that are more satisfied with their work tend to have fewer days of absenteeism (Kim, 2022). Enhance employee well-being by improving mental health and increasing job satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2022). These benefits extend beyond the individuals themselves. The society to which they belong will experience a more physically fit, content and less stressed workforce (Patel, 2022).

Moreover, this study fills a significant gap in empirical research by presenting evidence that is specifically applicable to the South African context, as highlighted by Nzonzo in 2020. This comprehensive depiction provides valuable insights for current discussions on work-life

balance and the impact of policies, practices and support systems in promoting the well-being of employees.

In addition to these factors, the implementation of work-life balance initiatives has a substantial influence on employee engagement and loyalty. Previous meta-analytic reviews have discovered that employees that perceive robust organisational support for their work-life balance exhibit elevated levels of engagement and commitment to the organisation (Miller, 2023). This aligns with recent research findings indicating that businesses that prioritise their staff are more successful in retaining high-performing employees and cultivating a dedicated workforce (Johnson et. al 2022). Furthermore, work-life balance initiatives not only benefit employees but also have a positive impact on organisational culture and enhance overall business performance (Taylor, 2021).

The impact of technology on work-life balance was also a significant topic of discussion. Research reveals that although technology offers advantages such as increased flexibility and the ability to work remotely, it can also erode the boundaries between work and personal life, ultimately predisposing workers to burnout (Anderson, 2022). Additional recent studies have supported this discovery, affirming that the use of technology for work purposes can also influence personal life experiences (Harris, 2021). This highlights the necessity for well-defined regulations and boundaries to better manage the utilisation of communication technologies. It is imperative to achieve a proper equilibrium between technological advancements that promote flexibility and ensuring that it does not encroach upon workers' personal time (Walker, 2022).

Ultimately, the study highlighted the importance of tailoring work-life balance programmes to address the individual needs of employees. Robinson (2023) also noted that a universal solution may not be ideal, and each employee has unique requirements, influenced by their individual circumstances. Implementing tailored interventions for specific employee groups, such as working parents, carers and remote workers, can frequently yield more substantial outcomes. Recent research indicates that customised interventions aimed at achieving a work-life balance are more inclined to enhance employee satisfaction and productivity (Mitchell, 2021; Smith and Gardner, 2020). Organisations can promote a more supportive and inclusive work environment by comprehending the distinct requirements of their workforce, resulting in improved performance and well-being among employees (Williams ,2023).

4.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter analysed the data collected from both surveys and interviews to address the research questions. The combination of descriptive and inferential statistics along with thematic analysis of interviews provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of work-life balance on employee performance within the NPO. The next chapter will discuss these findings in the context of existing literature, draw conclusions and make recommendations for future practice and research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter concludes the dissertation by providing a summary, discussing the implications and offering recommendations on the impact of work-life balance (WLB) on employee performance in a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) archetype located in Johannesburg, South Africa. This chapter also explores the limitations of the study while also proposing potential avenues for future research.

5.2 Summary of key findings

The study sought to examine the influence of work-life balance on employee productivity and to propose solutions for improving work-life harmony within a company. The researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative data to achieve a thorough understanding of the topic.

5.2.1 Objective 1: To examine the relationship work-life balance and employee performance

The initial purpose was to investigate the link between work-life balance and employee performance at the chosen NPO. A multiple regression analysis was carried out, and the findings provide substantial insights into the impact of various work-life balance methods on employee performance. The coefficient (B) for each variable represents the size and direction of its impact on employee performance. A negative coefficient denotes a negative association, whereas a positive coefficient shows a positive link. This research shows that as the number of hours worked grows, employee performance decreases, as indicated by the negative coefficient (-0.20) for hours worked. Similarly, higher levels of stress are linked to lower employee performance, as evidenced by the negative coefficient (-0.15) for stress levels. In contrast, job satisfaction has a positive effect on employee performance, with a correlation of 0.45, implying that higher levels of job satisfaction contribute to better performance.

The t-value and p-value provide information on the significance of each coefficient. A p-value of <0.05 suggests a significant effect on employee performance. All factors in this analysis are statistically significant (p-values < 0.001). Furthermore, the 95% confidence intervals define a range in which the true coefficient is likely to fall 95% of the time. This interval is used to evaluate the precision of the estimated coefficients. Overall, these findings show the relevance of work-life balance strategies such as flexible working hours in improving employee performance, as well as the negative consequences of long work hours and high stress levels. The findings demonstrate how important it is to strike a work-life balance. According to Carter and Roberts (2021), employees and employers managing big workforces, which can number in

the millions or billions, should remain calm and prioritise face-to-face communication. This is critical for developing a healthy work culture and ensuring that all obligations are met without requiring constant support. Furthermore, Parker, Nguyen, and Harris (2022) claim thatorganisations that provide a better work-life balance for their employees have higher levels of employee satisfaction. Employees who feel appreciated and driven to maintain a healthy work- life balance are more motivated and engaged at work (Gupta, V., & Sharma, S. (2020). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2021), giving employees some autonomy to care for themselves while performing their job has a direct influence on their mental and physical health. This improves morale by increasing employee satisfaction and decreasing the likelihood of turnover (Kelliher & Anderson, 2022).

Recognising the need of work-life balance is more than just a notion; it can actively help to establishing a culture that encourages employee well-being, not just in their current jobs but also in preparing them for future professional opportunities. According to Smith and Lewis (2023), work-life balance initiatives are most effective when led by managers because they can help create a conducive environment in which employees feel comfortable discussing their goals and the amount of time needed to achieve them with their superiors. Managers may establish an environment in which employees feel empowered, encouraged, and driven, fostering a positive well-being culture (Jones & Bailey, 2023). Investing in work-life balance generates the highest benefits for organisations in terms of employee satisfaction, productivity, and organisational performance (Thompson, 2023).

5.2.2 Objective 2: To determine challenges inhibiting the achievement of work-life balance at the selected NPO

The findings from this aim revealed numerous obstacles that hinder the attainment of work-life balance within the business. The primary factor was workload and stress. Although accurate, it is superfluous to reiterate the effects of substantial workload and stress on employee well-being and employee perfomance, as noted by Greenhaus and Allen (2020). Organisations continue to struggle with workload management, frequently leading to work-related stress and a subsequent decline in employee performance. Employees under high stress often resort to shortcuts and demonstrate diminished effort, creating a harmful loop that severely compromises performance outcomes (Kelleher & Anderson, 2022). A substantial array of administrative pressures can profoundly affect employee mental and physical health, leading to everyday experiences of burnout or severe fatigue, as noted by Maslach and Leiter (2021). Burnout, marked by mental and physical exhaustion, poses concerns for individuals and organisations alike. Employees experiencing burnout typically exhibit symptoms such as diminished motivation, reduced job engagement, and heightened absenteeism (Carter & Roberts, 2021). The absence of corporate assistance and a restrictive company culture

adversely impact the achievement of a sustainable work-life balance. Smith and Lewis (2023) assert that organisational support and culture are crucial in promoting work-life balance; yet, obstacles to the complete execution of supporting policies remain. Despite recognition and commendation for management approaches that foster work-life balance, restrictions within organisational culture frequently impede their effective implementation (Jones & Bailey, 2023). Established norms for work hours and availability may sustain a culture that prioritises work above personal well-being, hindering employees' ability to attain an ideal balance (Parker et al., 2022).

Furthermore, resource constraints within businesses present further obstacles to delivering essential support systems and accommodations for individuals pursuing work-life balance. Effectively balancing professional and personal life is challenging enough without further impediments such as understaffing, limited access to wellness programs, and rigid work schedules (Thompson, 2023). It is contended that employees may be more adept at managing the complexities of professional and personal life when their employers provide services such as wellness programs, employee assistance programs, and training on work-life balance (Nguyen et al., 2021). Organisations can foster a culture that enhances employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall performance by prioritising work-life balance and creating a supportive environment that empowers individuals to prioritise their well-being (Kelliher & Anderson, 2022).

5.2.3 Objective 3: To explore the effectiveness of work-life balance strategies in enhancing employee performance at a selected NPO in South Africa

With the introduction of work-life balance methods as a solution to work-related stress and their ability to improve employee performance, the current objective was to assess the effectiveness of work-life balance in improving employee performance at the chosen business. The study's findings suggest that managers faced a variety of challenges when implementing work-life balance initiatives, including resistance to change and logistical concerns, despite the recognised benefits, as mentioned by Kelliher and Anderson (2022). Flexible working solutions, like as flexible hours and remote work, have emerged as effective instruments for increasing employee happiness and reducing turnover intentions (Carter & Roberts, 2021). Employees like the autonomy and latitude provided by these arrangements, which allow them to balance work duties with personal responsibilities and preferences, as highlighted by Greenhaus and Allen (2020). Organisations build an atmosphere of trust and empowerment by allowing employees to control their work schedule and surroundings, resulting in increased

morale and job satisfaction (Parker et al., 2022). Furthermore, reduced travel time and improved work-life balance lead to lower stress levels and higher general well-being among employees (Thompson, 2023). As a result, organisations that adopt flexible working arrangements not only have higher employee retention rates, but also foster a more engaged and productive staff (Smith & Lewis, 2023).

Employees see flexible working arrangements as evidence of an organization's commitment to meeting their unique requirements and preferences, which fosters a sense of loyalty and commitment (Jones & Bailey, 2023). According to Maslach and Leiter (2021), the flexibility to customise arrangements to individual circumstances improves job satisfaction and strengthens the psychological relationship between employees and their company. Furthermore, flexible employment arrangements encourage inclusivity by addressing a variety of requirements resulting from caregiving duties, health concerns, or personal interests (Nguyen et al., 2021). This inclusivity generates a sense of belonging and respect, which boosts staff morale and organisational commitment (Kelliher & Anderson, 2022).

Furthermore, flexible working arrangements can provide actual benefits to organisations beyond employee happiness and retention. According to research, remote work, in instance, can contribute to higher employee perfomance and efficiency since employees have less interruptions and distractions than in regular office environments (Carter & Roberts, 2021). Furthermore, organisations that embrace remote work can access into a larger talent pool by hiring top personnel regardless of geographic location, increasing workforce diversity and creativity (Parker et al., 2022). Overall, flexible working arrangements emerge as a win-win solution, adapting to employees' changing requirements while increasing organisational success and competitiveness in the modern landscape (Thompson, 2023).

5.1 Implications of the study findings

The study's findings indicate that organizations must prioritise and effectively manage work-life balance to enhance employee performance and satisfaction. Organisational success is augmented by work-life balance initiatives, which enhance employee well-being, reduce attrition, and elevate productivity. The findings are distinctive for both employees and organisations and are outlined below.

5.2 For employees:

5.2.1 Enhanced job satisfaction and personal well-being

The study's findings have clear implications: organisations must prioritise and efficiently manage work-life balance to improve employee performance and satisfaction. Organisations that implement work-life balance initiatives can boost employee well-being while also supporting organisational success through increased productivity and lower turnover rates. Employees gain from this by enjoying job satisfaction and greater personal well-being, allowing them to achieve a better balance between work and personal life Johnson, Beaulieu, & Williams, 2022). This not only increases job satisfaction but also improves general quality of life, resulting in a more meaningful and lasting work experience.

5.2.2 Reduced stress and burnout rates

Organisations should consider prioritizing and effectively manage work-life balance to enhance employee satisfaction and performance, as indicated by the study's findings. By implementing work-life balance programs, organisations can enhance employee well-being, reduce turnover, and increase employee perfomance, so improving their financial performance. (Maslach, 2022) This indicates that employees are less prone to stress and burnout as they achieve a more effective balance between their professional and personal lives. The health and happiness of employees are improved, thereby elevating morale and job satisfaction, resulting in a more sustainable and fulfilling work environment for all.

5.3 For Organisations:

5.3.1 Increased employee perfomance and employee engagement

Prioritising and effectively managing work-life balance programs can result in considerable benefits for organisations, including higher employee perfomance and employee engagement (Nguyen et al.,2022). Employees are more likely to be engaged and productive when they perceive their employer values them as individuals and their ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. According to (Maslach, 2022) workers are more efficient with their time and effort as a result of their increased involvement, resulting in higher productivity. Employees are more likely to be loyal and devoted, which leads to improved organisational performance, when they feel valued and respected by their employer through programs that promote work-life balance. So, it's evident that work-life balance is an investment that provides returns for both people and the organisations.

5.3.2 Improved organisational reputation and employee retention rates.

Prioritising and efficiently managing work-life balance programs can substantially improve an organization's reputation and staff retention rates. When organisations exhibit a dedication to enhancing their employees' well-being and work-life balance, they cultivate a favourable reputation as an employer of choice (Mertens, 2020). This reputation draws elite talent and improves the organization's capacity to attract and retain proficient individuals. Furthermore, employees who perceive themselves as valued and supported are more inclined to exhibit loyalty to the business, hence diminishing turnover rates and the related expenses of recruitment and training (Miller, 2023). Investing in work-life balance programs enhances an organization's reputation as an attractive workplace while fostering a committed and contented workforce, hence promoting long-term organisational success.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

This study indicates the need of fostering supportive work environments that enable individuals to effectively balance their professional and personal obligations. The results indicate that individuals who achieve a healthy work-life balance have greater job satisfaction, reduced stress levels, and enhanced productivity, all of which facilitate organisational success. These findings align with existing literature, which indicates the necessity for organisations to adopt policies including flexible work arrangements, mental health assistance, and family- friendly initiatives. Emphasising work-life balance in organisations may enhance employee performance and foster a positive workplace culture that attracts and retains premier talent.

Moreover, the study highlights the significance of individual and organisational strategies in achieving work-life balance. Individuals must proactively establish limits and effectively manage their time; nevertheless, organisations are crucial in offering the necessary tools and support systems. The findings indicate that a collaborative approach involving both employees and employers is required to solve the concerns of work-life balance in today's fast-paced workplace. Future study may investigate the long-term impacts of work-life balance efforts on organisational results and the role of technology on work-life dynamics. Finally, this study adds to the expanding body of knowledge on work-life balance and gives practical recommendations for organisations looking to improve employee performance and well-being.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned findings, the following recommendations are put forward to improve work-life balance and enhance the performance of employees in non-profit organisations:

5.5.1 Enhance adaptability in managing arrangements

Organisations can improve the flexibility of work arrangements by increasing remote work options and endorsing non-traditional shift schedules to support personnel from varied backgrounds. By providing these alternative options, employees can exert increased autonomy in establishing their work schedules and attain a balanced integration of their professional obligations and personal responsibilities or preferences (Miller, 2023). Remote work allows employees to execute their duties from areas beyond the conventional office setting, while flexible hours provide workers the freedom to tailor their schedules according to their preferences (Rony, 2023).. These techniques not only foster a culture of trust and empowerment but also improve job satisfaction, employee morale, and general well-being.

5.5.2 Enhance the durability and stability of support frameworks

Establishing and improving support systems, such as employee assistance programmes (EAPs), mental health initiatives, and stress coping techniques, is critical for maintaining employee well-being and increasing organisational resilience. This implies that the employee will have access to our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which provides expert counselling, advice, and other resources to assist them with any personal or work-related concerns they may be experiencing. To limit the negative impacts of work-related stress on mental health and create a positive shift in employee wellness, organisations should implement policies and practices that help employees manage and cope with stressors. This can be accomplished by allocating the required resources and support. Creating these programs not only reflects the company's dedication to its employees, but also promotes an inclusive and supportive work atmosphere. This provides a strong message to all employees, validating their importance both emotionally and professionally.

5.5.3 Training for Managers

Organisations should highlight exhibiting symptoms of occupational stress and actively strive to cultivate a corporate culture that appreciates and encourages a healthy equilibrium between professional and personal life. This can be accomplished via management training programs. Empowering managers with the expertise to identify stress signs in their staff will enable organisations to proactively mitigate potential difficulties before they result in increased

employee absenteeism, turnover, or burnout. Guiding managers in cultivating a workplace culture that prioritises and fosters work-life balance results in enhanced employee morale, engagement, and employee perfomane. Managers play a pivotal role in influencing the success or failure of achieving a healthy work-life balance. Effective management, coupled with robust leadership, immediately enhances employee satisfaction and engagement with the organisation.

5.5.4 Policy Re-evaluation and Development

Regularly analysing and amending work-life balance policies is critical to ensuring their relevance and success, especially when supported by evidence-based best practices and adapting to changing employee needs. Organisations can discover areas for development and adjust their current rules by constantly analysing their impact, improving employees' capacity to attain a work-life balance. This could include getting employee feedback through surveys or focus groups to learn about their experiences and the components they prioritise in work-life balance initiatives. Furthermore, remaining up to date on latest work-life balance research can provide timely policy updates on how employers might apply evidence-based practices that are sensitive to employees' changing demands. Finally, I recommend employers to continuously examine and amend their work-life balance policy to demonstrate their dedication to encouraging employee well-being, which is a crucial component of establishing a happy and inclusive workplace.

5.5.5 Increase awareness and communication

The existing execution of work-life balance programs is suboptimal; nevertheless, their efficacy and scope might be markedly boosted by greater communication and active employee participation in dialogues. Organisations can accomplish this by continuously communicating information regarding new programs through many means, like email updates, internal publications, or company-wide gatherings. This will enable an employee to make informed judgements about the use of benefits. The content must be articulated properly and elucidated systematically to enhance accessibility. Moreover, fostering open conversations and feedback sessions would empower employees to articulate their thoughts and concerns about work-life balance programs, enabling businesses to refine these initiatives to more effectively meet the varied demands of their workforce. Organisations can cultivate a more transparent and supportive workplace by promoting open communication and actively including employees in the decision-making process. This method guarantees that employees experience a sense of

ownership and are informed regarding the ideation process. Nonetheless, if your organisation truly prioritises care, all objectives become attainable.

In addition to the practical interventions outlined above, it is recommended that non-profit organizations anchor their work-life balance strategies within a theoretical framework such as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model or the Spillover Theory, which explain how workplace demands and resources interact to affect employee well-being and performance. By grounding policies in such models, organizations can systematically identify stress-inducing factors (excessive workload and role ambiguity) while simultaneously strengthening resources (autonomy, social support and recognition) that buffer against burnout. This theoretical anchoring enables a more holistic and evidence-driven approach, ensuring that interventions are not fragmented but instead integrated into a coherent organizational strategy. Embedding these practices in theory allows continuous evaluation and adaptation, ensuring that work-life balance initiatives are sustainable and resilient to contextual changes such as evolving employee needs or external shocks affecting the non-profit sector in South Africa.

5.5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

The current study delves into the many variables that demonstrate the impact of work-life balance on employee performance. It is suggested that future researchers broaden the study and do longitudinal studies. Long-term research to investigate how work-life balance influences employee performance over time can aid in determining causality rather than correlation. Still on methodology, future researchers are encouraged to use objective measurement measures such as production levels and absenteeism rates rather than relying solely on primary data. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate work-life balance impacts across different industries and employment kinds to discover whether particular areas are more influenced than others.

5.6 Contribution of the study to the body of knowledge

This study significantly contributes to the existing knowledge by offering empirical evidence about the correlation between work-life balance and employee performance, especially within contemporary work settings. The research used a mixed methods approach to provide an in-depth understanding of the impact of work-life balance on essential performance indicators, including employee perfomane, job satisfaction, and absenteeism. The results highlight the mediating influence of elements such as stress alleviation, psychological well-being, and organisational support, enhancing the depth of established theories including Work-Family Conflict Theory and Boundary Theory. The study indicates measures that employees and organisations might implement to attain a harmonious balance. Consequently, the findings are

essential for enhancing the scholarly discussion on work-life integration and its effects on employee performance.

The report offers pragmatic insights for businesses and politicians seeking to establish conducive work environments. It indicates the significance of instituting adaptable work arrangements, including telecommuting and flexible schedules, with policies that foster mental well-being and family-oriented behaviours. The report indicates the necessity for structural modifications, including training managers to identify and tackle work-life challenges and cultivating a culture that prioritises employee well-being. These guidelines can assist organisations in formulating policies that improve employee performance and foster long-term organisational success. The findings of this study help to reconcile theory and practice, serving as a valuable resource for stakeholders aiming to enhance work-life balance and its effects on workplace outcomes.

5.7 Limitations of the study

The following limitations were encountered in the current study:

- Limited generalisability - The findings may be context-specific, applicable only to a particular industry, organisation or geographic location. In the current study the results pertain to an NPO as a unit of study however, there are many other organisations that exhibit different characteristics. Thus, limiting their applicability.
- Employees may not accurately report their work-life balance and performance due to social desirability bias or fear of repercussion (Morse, 2020). However, appropriate measures such as seeking authority, asking probing questions and prolonged interviews were put in place to reduce bias.
- Researcher struggled to discover relevant literature on work-life balance and employee performance in South Africa. The scarcity of available literature may impede a thorough comprehension of the topic and limit the background information for the investigation.
- It was difficult to reach and engage a representative sample, which hampered the data collection process. To solve the concerns, the researcher had to be flexible and accommodate all rescheduled appointments though this came with transport costs for the researcher. Maintaining ethical procedures and obeying data privacy requirements were also prioritised throughout the research process.
- Uncontrolled External Factors - Factors such as economic conditions, job market trends, and organisational policies can impact employee performance, making it challenging to isolate the impact of work-life balance on employee performance alone.
- Sample Size and Selection Bias - A small or non-representative sample may not reflect broader employee experiences, leading to biased conclusions. In the current study,

fairly large samples were selected and were deemed representative of the whole population. In the qualitative study, data saturation was even reached before the maximum predetermined sample size.To further enhance the insights of this study and address the limitations identified, future research can focus on developing a more comprehensive and a better understanding of work- life balance from various organisational perspectives.

5.1 Conclusion

This study has emphasised the essential importance of work-life balance in improving employee performance and organisational success. An in-depth analysis of employee and managerial viewpoints within a non-profit organisation reveals that excellent work-life balance methods are not merely advantageous but crucial for cultivating a productive, pleased, and dedicated staff. By adopting the suggested tactics, organisations can cultivate a more supportive workplace that advantages both workers and overarching corporate goals, ultimately resulting in enduring success and growth.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire for non-managerial employees

The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A seeks to understand the demographic details and Section B seeks to understand issues around work-life balance and employee performance. The information gathered will be used only for academic purposes. The information and data will be handled with the utmost privacy and confidentiality. Please refrain from writing your names or any unique identifiers. ***Tick (√) only one response for each item/question***

SECTION A

Age range	18-25 years	26 - 34 years	35 - 44 years	45 years +

Gender	Male	Female

Marital Status	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed

Studying	Yes	No

Highest Qualification	**Specialisation**
PHD	
Masters	
Honours	
Bachelors	
Matric	

Length of Service	
0-1 year	
1-2 years	
3-5 years	
6-10 years	
10years +	

No. of Children/ Dependants	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5 and above	

SECTION B

	QUESTION	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I occasionally work later than usual to keep up with my workload.				
2	Sometimes I work on holidays and weekends				
3	I sometimes fail to meet deadlines				
4	I can access my leave days whenever I need to take a vacation with ease.				
5	Due to professional constraints, I occasionally have to miss significant family occasions with friends and family.				
6	I often feel exhausted and overwhelmed when I have to do my work				
7	I am able to cope with all work demands				
8	I could benefit from offloading some of my tasks to another employee				
9	For me to be able to function more effectively at work , I must take energy supplements.				
10	If I have an urgent matter to take care of, I can easily switch shifts with a co-worker.				
11	I am free to select a shift choice that fits my needs and preferences				
12	In order to take more time off, I can combine my available leave (study, sick and annual leave)				
13	I feel like I don't have much influence over my professional life.				
14	At times, I have thoughts about work- related concerns while at home or home- related issues while at work.				
15	I prioritise my job over my family				

16	I prioritise my family over my work				
17	I sometimes feel depressed with my work				
		Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
18	I sometimes feel stressed with my workload				
19	I lack motivation for my work				
20	I sometimes receive work related messages after working hours				
21	I sometimes think about leaving my current job				
22	I believe I receive recognition and appreciation for my work in the company				
23	I am allowed to work from home sometimes				
24	I quickly embrace new ways of doing my work				
25	When I give my work load to a colleague they embrace it with enthusiasm				
26	I often receive training on work-life balance				
27	I believe that my company has a certain way of doing things				
28	My family responsibilities do not interfere with my work				
29	I receive assistance for dependent care from my organisation				
30	I am fully resourced when I do my work				

3.1. Can you describe a specific example when you had to work later than usual to manage your workload? How did this impact your overall well- being and work performance?

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3.2. Share a situation when you had to work on holidays or weekends. How did it affect your work-life balance and what strategies did you employ to cope with the additional workload during those times?

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3.3 Reflect on a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What factors contributed to this situation and what steps have you taken to address and improve your time management skills?

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3.4. Discuss an occasion when you had to miss a significant family event due to professional constraints. How did this affect your relationships and what measures have you considered or implemented to balance professional commitments with personal obligations?

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3.5 Elaborate on a time when you felt overwhelmed and exhausted while managing your work tasks. What specific challenges did you face and what coping mechanisms or support systems did you utilise to navigate through those difficult periods?

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Appendix B: Interview guide for management employees

The only use of the information gathered would be for academic purposes. The information and data will be handled with the utmost privacy and confidentiality. Please refrain from stating your names or any unique identifiers.

QUESTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEES - INTERVIEW

1. What do you think work-life balance means?
2. Does the company have strategies in place to promote work-life balance? Briefly explain
3. What steps are taken to inform staff members about these various initiatives?
4. What kind of challenges did the organisation encounter while implementing work-life balance initiatives?
5. How does the organisation plan to address these challenges?
6. Does the organisation believe that employee performance is impacted by lack of work-life balance? Please elaborate.
7. What kind of advantages do you anticipate work-life initiatives will bring to your organisation?
8. Does giving leave days to employee impact on employee performance?
9. What factors do you take into account when creating staff work schedules?
10. Do you sometimes contact employees for work matters during holidays, weekends or after working hours?
11. Is work-life balance considered as an important in performance reviews?

12. Does the organisation have programmes for addressing mental health issues of employees

Appendix C: Gate keeper's letter

Hand In Hand Development NPC
t/a
HAND IN HAND
Southern Africa

37 Homestead Lane, Homestead Park
Corner 12th Avenue, Rivonia,
Sandton, 2128

Postnet 173, Private Bag 75, Bryanston, 2021

Tel: +27 (011) 021 4535
Email: info@handinhand-sa.org
Web: www.handinhand-sa.org

1 June 2023

Dear Michelle Marufu,

Permission to Conduct Research at Hand in Hand Southern Africa

We are pleased to grant you permission to conduct your research entitled *Assessing the impact of Work Life Balance on employee performance* at Hand in Hand Southern Africa.

Please be informed that while conducting your research at Hand in Hand Southern Africa, you will be expected to comply with all organizational policies, guidelines, and protocols. This includes obtaining any necessary clearances, adhering to ethical standards and maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information. We also request that you provide regular updates on the progress of your research and seek guidance from the designated supervisor or point of contact assigned by the organization.

We encourage you to make use of the available resources and facilities at our organisation to support your research endeavors. Our staff members are willing to assist you in accessing relevant data or any other requirements you may have during the research process.

We hope that this research opportunity will be a rewarding experience that enhances your academic and professional growth. Should you require any further assistance or information, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

[redacted]

Dr Lawrence Gadzikwa

Chief Executive Officer

Hand in Hand Southern Africa

HAND IN HAND
Southern Africa
19 -06- 2023

Appendix D: Informed consent

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

18 July 2023

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Michelle Kundai Marufu from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, currently studying towards an MCOM in Human Resource Management. My email address is 221120515@stu.ukzn.ac.za and my contact number is [redacted].

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research *in Assessing the impact of Work-life Balance on employee performance.* The aim and purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of how the balance between work-related demands and personal life obligations affects an employee's overall job performance. The study is expected to enroll one hundred and sixty (160) participants in total. One hundred and fifty (150) employees and ten (10) managers from one (1) NPO organisation in Johannesburg, South Africa. It will involve semi structured interviews for managers and questionnaires for employees. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 20 minutes for the (employee) questionnaire and 1 hour for the (management) interview. The study is self-funded by the researcher.

The study will have no potential risks as all responses will be anonymous and also for the research report pseudo names will be used if need be. We hope that the study will help individuals have the opportunity to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the development of new insights and discoveries. Furthermore, involvement in research can provide participants with opportunities for personal growth and learning. They may gain new knowledge or experiences related to the research topic. The research will expand the existing body of knowledge on Work-life Balance and employee performance. Through data collection and analysis, the researcher will identify patterns, trends, or relationships in the data. These findings will contribute to scientific knowledge by revealing associations or correlations that were previously unknown or poorly understood. This information will provide insights into underlying phenomena, guiding further research in the field.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number _____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher on 221120515@stu.ukzn.ac.za or my supervisor , contact details as follows:

Dr Mbalenhle Dlamini
Email: Dlaminim6@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point. Participants will not be coerced or pressured to continue their participation if they wish to withdraw. Furthermore, in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. There will be no consequences to the participant for withdrawal from the study. The procedure for withdrawal is to communicate with the researcher through email on 221120515@stu.ukzn.ac.za or through a conversation with the Researcher. The participants will be required to return any study materials provided to them during the study, such as questionnaires. The researcher will handle the withdrawal process in a respectful and supportive manner, ensuring that participants feel comfortable and understood in their decision to withdraw.

In addition, if ethical concerns emerge related to a participant's involvement in the study, such as the potential for harm or violation of ethical guidelines, the researcher may decide to terminate their participation. This could be due to unforeseen risks, adverse effects, or the participant's inability to provide informed consent or comprehend the study requirements. Additionally, if the researcher determines that the participant's safety or well-being is at risk by continuing their participation in the study, termination may be necessary. This could be due to the emergence of unexpected adverse events or medical conditions that require immediate attention or discontinuation of study procedures.

Participants in this study will not incur any costs as a result of their participation. There are no fees, charges or expenses that participants will be required to bear. Furthermore, there are no incentives or reimbursements provided for participation in this study. Participants will not receive any financial compensation, gift cards, vouchers, or other forms of remuneration for their involvement. The participation in this study is purely voluntary and participants are not expected to invest any financial resources or receive any financial benefits. To protect the confidentiality of personal information in the research, the following steps will be taken:

Informed Consent: Participants will be provided with a clear and comprehensive informed consent form that outlines the purpose of the study, the use of their personal information and the measures in place to protect confidentiality. Participants must provide their informed consent before any data collection occurs.

Data Anonymisation: Identifying information that can directly link participants to their data (such as names, addresses, or specific identifying numbers) will be removed or anonymised. Instead, unique identification codes or pseudonyms will be assigned to participants to maintain confidentiality.

Secure Data Storage: Research data will be securely stored in password-protected electronic databases or locked filing cabinets to prevent unauthorised access. Only authorised personnel involved in the research will have access to the data

Data De-identification in Reporting: When reporting research findings, data will be aggregated or de-identified to further protect participant confidentiality. Individual responses or personal information that could potentially identify participants are not included in published reports or presentations.

Secure Destruction of Data: After the research study is completed and the data is no longer needed, it will be securely destroyed. Questionnaires will be shredded and any electronic data recorded will be permanently deleted to prevent any potential breaches.

CONSENT

I……have been informed about the study entitled *Assessing the impact of work-life balance on employee performance* by Michelle Marufu.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher via email on 221120515@stu.ukzn.ac.za or contact number [redacted].

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact :

Dr Mbalenhle Dlamini
Email: Dlaminim6@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable I

hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview YES / NO

Signature of Participant **Date**

Signature of Witness (Where applicable)	**Date**
Signature of Translator (Where applicable)	**Date**

Appendix E: Ethical clearance

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

22 November 2023

Michelle Kundai Marufu (221120515)
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov
Westville Campus

Dear MK Marufu,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00006072/2023
Project title: Assessing the impact of work-life balance on employee performance
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 29 August 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 22 November 2024.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Appendix F: Certificate of editing

Hand In Hand Development NPC
t/a
HAND IN HAND
Southern Africa

57 Homestead Lane, Homestead Park
Corner 12th Avenue, Rivonia,
Sandton, 2128

Postnet K75, Private Bag 75, Bryanston, 2021

Tel: +27 (011 021 4535
Email: info@handinhand-sa.org
Web: www.handinhand-sa.org

1 June 2023

Dear Michelle Marufu,

Permission to Conduct Research at Hand in Hand Southern Africa

We are pleased to grant you permission to conduct your research entitled *Assessing the impact of Work Life Balance on employee performance* at Hand in Hand Southern Africa.

Please be informed that while conducting your research at Hand in Hand Southern Africa, you will be expected to comply with all organizational policies, guidelines, and protocols. This includes obtaining any necessary clearances, adhering to ethical standards and maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive information. We also request that you provide regular updates on the progress of your research and seek guidance from the designated supervisor or point of contact assigned by the organization.

We encourage you to make use of the available resources and facilities at our organisation to support your research endeavors. Our staff members are willing to assist you in accessing relevant data or any other requirements you may have during the research process.

We hope that this research opportunity will be a rewarding experience that enhances your academic and professional growth. Should you require any further assistance or information, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Y[redacted]

Dr Lawrence Gadzikwa
Chief Executive Officer
Hand in Hand Southern Africa

HAND IN HAND Southern Africa
15 -06- 2023