

**EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT TOWARDS
WORK-LIFE BALANCE AT THE GULF AFRICAN BANK (KENYA)**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is my own work and effort and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any award.

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D61/79419/2012

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the candidate's University Supervisor.

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First and foremost I would like to thank the Almighty Allah for showering me with His blessings and giving me the strength and patience to achieve what I have until now. I would also like to thank my family for their utmost support and motivation throughout my life.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my family and my late Grandmother who was a pillar in my life and to my friends who gave me their support.

ABSTRACT

The challenge of balancing work and family demands is of concern to individuals and organizations. In recent years, global competition, downsizing, and technology that keep workers constantly connected to work have intensified employees' work demands (Cappelli, 1991; Valcour& Hunter, 2005). Organizations now offer family-friendly programs in response to a changing work force (Loysk, 1996). The last few decades have seen rapid and unprecedented changes. Changes in the composition of the workforce, together with a growing population of workers in nontraditional family roles, have focused attention on the conflict employees experience when looking to balance the demands of work and home (Greenhaus &Parasuraman, 1986).The purpose of the study was to examine how employees perceive their organization's family-friendly policies as they relate to achieving a positive work-life balance. The study used descriptive research design. The target population was all the employees of Gulf African Bank, who are 820 in total. Stratified random sampling technique was used as it ensured that all the departments were represented. The target population was stratified into the 3 management levels: senior, middle and lower management levels, and non- managerial employees. Random sampling was used within each stratum to reduce bias. The study used primary data that was collected using semi-structured questionnaires. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected in this research. The targeted sample size was 164 participants. Those filled and returned questionnaires were 150 respondents making a response rate of 91.5%The response rate for this study was excellent and therefore enough for data analysis and interpretation. The study showed that respondents' organization has family supportive supervisor. The respondents' organization gives emotional support to employees and supervisors set example themselves on how to integrate work and family. The study shows those respondents' organization offer flexible work arrangements to help employees balance work and family demands. The study further showed that telecommunicating in an organization improves productivity for the organization. The organization allows employees to choose when and for how long they engage in work-related tasks and also allows differing starting and finishing schedules for each day as well as allows for variation of the length of the week worked. The study recommends that organizations should embrace family supportive programs that will allow employees to live their normal lives when not at work. These will in turn increase work productivity. Organizations should not be very strict on work timelines but offer working arrangements based on flexibility and availability of the employee. Flexible working hours offers a competitive advantage to an organization.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The success of employee support activities depend on the approach which has been taken to account in providing such activities to employees and policies should be guided by idealistic morale and human value and such services include the provision of medical facilities, sanitary and the accommodation of workers employed, amenities and industrial social security measures, training and education facilities (Harika, 2010). Employees are spending more time than ever before at their jobs; White, et al. (2003) report that employees are working the equivalent of an extra month per annum. Being overworked can lead to work-home conflict, a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible. Such conditions suggest concerns over well-being and work life balance issues (Jennings & McDougald, 2007).

Challenge of balancing work and family demands is of concern to individuals and organizations. In recent years, global competition, downsizing, and technology that keep workers constantly connected to work have intensified employees' work demands (Valcour & Hunter, 2005). Organizations now offer family-friendly programs in response to a changing workforce. The last few decades have seen rapid and unprecedented changes. Changes in the composition of the workforce, together with a growing population of workers in nontraditional family roles; have focused attention on the conflict employees experience when looking to balance the demands of work and home. At the same time, employers are faced with the implications of taking no action. In other words, not only should employers consider the social implications of instituting such programs, they also have to consider the social and financial cost of doing nothing (Arthur, 2003).

Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) theorized a work-family situation under which work and family are "allies" rather than enemies, suggesting a model of work and family enrichment that offers a positive linkage between the two (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Friedman and Lobel (2003) opined that some employers have discovered the benefit of

giving employees work time to deal with personal issues. If they do so, an employee can realize an increased level of control and flexibility in their personal lives, which could ultimately benefit the employer (Callahan, 2007). An organization that offers this level of Support to employees can realize increased employee commitment (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000).

Inadequate work life balance is a problem that poses a big risk to Gulf Africa Bank employees' well-being, their performance as well as the organizational performance. Many employees often have difficulties in attempting to balance employment responsibilities with their social life. This is why the main objective of this study is to assess employee perceptions of organizational support towards work-life balance at the Gulf African Bank.

1.1.1 Employee perception

Supervisors shape employee views of organizational support and its association with work-life conflict (Kossek et al., 2011). Eisenberger, Singlhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, and Rhoades (2002) argue that workers view supervisors as organizational agents, and they consider supervisor actions to be equated with organizational actions. Kossek et al. (2011) define perceptions of supervisor work-life support as an employee's perception that their supervisor cares about his or her work-life well-being. Supportive supervisor behaviors include emotional support, instrumental support, role modeling behaviors, and creative work-life management (Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hanson, 2009).

Perception is not necessarily based on reality, but is merely a perspective from a particular individual's view of a situation. In dealing with the concept of organisational behaviour, perception becomes important because 'people's behaviour is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself; the world as it is perceived is the world that is behaviourally important' (Robbins et al ., 2004).

Factors influencing a person's perception can be broken down into three main categories. These include: the situation, the perceiver and the target. For example, the factors in the situation may include: time, work setting, or social setting. Where as the factors in the

perceiver may include: attitudes, motives, interests, experiences and expectations. Lastly, the factors in the target may include: novelty, motion, sounds, size background, proximity, and similarity (Robbins et al., 2004).

Perception affects our working relationships in many ways relating to the factors of organizational behaviour, such as: individual, group or structure. For example, based on the situation, perceiver and target we may have the perception that the people we are working with are no good at their job, and therefore we may tend to avoid working with them, in fear of being held responsible for their mistakes, and in doing so, affecting our working relationship with our team members, and ultimately, the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization (Robbins et al., 2004). .

1.1.2 Organizational support

Organization support not only leads to more use of formal flexibility policies and has a significant influence on perceived work life balance but also plays a crucial role in employee's general attitudes, commitment and perceptions towards the organization. Thompson and Prottas (2005) discovered that the supportiveness of an organization's culture was positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to stress, intentions to quit, and work-family conflict. They further discovered that there was no relationship between the availability of formal flexibility policies and outcomes such as absenteeism, work-family conflict and productivity.

On a similar note, McNall, Masuda and Nicklin (2010) emphasize the power of employers in generating positive attitudes. Employees are more likely to show positive attitudes and behaviors such as more job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions when they feel employers show understanding and care that they have lives outside of work, in form of flexibility policies. This suggests that family supportive organizational perceptions in fact mediate the relationship between family supportive benefit availability and outcomes such as job attitudes or work-family conflict.

Ultimately, when employers are able to make their organizational culture more family-friendly and supportive, the working environment also changes so that their employees experience a better work-life balance. Organizations can therefore play an active role in reducing work-family conflict and improving employee attitudes by establishing a family-friendly environment and culture through flexibility policies. Furthermore, a supportive organizational culture may become a competitive advantage to an organization, when it is less imitable and observable than bundles of human resource practices. Nevertheless, few organizations have taken flexibility up as a deliberate and strategic step towards achieving increased competitiveness or implemented it as a part of a business strategy (Thompson and Prottas, 2005).

1.1.3 Work Life Balance

The concept ‘work-life balance’ allows for a wider understanding of ‘non-work’ areas of life, incorporating workers with diverse family situations, giving increased scope to include men, and allowing for spillover and fluidity between work and other areas of life (Gregory & Milner, 2009). Whilst there is no one definition of work-life balance (Kalliath & Brough, 2008), it can be conceptualized as “the relationship between institutional and cultural times and spaces of work and non-work in societies where income is predominantly generated and distributed through labour markets” (Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea, & Walters, 2002); i.e. the relationship between paid employment and other areas of life. A more specific definition has been adopted by Clark (2000) satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict.

While there is no one accepted definition of what constitutes a work-life balance practice, the term usually refers to one of the following: organizational support for dependent care, flexible work options, and family or personal leave (Estes & Michael, 2005). Hence these practices include flexible work hours (e.g., flextime, which permits workers to vary their start and finish times provided a certain number of hours is worked; compressed work week, in which employees work a full week’s worth of hours in four days and take the fifth off), working from home (telework), sharing a full-time job between two employees (job sharing), family leave programs (e.g., parental leave, adoption leave, compassionate leave), on-site childcare, and financial and/or informational assistance with childcare and

eldercare services. A supervisor engages in emotional support when they listen and show their subordinates they care about their work-life demands. Instrumental support occurs when a supervisor reacts to employee's work-life demands on a daily basis or as it is needed. When supervisors actively demonstrate how to balance their work-life behaviors on the job, they are engaging in the third dimension of support, role modeling behaviors. The fourth and final dimension of supervisor support is creative work-life management.

Creative work-life management takes place when a supervisor rearranges a work day in order to enhance employee effectiveness on the job and off the job. It is important to consider all four dimensions of perceived supervisor support as they relate to employee and organizational outcomes. If employees view their supervisor as being unsupportive of their work-life balance, they may not utilize current work-life balance policies because they are fearful that it will make them look bad in front of their supervisor. Overall, supervisors play an important role in whether or not employees feel comfortable with balancing their work and life responsibilities (Hammer, Neal, Newsom, Brockwood, & Colton, 2005).

1.1.4 Banking Industry In Kenya

The Banking industry in Kenya is governed by the Companies Act, the Banking Act, the Central Bank of Kenya Act and the various prudential guidelines issued by the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK). The banking sector was liberalised in 1995 and exchange controls lifted (PWC, 2008). The CBK, which falls under the Minister for Finance's docket, is responsible for formulating and implementing monetary policy and fostering the liquidity, solvency and proper functioning of the financial system. The CBK publishes information on Kenya's commercial banks and non-banking financial institutions, interest rates and other publications and guidelines (PWC, 2008).

The banking sector comprised of 45 institutions, 42 of which were commercial banks, 2 mortgage finance companies and 1 non-bank financial institution (CBK, 2014). Out of 45 institutions, 35 were locally owned and 10 were foreign owned. The locally owned financial institutions comprised of 3 banks with significant shareholding by the Government and State Corporations, 29 commercial banks, 2 mortgage finance

institutions and 1 non-bank financial institution. Local private institutions constitute 71.1 per cent of total institutions while local public institutions constitute 6.7 per cent and foreign institutions 22.2 per cent. The total net assets for local private institutions constituted 54.7 per cent while the local public institutions and foreign institutions constituted 5.3 per cent and 40.0 per cent of the total net assets respectively (CBK, 2014).

1.1.5 Gulf African Bank

The genesis of Gulf African Bank (GAB) can be traced back to 2005, when a group of motivated Kenyans envisioned establishing an Islamic bank as an alternative to conventional banking in the country. By conducting business on the principles of Shari'ah, the bank would provide an ethical and fair mode of banking for all. Gulf African Bank is the first and largest Islamic Bank in Kenya and one of the fastest growing banks in the history of the banking sector of the country (Artur, 2008).

The bank offers fully Shari'ah compliant products and services that address the needs of not just Muslims, but everyone in the country including individuals, corporate companies, and institutions. The bank was incorporated on August 9th, 2006 and started operations as a commercial bank in January 8th 2008, in a historic event, where it was granted the country's first fully-fledged commercial banking license as a dedicated Islamic bank, by the Central Bank of Kenya. The vision of Gulf African Bank is to be the leading Shari'ah Compliant financial services provider in our market, while the mission is to provide innovative and competitive financial services solutions professionally through principles of fairness and integrity while enhancing the wellbeing of our customers, staff and the community (Kossek, 2009). Gulf African Bank has over 14 branches across the country, where 7 branches are spread across Nairobi, 6 in Mombasa and 1 in Garissa.

1.2 Research Problem

Employee support culture do increase the productivity of organization and promote healthy organizational relations thereby maintaining industrial peace. It is important to recognize the value of social support at work. Both one's peers and supervisors may serve to minimize some of these negative impacts. Workers have the ability to temporarily relieve an employee from his or her job duties at work in order to attend to

personal needs. Previous studies have shown that perceptions of supervisor support have a greater impact on employee outcomes (Rousseau & Aubé, 2010) or the availability of work-life balance policies alone. This research looks at employee perceptions of organizational support to a balanced work environment.

Gulf African bank (Kenya) has flexible work practices where employees work on alternate weekends to ensure that every employee has at least two weekends in a month where they get an off to spend time with their families and friends. In cases where branches work seven days a week i.e. Sunday to Sunday, the employees are given an overtime and they work in shifts so as that each employee is able to get at least two weekends off work in a month. Employees who work in branches are also given more annual leave days i.e. 28 working days compared to employees who work at the head office who are given 24 working days; this is due to the fact that employee at the branches work on weekends hence they are compensated for working during weekends.

Several studies have been done on work life balance. A study on fatherhood by Tahmincioglu (2010) shows that more men are looking for alternatives to their 40-hour work week in order to spend more time with their family. Though working less means a smaller paycheck and higher stress levels, men are looking for flexibility just as much as women. In their study Hill, Ferris & Martinson (2003) examined whether and to what extent the different work venues of virtual offices, home offices or traditional offices impacted job performance; motivation; retention and career opportunity; and family life balance. Their findings suggested that virtual and home offices showed mostly positive effects on the job performance variables, while traditional office arrangements showed mostly negative effects.

In Abdel-Wahab (2007) study that investigated employees' attitudes towards telecommuting on Egypt information employees', found that more respondents are in favor of telecommuting than those who are not. Those employees who have a positive attitude towards telecommuting may be encouraged by the pluses of telecommuting such as: saving commute cost and time; less travel related stress, especially for elder employees; better balance for the competing demands of work and family, especially for working women with young children. A study by Anne (2012) on the extent to which

work life balance practices are adopted in horticultural farms in Naivasha – Kenya, the results of the study indicate that horticultural farms in Naivasha have adopted practices relating to time and to the job to a great extent while practices relating to the place and to the benefits have been adopted to a moderate extent only. Most previous studies have not considered perception of workers on organizational support towards work life balance, hence the study tries to answer the research question; what are employees' perception of organizational support towards work-life balance at the Gulf African Bank?

1.3. Objective of the study

The objective of this study was to assess employee perceptions of organizational support towards work-life balance at the Gulf African bank.

1.4 Value of the Study

In academia, this study will contribute to contemporary debates on work-life balance and provoke the “why” question that could form the basis for future explanatory research. This study will also provide information that will contribute to theories and knowledge related to work life balance practices. Researchers and scholars can use this information to add to their understanding employee welfare programs practices in Kenya. The study will provide foundation and material for further related research.

This study will also be useful to the Ministry of Labour since it will be significant in policy formulation. It will assist policy makers to come up with policy frameworks and structures that will endear organizational processes which will sustain work life balance practices. The analysis will also be useful in making inferences in other labour intensive production sectors of the Banking industry. The government agencies and other organizations will make use of the study, as it provides knowledge useful in formulation of policy and a regulatory framework on human resource management and in particular welfare programs for better organizational performance and individual employees' wellbeing.

The study would also benefit most Human resource organizations on the perceived relationship between employee communication practices and organization commitment

and hence may come up with policies on employee communication. It will provide support for the importance of adopting a “work life” rather than just a “work family “ focus to HR efforts, policies and programs. It will also help in providing evidence of the effects of balancing between work and other domains on individual well-being and health and can serve as a justification for resources investment in programs to address a broader array of work life balance issues. Finally researchers can assist in enhancing the effectiveness of the organization through demonstrating that greater retention of individuals may be obtained through enhancement in work-life balance practices.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents various theories that support this study and also reviews the relevant literature on: Supportive Organizational culture, Flexible workplace, Work-life balance policies, flexi-time and Job satisfaction.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

This section looks at the various theories that help in understanding the behaviours of employers and employees and what each perceive and expect from each other to be able to achieve a balanced work environment. These theories are include social exchange theory, the psychological contract theory, identity mechanism theory and impression management theory.

2.2.1 Social Exchange Theory

Greenberg and Scott (1996) assert that the social exchange theory is most commonly used by the studies in predicting work behaviours in the field of organizational behaviour. The theory proposes that employees exhibit positive or negative behaviour as a response to the treatment they receive from their employers. According to Greenberg and Scott (1996) the central aspect of this theory is the norm of reciprocity. A strong social exchange relationship between the employer and employee will help maintain positive working relationships and would elicit positive sentiments such as satisfaction commitment and trust in employees which in turn will move employees to engage themselves in employee productivity. Thus employers need to treat their employees fairly such that they can reciprocate the good gesture in the form of behaviour such as organizational citizenship behaviour which contributes to organizational influence effectiveness.

The social exchange theory also has its fair share of criticism. Miller (2005) argues that the theory reduces human interaction to a purely rational process that arises from

economic needs. Miller (2005) further contends that the theory favours openness as it was developed in the 1970s when ideas of freedom and openness were preferred but there may be times when openness is not the best option in a relationship.

2.2.2 The Psychological Contract Theory

The psychological contract theory explains a two way exchange process of perceived promises and obligations between employees and their employers. According to Armstrong (2006) it is an open ended agreement about what the individual and the organization expect to give and receive in return in the employment relationship. The contract represents a dynamic and reciprocal deal. Armstrong (2006) posits that the theory holds that employees expect to be treated fairly as human beings to be provided with work that uses their abilities to be rewarded equitably according to their contribution to be able to display competence to have opportunities for further growth to know what is expected of them and to be given feedback on how well they are doing.

On the other hand employers expect employees to do their best on behalf of the organization to put themselves out for the organization to be fully committed to its values to be compliant and loyal and to enhance the image of the organization to its customers and suppliers. Bratton and Gold (2007) contend that at the heart of the psychological contract theory is an exchange of individual employee commitment motivation and task performance beyond expected outcomes by the organization. According to Lam (2001) these actions which are beyond formally prescribed roles and job descriptions that is extra role behaviour rather than role behaviour is what is called employee productivity. This is important in organizations because it brings about organizational success through efficient use of resources.

2.2.3 Identity Mechanism Theory

Another theoretical explanation for employee productivity is based on an identification mechanism. According to the theory employees engage in employee productivity because they incorporate the organization into their social identity Chattopadhyay (1999). Thus, behaviours that benefit the organization such as employee productivity are seen to benefit the self. Coyle Kessler and Purcell (2004) argue that identification with the organization

leads to the internalization of the organization's goals and as a result individuals broaden the definition of in role performance to include employee productivity. Thus effort directed towards preserving supporting and improving the organization proceeds naturally from the congruence between a member's self-definition and the organization's definition. In this regard organizational identification aligns individual interests and behaviours with interests and behaviours that benefit the organization. Organizations therefore need to provide conducive working conditions to their employee who would enable them to incorporate the organization into their social system to such an extent that they are able to align their interests and behaviours with the values of the organization. This ultimately results in displaying of behaviour such as employee productivity that benefit the organization.

2.2.4 Impression Management Theory

The impression management theory is another theory that provides an explanation for the concept of employee productivity. Like the social exchange and identity mechanism theory the impression management theory explains employee productivity with reference to an employee's ongoing relationship with the organization. According to Bolino (1999) the theory holds that employee productivity is spurred by strategic reasons as employees seek to improve their future prospects in the organization. Thus employee productivity is seen as part of employees' attempts to influence the images others have of them increase performance evaluation ratings and enhance promotion opportunities.

Another theory that seems to explain the concept of employee productivity is the expectancy theory. Armstrong (2006) argues that the concept of expectancy was originally contained in the valence- instrumentality- expectancy theory by Victor Vroom in 1964. According to Armstrong (2006) valence stands for value instrumentality is the belief that if we do one thing it will lead to another and expectancy is the belief that action or effort will lead to an outcome. The theory holds that individuals choose between alternatives which involve uncertain outcomes. The individual's behaviour is not only affected by his preferences amongst these outcomes but also by the degree to which the individual believes the outcomes to be possible.

Armstrong (2006) defines expectancy as a monitory belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will be followed by a particular outcome. According to Armstrong (2006) expectancies may be described in terms of their strength. Maximum strength is indicated by subjective certainty that the act will be followed by the outcome while minimal strength is indicated by subjective certainty that the act will not be followed by the outcome. The strength of expectations may be based on past experiences for example the idea that employees who go beyond the call of duty are rewarded. In these circumstances motivation to perform will be increased. To maintain such employee performance at the workplace managers should reward their employees in accordance with their contribution. This will motivate the employee to continue performing and even go beyond the call of what they are expected to do. The expectancy theory has also made some important contributions to motivation theories. Unlike other theories the expectancy theory takes into account individual perceptions and thus personal histories allowing a richness of response not obvious in other theories which assume that people are essentially the same. However the expectancy theory has also been criticized. Mitchell (2001) argues that the greatest difficulty in testing the theory stems from the fact that theory is so comprehensive that it is virtually impossible to concurrently test all aspects of the theory.

Despite the fact that numerous theories have been discussed to explain the concept of organizational citizenship behaviour the present study adopts the social exchange theory as the main theory guiding the concept. The social exchange theory is adopted because it emphasizes the norm of reciprocity which explains why employees exhibit positive or negative behaviour as a response to the treatment they receive from their employers. The norm of reciprocity in the theory is used in this study to hypothesis that job satisfaction correlates positively with organizational citizenship behaviour that is only satisfied employees would engage themselves in organizational citizenship behaviour (Mitchel 2005).

2.3. Supportive Organizational Culture

At the organizational level, organizational culture can be defined as shared perceptions of organizational work practices within organizational units that may differ from other

organizational units (Van Den Berg and Wilderom, 2004). The culture of an organization constitutes a big part of how an employee experiences his work and work environment and is one of the most important factors in determining whether he feels entitled to claim or use flexible work arrangements. A supportive organizational culture has been defined as the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employee's work and family lives.

The supportiveness of an organizations' culture as well as the supportiveness of supervisors and colleagues are what make up the informal context in an organization, which has been shown to be more important and appreciated by employees than the actual formal flexibility programs in place. The behaviors and attitudes that are held up and rewarded in an organization communicate to the employees what is valuable to the organization and to the management. If employees perceive that usage of flexibility benefits are not a part of these behaviors they might be afraid and therefore unlikely to make use of them regardless of their availability (Allen, 2001). This is consistent with the human ecology theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which focuses on that individual decisions and choice are drawn on adaption to the environment that a person finds himself in. The importance lies in adapting to a situation or environment, be it at home or at the workplace, so that a person can function more efficiently in it.

A supportive culture therefore not only leads to more use of formal flexibility policies and has a significant influence on perceived work life balance but also plays a crucial role in employee's general attitudes, commitment and perceptions towards the organization. Thompson and Prottas (2005) discovered that the supportiveness of an organization's culture was positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to stress, intentions to quit, and work-family conflict. They further discovered that there was no relationship between the availability of formal flexibility policies and outcomes such as absenteeism, work-family conflict and productivity. On a similar note, McNall, Masuda and Nicklin (2010) emphasize the power of employers in generating positive attitudes. Employees are more likely to show positive attitudes and behaviors such as more job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions when they feel employers show understanding and care that they have lives outside of work, in form of flexibility policies. This suggests

that family supportive organizational perceptions in fact mediate the relationship between family supportive benefit availability and outcomes such as job attitudes or work-family conflict.

Ultimately, when employers are able to make their organizational culture more family-friendly and supportive, the working environment also changes so that their employees experience a better work-life balance. Organizations can therefore play an active role in reducing work-family conflict and improving employee attitudes by establishing a family-friendly environment and culture through flexibility policies. Furthermore, a supportive organizational culture may become a competitive advantage to an organization, when it is less imitable and observable than bundles of human resource practices. Nevertheless, few organizations have taken flexibility up as a deliberate and strategic step towards achieving increased competitiveness or implemented it as a part of a business strategy (Thompson and Prottas, 2005).

2.3.1 Supervisor Behaviours

A construct of family-supportive supervisor behaviors helps to understand how supervisor behavior affects employees. Hammer, Kossek, Zimmerman and Daniels (2007) distinguish between four types of behaviors; emotional support, instrumental support, role model behaviors, and recognition of the strategic importance of work-family issues. They argue that managers' role varies depending on their role and position within the organization, with lower-level managers being more responsible for active support such as approving changes in working hours and upper management more being role models, providing explicit acknowledgment of employee's personal needs and thereby influencing the organizational culture.

Building on this framework, Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner and Hanson (2009) advanced the construct of family supportive supervisor behaviors by arranging four constructs hierarchically as being subordinate to the general notion of family supportive supervisor behaviors: emotional support, role modeling behaviors, instrumental support and creative work family management.

Emotional support focuses on considering the feeling of the employees, talking and listening to them and make them feel they are being cared for. Role modeling behavior is then based on supervisors setting the example themselves on how to integrate work and family, for example by working flexible themselves. Instrumental support focuses on reactive support, responding to demands of employees and accommodating to their needs if approached on a daily basis. Creative work family management however focuses on a more proactive way of dealing with flexibility, management initiated and creative in finding new ways to work and facilitate employee effectiveness. Through their framework measure Hammer et al. (2009) show that family supportive supervisor behaviours are distinct from general supervisor support and clarify what behaviors are viewed as family supportive. Interestingly, they draw attention to supervisor support as independent of work culture or formal policies and therefore establish it as a unique construct allowing the attention to be drawn to the fact that it is the managers that manage how policies are implemented in practice and this therefore needs to be examined as a separate construct.

Kossek, Barber and Winters (1999) study on managers show that peer use of flexible work arrangements has a significant social influence on other managers, supporting the use of flexible work arrangements, more so than gender, family situation, level or other well-known demographic factors. They therefore suggest that if managers themselves take up flexible work schedules they become change agents and role models and help in removing the social barriers hindering the implementation of flexibility, which is consistent with the role model behaviors described by Hammer et al. (2009).

2.3.2 Role of Colleagues

Colleagues constitute a significant part of employees' experience of their work and their work environment. Colleague support has been shown to lead to higher job satisfaction and to be negatively related to stress and work-to-family conflict (Thompson and Prottas, 2005). Research has also shown that employees are often reluctant to change working patterns because of the impact on their colleagues. The support or disapproval of colleagues, who often have to pick up the work from their flexible working colleagues,

can in fact reduce the sense of entitlement to flexibility, as flexible working employees don't want to overburden their colleagues (Lewis and Den Dulk, 2008).

There are two theories in particular that explain the colleague relationship. Firstly, equity theory (Adams, 1965) predicts how individuals manage relationships with others. They assess the input/output ratio of themselves in comparison with others and if they feel an inequity is present they experience distress and frustration whereas perceived equity upholds positive feelings. The more distress an individual then feels, the harder he will work to restore it through changing his own inputs or outcomes, changing the comparison other or terminating the relationship. Individuals therefore constantly compare themselves to their colleagues and make their own conclusions on whether the treatment they are receiving is fair or not. The second theory that can be used to explain the colleague relationship is the human ecology theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

There are a number of ways that an organization can help employees balance their work and family responsibilities. Examples of these strategies include more traditional benefits such as health insurance, pension plans, and paid vacation time. An organization can offer work and family policies, such as flexible work arrangements, assistance with child and elder care, and expanded leave options. These are some of the programs that can make it easier for employees to resolve personal issues (Berg, Kalleburg, & Appelbaum, 2003).

2.4 Work- Life Balance

Work-life balance is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities and thus strengthen employee loyalty and productivity. Numerous studies have been conducted on work-life balance. According to a major Canadian study conducted by Lowe (2005), 1 in 4 employees experience high levels of conflict between work and family, based on work-to-family interference and caregiver strain. If role overload is included, then close to 60 percent of employees surveyed experience work-family conflict.

Of all the job factors that influence work-life conflict, the amount of time spent at work is the strongest and most consistent predictor. The higher levels of work-to-family conflict reported by managers or professionals often are a function of their longer work hours. Other reasons include: job security, support from one's supervisor, support from co-workers, work demands or overload, work-role conflict, work-role ambiguity, job dissatisfaction, and extensive use of communication technology that blurs the boundaries between home and work(sahay,2003).Today's workers have many competing responsibilities such as work, children, housework, volunteering, spouse and elderly parent care and this places stress on individuals, families and the communities in which they reside. Work-life conflict is a serious problem that impacts workers, their employers and communities.

It seems that this problem is increasing over time due to high female labour force participation rates, increasing numbers of single parent families, the predominance of the dual-earner family and emerging trends such as elder care. It is further exasperated with globalization, an aging population, and historically low unemployment. Employers are becoming increasingly aware of the cost implications associated with over-worked employees such as: operating and productivity costs, absenteeism, punctuality, commitment and performance. There are five main reasons why companies participate in work life balance programs: high return on investment, recruitment and retention of employees, legislation, costs and union regulations (van, 2004).

There are a wide variety of practices currently being used to help employees achieve work-life balance. It is important to note that some work-life balance programs help employees handle stress and otherwise cope more effectively while other programs help to reduce the absolute stress levels by rebalancing work life. A growing number of employers have implemented wellness programs or pay for their employees' gym membership as part of a benefits package. Some companies invite fitness trainers or yoga instructors into the office to hold lunchtime sessions (lewis, 2003).

Some companies undertake initiatives to improve employees' healthy eating habits. Others offer stress management programs which include stretching, yoga, counseling, as well as bringing in Registered Massage Therapists to work. Many employers are offering longer vacation times than the mandatory 2 weeks per year imposed by Canadian legislation. Additionally, some companies will offer "flex" days. Interestingly, sick days tend to go down once some is "entitled" to three weeks or more a year of holidays (major, 2008).Human resources policies that can be used to increase work-life balance include implementing time off in lieu of overtime pay arrangements, providing a limited number of days of paid leave per year for child care, elder care or personal problems, or having policies around weekend and evening use of laptops and Blackberrys.

According to a study by Messmer in 2006, flexible scheduling is the benefit valued most by employees. However, increased flexibility, if implemented without conditions and used to facilitate business ends without provision for worker consent, could compromise instead of enhance work life balance.

2.4.1 Work-Life Balance Policies

Organizations should be more committed to providing working conditions which enable employees to achieve a work-life balance whilst fulfilling the business needs of the organization. There are a number of work-life balance and flexible working arrangements which ought to be put in place. (Friedman, 2003)These guidelines focus on the main policies and identify those aspects of the policy which are mandatory and those which are discretionary.

In applying discretion, managers need to balance the immediate needs of the service with the need to create and maintain a diverse and effective workforce. Some of these policies include: Part-time and Term-time Working, Flexible Working Hours, Job Share Arrangements, Maternity Leave Agreement, Paternity Leave Agreement, Parental Leave Agreement, Compassionate Leave/Emergency Care of Dependents and Working Time Policy.

Organizations should offer a range of part-time and term-time posts in line with the needs of the service. Additionally, full-time employees may request to work part-time at particular points in their career (hammer, 2007). Managers should carefully consider such requests taking into consideration: operational needs, the needs of the employee, whether the post can be split, whether workloads or responsibilities can be allocated differently, whether more flexible working hours can be agreed if part-time work is not possible and whether an alternative part-time post may be available. Where it is agreed that the employee may undertake part-time employment Personnel should be informed of the decision, the agreed hours and the date of commencement of the change. If the manager decides that part-time work is not an option they should contact their designated Personnel Officer to ensure that all options have been considered (Gregory, 2009).

2.4.2 Types of Flexible Work Patterns

Flexible working patterns are those which alter what might be seen as a traditional work pattern, in other words working a set number of hours per day, five or six days per week. Unlike shift working, which is designed to meet a need relating to service delivery (for instance, the need for continuous production, or to maintain an essential service - nursing, for example - or to carry out a task while premises are vacated, such as cleaning), flexible work patterns were introduced initially with a view to overcoming problems experienced by employees, such as travel to work. For this reason some employers introduced flexible working hours. (Jennings, 2007).

The first one is *Part-time work*, this where employees have predictable hours of work each week but fewer than full-time. They have the same entitlements as full-time workers (e.g. recreation and sick leave) but on a pro rata basis (Callahan, 2007).

Job sharing basically describes sharing the duties of 1 job between 2 or more employees can be an ongoing or short-term arrangement. There are many ways to divide the job but generally, there are 2 types of job share: twin model—2 employees share 1 position and all tasks but work on different days and islands model—employees share 1 position but take on different aspects of the job. This can be a good arrangement if you and your job share partner have different skills (galinsky, 2007). Often employees work an equal number of hours. This can mean splitting the week to 2.5 days each or splitting the day. Some employees work alternate weeks. Some split the hours (e.g. 1 person works 2 days and the other 3 days).

On the other hand *Telecommuting* means working away from the central workplace—often at home. It can be on set days or arranged as the work demands. You should have a dedicated work area where you are undisturbed. All the equipment and resources you need to do the job should be accessible. A formal workplace health and safety assessment may be required. Telecommuting may not be practical if your job requires: a lot of face-to-face contact with customers or clients, use of specialist, non-portable equipment and direct supervision (Arthur, 2003)

Compressed working hours is a formal arrangement where you work your normal, full-time hours (e.g. 36 hours, 15 minutes a week) over fewer than 5 days. This arrangement is often used to work a 9-day fortnight.

Flexible working hours this is where you work your usual number of hours but they vary when you start and finish. Accrued time (also known as flexi-time): work more than your standard daily or weekly hours—the time you accrue can be taken later as a full or part days leave.

Purchased leave is also another type of flexible work pattern where it lets you take extra leave each year by pay averaging you work 44 weeks a year. You take 4 weeks normal annual leave, and 4 weeks extra or purchased leave. Your pay is averaged over the full year so you get more leave but receive a lower annual pay. This can suit employees transitioning to retirement (Estes, 2005).

2.5 Organizational Support

Organizational support has aroused a great deal of interest among researchers in the fields of psychology and management (Rhodes and Eisenberger, 2002). In the literature, Organizational support has been defined in various ways. Eisenberger (1986) defined perceived organizational support as employees in an organisation from global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Perceived organizational support is also defined as “how much the organisation values employees’ contributions and cares about them” (Allen et al., 2008). Organizational support created by reason of job conditions and some human resource practices provide creation of positive employee attitude and behaviour. Fair treatment, supervisory support, and rewards and favorable job conditions showed a strong relationship with perceived organizational support (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002).

On the other hand, perceived organizational support strengthens employees’ effort in the organisation, resulting in greater efforts to fulfill the organization’s goals (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to organisational support theory, in return for a high level of support, employees work harder to help their organisation reach its goals (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003) because organizational support has a significant effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Rhodes and Eisenberger, 2002).

Based on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), which have been widely used for research on the relationship between organizations and employees, it can be reasoned that employees’ perceived organizational support affects their feeling of obligation to their organization.

In one empirical study, Allen, Shore and Griffeth, (2003) have illustrated that perceived supportive human resource practices contributed to the development of perceived organizational support, of which mediated relationships with organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Moreover, empirical evidence has also suggested that perceived organizational support is significantly correlated with organizational commitment and

organizational commitment is significantly related to trust in management (Whitener, 2001).

2.6 Organizational Support and work life balance

It should come as no surprise that employees today are struggling to balance work and personal responsibilities. Longer work hours and more erratic work schedules, the increasing prevalence of two-career families, the demands of constant accessibility and global collaboration, and leaner operations have all created a recipe for strains in this area. How are organizations responding to increased work-life balance concerns? Typical approaches have been tactical, seeking to provide employees with more flexibility in where and when they work. Organizations have emphasized telecommuting options, flexible work schedules, compressed work weeks and the like. While these benefits are certainly helpful, they fail to address the fundamental problem. For today's maxed-out workers, professional and personal demands simply leave them with too much to do and too little time to do it

Lockwood,(2003),argues that organizations that provide workplace culture with the psychological conditions of meaningful (job enrichment, work-role fit); safety (supportive manager and co-workers) and availability (resources available) are more likely to have engaged employees. Work-life balance is increasingly important for engagement and affects retention. By being aware of the unique needs of diverse groups, as well as by recognizing individual differences within these groups, HR can better understand the challenges of increased diversity in the organization's workforce (different generations, more females) and work toward designing and implementing work-life balance policies and practices to engage diverse employee groups Kopelman, Prottas, Thompson, & John, (2006).Work-life balance initiatives at organizational level directly benefit employers as well as employees. This in turn enhances the job satisfaction, work engagement and work productivity of employees. These direct benefits to employees in turn benefit the over performance of the employee organization (Golden and Jorgensen, 2006).

Given that time available for work is finite and work demands are unlikely to decrease anytime soon, long-term solutions to work-life balance issues need to focus on helping employees work smarter as well as harder. By providing enabling work environments, organizations can help employees accomplish work tasks as efficiently as possible, leaving more time to attend to personal responsibilities. At the same time, even when workloads are heavy, employees are likely to feel far better about staying late or coming in early if they are working on tasks with a clear and compelling purpose, provided with adequate resources and support from colleagues, and given the authority necessary to make decisions about how best to accomplish their objectives (Golden and Jorgensen, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, target population, sampling design, data collection instruments and procedures and data analysis. It explains methods which were used to achieve the study objectives.

3.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive research design. This type of design enables the researcher to assess the situation within the study area at that time. The purpose of descriptive study was basically to observe, describe and document aspects of a situation as they naturally occur hence the choice for the study. The design was used to establish employee perceptions of organizational support towards work life balance.

3.3 Target Population

A population for a study is any group of individuals or institutions which have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher (Cooper 1996). The target population was all the employees of Gulf African Bank, who are 820 in total.

3.4 Sampling Design

The study used stratified sampling technique which involves selecting units (people, organizations) from heterogeneous population (Castillo, 2009). The sampling technique is chosen as the population is heterogeneous (consisting of different management levels). Stratified random sampling technique was used as it ensured that all the departments were represented as each management levels might have different welfare programs for their members. The target population was stratified into the 3 management levels: senior, middle and lower management levels, and non- managerial employees as shown in the Table below. Random sampling was used within each stratum to reduce bias.

Table 3.1: Population and Sample

Level	Population	Sample (20% of population)
Senior Level Management	160	32
Middle Level Management	250	50
Lower Level Management	160	32
Non- managerial Employees	250	50
Total	820	164

3.5 Data collection

The study used primary data that was collected using semi-structured questionnaires. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected in this research. Questionnaires are appropriate as they collect information that is not directly observable as they inquire about feelings, motivations, attitudes, accomplishments as well as experiences of individuals (Sutrisna, 2009). Closed-ended and likert scale questions were used to obtain the required data. The questionnaires were delivered to the respondents through drop and pick up method for those within the Nairobi region and through mail for the respondents outside Nairobi region.

3.6 Data Analysis and presentation

The collected data was coded and entries made into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). Descriptive analysis was conducted on quantitative data, while Content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Descriptive statistics included mean, standard deviation, percentages and frequency distribution. Data was then be presented in form of tables and charts/graphs.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of results and findings obtained from field responses and data, broken into two parts. The first section deals with the background information, while the other section presents findings of the analysis, based on the objectives of the study as explored by the questionnaires where both descriptive and inferential statistics have been employed.

4.2 Response Rate

The targeted sample size was 164 participants. Those filled and returned questionnaires were 150 respondents making a response rate of 91.5%. According to Mugenda (2008), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. This means that the response rate for this study was excellent and therefore enough for data analysis and interpretation.

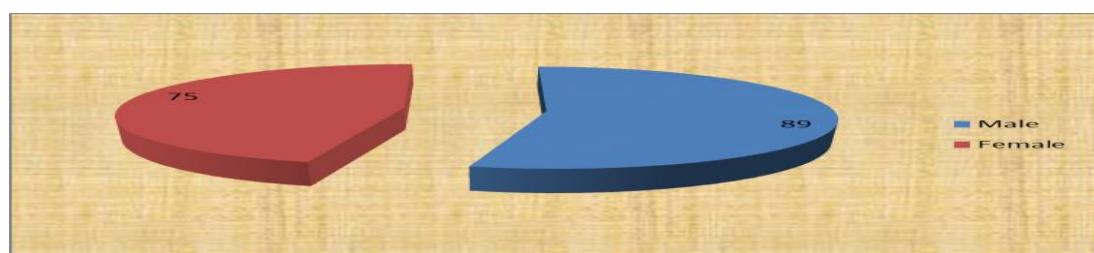
4.3 Background information

These contains results of the research which includes: Gender, Age of respondents, Marital status, level of education, Years of service in the organization, work life balance, organization support towards work life balance, organization flexible work place policies, flexible work practices

4.3.1 Gender

The researcher sought to establish the gender of the respondents, as indicated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Gender



Results from figure 4.1 above shows that 89% of the respondents were male while 75% were female.

It is clear from the figure above that majority of the respondents were male as suggested by 89% of the respondents. However, both genders were well represented to carry the study out.

4.3.2 Age of the respondents

The research sought to establish the gender of the respondents. The results are recorded in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Age

	Frequency	Percent
20-30 years	23	15
31-40 years	41	27
41-50 years	36	24
50 and above	50	33
Total	150	100.0

The results in table 4.1 above shows that, 15% of the respondents were aged between 20 and 30 years, 27% were aged between 31 and 40 years, 24% were aged between 41 and 50 years while 33% were aged 50 and above.

The study indicated that the population was well distributed to carry out the research and that both age groups were well represented.

4.3.3 Marital status

The research sought to establish the marital status of the respondents. The results are presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Marital status

	Frequency	Percent
Married	68	45
Divorced	36	24
Widow	46	31
Total	150	100.0

The results in table 4.2 above shows that 45% of the respondents were married, 24% were divorced while 31% were widows.

Study above shows that majority of the respondents were married as indicated by 45% of the respondents.

4.3.4 Level of education

The researcher sought to establish the level of education of respondents. The results are presented in the table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Education level

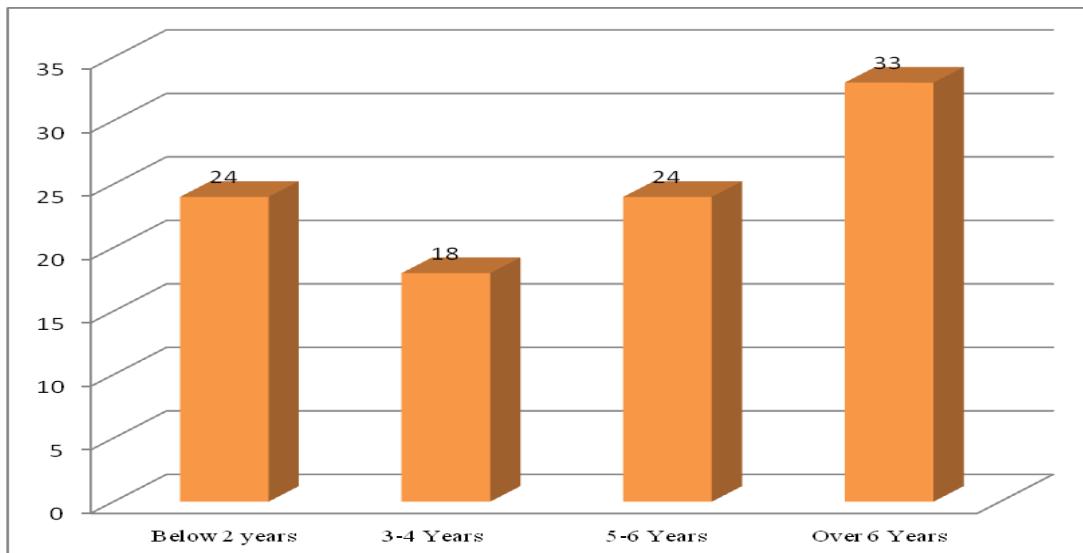
	Frequency	Percent
Primary education	35	23
Secondary education	55	36
College	45	30
University	15	10
Total	150	100.0

The study above shows that 23% of the respondents had primary education, 36% had secondary education, 30% had reached college level while 10% had university education. The education level of the respondents was ideal because the respondents could read, interpret and answer questionnaires appropriately.

4.3.5 Years of service in this organization

Table 4.3 below describes the years of service of the respondents in their organization.

Figure 4.2 Years of service in this organization

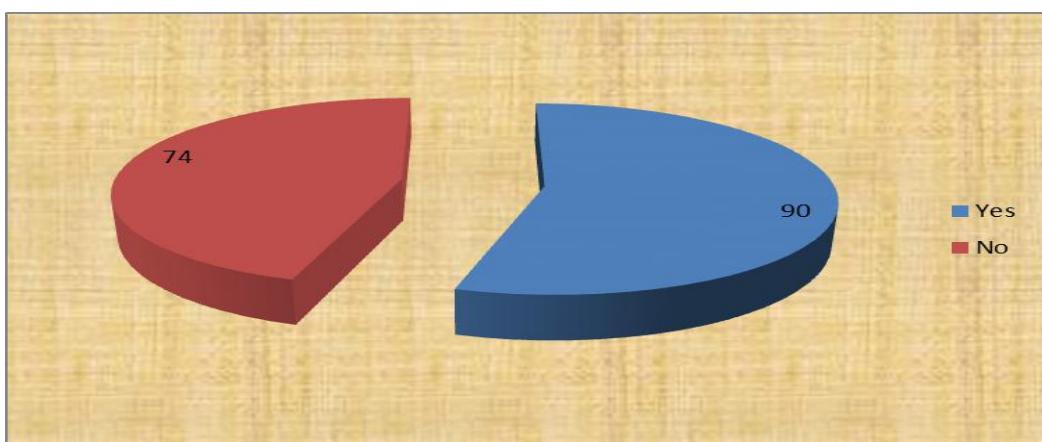


The results in figure 4.2 above indicates that 24% had worked below 2 years, 18% had worked for between 3-4 years, and 24% had worked between 5– 6 years while 33% had worked for Over 6 years.

4.4 Work life balance

The researcher sought to establish employees' perception of organizational support towards work life balance. The results were recorded in table 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3 Work life balance



Results from figure 4.2 above shows that 90% of the respondents agreed while 74% disagreed that their organizations practice work-life balance.

4.5 Organization support towards work life balance

The results in table 4.4 below indicates organization support and value the integration of employee's work and family lives.

Table 4.4 Organization support towards work life balance

Statement	NA	L E	N	A	VM	MEAN	SD
Organization support towards work life balance	6	7	8	29	37	3.97	1.215

The above results indicates that organization support and values the integration with a mean of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 1.215. However, more statements on organization support and value the integration are presented in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Organization support towards work life balance

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	MEAN	SD
Our organization has family supportive supervisor.	6	6	9	20	33	3.90	1.115
Our organization gives emotional support to employees.	4	4	14	24	41	4.08	1.112
In our organization supervisors set example themselves on how to integrate work and	0	6	28	24	29	3.87	0.962
Our organization allows employees to come up with creative ways of doing work.	1	8	2	35	41	4.23	0.961
Support from colleagues at work significantly impacts the intention and decision of employees to take up flexible work arrangements.	0	1	15	29	32	3.94	1.027

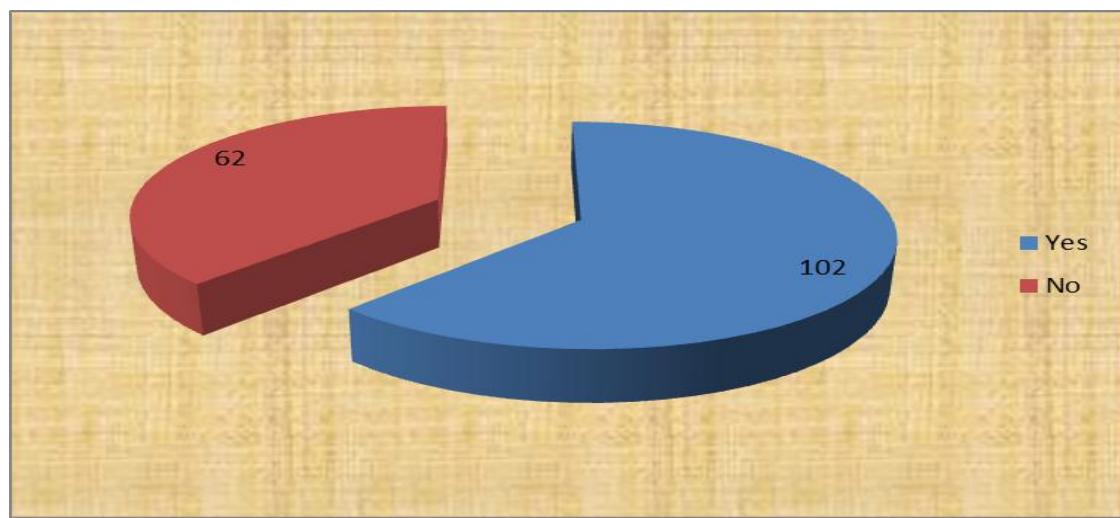
The above results shows that respondents' organization has family supportive supervisor with a mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 1.115. The respondents' organization gives emotional support to employees with a mean of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 1.112. In respondents' organization supervisors set example themselves on how to integrate work and family with a mean of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.962. In

respondents 'organization allows employees to come up with creative ways of doing work with a mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 0.961. Support from colleagues at work significantly impacts the intention and decision of employees to take up flexible work arrangements with a mean of 3.94 and a standard deviation of 1.027.

4.6 Organization have flexible work place policies

The researcher sought to establish whether organization have flexible work place policies. The results were recorded in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Organization have flexible work place policies



The above results shows that 102 % of the respondents' agreed while 62% disagreed that the organization offered flexible work place policies

4.7 Flexible work practices

The researcher had to establish flexible work practices as presented in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.6 Flexible work practices

Statement	NA	LE	N	A	VM	MEAN	SD
Our organization offer flexible work arrangements to help employees balance work and family demands	(0.00%)	(7.14%)	(14.29%)	(50%)	(27.57%)	4.33	0.23

Telecommuting helps commuters to reduce their commuting time.	(7.14%)	(14.29%)	(50%)	(14.29%)	(14.29%)	3.98	0.29
Telecommuting helps commuters to reduce their cost.	(0.00%)	(7.14%)	(21.43%)	(42.86%)	(28.57%)	2.23	1.02
Telecommuting increases employee satisfaction.	(7.14%)	(7.14%)	(7.14%)	(57.14%)	(21.43%)	4.34	0.22
Telecommunicating in an organization improves productivity for the organization.	(0.00%)	(14.29%)	(21.43%)	(42.86%)	(21.43%)	4.33	0.23

The above result shows those respondents' organization offer flexible work arrangements to help employees balance work and family demands with a mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 0.23. Telecommuting helps commuters to reduce their commuting time with a mean of 3.98 and a standard deviation of 0.29. Telecommuting helps commuters to reduce their cost with a mean of 2.23 and a standard deviation of 1.02. Telecommuting increases employee satisfaction with a mean of 4.34 and a standard deviation of 0.22. While telecommunicating in an organization improves productivity for the organization with a mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 0.23. On duration of work flexibility, the results were further recorded in the table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Duration of work flexibility

STATEMENT	NA	LE	N	A	VM	MEA N	SD
Our organization offers flexible work schedule	(0.00%)	(14.29%)	(7.14%)	(27.57%)	(50%)	4.22	0.19
Our organization allows employees to choose when and for how long they engage in work-related tasks.	(14.29%)	(7.14%)	(14.29%)	(50%)	(14.29%)	4.11	0.72
Our organization allows differing starting and finishing schedules for each	(0.00%)	(7.14%)	(21.43%)	(28.57%)	(42.86%)	3.25	0.87

day.

Our organization allows for variation of the length of the week worked.	(7.14%)	(7.14%)	(7.14%)	(57.14%)	(21.43%)	4.34	0.22
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The above results indicate that respondents' organization offers flexible work schedule with a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.19. Our organization allows employees to choose when and for how long they engage in work-related tasks with a mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 0.72. Respondents' organization allows differing starting and finishing schedules for each day with a mean of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 0.87. While respondents' organization allows for variation of the length of the week worked with a mean of 4.34 and a standard deviation of 0.22.

The above results can be attributed to the idea that long hours culture among professionals and managers is the biggest problem for work life balance, and generally speaking, the best way for both women and men would be working fewer hours. In many countries and enterprises, this is problematic, and unfortunately the revision of the working time directive does not seem to take this into account.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, summary of the results, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Summary

The objective of the study was to assess employee perceptions of organizational support towards work-life balance at the Gulf African bank, and establish if the organization balances between work and personal life of the employees, from the results of the research it can be seen that the organization has balanced between work and employees life hence creating a balanced work environment.

It is clear from the study that respondents' organization has family supportive supervisor. The respondents' organization gives emotional support to employees. In respondents' organization supervisors set example themselves on how to integrate work and family. In respondents 'organization allows employees to come up with creative ways of doing work. Support from colleagues at work significantly impacts the intention and decision of employees to take up flexible work arrangements.

The study shows those respondents' organization offer flexible work arrangements to help employees balance work and family demands. Telecommuting helps commuters to reduce their commuting time to reduce their cost and increases employee satisfaction. The study further showed that telecommunicating in an organization improves productivity for the organization. On duration of work flexibility, the results were further recorded for interpretation purposes. The study also indicates that respondents' organization offers flexible work schedule. The organization allows employees to choose when and for how long they engage in work-related tasks. Respondents' organization allows differing starting and finishing schedules for each day, while respondents' organization allows for variation of the length of the week worked.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that the organization has family supportive supervisor and supportiveness of an organizations' culture as well as the supportiveness of supervisors and colleagues. This is what makes up the informal context in an organization, which has been shown to be more important and appreciated by employees than the actual formal flexibility programs in place.

The study further concludes that the organization offer flexible work arrangements to help employees balance work and family demands. When employers are able to make their organizational culture more family-friendly and supportive, the working environment also changes so that their employees experience a better work-life balance. Organizations can therefore play an active role in reducing work-family conflict and improving employee attitudes by establishing a family-friendly environment and culture through flexibility polices. Furthermore, a supportive organizational culture may become a competitive advantage to an organization, when it is less imitable and observable than bundles of human resource practices. Nevertheless, few organizations have taken flexibility up as a deliberate and strategic step towards achieving increased competitiveness or implemented it as a part of a business strategy.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that organizations should embrace family supportive programs that will allow employees to live their normal lives when not at work. These will in turn increase work productivity.

Organizations should not be very strict on work timelines but offer working arrangements based on flexibility and availability of the employee. Flexible working hours offers a competitive advantage to an organization.

5.5 Limitations

Although the research reached its aim the limitations noted were that the study was conducted on a small population which was overloaded by work and to some extent this may have affected the results, secondly was the difference in location of the respondents,

this saw that some respondents took time to fill in the questionnaires and submit to enable faster analysis and interpretation of the data.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

The study recommends further research to be carried out to establish the effect of employee annual leave on work performance

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

You have been selected as a respondent in the study to establish employee perceptions of organizational support to a balanced work environment. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Kindly provide responses without reservations as this is purely for academic purposes. Please tick as appropriate.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENT

1. Gender Male [] Female []
2. Age 20-30 years [] 31-40 years [] 41-50 years []
Above 50 Years []
3. Marital status Married [] Single []
Divorced [] Separated []
4. Level of education Primary education [] Secondary education []
College [] University []
5. Years of service in this organization

- Below 5 years [] 6-10 years []
11– 15 years [] Over 15 years []

SECTION B: EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT TOWARDS WORK LIFE BALANCE

6. Does your organization practice work-life balance? Yes [] No []
7. To what extent does your organization support and value the integration of employee's work and family lives?

- Very large extent [] Large extent [] Moderate extent []
Less extent [] Not at all []

8. Please indicate the level of your agreement with the following statements.

- 1: Strongly agree** **2: Agree** **3: Neutral**
4: Disagree **5: Strongly Disagree**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Our organization has family supportive supervisor.					
Our organization gives emotional support to employees.					
In our organization supervisors set example themselves on how to integrate work and family.					
Our organization allows employees to come up with creative ways of doing work.					
Support from colleagues at work significantly impacts the intention and decision of employees to take up flexible work arrangements.					

9. What are other ways by which your organizational culture supports work-life balance?

10. Does your organization have flexible work place policies?

Yes [] No []

Briefly explain your answer,

11. The following are some of the statements on flexible work practices. Please indicate the level of your agreement with the following statements.

1: Strongly agree

2: Agree

3: Neutral

4: Disagree

5: Strongly Disagree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Our organization offer flexible work arrangements to help employees balance work and family demands					
Telecommuting helps commuters to reduce their commuting time.					
Telecommuting helps commuters to reduce their cost.					
Telecommuting is increases employee satisfaction.					
Telecommunicating in an organization improves productivity for the organization.					

12. Does your organization support flexible work practices?

Yes [] No []

Briefly explain,

13. Please indicate the level of your agreement with each statement.

1-Strongly agree

2-Agree

3-Neither agree nor disagree

4-Disagree

5-Strongly disagree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Our organization offers flexible work schedule					
Our organization allows employees to choose when and for how long they engage in work-related tasks.					
Our organization allows differing starting and finishing schedules for each day.					
Our organization allows for variation of the length of the week worked.					
Our organization allows employees to choose their day off.					

14. What are some other ways by which your organization supports flexible work patterns?

15. What would you recommend to be done to improve organizational support for work-life balance?

Thank you for your cooperation