## Investigating the Relationship between Work- Life Balance and Employee Engagement among Flight Attendants

Hamida Abd El Samie Mohamed      Heba Salah Zaki
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, University of Sadat City

**Abstract**

Work-life balance and employee engagement have become two considerable concepts that capture the attention of both academics and practitioners. The prime concern of this paper is to examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among flight attendants in Egypt. The study focuses on the positive side of work life balance (work life polices and supervisor support) and how they sustain employee engagement. Primary data was conducted using a questionnaire survey of flight attendants in Egyptian airlines. The findings indicated that both work life balance policies and supervisor support were positively correlated with the job engagement of the Egyptian flight attendants. The study proved also that the supervisor support effect on the employee engagement was higher than the effect of work life policies. Based on these results, this study can be concluded that work life balance had a positive significant impact on the engagement of the Egyptian flight attendants. Finally, this study concludes by discussing managerial implications and providing suggestions for future research.
**Keywords**: Employee engagement; flight attendants; work-life balance; work-life policies.

**Introduction**

Previous studies reveal that both work-life balance and employee engagement contribute to increased business success and create competitive advantage for organizations (Deery, 2008; Pranav, 2010). Work-life balance in its broadest sense is defined as a satisfactory stage of involvement or fit between the multiple roles in a human's life (Jenkins, 2008). In other words, it is a pleasant or satisfying arrangement between an individual's work obligations and his/her personal life (Amarakoon & Wickramasinghe, 2010). Work–life balance has received substantial attention in the majority management and hospitality research and a number of topics appear from the research since 2008 (Deery & Jago, 2015). Moreover, employee engagement has generated a great deal of interest in recent years as a widely used concept in organizations and consulting firms (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Engagement is the state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organization (Bhalerao, 2013). Bakker and Leiter (2010) argue that contemporary organizations need employees who are engaged, because they are psychologically linked to their work, are willing and able to fully devote themselves in their roles and are proactive and committed to high quality performance standards. Work–life balance contributes to employee engagement which in turn is translated to higher productivity and lower organizational turnover (Grawitch et al., 2006; Baral & Bhargava, 2010).Work-life balance policies (WLBPs) are formally designed and communicated policies on work- life balance that are applied within the organization (Poelmans et al., 2003). Richman et al. (2008) argue that an organization's flexible work-life policies have a great positive impact on employee engagement. Research also confirms that supervisor support is vital when it comes to the operation and effectiveness of work-life programs (Thompson et al., 1999).

The airline industry is mainly a sensitive service industry (Yeh, 2014). Service firms must find ways to manage their employees effectively, and ensure that their attitudes and behaviors are encouraging to the delivery of high quality service (Chan & Wan, 2012). Flight attendants are in close contact with customers for long periods (Yeh, 2014). Therefore, the quality of the service they provide has a strong impact on customer satisfaction (Yeh, 2014). Flight attendants are

characterized as undertaking work that can lead to emotional exhaustion among workers with low job independence and long working hours (Williams, 2003). In the context of airline industry, there are only few studies that investigate both the organizational and individual consequences of burnout or employee engagement with regard to flight attendants and their work environments (Chen, 2006; Xanthopoulou et *al*. 2008; Chen & Kao, 2012).The main aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between work- life balance and employee engagement among flight attendants in Egypt. Besides, the study has specific objectives to achieve as follows:

i. To explore the relationship between work-life policies and employee engagement among flight attendants in Egypt.

ii. To determine the relationship between supervisor support and employee engagement among flight attendants in Egypt.

This study comprises four major parts. Firstly, the study reviews the relevant literature for both work-life balance and employee engagement**.** Secondly, the paper discusses the role of work-life polices and supervisor support and how they relate to employee engagement. Thirdly, the study presents the statistical methods that are applied to test the relationship between independent and dependant variables. Finally, the study suggests the strategies that companies should take up to keep employees engaged at their jobs.

**Literature review**
**Work-life balance**

Work-life balance has emerged as a key topic during the last two decades, which witnessed a widespread increase of work caused by economic uncertainty, organizational restructuring, and increased competition (Green, 2001). Moreover, the shift away from the image of the traditional family towards an increasing appearance of single parent families and the greater participation of women in the labor force represent factors demanding a greater work-life balance among employees (Guest, 2002). Recently, the term "work-life balance" has been replaced what has been known as "work-family balance" (Hudson Resourcing, 2005). This change resulted from the recognition that childcare is not the only important non-work responsibility and that balance can be applied to any non-paid activities or commitments and to a diverse range of employees such women, man, parents and non-parents, singles and couples (Lazar & Ratiu , 2010).

Work-life balance has been described as the ability of individuals, regardless of age or gender, to find a time that will allow them to match their work with their non-work responsibilities, activities and goals (Huges & Bozionelos, 2007). Clark (2000: 349) defines work–family balance as "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict". Work-life balance is generally associated with equilibrium between the amount of time and effort somebody dedicates to work and personal activities, in order to maintain an overall sense of harmony in life (Clarke et *al*., 2004). In a word, work–life balance is about people having a level of control over when, where and how they work (Fleetwood, 2007).There are three components of work family–balance: time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance (Greenhaus et *al*., 2003). Work life balance can affect both the individual and the organization (Cain, 2015). Work life balance contributes also to high scores of work performance (Karatepe & Bekteshi, 2008). Frame and Hartog (2003) imply that good work-life balance means that employees feel they are freely able to use flexible working hours policies to balance their work and other commitments (family, hobbies, art, traveling, studies), rather than focusing completely on work.

### Employee engagement

Work engagement and employee engagement appear interchangeably in many studies. Work engagement refers to the " relationship of the employee with his or her work, whereas employee engagement may also include the relationship with the organization" (Schaufeli, 2013:1). Gibbons (2006) defined employee engagement as a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional flexible effort to his/her work. Research has indeed shown that work engagement is positively related to job performance (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010). Engagement can be formed as a progressive combination of satisfaction, motivation, commitment and advocacy resulting from employees' movement up the engagement pyramid (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Employee engagement is defined as being positively present during the performance of work by readily contributing intellectual effort and experiencing positive emotions and significant connections to others (Alfes et *al*., 2010).

Schaufeli et al. (2002:74) define work engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption." Vigor can be described as employees' having high levels of energy; dedication refers to employees' feeling of a sense of importance, passion, motivation, pride and challenge; absorption can be described as employees being fully concentrated and deeply immersed in one's work (Schaufeli et *al*., 2002). Engagement is composed of three dimensions which include intellectual engagement (thinking hard about the job and how to do it better), affective engagement (feeling positive about doing a good job) and social engagement (actively taking opportunities to discuss work related improvements with others (Cavanagh & Virdie, 2007). Khan (1990) revealed that three psychological conditions shape employee engagement: meaningfulness, availability, and safety. Psychological meaningfulness is represented by emotional, physical or cognitive energy that an individual experiences from investing time in work (Khan, 1990). Psychological availability represents the confidence with which an individual approaches and engages in their work role (Khan, 1990). Psychological safety represents an individual's ability to behave in a manner that is natural and utilizes skill and aptitude in work without fear of negative criticism (Khan, 1990).

As indicated in the figure (1), satisfaction is the most passive of measures of engagement; it is what gets employees to just show up for work (Abbas et *al.*, 2014). Motivation is the excitement employees feel about their work and a desire to surpass in it (Fearon et *al.*, 2013). As the employee progresses up the ladder he/she achieves commitment (Rana et *al.*, 2014). Advocacy is the actual measure and shows the level of how proactive employees are in speaking about the company they work for as well as the products/services they offer (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006).

Figure1 Andrew Brown's Engagement Pyramid



**Source:** Cawe, 2006:11

An open and supportive environment is considered as a vital perquisite for employees to feel safe in the workplace and engage totally with their responsibility (Fearon et *al*., 2013). Hughes and Rog (2008) consider training and career development as an important antecedent for engaging employees. Compensation or remuneration is another crucial attribute to employee engagement (Albrecht, 2012). Many researchers have claimed that employee engagement predicts employee outcomes, organizational success, and financial performance (Harter et *al*., 2002; Baumruk, 2004). When an employee is engaged, he/she is aware of his responsibility in the business goals and motivates his colleagues alongside, for the success of the organization goals (Dulagil, 2012). Engaged employees experience high levels of energy and strong identification towards their work (Bakker et *al*., 2009), which translates to a more sustainable workplace in terms of both individual health and organizational performance (Kangure, 2014). Saks (2006) argued that engagement is likely to result in positive work outcomes, such as organizational commitment, service climate and customer loyalty. Engagement can positively predict various positive organizational outcomes decreased withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover (Schaufeli et *al*., 2006).

## Employee engagement and work-life balance

Amarakoon and Wickramasinghe (2010) found that work-life balance has a positive influence on employee engagement. Bakker et *al*. (2011) assumed that work engagement negatively influences work-life balance as people can become too engaged. This implies that employees, who are so engaged, take work home, which distorts their work-life balance (Bakker et *al*., 2011). Moreover, Jawaharrani, (2011) argues that there exists a relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement. Shankar and Bhatnagar (2010) researched work life balance and organizational outcomes, and suggested a link between employee engagement and work- life balance. An initial job resource relevant to the work-family literature and work engagement could be family-friendly organizational policies, such as flexible work scheduling childcare assistance, flexible work arrangements, and elder care assistance (Brough et *al*., 2005; Lu et *al*., 2009).Job resources also include supervisor support and colleague support which are each also positively associated with work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Supervisor and colleague support may satisfy employees' needs to belong and enable employees to identify with their work, which in turn promote the willingness to dedicate efforts and abilities to the work task, thus facilitating successful work performance (Siu et *al*., 2010).Therefore, the current study will focus on the role of work-life balance polices and supervisor support for maintaining employee engagement.

## Work-life balance policies and practices

Competing between work and home responsibilities has assumed increased relevance for employees in recent years, with special features such as: a greater numbers of women in the workforce (dual-career couples), transformation in family structures (a rise in the number of single parents), a growing reluctance to accept the longer hours culture and technological advancements (Lazar & Ratiu , 2010). In response to these changes and the conflict they generate among the multiple roles that individuals occupy, organizations are increasingly pressured to design various kinds of practices, intended to facilitate employees' efforts to fulfill both their employment related and their personal commitments (Lazar & Ratiu , 2010). Work-life balance arrangements and practices refer to initiatives voluntarily introduced by firms which facilitate the compromise of employees' work and personal lives (McCarthy et *al*., 2010).Cascio

(2000: 166) defines work-life balance programs as "any employer sponsored benefits or working conditions that help employees balance work and non-work demands". Practices that are meant help employees better manage their work and non-work times are described in the literature as work-family policies, family-friendly or family-responsive policies (Lazar & Ratiu , 2010).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, working from home (tele-work), sharing a full-time job between two employees (job sharing), family leave programs (e.g., parental leave, adoption leave, empathetic leave), onsite childcare, and financial and/or informational assistance with childcare and eldercare services (Bhalerao, 2013).

Flextime can allow employees to meet family or personal commitments/emergencies, enable employees to respond to both predictable and unpredictable circumstances during the day (Lazar & Ratiu , 2010).Telecommuting or telework means using technology away from the office (Dessler, 2015). It may also beneficial for disabled employees (Lazar & Ratiu , 2010). Job sharing can be helpful for retirement – aged employees (Dessler, 2015). It can benefit employers by improving staff retention, increasing productivity and combining a wider range of skills and experience in a single job (Lazar & Ratiu , 2010). Anitha (2014) established a link between work-life balance policies and employee engagement. Studies also show strong links between work-life balance policies, increased productivity and job satisfaction (Jawaharrani, 2011). Work-life policies and programs allow employees to have greater control over how, when and where they work (Albrecht, 2012). Based on this review the following **hypothesis** can be formulated:

There is a significant relationship between work-life policies and employee engagement among flight attendants in Egypt.


**Supervisor support**
Work-life studies assure the importance of moving beyond the pure implementation of work-family practices towards a change in organizational culture (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002). From the organizational perspective, it seems essential to know which individual managerial factors contribute to family supportive supervisor behavior, so that managers can be trained to become family supportive (Kossek & Hammer, 2008). Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior (FSSB) consists of four family supportive supervisor behaviors: emotional support, instrumental support, role model behaviors and recognition of the strategic importance of work-family issues (Lapierre & Allen, 2006). Emotional support is focused on perceptions that an individual is being cared for, that their feelings are being considered, and that they feel comfortable communicating about work-family issues with their supervisors when necessary (Breaugh & Frye, 2008). Instrumental support refers to behavioral types of work and family in the form of scheduling flexible work (Poelmans et *al.*, 2003). In the workplace, supervisor support is considered one of the most relevant forms of social support for employees (Poon, 2011).Supervisor support is a key aspect of work-life culture regarding the extent to which an organization supports the integration of employees' work and private lives (Thompson et *al.*, 1999). Varizani (2007) advocates that supervisors determine the level of engagement .Talented and engaged employees can leave organizations if they have a weak relationship with their managers or supervisors (Varizani, 2007). Besides, Alfes et *al.* (2010) examined the relationship between perceptions of line managers and engagement levels and found that positive perceptions of line managers were associated significantly with extent of employee engagement.

Based on this review the following hypothesis can be formulated:
There is a significant relationship between supervisor support and employee engagement among flight attendants in Egypt.

**Methodology**
This study integrates quantitative approaches. A structured questionnaire was handed out to a randomly selected sample of 150 flight attendants working at Egyptian airline companies both public (Egypt Air) and private (Nile Air and Air Arabia) airlines. Only 124 responses were collected with a response rate 82.6% of the total sample. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was developed to measure the three dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. It has been considered a valid and reliable measure of the engagement construct (Schaufeli et *al.*, 2006). Work- life balance policies were adopted from State of Queensland (2005) measure of family-responsive index and IESE, while, supervisor support scale was from Kangure (2014). The survey was conducted from December 2016 to February 2017. The questionnaire consists of four parts. Part A concerned with demographic purposes about the respondents such as: age, gender, education, marital status, number of children, part B gathered information assessing work life balance policies, part C measured supervisor support and finally part D assessed the employee engagement. All items except demographic information were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from ''strongly disagree'' (1) to ''strongly agree'' (5). The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS, Version 16.0). The statistical analysis has been conducted through two ways: (1) the descriptive analyses were performed to compute the frequencies, standard of deviation and means; (2) correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Finally, linear regression test has been used to estimate the significance effect of the independent variables (work life balance policies – supervisor support) on the dependent variable (employee engagement). Regarding reliability, this research calculated the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all constructs and it exceeded 0.70 which means that results are reliable (Hall, 2008). Table 1 lists the reliability statistics for each construct.

Table 1: Constructs' Reliability

| Constructs | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|
| Work life Policies | 0.78 |
| Supervisor Support | 0.88 |
| Employee Engagement | 0.91 |

**Data Analysis**
**A) Respondents' profiling**
Regarding respondents' demographic characteristics, results showed that 57.3% of respondents were female and only 42.7% were male. Most of respondents 91.1% have university education. Around 34.7% of respondents were between 21 and 30 years while 65.3% were between 31 and 40 years. The majority of respondents 72.6% have working experience between 5 to 10 years, whereas 15.3% have less than 5 years, and 12.1% have more than 10 years experience. This means that the respondents have an appropriate working experience with the company that enables them to provide useful information for this study. Regarding marital status, 57.3% of respondents were married and 85 % of them have children.

## B) Work life balance policies

Nearly three quarters 74.2% respondents clarified that their companies already have written workplace polices while 23.4% indicated that they have not .Only 2.4% did not know if their companies have work life balance policies (WLBPs) or not. Moreover, respondents were also asked to identify (WLBPs) that already exist in their companies.

Table 2: Mean ranking of work life balance policies

| Work life balance Policies | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Deciding the start and the finish times for the tasks assigned. | 3.6 | 1.10 |
| Flexibility for educational or training opportunities. | 3.7 | 1.01 |
| Paid leave arrangements (maternity, pooled leave). | 3.6 | 1.44 |
| Take time off for cultural/religious reasons.. | 3.5 | 1.26 |
| Female workers are entitled to safety at work when expectant. | 3.7 | .92 |
| My employer has social functions arrangement at suitable times for my family to participate. | 3.5 | 1.07 |
| Flexible work schedules. | 3.6 | 1.11 |
| Up-skilling strategies are regularly arranged. | 3.9 | .29 |
| The availability of professional counseling services for employees. | 3.5 | .56 |
| Recreational facilities. | 3.2 | 1.56 |
| Heath care. | 4.2 | .73 |
| **Total** | **3.7** | **.61** |

As shown in table 2, the most common work life balance policies available in flight attendants' companies was heath care with mean 4.2 and standard deviation .73, while the lowest mean was for recreational facilities 3.2. The total mean value for all work life balance policies was 3.7. These findings mean that Egyptian airlines already have some work life balance polices which enable flight attendants to balance between their work and family responsibilities.

## C) Supervisor support

Concerning the supervisor support, participants confirmed with a percentage of 58.8% that their supervisors were sensitized on work life balance , 33.1% of them disagreed while the rest of respondents 8.1% did not know whether their supervisors were sensitized about work life balance or not. In table 3, respondents were also asked to identify to what extent their supervisors support work life balance.

Table 3: Mean ranking of Supervisors' Support to Work-life Balance

| Supervisor support | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Our managers understand employees family responsibility and this makes employees feel that the company cares about their welfare. | 3.9 | 1.26 |
| My immediate boss is sympathetic about my personal matters. | 3.7 | 1.05 |
| My supervisors seems to take care about me as a person and | 3.8 | .95 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| this fosters a good employee relations . | | |
| I can easily discuss personal matters with my supervisor. | **3.8** | **.96** |
| My supervisor talks to me about my work progress regularly. | **3.7** | **.96** |
| I receive adequate support from my supervisor which enables  me to achieve more for the company and helps me on personal accomplishment | **3.9** | **.26** |
| My supervisor motivates me to achieve more on personal and career goals. | **3.9** | **.23** |
| My supervisor inspires me to do the best in my job. | **4.3** | **.53** |
| **Total** | **3.9** | **.56** |

As shown in table 3, the agreement level of respondents for all statements was positive with mean 3.9 and standard deviation .56. These results indicate that supervisors in Egyptian airlines were family supportive.

### D) Employee engagement
The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) was developed to measure the three dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et *al*., 2006). Participants were requested to identify the level of their engagement.

Table 4: The level of employee engagement

| Employee Engagement | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Vigor** | At my work, I feel bursting with energy. | 4.2 | .68 |
| | At my job, I feel strong and vigorous. | 3.9 | .36 |
| | When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. | 3.8 | .50 |
| | I can continue working for very long periods at a time. | 4.00 | .92 |
| | At my job, I am very resilient, mentally. | 3.8 | .58 |
| | At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well. | 3.8 | .62 |
| **Absorption** | Time flies when I am working. | 4.1 | .78 |
| | When I am working, I forget everything else around me. | 3.8 | .57 |
| | I always do more than is actually required on my job. | 3.9 | .30 |
| | I am immersed in my work. | 3.5 | .54 |
| | I get carried away when I am working. | 3.9 | .29 |
| | It is difficult to detach myself from my job. | 3.8 | .49 |
| **Dedication** | I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose. | 4.3 | .49 |
| | I am enthusiastic about my job. | 4.3 | .57 |
| | My job inspires me. | 3.9 | .20 |
| | I am proud of the work that I do. | 4.2 | .56 |
| | To me, my job is challenging. | 4.2 | .54 |
| **Total** | | 4.01 | .35 |

As shown in table 4, the total mean value for all employee engagement responses is 4.1and standard deviation .35. This refers to that the engagement level of Egyptian flight attendants is above average.

## Correlation analysis

A correlation analysis has been conducted to find out the relationship between the independent variables (work life balance policies, supervisor support) and dependent variable (employee engagement) of the study. The results of the correlation were shown in table 5.

Table 5: The correlation of work life balance policies and employee engagement

| | | **Employee Engagement** |
|---|---|---|
| **Work life balance Policies** | Pearson Correlation | .522[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . 000 |
| | N | 124 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in table 5, the correlation was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The work life balance policies have a significant positive relationship with employee engagement (r = .522, p < .05).

Table 6: The correlation of supervisor support and employee engagement

| | | *Employee engagement* |
|---|---|---|
| **Supervisor Support** | Pearson Correlation | .614[**] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . 000 |
| | N | 124 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Results in table 6 showed that there was also a significant and positive relationship between supervisor support and the engagement of Egyptian flight attendants with their work (r = .614, p < .05).

## Simple linear regression analyses

As mentioned before, the first aim of this study is to explore the relationship between work-life policies and employee engagement among flight attendants in Egypt. A simple linear regression analysis has been used to test the significance impact of the work life balance policies on employee engagement.

Table 7:  Simple linear regression analysis

| **Model Summary** | **R Square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 0.311 | 13.084 | 0.000 |

Predictors: (constant) work life balance policies.
Dependent variable: employee engagement.

Results in table 7 indicated that work life balance policies have a significant positive effect on employee engagement. The results of Simple linear regression analysis depicts that work life balance policies can explain 31.1 (f= 13.084; sig. =.000) of the employee engagement. This means that work life balance policies affected by 31.1% on the engagement of the Egyptian flight attendants. Based on the above discussion, the first hypothesis will be accepted.

Table 8:  Simple linear regression analysis for supervisor support

| **Model Summary** | **R Square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 0.401 | 23.417 | 0.000 |

Predictors: (constant) supervisor support.
Dependent variable: employee engagement.

The second objective of this study was to determine the relationship between supervisor support and employee engagement among flight attendants in Egypt. Table 8 revealed that supervisor support has significant positive effect on employee engagement. The results of Simple linear regression analysis depicts that supervisor support can explain 40.1% (f= 23.417; sig. =.000) of the employee engagement. This means that supervisor support affected by 40.1% on the engagement of the Egyptian flight attendants. Based on the above discussion, the second hypothesis will be accepted

## Multiple regression for all research Variables

This study used multiple regression to explain the overall effect of work life balance policies and supervisor support on the engagement of the Egyptian flight attendants.

Table 9: Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .539[a] | .480 | .494 | .18329 |

a. Predictors: Work Life Balance Policies, Supervisor Support

The results of table 9 showed that independent variables (Work Life Balance Policies and Supervisor Support) explained 48% of the dependent variable (employee engagement).

Table 10:  The analysis of Variance ANOVA[b]

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 1.217 | 2 | .609 | **18.114** | .000[a] |
| | Residual | 4.065 | 121 | .034 | | |
| | Total | 5.282 | 123 | | | |

a. Predictors: Work Life Balance Policies, Supervisor Support.
b. Dependent Variable: employee engagement.
As shown in table 10 the results proved that the model fit was significant as (f = 18.114 and p<0.05).

Table 11: Relationship between Work-life polices and Employee Engagement Coefficients

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| | Work Life Balance Policies | .150 | .045 | .264 | 3.303 | .000 |
| | Supervisor Support | .198 | .042 | .378 | 4.727 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable:  employee engagement

Table 11 illustrated that all the model components (Work Life Balance Policies and Supervisor Support) have significant effects on the engagement of flight attendants. It means that the increase of Work Life Balance Policies by one unit leads to increase in the employee engagement by .150 of the unit. The increase of supervisor support by one unit leads to increase in the employee engagement by .198 of the unit.

## Results and Discussion

The research focused on two predictors of work life balance (work life polices and supervisor support) and how they sustain employee engagement. Specifically the study has been directed by the following objectives; to explore the relationship between work-life policies and employee engagement and to determine the relationship between supervisor support and employee engagement among flight attendants in Egypt. Pearson correlation, simple linear regression and multiple regression analysis have been conducted to check the relationship among research variables and estimate the influence of each independent variable (work-life policies, supervisor support) on the dependent variable (employee engagement). The results of Pearson correlation proved that the supervisor support and work life balance policies are correlated positively with employee engagement, the supervisor support was leading with the highest influence on the employee engagement at (.614). These findings came to agree with the studies of Schaufeli & Bakker (2004); Varizani (2007) Alfes et *al.* (2010) which have concluded that the supervisor support positively associated with work engagement. The study of Thompson et *al.* (1999) also confirmed that supervisor support was considered vital when it comes to the operation and effectiveness of work-life programs. A simple linear regression analysis was applied and revealed that supervisor support explained 40.1% of the variation in the flight attendants engagement in Egyptian airlines. Hence, the results proved that supervisor support enhances the level of employee engagement. This result matched with the research of Fearon et *al.* (2013) which has concluded that the supportive environment is vital for employees to engage totally with their responsibility. The research of Varizani (2007) also advocated that supervisors determined the level of employees' engagement. Regarding Pearson correlation of work life policies, it is also correlated positively with employee engagement at (.522). This result corroborates the findings of Anitha (2014) which proved that there is a relationship between work life balance policies and employee engagement. The study of Richman et *al.* (2008) also argued that an organization's flexible work-life policies have a great positive impact on employee engagement. A simple linear regression analysis was carried out and implied that work life balance policies explained 31.1% of the flight attendants engagement in Egyptian airlines. This result came to agree with the study of Albrecht (2012) which suggested that work-life policies and programs allow employees to have greater control over how, when and where they work. Therefore, the results conclude that work life balance policies had a significant influence on employee engagement.

Multiple regression analysis revealed that all identified dimensions are predictors of flight attendants engagement (R2 =0.480). This means that the work life balance has significant positive effect on employee engagement, it may cause 48% change in the Egyptian flight attendants engagement. This result came in favor with the findings of Amarakoon and Wickramasinghe (2010); Shankar and Bhatnagar (2010); Jawaharrani (2011) which have concluded that there is a significant relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement. The findings of this study were contradict to the research of Bakker et *al.* (2011) which had concluded that work engagement negatively influences work-life balance

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings of this study illustrated that work life balance with its two sides (work life policies and supervisor support) has played a vital role in achieving employee job engagement among the Egyptian flight attendants. For enhancing the level of flight attendants job engagement, Egyptian airlines should implement the concept of work life balance and adopt family-friendly

organizational policies. Besides, support and mutual respect between team members create and maintain an engaged flight attendant. Flight attendants who achieve a balance between his/her work and family can perform better.

Based on the previous results, the present study proposes the following recommendations;

1- Airlines companies should encourage the adoption of work life balance polices.
2- Family friendly policies should be evaluated and improved regularly to assure benefits for both employees and organizations.
3- To achieve employee engagement, managers themselves must be exemplars of commitment and engagement. Without the leadership engagement, the employee engagement will not be more than "a company fad".
4- Managers should appreciate their employees and maintain a good relationship with them because their level of engagement is a direct reflection of their relationship with the employer.
5- Training employees regularly not only increasing their knowledge and skills, but also enhancing their commitment and engagement level.
6- Checking the level of employee engagement regularly helps identifying factors which affecting employee engagement.

**Area of further research**
Although the present study added a considerable contribution to the literature, further researches are needed to discuss the relationship between work life balance and employee engagement in different sectors such as: travel agencies and tour leaders. Besides, subsequent studies can be conducted to identify the impact of demographic factors of employees on their work life balance and employee engagement.

**References**
Abbas, R. Z., Murad, H. S., Yazdani, N. and Asghar, A. (2014). Extending "Kahn's model of personal engagement and disengagement at work" with reference to existential attributes: A case study of HR managers in Pakistan. International Journal of Social Economics 41(1): 2-31.

Albrecht, S. L. (2012). The influence of job, team and organizational level resources on employee well-being, engagement, commitment and extra-role performance. International Journal of Manpower 33(7): 840-853.

Alfes, K., Truss, C., Soane, E. C., Rees, C. and Gatenby, M. (2010). Creating an engaged workforce: Findings from Kingston Employee Engagement Consurtium Project. CIPD Research Report.

Amarakoon, A. and Wickramasinghe, V. (2010). Impact of work-life balance on employee engagement. An empirical study on Sri Lankan Employees. Paper Presented at the International Research Conference on Management and Finance 2009. University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Anitha, J. (2014). Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management 63(3): 308-323.

Bakker, A. B. and Leiter, M. P. (2010). Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research. New York: Psychology Press.

Bakker, A. B., Albrecht, S. L. and Leiter, M. P. (2011). Key questions regarding work engagement. European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology 20: 4-28.

Baral, R. and Bhargava, S. (2010). Work-family enrichment as a mediator between organizational interventions for work-life balance and job outcomes. Journal of Managerial Psychology 25: 274-300.

Baumruk, R. (2004).The missing link: the role of employee engagement in business success. Work span. 47: 48-52.

Bhalerao, S. K. (2013).Work life balance: The key driver of employee engagement. ASM's International E-Journal of Ongoing Research in Management and IT: 1-9.

Blair-Loy, M. and Wharton. (2002). Employee's use of work-family policies and the workplace social context. Social Forces 80(3): 813-846.

Breaugh, J. A. and Frye, N. K. (2008). Work-family conflict: The importance of family-friendly employment practices and family supportive supervisors. Journal of Business and Psychology 22 (4): 345-353.

Brough, P., O'Driscoll, M. and Kalliath, T. (2005). The ability of 'family-friendly' organizational resources to predict work-family conflict and job and family satisfaction. Stress and Health 21: 223–234.

Cain, N. (2015). Examining the factors that impact work life balance for executive chefs. PhD Thesis. University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Cawe, M. (2006).Factors contributing to employee engagement in South Africa. Master Thesis. Johannesburg.

Chan, K.W. and Wan, E.W. (2012). How can stressed employees deliver better customer service? The underlying self-regulation depletion mechanism. Journal of Marketing 76 (1): 119-137.

Chen, C.F. (2006).Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and flight attendants' turnover intentions: A note. Journal of Air Transport Management 12: 274–276.

Chen, C. F. and Kao, Y. L. (2012).Investigating the antecedents and consequences of burnout and isolation among flight attendants. Tourism Management 33: 868-874.

Cascio, W. (2000). Costing human resources: The financial impact of behavior in organizations. Boston: Thompson Learning.

Carlson, D.S., Grzywacz, J.G. and Zivnuska, S. (2009). Is work−family balance more than conflict and enrichment? Human Relations 62: 1459-1486.

Cavanagh, L. and Virdee, L. (2007). Economic and social research council (ESCR)/ Scottish Executive (SE) Scotland's Demography Research Programme. Scottish Executive Social Research. PAMS (07) 08 Retrieved from: http:/www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files1/stats/pams07-08-mig-related-research-scot-update.pdf. (Accessed 22/8/2016).

Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. Human Relations 53: 747-770.

Clarke, M., Koch, L. and Hill E. (2004). The work–family interface: Differentiating balance and fit. Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal 33(2).

Deery, M. (2008). Talent management, work-life balance and retention strategies. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management 20(7): 792-806.

Deery, M. and Jago, L. (2015). Revisiting talent management, work-life balance and retention strategies. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management 27(3): 453 - 472.

Demerouti, E. and Cropanzano, R. (2010). From thought to action: Employee work engagement and job performance. In A. B. Bakker & M. P. Leiter (Eds.), Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research. New York: Psychology Press.

Dessler, G. (2015).Human Resource Management. 14ᵗʰ ed. England: Pearson Education Limited

Dulagil, A. (2012). The relationship of employee engagement and wellbeing to organizational and student outcomes. SBS HDR Student Conference. Paper 1 (pp. 1-12). University of Wollongong. Retrieved from: http://ro.uow.edu.au/sbshdr/2012/papers/1. (Accessed 21/8/2016).

Fearon, C., McLaughlin, H. and Morris, L. (2013). Conceptualizing work engagement: An individual, collective and organizational efficacy perspective. European Journal of Training and Development 37(3): 244-256.

Fleetwood, S. (2007). Why work–life balance now? The International Journal of Human Resource Management 18: 387–400.

Frame, P. and Hartog, M. (2003). From rhetoric to reality. Into the swamp of ethical practice: implementing work-life balance. Business Ethics: A European Review 12 (4)**:** 358-67.

Gibbons, J. (2006). Employee engagement: A review of current research and its implications. New York: The Conference Board.

Grawitch M.J., Gottschalk M. and Munz DC. (2006). The path to a healthy workplace: A critical review linking healthy workplace practices, employee well-being, and organizational improvements. Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research 58: 129–147.

Green, F. (2001). It's been a hard day's night: the concentration and intensification of work in late twentieth-century Britain. British Journal of Industrial Relations 39: 53-80.

Greenhaus, J. H., Collins, K.M. and Shaw, J. D.(2003). The relation between work-family balance and quality of life. Journal of Vocational Behavior 63:510–531.

Guest, D. E. (2002). Perspectives on the Study of Work-life balance. Social Science Information 41: 255-279.

Hall, R. (2008). Applied Social Research: Planning, designing and conducting real-world research. Malaysia: Palgrave Macmillan.

Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L. and Hayes T. L. (2002). Business-Unit-Level Relationship between Employee Satisfaction, Work engagement and Business Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis. Journal of Applied Psychology 87(2): 268-279.

Hudson Resourcing. (2005).The case for work/life balance: Closing the gap between policy and practice**.** Hudson Australia and New Zealand Retrieved from www.hudson.com (Accessed 24/8/2016).

Hughes, J. and Bozionelos, N. (2007). Work-life balance as source of job dissatisfaction and withdrawal attitudes: An exploratory study on the views of male workers. Personnel Review 36(1):145-154.

Hughes, J. C. and Rog, E. (2008). Talent management: A strategy for improving employee recruitment and engagement within hospitality organizations. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management 20(7): 743-757.

Jawaharrani, S. K. (2011). Work-life balance: The key driver of employee engagement. Asian Journal of Management Research 2 (1): 474-482.

Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of a personal engagement and disengagement at work. Academy of Management Journal 33(4): 692-724.

Kangure, F. M. (2014).Relationship between work life balance and employee engagement in state corporations in Kenya . PhD Thesis. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. Kenya

Karatepe, O.M., and Bekteshi, L. (2008). Antecedents and outcomes of work–family facilitation and family–work facilitation among frontline hotel employees. International Journal of Hospitality Management 27: 517–528.

Kossek, E. E. and Hammer, L. B. (2008). Supervisor work training and get results. Harvard Business Review 86 (11): 36.

Lapierre, L. M., and Allen, T. D. (2006). Work-supportive family, family-supportive supervision, use of organizational benefits and problem-focused coping: Implications for work-family conflict and employees' well-being. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology 11 (2): 169-181.

Lazar, I. and Ratiu, P. (2010).The Role of Work-Life Balance Practices in Order to Improve Organizational Performance. European Research Studies XIII (1): 201-214.

Lu, J. F., Siu, O. L., Spector, P. and Shi, K. (2009). Antecedents and outcomes of a four-fold taxonomy of work-family balance in Chinese employed parents. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology 14: 182–192.

Macey, W. H., and Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. Journal of Industrial and Organizational Psychology 1: 3-30.

McCarthy, A., Darcy, C. and Grady, G. (2010). Work-life balance policy and practice: Underlying line managers attitudes and behavior. Human Resource Management Review 20: 158-167.

Poelmans, S., Chinchilla, N. and Cardona, P. (2003). The adoption of family-friendly HRM policies: Competing for scarce resources in the labor market. International Journal of Manpower 24 (2):128-147.

Poon, J.(2011).Effects of Abusive Supervision and Coworker Support on Work Engagement. 2nd International Conference on Economics. Business and Management 22:65-70.

Pranav, N. (2010).Overview of work-life balance discourse and its relevance in current economic scenario. Asian Social Science 6: 148-155.

Queensland Government (Department of Industrial Relations). (2005). Better Work-life balance survey manual. University of Queensland. Available at: http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/46355/ir-work-life-balance-manual.pdf (Accessed on: 5 /11/2016).

Rafferty, A. E. and Griffin, M. A. (2006). Refining individualized consideration: Distinguishing developmental leadership and supportive leadership. Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology 79:37-61.

Rana, S., Ardichvili, A. and Tkachenko, O. (2014). A theoretical model of the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement: Dubin's method. Journal of Workplace Learning 26(3/4):249-266.

Richman, A., Civian, J.T., Shannon, L., Hill, E. and Brennan, R. (2008).The relationship of perceived flexibility, supportive work life policies, and use of formal flexible arrangements and occasional flexibility to employee engagement and expected retention. Community, Work & Family 11(2): 183-197.

Saks, A. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Journal of Managerial Psychology 21 (7): 600-619.

Schaufeli, W.B. (2013). What is engagement? In C. Truss, K. Alfes, R. Delbridge, A. Shantz, & E. Soane (Eds.). Employee Engagement in Theory and Practice**.** London: Routledge.

Schaufeli, W. B. and Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources and their relationship with burnout and engagement: a multi-sample study. Journal of Organizational Behavior 25: 293-315.

Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V. and Bakker, A. B. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout: A confirmatory factor analytic approach. Journal of Happiness Studies 3:71-92.

Schaufeli, W.B., Bakker, A.B. and Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire. Educational and Psychological Measurement 66(4): 701-16.

Shankar, T. and Bhatnagar, J. (2010). Work life balance, employee engagement, emotional consonance/dissonance & turnover intention. The Indian Journal of Industrial Relations 46(1): 74-87.

Siu, O., Lu, J., Brough, P., Lu, C., Bakker, A. B., Kalliath, T., O'Driscoll, M., Phillips, D. R., Chen, W., Lo, D., Sit, C. and Shi, K. (2010). Role resources and work-family enrichment: The role of work engagement. Journal of Vocational Behavior 77: 470-480.

Thompson, C. A., Beauvais, L. and Lyness, K. S. (1999). When work-family benefits are not enough: The influence of work-family culture on benefit utilization, organizational attachment and work-family conflict. Journal of Vocational Behavior 54: 392-415.

Vazirani. (2007). Employee engagement: Working Paper Series. SIES Rise with Education.

Williams, C. (2003). Sky service: the demands of emotional labor in the airline industry. Gender, Work & Organization 10:513-550.

Xanthopoulou, D., Baker, B., Heuven, E., Demerouti, E. and Schaufeli, W. (2008). Working in the Sky: A Diary Study on Work Engagement among Flight Attendants. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology 13(4): 345–356.

Yeh, Y. (2014).Exploring the impacts of employee advocacy on job satisfaction and organizational commitment: Case of Taiwanese airlines. Journal of Air Transport Management 36: 94-100.