

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES AMONG FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN THE
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION, KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS (MSC),
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for any academic certificate.

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This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as university supervisor.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I praise and thank God Almighty for nothing is possible without His divine blessings and mercy. This project would never have been completed without the help, guidance, prayers and support of my Mother Mary Synaider. I thank my employer Public Service Commission for sponsoring me for this worthy achievement. I am grateful to my supervisor, Mr. George Omondi who was there to make me understand and translate my thoughts into comprehensible ideas that gave shape to the study. I thank the chairman of the Department of Business Administration Dr. J. Munyoki and members of staff in his office, for their quick action whenever I needed assistance from their office. I am indebted to all the respondents at the Public Service Commission who sacrificed their time to fill in the questionnaires. I also appreciate the support from my workmates especially Elizabeth, Sylvia, Samuel and Stephen for their unselfish support, sacrifice and encouragement during my study.

Completing this project would have been more difficult without the support and encouragement of my friends, some of whom I met in the course of my study.

Last and most important, is my everlasting gratitude to my children Mary, Johnson, Alphonse and David, who innocently bore the brunt of my absence and my mother for morale support and unending prayers. May you all be blessed.

DEDICATION

This is a dedication to my family.

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ABSTRACT

Recent changes in the nature of work along with introduction of new technologies have led to many employees struggling to balance roles in their work and personal life. In response to these changes and the conflict they generate among the multiple roles that individuals occupy, organizations are increasingly pressured to implement work practices intended to facilitate employees' efforts to fulfill both their employment-related and their personal responsibilities. The objective of the study was to determine work-life balance practices among female employees in the Public Service Commission, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Data was collected from the female employees of the Public Service Commission using a self-administered structured questionnaire. It was analyzed using descriptive statistics, like the mean and the standard deviation. The researcher used MS Excel and SSP as the tool for data analysis. The results of the study indicate that the Public Service Commission female employees practice work-life balance practices relating to: time- time off to take care of family members and attend to emergencies; Place - flexibility in choosing the place of work especially directorates that interact with clients outside duty stations and resources provided for; job- work-related responsibilities cannot be shared as individually, targets have to be met; benefits such as training; paid for leave like maternity among others. Assistance for Baby/day care, onsite convenience shops are not provided for by the Commission. Counseling/Health facility is underutilized. The study recommended that greater attention be paid to practices relating to benefits such as Baby/Day care, Onsite exercise facility or subsidized exercise facilities/gym membership and work place convenience shops. Further, the Commission should consider introducing flexible working hours and increase work autonomy. The study recommended further studies to be conducted in other constitutional Commissions in Kenya as well as the entire Kenyan public service.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Work-life balance is important, however, human resource management practitioners only recently began to see work-life balance as a business issue that has benefits for both employees and employers (Clutterbuck, 2003). Organizations have recently received more pressure to perform better and cost effectively (Blyton, Blunsdon, Reed and, Datmalchian 2006). No organization can achieve its objectives without the commitment of employees. Organizations require empowered employees possessing higher competencies and multitasking skill in order to ensure sustained growth at minimum operational costs. Recent changes in the nature of work along with introduction of new technologies have led to many employees struggling to balance roles in their work and personal life (Hayman, 2009). In response to these changes and the conflict they generate among the multiple roles that individuals occupy, organizations are increasingly pressured to implement work practices intended to facilitate employees' efforts to fulfill both their employment-related and their personal responsibilities (Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher and Pruitt, 2002). Organizations have also had to respond to these changes through mergers, reorganization, restructuring so as to achieve their objectives. However, the policies turn out to be complex, ambiguous in meaning, and evolving in practice, rationales, and cultural acceptance (Kossek, Lewis and Hammer, 2007). Commitment towards self-development, allegiance to family and social life in order to fulfill the demand and duties of the organization along with organization obligations are imperative for individual employee. A stable workforce is key element in effective human resource management (Ghiselli, La Lopa and Bai, 2001).

In the United States, nearly 78 percent of women with children under 18 are working at least part-time, 40 percent of all United States managers and professionals are women, and 80 percent of two-parent families with a child under 18 years are dual earners (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky and Prottas, 2002). Heightened global competition has resulted in changes in the nature of work such as the intensification of work and the blurring of work-non-work boundaries (Lewis, 2009). The flattening of the world platform systems for delivering services and manufacturing of goods and the growing interdependence of economic systems have also contributed to the converging trends of work intensification and blurring work-home boundaries for many jobs. In Kenya, formal provisions can sometimes lower expectations of additional organizational supports. Moreover since government policies are implemented at the employer level, it can be difficult to enact workplace culture change.

The Public Service Commission draws its mandate from the constitution of Kenya and therefore observes the values as spelt out in article 10 and 232 of the constitution of Kenya in its operation (constitution of Kenya, 2010). The Commission's values set the climate in terms of how things are to be done. It spells out timelines within which particular activities are to take place and who is to do what according to specialization (Strategic Plan, 2013-2017). Galinsky and Stein (1990) in their study on employers found that the main problems faced by employed women are dependants care, work time and timing, transfers and job autonomy and job demands, supervisory relations and supportive organization culture. The prevailing argument is that as the workforce is becoming increasingly diverse, the Commission should be able to adapt to these demographic shifts to realize higher quality workforce.

1.1.1 Concept of Work-Life Balance

Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) defined work life balance as the ‘degree to which an individual is busy and satisfied with his/her work and family role’. Clarke, Koch and Hill (2004) defined work-life balance as a satisfactory level of involvement or ‘fit’ between the multiple roles in a person’s life. The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development defined it as ‘a state where individual manages real or potential conflict between different demands on his or her time and energy in a way that satisfies his or her needs for the wellbeing and self-fulfillment’. Belief about the concept of work-life balance is that work and life are separate and that balance between the two spheres is sought. Not only is balance sought, the promise is that balance, once achieved, creates contentment (Jackson, 2002). The evolution and meaning of work-life balance is protean as it varies between the age, interest, values, personal circumstances and personality of each individual.

Work-life balance, however, represents a duplicitous discourse in which balance, while constituted as desirable, remains conceptually problematic and ideologically unchallenged. Guest (2001) suggested five main descriptive models that have attempted to conceptualize work life balance, these include segmentation model, which states that work and life outside of work are mutually exclusive such that one sphere does not impact the other. The spillover model, states that work and life are interdependent and therefore influence each other. It further states that personal life and professional life intermingle and have either negative or positive effect on the other. The compensation model states that one sphere makes up for the lack in the other sphere, while the instrumental model states that one sphere emphasis the other sphere, and the conflict model states that each sphere has numerous demands hence individuals have to prioritize and make choices that may lead to conflict. While sufficient research has been reported, need

exists for more comprehensive propositions about the nature, causes and consequences of spillover model (Zedeck and Mosrer, 1990).

1.1.2 Work-Life Balance Practices

Work-life balance initiatives and policies are considered to be deliberate organizational changes in programs or culture designed to help employees manage their work-life times and are classified (Clutterbuck, 2003). Work-life balance practices are: those relating to time like flexi-time, compressed hours, annualized hours, part time working; those relating to the place-telecommuting; those related to the job - job re-designing and job sharing; and those relating to the benefits - leave provision, employee assistances programs, dependent care and wellness programs. Thorne (2011) says that any type of formal or informal benefit or working condition that an organization engages to reduce job-personal or family imbalance which can arise in the organization is considered a work life balance practice. Given the usually negative impact of the absence of work-life balance practices on employees and organizations, initiatives aimed at supporting employees with work-life conflict have become more popular and commonplace in organizations (Cooke, Zeytinoglu and Mann, 2009).

Work-life practices relating to time help employees attain a better blend between work and life activities and help organizations to recruit, retain and motivate their employees, (Bachmann, 2000). Flexi time has been identified as arrangements that reduce late comings, absenteeism and turnover (Christenensen and Staines, 1990). Telecommuting maximizes the benefits of concentration and time for family, but minimizes social isolation and loss of contact with co-workers and supervisors. Work-life balance practices related to the job are aimed at preserving existing jobs or creating new ones. According to Chung (2006) there are various types of

employee benefits including pension schemes, personal security, financial assistance, personal needs, subsidized meals, clothing allowance, mobile phone credit, company car and petrol allowance among others. The practice is often seen as expensive for employers and is typically used by a small proportion of employees. This practice can be effective in the long run as a result of decreased absenteeism, greater retention, and support for recruiting new talent.

1.2 Public Service Commission

The Commission is established under Article 233 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and consists of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and seven other members appointed by the President with the approval of the National Assembly. The Commission derives its mandate from the Constitution. The Commission is mandated by articles 234, 155(a), 158(2)(3) and (4), 172(2), 230(2)(b) and 236 of the Constitution of Kenya. Among its functions is the promotion of values and principles referred to in articles 10 and 232 throughout the public service; investigate, monitor and evaluate the organization, administration and personnel practices of the public service; ensuring the public service is efficient and effective, and development of human resources in the public service. The Public Service comprises of over two hundred and forty thousand (240,000) employees distributed as follows: Ministries and State Departments – 57,000; County Public Service – 95,000; State Corporations – 90,995; Independent Commissions and Offices that include Statutory Commissions and Authorities.

The Commission's vision is to be the lead service commission in the provision, management and development of competent human resource in the public service. Its mission is to transform the public service to become professional, efficient and effective for the realization of the national development goals. The Commission is guided by the following values in the discharge of the mandate: Integrity; professionalism; equity and diversity; team spirit; transparency and

accountability; creativity and innovation and continual improvement. In the discharge of its mandate, the Commission is assisted by a secretariat headed by the Commission Secretary/CEO appointed by the Commission as provided for under article 233(5). The secretariat is organized into the office of the Secretary and five technical Directorates namely; Recruitment and Selection, Human Resource Management and Development, Establishment and Management Consultancy Services, Compliance Audit and Quality Assurance, and Finance Planning.

In Kenya, Public Service Commission is responsible for employing, sourcing and placing manpower in public service (Constitution of Kenya 2010). It has been noted that Working women are facing work of imbalances which is exerting negative influences in their life. The Commission recognizes that highly qualified and versatile staff members need to be recruited, nurtured and supported in their development in order to carry out its mandate and respond to its unique and specific programmatic needs. To do this, the Commission has developed policies and practices geared to enhance organizational structural and cultural/relational support for work, family and personal life. Structural work–life support alters human resource policies and practices and job structures to enhance flexibility to increase worker control over the location, place or amount of work, or provide additional instrumental resources such as information and direct services to enable individuals to be able to combine employment with caregiving or other important non-work roles. For instance, structural support include job redesign to enable flexible work schedules, teleworking and virtual arrangements, reduced workloads or other non-traditional work arrangements; occupational safety and health initiatives to reduce job and family stress; formal policies on absenteeism, vacations, and sick time that support work–life needs; and enhanced childcare benefits.

1.3 Research Problem

Work-life balance has many strands of thought and one can be attributed to work- life conflict, or difficulties workers experience in trying to find a sense of balance within and outside work situation. The concept of work-life conflict recognizes that most individuals have multiple roles such as being a spouse, parent or leisure activities. The notion of work-life balance is aimed at minimizing the amount of conflict experienced by individuals (Lero, Richardson and Korabik, 2009). There has been a paradigm shift in employee benefits provision where employers are increasingly placing greater responsibility on their employees to fund and make decisions about their benefits option (Burke, 2002). Due to rising cost of implementing employee benefits schemes, the employee benefits model has evolved, with significant changes occurring in the past few years. It is therefore, important for employers to support work-life balance to allow working parents to work flexibly, promote equality of opportunities by ensuring that those with caring responsibility more so women, are not disadvantaged in the work place. Organizations that adopt work-life balance practices whether formal or informal report fewer turnovers (Mayberry, 2006).

Public Service Commission is responsible for the promotion of values and principles referred to in articles 10 and 232 throughout the public service; investigate, monitor and evaluate the organization, administration and personnel practices of the public service; ensuring the public service is efficient and effective, and development of human resources in the public service. One of the key ingredients to an organization's strength and growth is to have the right people in the right places at the right time and doing the right tasks. This requires that an organization put in place policies and practices that ensure that human resource performs efficiently and effectively to achieve the desired objectives (Nzuve, 2010). The Commission has faced challenges in regard

to work-life balance practices, especially among female employees. For instance, benefits offered to facilitate work-life balance like leave end up being utilized to achieve other goals like career progression or commuted for money; counseling services are not being utilized as expected for fear of being traumatized for false impressions; information resource centre is not fully utilized as a result of poor time management medical insurance companies to offer a medical cover if the employee visits reputable hospital where the amount is more, employee has to pay the extra amount also there is a limit as to the number of dependants. Nature of work in the Commission requires that one has to work on individual targets in consultation with the heads of directorates and also section heads as agreed at every financial year and cannot be varied. Telecommuting is also a challenge because of security to the equipment if any is provided. Since female employees need to progress just like their male counterparts, there is no doubt that there are sacrifices in order to balance work, study and social activities as opposed to what is in black and white to guide work-life balance. These challenges can lead to imbalance as regards women's needs between work and family responsibilities.

Rajesh and Dabhade (2013) researched on Work life balance amongst the working women in public sector banks: a case of State Bank of India and their finding was that employers are investing in work-life balance, but the solutions offered are not always compatible with employees' needs. Felicity et al (2014) determined work-life balance practices and female lecturers' career progression in Ghana and the finding was that family-life have a negative effect on the career progression of female lecturers; Ibiyinka et al (2014) studied work life balance policies and practices: case study of Nigerian female university students and the results was that the female students had difficulties when balancing the multiple demands of work, study and

social activities. In Kenya, Muinde (2012) researched on the extent to which work-life balance practices have been adopted in flower firms in Naivasha, and found out that some practices were adopted moderately; Njenga researched on ' the effect of work-life balance policies on women retention in United Nations Development Program, in Kenya; Otieno (2010) conducted a study on the influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction and commitment of women employees of commercial Banks in Kenya. The studies have only proved the impact of work-life balance practices in relation to one aspect. The fact is that culture, socialization, family structure and socio-economic factors between these countries are different. This study sought to answer the question: what are the work-life balance practices among female employees in the Public Service Commission?

1.4 Research Objective

To determine work-life balance practices among female employees in the Public Service Commission.

1.5 Value of the Study

The findings of the study is a benefit to working committees in the Public Service Commission as it will highlight and emphasize the various work-life balance practices and policies and how they are implemented, challenges and remedies put in place. It will therefore act as a reference point with regard to work-life balance amongst female employees.

The academics and business researchers are able to borrow from the findings of this research to support literary citations as well as develop themes for further research. The study has contributed to theory, practice and methodology. The findings contribute to professional

extension of existing knowledge in work-life balance practices by helping to understand the current trend. It is also a benchmark to private organizations that may be interested in improving the work-life balance for its female employees.

The findings inform policy makers in developing organizational policies that will help in achievement of work-life balance among female employees in the Kenyan public service. It adds knowledge in the area of work-life balance among female in public service and also form basis for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information on theoretical foundation of the study, a review of relevant literature and previous studies on work-life balance practices.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Study

The theories upon which the study anchored are Boundaries and Organizational Support theories.

2.2.1 Organizational Support Theory

Organizational support theory posits that employees form a universal perception concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. When employees perceive that their organization values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing, their needs for affiliation, approval, emotional support and esteem will be met leading them to identify the wellbeing of the organization as their own and feel emotionally attached to it (Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli, 2011). This personification of the organization is enhanced by the organization's legal, moral, and financial responsibility for the actions of organizational policies, norms, and culture that provide continuity and prescribe role behaviors. They also enhance the power the organization's agents exert over individual employees.

Due to this personification of organizations, employees base their judgments of their perceived value to the organization on how favorably the organization treats them. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) postulated that fair treatment, supervisory support and rewards and a favourable job are the predictors for organizations support. Employees who receive organization support from the workplace are likely to create long term relationship with the organization. It

also provides opportunities to progress professionally to its staff, while the workers play an important role in the organization's growth and success. People join organizations with personal needs, desires and skill sets, and in return anticipate finding a workplace environment where their abilities can be utilized and most of their basic needs satisfied (Dessler, 2012).

2.2.1 Boundaries Theory

Theory of boundaries is an important early work of conceptual art as boundaries identify where something starts and where something ends (Bochner, 1969–1970). Targets are defined by their edge and it is this edge that gives the target its identity. Anything that has no Boundary has no identity since boundary brings definition and meaning to the target. This theory posits that to know what is acceptable, we must also know what is unacceptable and it is as important to know when we will say no. Boundaries are one of the strongest tools to clarifying relationships. Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate (2000) work on boundary theory and role transition suggests that because workers have different preferences for integration versus segmentation of work and family roles, certain work-life practices may be ineffective in reducing inter-role conflict if they do not cater for a worker's particular values, needs, or preferences for managing multiple roles. For example, participating in telework arrangements has been shown to benefit some workers, whereas for others—particularly those with greater family responsibilities—it appears to blur the boundaries between work and home (Loscocco, 1997).

2.3 Work-life Balance Practices

Work-life balance practices include flexible work arrangements such as flexibility in scheduling time of arrival and departure to and/or from work, flexibility in choosing the place of work, leave in lieu of family reasons such as parental leave, direct financial assistance for child care and

information services such as finding a childcare center for a new employee. Wise and Bond (2003) cite four main drivers for introducing work-life policies: recruitment which counters negative work practices such as longer working hours; retention which is responsible to the workforce's changing and diverse needs; supportive working environment which improves organizational climate that results in motivation among staff and equality which improves access through inclusiveness.

Telework is a practice that has received mixed support with regard to its effects on employee performance. Studies using self-report measures of productivity often find a positive association between telework and performance among employees and formal participation in telework programs has also been related to improved performance ratings from supervisors (Kossek et al, 2006). Pitt-Catsouphes and Marchetta (1999) in their review of telework studies found that productivity increases between 10% and 30%, and qualitative research among teleworkers and their managers also yielded positive reports of increased performance (Frolick et al, 1993). Gajendran and Harrison's (2007) meta-analysis reveal an association between telework and supervisor ratings or archival records of job performance. However, other results indicate that more time spent teleworking is related to lower productivity, rather than increased performance (Hartman, Stoner, and Arora, 1991). This relationship was moderated by responsibility for initiation of telework arrangements; employees in employee-initiated or mutually-initiated rather than supervisor-initiated telework arrangements.

Despite these benefits and the attention that teleworking has attracted in the media, very few collective agreements contain telework provisions. Frequent telework has been associated with

professional isolation, impeding professional development activities such as interpersonal networking, informal learning, and participating in mentoring relationships (Cooper and Kurland, 2002). Moreover, employers may be concerned by the initial implementation costs, potential legal liabilities, and difficulties in supervising and appraising the performance of teleworkers. Trade-Unions may disapprove of work-at-home clauses if they perceive them as leading to greater isolation of employees, reduced job security and promotion opportunities, and diminished health and safety protection.

Professional success requires women to remain single or childless if they do have children, they need to be happy for others to raise them (Schwartz 1989). Jacobsen (2004) stated that women who remain single or childless surpass men. Such a critical decision can obviously create gaps in that, if women were to remain childless, there will be no men in the labour market. A shared vision was articulated in Work-Life Balance Charter which stated that a society where each citizen works with a sense of satisfaction, finding his/ her job rewarding, executes work-related responsibilities, and at the same time, chooses and lives a variety of lifestyles in different stages of life like during childrearing, middle and old ages as a member of a family and a community (Report on Health, Labour and Welfare, 2011). Support offered by an organization in the form of human resource practices does influence work-life balance that is experienced by female employees. In some countries like India, interventions to protect employees from workplace exploitations, workplace terms and conditions are made by employers.

Leave policies allow employees to be away from the workplace for varying period of time in order to deal with other responsibilities (Bond and Wise, 2003). Leave fall into the following

categories; annual leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, child adoption, unpaid leave, compassionate leave, sick leave, terminal leave and leave for sportsmen/women. Regardless of the type of leave, length of absence, or when leave was taken, managers who take multiple leaves of absence receive fewer rewards than managers who take only one leave of absence. It is therefore not surprising that work-life practices tend to be under-utilized by male employees, single employees, and career-oriented mothers (Bailyn et al, 1997). Apprehension of negative career consequences for using practices has been associated with increased levels of work-life conflict (Anderson et al, 2002 and Thompson, 1999).

Work-life balance practices regarding working hours include flexi time which allows employees to determine the start and end times of their working day provided a certain number of hours have been worked. This can allow staff to meet family or personal commitments/emergencies during the day or reduce their commuting time by starting and ending work before or after the rush hours. Employees are often demonstrably concerned that using flexible working arrangements will damage their promotion prospects and perhaps their relationships with co-workers and managers (Houston and Waumsley, 2003). Rogier and Padgett (2004) conducted an experimental study among 107 working MBA students, in which participants were given a packet of materials designed to simulate the personnel file of a female employee in an accounting firm who was seeking a promotion to senior manager. They found that participants perceived the job candidate who was using flexible work hours as being less committed to her job, less suitable for advancement, less ambitious, and less desirous of advancement, despite no differences in her perceived capability compared to a candidate not using a flexible schedule. This finding was consistent with that of Cohen and Single whose research showed that

accountants working flexible schedules were perceived to be less likely to be promoted and more likely to leave the firm (Cohen and Single, 2001).

The European Working Conditions Survey found that 85% of those working less than 30 hours per week were satisfied with their work–life balance. Furthermore, part-time workers and those working less than 35 hours a week reported the lowest levels of both physical and psychological health problems. Part-time work is one strategy frequently used by workers who wish to better balance their work and family life. Part-time work should be promoted in more, higher-level occupations, for instance, Daimler Chrysler in Germany promotes part-time work in leading positions in the company (Clarke et al, 2004). The concept of flexibility especially in terms of working time and work location are often looked as effective ways to achieve positive spill over and are essential to achieve work-family balance (Hill et al., 2001; Galinsky and Johnson, 1998; Thornthwaite, 2004).

Job sharing is form of work that has many constructive aspects and is also viewed as a family-friendly practice. It is an employee driven trend and is used in response to the perceived need for more family friendly policies or as a means of tackling the unemployment crisis in some economies (Gunnigle et al, 1998). Brocklebank and Whitehouse (2003) concluded that over 90 per cent of job sharers are women most likely a reflection of the traditional role of females in child and home care. Job sharing is much more extensive in the public sector. Hybrids of job-sharing may characteristically involve one full-time job with all responsibilities and benefits shared; others entail split weeks, split days or week-on week-off situations.

Job sharing is appropriate where opportunities for part-time jobs or other arrangements are limited. Apart from the obvious advantage of allowing employees more time for other commitments, including family responsibilities, job sharing also facilitates the development of partnerships, where job sharers can learn from each other while providing mutual support. It can benefit employers as well by improving staff retention, increasing productivity and combining a wider range of skills and experience in a single job. In some cases, such an arrangement can also provide additional coverage during busy periods, while ensuring continuity of coverage when one partner is on sick leave or holidays.

Organizations featuring an entrenched long-hours culture and unaccommodating attitudes among managers and co-workers tend to discourage employees from making use of the work-life practices ostensibly available to them. Bailyn (1997) said that being visible at work for long hours is a sign of commitment, loyalty, competence and high potential. This can also be an indicator in and of itself of productive output. Employees who do not give the maximum amount of time possible to the organization are often defined as less productive and less committed, therefore are less valued than employees working longer hours. This view is reflected in the attitudes of many managers to the promotion of employees working reduced hours or non-standard schedules (Lewis, 1997).

In 2000 the British Government outlined its plans for encouraging the growth of work-life balance within the UK in the discussion document 'Work-Life Balance: Changing Patterns in a Changing World'. The document announced the launch of the Work-Life Balance Campaign. One aspect of this campaign was the setting up of an employer-led alliance: 'Employers for Work-Life Balance', with the aim of promoting the benefits of work-life balance to employers in

the UK by demonstrating its success within their own organizations. In the discussion document the Government, in partnership with Employers for Work-Life Balance, drew up a six-point checklist outlining the key considerations for employers if they are committed to work-life balance. It states: An organization that is committed to work-life balance: Recognizes that effective practices to promote work-life balance will benefit the organization and its employees; acknowledges that individuals at all stages of their lives work best when they are able to achieve an appropriate balance between work and all other aspects of their lives; highlights the employer's and employees' joint responsibility to discuss workable solutions and encourages a partnership between individuals and their line managers; develops appropriate policies and practical responses that meet the specific needs of the organization and its employees, having regard to:- Fairness and consistency; Valuing employees for their contribution to the business, not their working pattern; Monitoring and evaluation; communicates its commitment to work-life strategies to its employees; demonstrates leadership from the top of the organization and encourages managers to lead by example (<http://www.dfee.gov.uk/work-lifebalance>).

Employee assistance programs are intended to recognize the interaction between domestic and working lives and to offer confidential counselling to staff to address personal or other problems, including work-related stress that may be affecting their performance (Clemmet, 1998). The programs include assistance in the areas of personal issues, relationship issues, eldercare, childcare, parenting issues, harassment, substance abuse, job stress, balancing work and family, financial or legal and family violence. Some organizations also offer other services like retirement or lay-off assistance, and wellness and health promotion and fitness while others may offer advice on long term illnesses, disability issues, counselling for crisis situation.

Training as a program is the use of systematic planned instructions activities to promote learning. It involves the use of formal process to impart knowledge and help people to acquire the skills necessary for them to perform their job satisfactorily. Reynolds (2004) points out that, training has a complementary role to play in accelerating learning and that it should be reserved for situations that justify a more direct, expert-led approach rather than viewing it as a comprehensive and all-pervasive people development solution. He also commented that the conventional training model has a tendency to emphasize subject-specific knowledge, rather than trying to build core learning activities. Training as a work-life balance practice is seen as a basic requirement for any employee so that they can reduce tensions that occur in the working environment. Organizations that train staff increase productivity and improve employee retention (Sands and Harper, 2007; Allen, 2001).

Deutsche Bank has seen training benefit grow in popularity yearly. It introduced coaching in 2008 not only to pregnant women, but also to all managers of women going on maternity leave. For women, the coaching program is designed to support a successful transition from and back to work. For line managers the program highlights and reinforces the benefits of good communication and planning. The workshops provide a support community for mothers, as well as access to information and materials. The coaching programme offers a 12-24 month session to some women, as this has been identified as the point when women tend to question their career. There is an ante-natal healthcare programme for expectant mothers. Wider benefit of the maternity provisions is that Deutsche Bank has seen an increased retention rate of women returning from maternity leave (<http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk>).

Professional counseling is one of the areas that organizations have invested heavily in a bid to assist employees balance their work. There is an increasing amount of research supporting the notion that workers who make use of work-life practices suffer negative perceptions from colleagues and superiors. Allen (1999) in experiment found that employees who used work-life balance practices were perceived by co-workers as having lower levels of organizational commitment, which was thought to affect the subsequent allocation of organizational rewards such as advancement opportunities and salary increases. Some work-life practices, such as voluntary reduced hours, are frequently unavailable in upper-level professional and managerial work. However, when they are available to professionals and managers, their use is often associated with career derailment (Raabe, 1996). As time spent at the workplace is often used as an indicator of employees' contributions and commitment to the organization, participation in work-life practices that make employees less visible such as telework, flexible hours, or family leave has been associated with lower performance evaluations, smaller salary increases, and fewer promotions (Bailyn, 1997 and Perlow, 1995).

While work-life balance practices enable employees to manage work and care giving, they can increase work intensification and perpetuate stereotypes of ideal workers (Kossek, Lewis and Hammer, 2010). Studies have revealed that employees do not always take advantage of the work-life benefits offered by their organization (Thomson, Beauvais and Lyness, 1999).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains research design, population of the study, data collection and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher used descriptive research design. According to Cooper and Schindler (2000) a descriptive research design is concerned with finding out the; who, what, where, when and how much. Descriptive research design method proves quantitative data from cross section of the chosen population. The design provided further insight into research problem by describing the variables of interest. The design was used to identify work-life balance practices among female employees in the Public Service Commission.

3.3 Target Population

According to Staff Establishment of June (2015) there were a total of one hundred and thirteen (113) female employees in the Public Service Commission. This population was appropriate for the study since all the female employees were represented giving a clear picture of the work-life balance practices among female employees. The female population was small hence the study was a census.

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data was used for this study. Data was obtained using self-administered structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument. Questionnaire as data collection instrument was easy to formulate and administer and also provided simple and straightforward approach to the

study of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives (Robson, 2002). The questionnaire that comprised of demographic question to collect data on employee and five point Likert scale questions to collect data on work-life balance practices among female employees. The mode of collection was drop and pick.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using percentages. Once the data was collected, the questionnaires were edited for accuracy, consistency and completeness. It was analyzed using descriptive statistics, like the mean and the standard deviation. The researcher used Micro Soft Excel and SSP as the tools for data analysis. Findings were presented using tables to illustrate the diverse findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings and provides an interpretation of response rate, demographic characteristics of the respondents and work-life balance practices among female employees in the Public Service Commission, Kenya.

4.1.1 Response rate

One hundred and thirteen (113) questionnaires were distributed to female employees in the Commission, out of these, 85 questionnaires were duly filled and collected translating to (75%) response rate. This is regarded as an excellent response rate in line with the literature by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) which recommends that for generalization, a response rate of (50%) is adequate for analysis and reporting. (60%) is good and any response rate of (70%) and over is excellent for descriptive studies.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

4.2.1 Age

The study established that most female employees in the Commission are in the age bracket of 36-45 years forming (34%) followed by 46-55 who form (31%), the rest form (25%).

4.2.2 Work Experience

Regarding work experience, the study revealed that, majority of female employees have been with the Commission for 4-10 years and thus form (60%) of female employees. However, those who had worked for more than 10 years formed a significant (10%).

4.2.3 Highest Level of Education of the Respondents

In terms of qualification, the study revealed that (52%) have bachelors' degree while (28%) had diploma qualification while the rest had certificates.

4.3 Work-life Balance Practices

4.3.1 Policy

All the 85 respondents said that there was no policy in place. This means that the issue of work-life balance practices is critical enough to warrant the establishment of a formal policy that outlines specific work-life balance practices among female employees. This confirms that policies in organizations are complex, ambiguous and evolving in practice, rationales and cultural acceptance as observed by other researchers and cited in this study. While work-life practices serve a purpose in highlighting the need for organizational adaptation to changing relationships between work, family, and personal life, they are marginalized rather than mainstreamed into organizational systems. The study revealed that Commission's work-life balance practices are embedded in the human resource manual, which spells out how, which, what should be done.

4.3.2 Time

The results indicated that every female employee works eight hours per day and five days per work. The following table shows response on work-life balance practices regarding time.

Table 4-1: Practices Relating to Time

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Female employees are allowed to take time off to care for and support a sick family or household member.	3.24	.882
Female employees are allowed flexible start and finish time so long as they put in minimum required time	2.22	.980
Female employees are allowed to vary working hours subject to putting in minimum working hours	2.25	.975
Female employees are allowed to take time off during family emergencies and important events	3.24	.797
Female employees have ample time to utilized facilities like information resource centre (Library), physical fitness centres and time to have good and recommended meals	1.86	1.002
Overall Average	2.56	0.927

From the above table, time off to take care of and support a sick family or household member and during family emergencies or important events have a mean of 3.24 showing that they are practiced by female employees in the Commission. Flexible start and finish time so long as they put in minimum required time has a mean of while 2.22 and variation of working hours subject to putting in minimum working house has 2.25 meaning they are practiced moderately. An overall mean of 2.56 indicates that practices relating to time are practiced among female employees. However, time to utilize facilities like information resource centre, physical fitness centres and time to have good and recommended meals with a mean of 1.86 and standard deviation of 1.002 being greater than 1, indicates that female employees do not have ample time to practice.

This data shows that flexi time is not allowed, variation of working hours and time to utilized information centres or health fitness clubs as well as have a good meal is not practiced. However female employees get time off to support a sick family member and also attend to family emergencies and important events.

4.3.3 Place of Work

This would assess the freedom granted to female employees to work at a place other than the offices. The findings of the study are summarized in table below.

Table 4-2: Practices Relating to Place of Work

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Female employees are provided with resource for tele-working, for instance, lap tops, telephone and credit	2.87	.828
Female employees can work from locations other than the office	3.13	1.110
Overall Average	3	0.969

The data above indicate that, provision of resources for teleworking with a mean of 2.87 and tele-working with a mean of 3.13 shows that these are practices among female employees in the Commission. Majority of female employees agree that they are provided with resources for teleworking away from the offices. An overall mean of 3 indicates that practices relating to place are practiced by the female employees.

4.3.4 Job Policies

This section sought to determine policies relating to job and the results are summarized in the table below.

Table 4-3: Practices Relating to Job Policies

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Female employees are allowed to share work whenever they are unable to work full time	1.88	.865
Female employees are allowed to do their work without supervision provided results are obtained by the agreed time	2.07	.753
Overall Average	1.98	0.809

From the above table job sharing to cater for those who cannot work full time has a mean of 1.88 meaning female employees do not practice job sharing. While doing work without supervision provided results are obtained by the agreed time with a mean of 2.07 is practiced. Majority of female employees agree that they work without supervision especially where the in-charge has trust in the employee.

4.3.5 Benefits

This section sought to investigate the benefits availed by the Commission to the female employees. The responses are summarized below.

Table 4-4: Practices Relating to Organizational Benefits**Benefits**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Female employees are allowed to have sick leave, compassionate leave, maternity leave, whenever need arise	3.28	.881
Female employees with family responsibilities are encouraged to go for training and provided with tuition fees	3.08	1.071
Counseling/Health services for female employees experiencing, among other things, work/family stress are available	2.56	1.239
Baby/Day Care facilities are provided for female employees with young children	1.93	.784
Onsite exercise facility or subsidized exercise facilities/gym membership are available for female employees	1.75	.912
The Commission provides for work place convenience shops/kiosks	1.61	.803
Overall Average	2.37	0.948

Table 4.4 above shows that all female employees are allowed to take leave, with a mean of 3.28. Training is also practiced and tuition fees are paid for by the Commission. Counseling/health services for female employees experiencing work-life stress is also practiced among female employees. However, Baby/Day care facilities with a mean of 1.93 and onsite exercise facility or subsidized exercises facilities or gym membership with a mean of 1.75 as well as work place convenience shops or kiosks, 1.61 are not practiced among female employees of the Commission.

These results suggest that with reference to practices relating to benefits, statutory requirements are complied with. The Commission found it important to have counseling services and medical cover for the employees to ensure that their health is taken care off for efficient and effective service delivery. In terms of training, the Commission adheres to the training policy which postulates that all employees must attend at least five (5) days training in a financial year. The Commission does not provide for Baby/Day care facility or Onsite exercise facility while female employees are at work due to lack of space to put up such centres.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusion, limitations of the study and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Majority of the female staff in the Commission are in the age bracket of 36-55 years, have been with the Commission for 4-10 years and that most female employees of the Commission are degree and diploma holders.

The study established that the Commission does not have a document that specifically outlines work-life balance practices among female employees, employees report to work at 8.00 a.m. and leave 5.00 p.m. with one hour lunch break. They work eight hours per day and five days in a week, however, due to workload, this can extend to meet deadlines thus not flexible. Female employees are allowed time off to take care of and support sick family members and also attend to emergencies. There is inadequate time for staff to utilize facilities like information resource centre, physical fitness centres and time to have good and recommended meals.

Study revealed that the Commission's female employees stationed in directorates that do not handle sensitive work and interact with clients practice telecommuting, ensure regular facility inspection and maintenance and provides other resources whenever need arises to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. The study found that it is not possible to allow sharing of jobs if one is unable to work full time because of working targets against which performance is measured. The Commission complies with statutory requirements to grant paid leaves and grants whenever need arises. The Commission provides medical cover insurance

which has conditions like the number of dependants to be covered and age of the children to be covered and the cover do not included services like physical fitness. The Commission has a pension program to help employees save for their retirement and also adheres to the training policy which is tailored to achievement of its objectives. Baby/day care facility as well as onsite exercise facility or subsidized exercise facilities/gym membership and work place convenience shops/kiosks are not available.

5.3 Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that work-life balance practices in regard to time, place of work, job and benefits are practiced among female employees of the Commission. This would be a sign of organizational concern for employees, which would promote employee interest in and obligation to the organization. Employees who make use of available work- life practices attract cost savings for organizations' efficiency and effectiveness.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that work-life balance practices among female employees be framed both structurally and culturally such that they are part of the core employment systems and not just as strategies to support disadvantaged or non-ideal workers in order to advance work life balance among the female employees. There is need for attention to be paid to practices in areas of time, place, job and benefits. In particular, the commission should introduce Baby/Day Care and onsite exercise facility or subsidized exercise facilities/gym membership facilities for female employees, even if it means being included in the medical cover. Further, the Commission should consider introducing flexible working hours and increased work autonomy so that the employees can schedule their work in a manner that allows them to attend to non-work matters

during off peak working hours/seasons, without compromising on other benefits, for instance, workplace convenience shops. Sensitization on counseling should be undertaken so that the facility can fully be utilized without fear. Human resource manual has not outlined specific practices among female employees, but the above findings confirm what is practiced in order to move with the trend. It is high time that the Commission links the human resource manual to work-life balance practices specifically among its female employees since majority are in child-bearing and also middle age crisis in terms of taking care of those under eighteen. As the nature of the workforce continues to diversify, it will become increasingly important for the Commission to consider all the factors influencing their female employees' ability to balance work and non-work commitments.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The sensitive nature of the information sought was one of the limitations to the data collection process. Commission works within deadlines and some are in the filled therefore finding time to have them feel the questionnaire was a challenge. However, due to the fact the research area was timely; the female employees created time to have the questionnaire filled.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study focused on female employees on the Public Service Commission, Kenya. It would be beneficial if further research could be conducted other Independent Commission in Kenya and also further study be conducted for the entire Kenyan public service employees. A survey should also be conducted on the Commission's female employees to further validate the findings of this study.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire for Female Employees of the Public Service Commission

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Name? (Optional) _____

2. What is your age bracket? Tick []

Below 25 years []

25 to 35 years []

35 to 45 years []

45 to 55 years []

Above 55 years []

3. What is your highest academic qualification? Tick []

Diploma () Graduate () Post Graduate () any other (specify).....

4. How many years have you worked for this organization? Tick []

Five years or less

More than 5 to max of 10yrs

More than 10 to max of 20 years

More than 20 to max of 30 years

More than 30 years

5. Marital Status? Tick [] Married [] Single [] Widow []

6. Family Type (Please tick) Extended [] Nuclear []

7. Salary Scale: _____

8. How many days do you work per week? _____

9. How many hours do you work per week? _____

SECTION B: Work life Balance Practices

10. Does the Commission have a document that outlines female employees’ work- life balance practices?

Yes []

No []

Not aware []

11. Please Tick [√] one of the following statements regarding work-life balance practices by using numbers 1-5 where: 5- Strongly disagree, 4- Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 2 – Agree and 1 – Strongly agree.

TIME	5	4	3	2	1
Female employees are allowed to take time off to care for and support a sick family or household member.					
Female employees are allowed flexible start and finish time so long as they put in minimum required time.					
Female employees are allowed to vary working hours subject to putting in minimum working hours.					
Female employees are allowed to take time off during family emergencies and important events.					
Female employees have ample time to utilized facilities like information resource centre (Library), physical fitness centres and time to have good and recommended meals.					

PLACE					
Female employees can work from locations other than the office.					
Female employees are provided with resource for tele-working, for instance, lap tops, telephone and credit.					
JOB					
Female employees are allowed to share work whenever they are unable to work full time.					
Female employees are allowed to do their work without supervision provided results are obtained by the agreed time.					
BENEFITS					
Female employees are allowed to have sick leave, compassionate leave, maternity leave, whenever need arise.					
Baby/Day Care facilities are provided for female employees with young children.					
Counseling/Health services for female employees experiencing, among other things, work/family stress are available.					
Onsite exercise facility or subsizes exercise facilities/gym membership are available for female employees					
Female employees with family responsibilities are encouraged to go for training and provided with tuition fees.					
The Commission provides for work place convenience shops/kiosks					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

