

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

**THE EFFECTS OF WORK LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE
RETENTION IN THE CASE OF UNILEVER ETHIOPIA HEAD OFFICE
EMPLOYEES**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND
ECONOMICS IN PARTIAL FULFILLMET OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINSTRATION IN
MANAGEMENT**

BY: TSEGA BERHE

ADVISOR: Dr. YOHANNES WORKEAFERAHU

JANUARY, 2025

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Tsega Berhe, declare that this study proposal entitled “The effects of work life balance on employee retention in the case of Unilever Ethiopia head office employees, is the study I undertook independently with the guidance and support of my advisor. This study proposal has not been submitted for any degree or diploma program in this or any other institution and that all sources of materials used for the thesis proposal have been duly accredited.

Declared by: Tsega Berhe


ID: GSE/1313/15

Signature: 

Date: January 22, 2025

Place: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Advisor: Dr. Yohannes Workeferahu

Signature: 

Date: January 22, 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Tsega Berhe, entitled: “The effects of work life balance on employee retention in the case of Unilever Ethiopia head office employees” Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration in Management complies with the regulations of the College and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee:

External Examiner Tareku Jember Signature [Signature] Date 16 / 04 / 2025
Internal Examiner Meskerem Mitiku (PhD) Signature [Signature] Date 24 / 05 / 2025
Advisor Dr. Yohannes Workeferahu Signature [Signature] Date 24 / 05 / 2025

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ACRONOMYS

KII: Key Informant Interview

ILO: International Labor Organization

MNCs: Multinational corporations

NGOs: Non-Government Organizations

PLC: Personal Limited Cooperation

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

WLB: Work Life Balance

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of work-life balance on employee retention in the case of Unilever Ethiopia head office employees. The study employed a mixed approach that used numerical and non-numerical data. The study has applied a cross-sectional survey design. A target population of the Unilever Ethiopia; hence, this study focuses on the employees at the headquarters, comprising a total of 150 employees. The population of this study was the employees who are working at Unilever Ethiopia. The research used a census approach because the population number was below 200. The researcher received responses from 136 respondents while 14 respondents were not willing, also, purposeful sampling technique was employed to interview the key informant interviews. Collected questionnaires' data was analyzed by using SPSS 26. Descriptive and inferential analysis methods were applied on the side of quantitative method while thematic analysis was approached. The data reliability was measured by Cronbach alpha, which resulted at 0.984, which shows the data was highly reliable. The overall findings of the study was Unilever Ethiopia employees face moderate challenges in achieving work-life balance, with issues such as high workloads, limited flexibility in work arrangements, and difficulties disconnecting from work, highlighting the need for improved policies to foster employee well-being, satisfaction, and retention. Work overload and Work-Related Stress had significant positive correlation ($r=0.840$), whereby higher levels of workloads are highly related to higher levels of work-related stress ($p<0.001$). The correlation between Work overload and Flexible Work Arrangements was medium positive ($r = 0.643, p <0.01$) It implies that the higher the employee's perception of workloads the higher their perception of the need for better flexible work arrangements. Family Role Overload receives a very strong positive correlation coefficient of $0.921, r = 0.921, p <0.01$ thus summarizing that flexible work arrangements increase family role overload has a positive relationship. The One-Sample t-test results underscore the critical importance of employee retention while highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address work overload, work-related stress, and family role overload through enhanced work-life balance and stress management policies. To enhance employee retention and morale, Unilever Ethiopia should focus on addressing work-life balance challenges, improving job satisfaction, and fostering a supportive work environment while maintaining strengths in training, benefits, and flexible work arrangements.

Key Word: Work Overload, Work Related Stress, Work Arrangement, Family Role Overload and Employee Retention

CHAPTER ONE:

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the study's background, problem statement, and objective, and research hypothesis, significance of the study, scope, and organization.

1.1. Background of the Study

Work-life balance has historically been viewed as a personal issue (Emslie & Hunt, 2009), with managers typically responding to employees' requests by offering paid maternity leave and on-site daycare. However, due to environmental changes and shifts in employee values, the demand for work-life balance has increased, leading companies to adopt more proactive approaches (Thorntwaite, 2004). It is important to note that work-life balance does not necessarily mean an equal distribution of time between paid and unpaid work.

Rather, it refers to a sense of satisfaction or "fit" between the different roles a person plays in life. Although subjective, work-life balance generally involves finding a balance between the time and energy devoted to work and leisure activities to maintain overall well-being. Work is essential to people's lives, as it provides a sense of accomplishment, recognition, and, most importantly, a way to earn income to meet basic needs (Das & Khushwah, 2006). While the concept of work-life balance (WLB) originated in the 1930s, the term was not formally used to describe the balance between personal and professional life until the 1970s.

During the 1980s, many companies began offering services such as daycare and employee assistance programs. By the 1990s, work-life balance became a key concern for women, although many initiatives failed to address the actual challenges employees faced. After the early failures of these initiatives, led by HR departments, professionals began to pay more attention to WLB programs in the early 21st century.

According to Falkenberg and Monachello (1990), citing the National Framework Committee for the Promotion of Work-Life Balance, define WLB as "a balance between an individual's work and their life outside work," emphasizing the importance of a healthy balance and personal fulfillment both within and outside of work, as satisfaction in life can enhance an employee's work performance.

In today's world, achieving work-life balance is becoming increasingly difficult due to the challenges of balancing work and other life responsibilities. Though still a challenge for many, the concept of WLB has been adopted by organizations and HR departments globally,

leading to the development of various policies and strategies aimed at reducing conflicts between work and personal life (Journal, 2021).

According to Bhise, Chaudhary, and Pawar (2022), the concept of "work-life balance" originates largely from Western management theories, as demonstrated by companies like Infosys, Wipro, Yahoo India, and Google India. This approach has been adopted by numerous organizations, including Dell India, Microsoft India, Accenture, and HCL Technologies. Indian companies implement a variety of strategies to promote work-life balance, such as encouraging remote work, organizing projects to allow weekends off, managing time effectively, and leveraging company resources.

In recent years, many companies have observed shifts in labor supply and demand due to new technologies, which have altered employees' skills and knowledge. This trend is also evident in Malaysia, where the need for work-life balance has increased. A study by *The Malaysian Insider* found that over 60% of Malaysian workers believe that their long working hours prevent them from spending enough time with their families (Gomez, 2013).

Achieving work-life balance can be more challenging than it seems, given the strong connections between professional and personal lives. Meeting work obligations, managing clients, and spending more time at work can negatively impact personal life, making it difficult to complete personal tasks. Similarly, personal life pressures, such as caregiving responsibilities or family problems, can cause stress, absenteeism, and decreased focus at work (Elloy & Smith, 2003).

Pathak (2018) emphasizes that work-life balance has long been a central topic in the social sciences because of its influence on career choices, time and stress management, and other critical aspects of daily life. According to Bhattarai (2022), workplace stress caused by unfavorable working conditions negatively affects an individual's performance and overall physical and mental health. This stress often results from conflicts between workplace expectations and employees' personal needs, leading to higher turnover rates.

While organizations can reduce staff turnover rates, it cannot be entirely avoided, according to Caesar and Fei (2018). To reduce costs, companies need to develop employee retention strategies. Research has shown that work-life balance, interpersonal relationships, and job satisfaction are among the key factors influencing turnover intentions. Work-life balance aims to harmonize career goals with personal fulfillment, leisure, family, and spiritual well-

being.

Since its foundation in 2015, Unilever Manufacturing PLC has assisted an expanding network of suppliers, distributors, and merchants in Ethiopia. The company has on shored soaps, detergent powders, and bouillons, and it continues to expand its local manufacturing capacity.

Unilever is committed to making the world a better place by helping people look good, feel good, and get more out of life. Its portfolio includes locally produced brands such as Signal, Lifebuoy, OMO, Sunlight, Knorr, Geisha, and Lux, along with globally recognized brands like Dove, Fair & Lovely, and Axe. The Unilever Sustainable Living Plan, which seeks to improve the lives of millions by 2020, reduce the environmental impact of its goods by half by 2030, and help more than a billion people improve their health and well-being by 2020, serves as the foundation for the company's strategy (Unilever, 2019).

This research aims to examine the effects of work-life balance on employee retention within Unilever Ethiopia. It's focused on specific issues, such as work overload, work-related stress, flexible work arrangements, and family role overload, as independent variables that may impact employee retention. Three departments were included in this study: finance and administration, human resources and logistics and supply chain.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Workers are considered an organization's most valuable asset, as they play a critical role in achieving its goals and objectives (Lazar & Osoian, 2010). The purpose of work-life balance is to create a positive and healthy work environment where individuals can manage both personal and professional responsibilities. Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000) assert that work-life balance is crucial for overall life satisfaction, family well-being, and workplace happiness, as it reduces absenteeism and turnover. Research has shown that organizations with effective work-life balance programs experience lower turnover rates, greater employee loyalty, and higher employee morale (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010).

As work demands increase, the importance of work-life balance becomes even more significant. Numerous studies indicate that a lack of work-life balance is linked to burnout, which negatively impacts employees' physical and mental health, leading to increased turnover intentions (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Additionally, high levels of work-related stress

are associated with decreased job satisfaction and commitment, which are critical precursors to employee retention (Sonnetag & Fritz, 2015).

Many organizations fail to recognize the impact that the work environment has on employee performance, which often results in poor work-life balance, increased workloads, reduced productivity, and job dissatisfaction. The issue of work-life balance has gained increasing attention as researchers explore the effects of demanding work environments in today's competitive world. A growing body of literature has explored the relationship between employees' work performance and their personal life balance, with evidence suggesting that supportive work environments and flexible working arrangements significantly enhance employees' ability to juggle work and personal responsibilities (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

According to Susi (2010), a highly engaged workforce is 50% more productive than a disengaged one, and work-life balance plays an essential role in fostering employee engagement. Engaged employees are likely to stay with their organizations longer, as they perceive their work-life balance as being supported by their employer. In fact, 78% of HR professionals consider employee engagement to be crucial or extremely important for organizational performance. Research by Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) also supports this idea, indicating that higher employee engagement leads to lower turnover.

In today's competitive business landscape, employee engagement is increasingly recognized as a key factor for business success and is widely regarded as a "win-win" strategy for businesses, employees, and their communities. However, the pursuit of faster results, increased workloads, and business globalization has made it more difficult to achieve work-life balance.

While some research has been conducted on work-life balance across various sectors in Ethiopia, little has been done on the relationship between work-life balance and employee retention in government, profit, and non-governmental organizations. This study will specifically examine how factors such as high workload, work-related stress, flexible work arrangements, and family role demands at Unilever Ethiopia impact employee retention. The researcher will explore whether challenges related to work-life balance affect employee retention at Unilever Ethiopia, given that retention concerns are frequently raised in organizational meetings.

This thesis investigates the impact of work-life balance on employee retention, with a focus on Unilever Ethiopia. Unlike previous research that primarily examined corporate sectors, this study addresses the issue in an Ethiopian context, where perspectives and experiences may differ. According to recent surveys, employee expectations around work-life balance are evolving, making it crucial for organizations to adapt their strategies (Bloom et al., 2015). This research aims to fill a gap in the literature by focusing on profit organizations and testing hypotheses related to work-life balance and employee retention, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of how cultural and environmental factors influence this relationship in the Ethiopian context.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does work overload affect employee retention?
2. How does work related stress affect employee retention?
3. How does flexible work arrangement affect employee retention?
4. How does family role overload affect employee retention?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated and tested in the course of the study

H1. Work overload has significant effect on employee retention (Please refer chapter 2 section 2.5.1 for details)

H2. Work related stress has significant relation with employee retention (Please refer chapter 2 section 2.5.2 for details)

H3: Flexible work arrangement has significant effect on employee retention (Please refer chapter 2 section 2.5.3 for details)

H4. Family role overload has significant effect on employee retention (Please refer chapter 2 section 2.5.4 for details)

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the effects of work life balance on employee retention in the case of Unilever Ethiopia head office employees.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

1. To examine the effects of work overload on the employee retention
2. To examine the effects of work related stress on the employee retention

3. To examine the effects of flexible work arrangement on the employee retention
4. To examine the effects of family role overload on the employee retention

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are vital for three key business sectors: nutrition, hygiene, and personal care, each of which plays a pivotal role in the global economy. The research underscores how work-life balance can significantly impact employee retention, offering a valuable strategy for improving retention within specific organizations. This is especially relevant in today's globalized business landscape, where diverse teams contribute various perspectives, leading to innovative solutions and enhanced organizational performance.

For companies in these sectors, the study provides important insights into how effective management of work-life balance can result in higher employee retention crucial for industries centered on consumer health and wellness. By recognizing and applying strong diversity management practices, these organizations can create more inclusive work environments that promote creativity and innovation, ultimately delivering better products and services to consumers.

The findings will help organizations in these sectors understand the link between work-life balance and improved employee retention. Furthermore, the study serves as a valuable resource for managers and leaders, offering practical guidance on the elements of work-life balance that directly affect employee retention.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research seeks to explore the impact of work-life balance on employee retention, focusing on Unilever Ethiopia. The study examines key demographic and personal factors believed to significantly affect employee performance within a global business context. These factors include work-related overload, work related stress, flexible work arrangements, and family role overload. By analyzing these aspects, the research aims to determine their influence on employee retention and how they contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives.

To meet these aims, a systematic random sampling method was employed. This approach ensures that the employee sample is representative of the broader Unilever Ethiopia workforce. By carefully selecting participants, the study aims to reduce bias and provide an accurate assessment of how factors such as gender, age, educational background, and marital

status impact employee retention.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study has five chapters. Chapter one discusses the introduction part, statement of research problem, research objectives and significance of the study. Chapter two consists of literature review which comprise of conceptual definitions, theoretical review and empirical review. Chapter three contains the research methodology which comprise of the research design, study area, research population, sampling design, and data collection methods. Chapter four highlights the presentation and interpretation of data as well as discussing of Findings. Chapter five contains the summary of the study, recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter shows a complete overview of applicable literature in order to put the study in a suitable theoretical framework. It investigates the study's theoretical, conceptual, and empirical literature. It contains theories about workplace environment factors that influence employee performance, such as physical environment, reward, leadership style, training, and communication practice. It then goes on to discuss the results of related studies.

2.2 Concept of Employee Retention

The ability of a business to retain its workforce and lower attrition rates is known as employee retention. It entails tactics and procedures intended to guarantee that workers stick with the business for a long time, sustaining stability, cutting expenses associated with hiring new staff, and conserving organizational knowledge. The performance of the business as a whole is ultimately influenced by the skilled and motivated personnel, which is maintained through effective employee retention.

Retention involves all of the actions an employer takes to motivate skilled and effective workers to stay with the company. Jackson et al (2009). Retention efforts are intended to decrease the unintended voluntary turnover of employees that the company wants to retain. Companies develop employee retention plans with the goal of obtaining a competitive edge that complements their overarching business plan.

2.3 Work life balance

There are numerous distinctive aspects to the definition of work-life balance. It frequently depends on the speaker's point of view and the conversation's context. The appropriate balance now may not be the same as it is tomorrow, and it can mean various things to different groups. The appropriate balance throughout one's single years will change following marriage and child rearing, or when embarking on a new profession as opposed to approaching retirement.

Scholars have also been unable to agree on a definition and comprehension of the concept of work-life balance. The separation of activities into two categories—life linked to and unrelated to work is one definition or point of view that could be used. It is the separation of various types of work and non-work nature, according to Gröpel (2006). According to the

author, people perceive a balance between their job and personal lives when they allocate time for both, yet this perception is arbitrary.

As per Fagan et al. (n.d.), the International Labour Organization (ILO) defines work-life balance as the equitable allocation of time and energy between work and other facets of life. Work-life balance, or WLB, is the capacity of individuals to successfully pursue their professional and personal lives without one area placing undue pressure on them to compromise the fulfilling experience of the other (Noon & Blyton, 2007). Workers who feel competent of juggling their job and non-work commitments and, for the most part, do so are said to have a "good" work-life balance (Moore, 2007).

According to De Bruin and Dupuis (2009), Programs that promote work-life balance include official and informal procedures, routine arrangements, and established arrangements that help employees manage the sometimes-competing worlds of work and non-work. The goal is to strive to give employees more freedom to play out their responsibilities at work and outside of it without worry.

Three key elements are typically included in definitions of work-life balance: businesses must provide programs to help employees strike an acceptable work-life balance, employees must be given flexibility, and employees must attain this balance (H. De Cieri, n.d.).

2.4 Work Life Balance Theories

To explain the relationship between work and family and the varying perspectives on the interaction between work, personal, and family life, experts have attempted to put out a number of hypotheses. Boundary theory and Border theory are two basic ideas that examine role tensions and their impact on work-life balance. On the basis of these two, numerous alternative ideas have been developed (Kumar & Janakiram, 2017).

2.4.1 Border Theory

According to Border Theory, the level of integration and the ease of transitions between the work and family realms depend on the flexibility and constraints involved in drawing boundaries between them. There is a significant relationship between the degree of conflict within these areas. Flexible boundaries facilitate the integration of home and work domains, easing transitions but also increasing the risk of work-family conflict. In contrast, more distinct domains are less likely to result in conflict but require greater effort to shift between them (Bellavia & Frone, 2005).

2.4.2 Boundary Theory

Boundary Theory focuses on outcomes such as how individuals perceive their homes and workplaces (Nippert-Eng, 1996) and the ease and frequency with which they transition between roles (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). According to this theory, individuals use processes of integration or segmentation to manage the boundaries between their personal and professional lives (Bulger, Matthews, & Hoffman, 2007).

2.4.3 Compensation Theory

Compensation Theory describes efforts to counterbalance negative experiences in one area by seeking positive ones in another. It divides life into two domains: work and family. For instance, dissatisfied employees may focus more on their families compared to satisfied employees, potentially compromising family life (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Clark (2000) explains that Compensation Theory posits a conflicting relationship between work and life, where individuals attempt to compensate for deficiencies in one area by finding fulfillment in another.

According to Zedeck and Mosier (1990) compensation theory has been divided into two broad categories: supplemental and reactive. Supplemental compensation occurs when helpful experiences are inadequate at work and are therefore followed at home and reactive compensation happens when undesirable work experiences are made up for in helpful home experiences.

2.4.4 Resource Drain Theory

Given that resources are limited, resource drain theory describes the movement of resources between domains. To attain equilibrium, resources are transferred from one domain to another, including money, time, and attention (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000).

2.4.5 Structural Functionalism Theory

According to structural functionalism, society is a complicated system whose components cooperate to maintain stability. According to this view, there are two types of lives: the emotional (home) and the productive (job). According to structural functionalism, men and women should have distinct responsibilities for their families and careers, with a clear division between the two (Kumar & Janakiram, 2017). The theory implies that every individual's life is concerned mainly with two separate spheres: productive life which according to this theory refers to that part of work life that helps one to produce a product or a service and emotional life which is at home that revolves around spending time for one's,

marital partner, siblings, children, vacation, health care etc. Structural functionalism theory stresses in the existence of basic separation between work and families.

2.4.6 Spill over Theory

Spillover Theory posits that experiences in one role can affect another role. It suggests that individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and emotions in their work and home lives influence work-family relationships (Belsky, Perry-Jenkins, & Crouter, 1985). Spillover can be either positive or negative. Xu (2009) states that negative spillover occurs when challenges in one domain cause issues in another, while positive spillover occurs when success in one domain leads to success in another. Young and Kleiner (1992) states that family and work function as an entity. This is because what happens at home affects the situations at work.

2.4.7 Work-Life/Family Enrichment Theory

The extent to which experiences in one role enhance the quality of life in the other role" is the definition of work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This model (Madsen, John, & Miller, 2005) explains the beneficial consequences of the link between job and family by demonstrating how values, skills, and talents acquired in one area enhance the quality of life in the other.

2.5 Factors Affecting Work-Life Balance

Numerous research studies have investigated the variables influencing people's perceptions of work-life balance. A competitive atmosphere, job satisfaction, work stress, career advancement, absenteeism, turnover, and appreciation are just a few of the elements that Shrivastava (2017) highlighted as having an impact on quality of life.

2.5.1 Work Overload

According to Elloy and Smith (2003), job overload happens when workers are given more responsibilities than they can handle. There are two types of work overload: quantitative (too many tasks) and qualitative (too hard). According to Duxbury and Higgins (2003), role overload occurs when a person's time and energy are demanded beyond what they can handle. Workload is the amount of mental and physical labor that can be done efficiently and without endangering one's health or safety (McDowall, 2009).

In an attempt to characterize work intensity, Boxall and Macky (2014) examined the number of hours worked, as well as whether or not employees feel overburdened by the demands of their jobs and whether they feel compelled to work longer hours or take work home. This

may occur when increased participation in decision-making necessitates more work due to exposure to more challenging or time-consuming challenges. According to Shiels (2015), work demands can also lead to conflict between work and family (Boyar, Maerts, Pearson, & Keough, 2003).

Nadeem and Abbas (2009) investigated the connection between work-life balance and job satisfaction, concluding that workload plays a significant role in determining how satisfied employees feel in their jobs. Their findings indicate that when employees are burdened with excessive tasks and responsibilities, it can lead to a decline in their overall job satisfaction. This suggests that managing workload effectively is crucial for maintaining a motivated and content workforce.

Further, Fatima and Sahibzada (2012) examined the specific context of universities and found that high workloads contribute to staff dissatisfaction. In the academic environment, where demands can be particularly intense, employees may feel overwhelmed. This overload can hinder their ability to balance their professional obligations with personal life, resulting in frustration and decreased morale.

The inability of employees to say no, the nature of their job and the company, the degree of trust and responsibility the company placed in them, and the imbalance between their responsibilities and working hours are some of the primary causes of work overload, according to Bahiru and Mengistu (2018).

According to Shah et al. (2011), in large businesses, employees are assigned multiple tasks that must be performed within a short period. This puts pressure on employees to accomplish their entire assignment before the deadline. According to Awang et al. (2010), the combination of deadlines and task pressure increases workplace stress. According to another respondent, some of the duties assigned are highly essential and relevant, but they must be performed within a short amount of time.

Based on the above discussions the following hypotheses was drawn:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Work overload has significant effect on employee retention.

2.5.2 Work related stress

The EU Framework Agreement on Work-Related Stress (2004) defines stress as a condition characterized by various physical, psychological, or social issues and dysfunctions. This state

arises when individuals perceive themselves as unable to meet the demands or expectations imposed upon them. In essence, stress can stem from a disconnect between one's abilities and the pressures of their work environment. This misalignment can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including decreased productivity, health problems, and strained relationships, highlighting the importance of addressing work-related stress to foster a healthier and more effective workforce. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (2012) describes workplace stress as the detrimental physical and emotional reactions that can occur when there is a conflict between the demands placed on an employee and the level of control that employee has in managing those demands. This definition emphasizes that stress arises not just from the pressures of the job itself, but also from the perceived lack of autonomy in addressing those pressures. When employees feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities without sufficient authority or resources to cope, it can lead to various negative effects, including anxiety, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction. Recognizing and addressing these conflicts is crucial for promoting a healthier work environment and enhancing employee well-being. As noted by Crank (1998), job stress refers to an employee's feelings of anxiety related to their workload. This type of stress is common among staff members and is a major cause of them not being satisfied by their job.

Comish and Swindle (1994) define occupational stress as the inability to cope with work demands when those demands exceed an individual's capabilities. This situation occurs when employees are faced with responsibilities or expectations that feel overwhelming and unmanageable. When the challenges of a job surpass what a person can reasonably handle—whether due to a high workload, tight deadlines, or inadequate resources—it can lead to significant stress. This stress not only affects an individual's mental and emotional well-being but can also impair performance, reduce job satisfaction, and lead to health issues. Therefore, it is vital for organizations to recognize the signs of occupational stress and implement strategies to ensure that workloads align with employees' abilities and resources. Additionally, stress often originates from dissatisfaction with leadership styles (Gill et al., 2010) and a lack of organizational support (Van Knippenberg et al., 2007; Wolff et al., 2016).

Thompson, Kirk, and Brown (2005) demonstrated that supervisors play a crucial role in the professional stress experienced by female police officers, helping to decrease moral exhaustion and promote a healthier work-life balance which in turn affects retention.

Based on the above discussions we can draw the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2(H2): Work related stress has significant relation with employee retention.

2.5.3 Flexible Work Arrangement

Studies have shown that flexible work schedules can help improve work-life balance for employees while also aiding employers in attracting, retaining, and motivating staff (Bachmann, 2000; Kaur, 2004).

Alternative work arrangements have been studied in the public sector as a way to reduce work-life conflict. Julien, Somerville, and Culp (2011) found that a shortened work week was seen as an alternative work schedule that reduced tension between work and personal life and contributed to improved work-life balance. High levels of management and support for flexible work arrangements, such as compressed workweeks and flexible hours, were positively correlated with the ability to balance personal, family, and work responsibilities.

Flextime work arrangements decreased turnover, absenteeism, and late arrivals, according to Christensen and Staines (1990). The study found that by reducing absenteeism, turnover, and work-family conflict, a flexible time strategy increased employee productivity.

In 2001, Hawkins, Ferris, and Weitzman studied 6,451 IBM workers in the United States. and the research demonstrated the value of flexible work schedules and locations of workplace to lessen the imbalance between work and life for employees. The study showed that people who felt their jobs were flexible were able to work longer hours and had the advantage of having a healthy work-life balance.

According to Wayne, Musisca, and Fleeson (2004), reducing work hours may help employees achieve a higher degree of work-family balance since it may lessen tension between work and family. According to Hill, Erickson, Hoimes, and Ferris (2010), flextime enables workers to better balance their obligations to their families and their jobs, reducing work-family friction and enhancing productivity both at work and at home.

The capacity to manage pressures from work, family, and personal life was positively correlated with high levels of management and superior support for flexible work arrangements, such as compressed work weeks and flexible hours. The majority of international studies conducted recently have placed more emphasis on new working conditions and flexible work arrangements than on other work-life balance initiatives, as noted Carlson, Grywacz & Kacmar (2010).

Muchiri et al. (2014) examined the relationship between Work-Family Support Services and

employee performance in the Kenyan banking sector. Their findings revealed that flexible work arrangements minimized role conflict and positively impacted staff retention and productivity. Okemwa (2016) discovered that flexible arrangements boost nurses' commitment in public hospitals. Additionally, Ibrahim (2019) indicated that employees with flexible schedules tend to enhance their job performance due to better focus on their work.

Madipelli, Sarma, and Chinnappaiah (2013) studied the factors affecting work-life balance in the workplace and found that organizations with inadequate work arrangements, unfavorable working conditions, extended hours, low pay, and a high-pressure environment can contribute to feelings of monotony, frustration, and stress. These negative experiences can disrupt the balance between work and personal life, ultimately impacting employee retention.

Based on the above discussions we can draw the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Flexible work arrangement has significant effect on employee retention.

2.5.4 Family Role Overload

Family demands are defined by Michel and Clark (2009) as the sum of the following: the number of children living at home, the amount of time spent on family activities, parental (time) demands, and time dedicated to the family. The number of dependent responsibilities (taking care of kids, elderly parents, gravely ill spouses, and other family members) as well as particular acute situations that result in high demands like the birth of a new child or unexpected serious illnesses of spouses, parents, or other family members increase family demands. In the words of O'Driscoll, Brough, and Kalliath (2006), "the combination of reduced time available and increased work and family demands for many employed parents obviously creates additional role stress" (p. 1982).

Furthermore, it has been suggested that work-family specialized assistance will have a stronger association to work-life conflict than general support, even while general organizational support is advantageous and can be seen as a resource (Kossek et al., 2011). According to Hammer, et al., (2009) have conceptualized family-supportive supervision along four dimensions: emotional support, instrumental support, role modelling behavior, and creative work–family management.

Emotional support involves making employees feel comfortable discussing work–family issues and conveying empathy. Creative work family management is defined as manager-

initiated behaviors intended to restructure work in a way that facilitates employee effectiveness on and off the job (Allen, 2013). Feeling supported could enrich the individual's experience at work, and this could lead to greater satisfaction in the family domain as well as the work domain (Shiels, 2015).

Work-family conflict can lead to behavioral changes among individuals. Work-family conflict has a significant impact on an individual's well-being and health. According to Warner and Hausdorf (2009), deviating from personal and organizational goals might negatively impact one's mental talents and sense of accomplishment. Employees at all levels are experiencing work-family conflict. (Frone et al. 1997). Research suggests that work-family conflict can lead to job dissatisfaction, low performance, low organizational commitment, irregular attendance, sluggishness, and high turnover rates (Allen et al., 2000; Ahuja et al., 2006; Moore, 2000a; Sondhi et al., 2008).

Research conducted in Pakistan found that work-family conflict and tiredness can impact relationships. According to Noor and Maad's (2008) study, work-life conflict significantly impacts the intention to leave marketing personnel. Aslam et al. (2011) found that work-family conflict and family work conflict have a favorable impact on employee stress and weariness, leading to increased turnover intentions in both commercial and public sectors. The impasse between work demands and family responsibilities is known as work-family conflict. One type of inter-role conflict that results from the inappropriate role stress of work and family difficulties is work and family interference.

Family issues may interfere with employment opportunities, and work may interfere with the appropriate resolution of family difficulties (Yildirim & Aycan, 2008). Put differently, an individual is impacted by work and family when the demands of one job conflict with those of the other, leading to the effective performance of that function (Greenhaus et al., 2006).

Ethiopian culture places additional demands on workers' time, including as going to funerals and weddings and engaging in native social media sites like "edir" and "equb." These activities add to the burden of fulfilling obligations to one's family and life (Bahiru & Mengistu, 2018).

Based on the above discussions we can draw the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4(H4): Family role overload has significant effect on employee retention

Social Support

Both work-related and non-work-related sources can provide social support; it usually takes the form of instrumental support, such as practical help with problem-solving, or emotional support, such as listening and demonstrating empathy (Adams, King, & King, 1996). Family support is typically thought of as non-work support (Grawitch & Barber, 2010). Work-life balance is managed by family members who receive family-based support in balancing their obligations to their families and their jobs (Voydanoff, 2005). Similar to the support provided by coworkers and supervisors, family support consists of two components: emotional support (such as comprehension and empathy) and instrumental support (such as helpful assistance at home; Shiels, 2015).

Spouses, parents, kids, bosses, friends, and peer groups can all provide support in helping employees manage their paid and unpaid duties. For instance, Kinnunen, Mauno, Geurts, and Dikkers (2005) discovered that employees who have supportive partners find it easier to talk through challenging topics and recuperate from work-related pressures. Better job results, including enhanced teamwork, can result from having a helpful family member, such a spouse, who helps with household chores or offers emotional support (Shiels, 2015).

According to Padma and Reddy's (2013) research, family support is a major predictor of work-life balance since it helps people balance their personal and professional lives. In a similar vein, Russo, Shteigman, and Carmeli (2016) discovered that work-life balance, psychological availability, and positive energy at work are all enhanced by support from both family and the workplace.

According to a 2009 study by Flechl, who looked into how successful jobs and family life were blended by women in senior management roles in Austria, Denmark, and the UK. The study found that attaining a healthy work-life balance required organizational flexibility as well as support from partners and family. Bahiru and Mengistu (2018) also emphasized the value of spouse support, as respondents mentioned that childcare assistance helped them manage the demands of both job and family.

Wayne, Randel, and Stevens (2006) found that people who received practical and emotional help at home felt happier and were better able to manage their job roles. Women entrepreneurs' work-life balance is severely disrupted by a number of important concerns, including role overload, health issues, dependent care issues, time management difficulty, and a lack of family support, according to Rincy and Panchanatham (2011).

2.6 The Effect of Work Life Balance on Employee Retention

The concept of work-life balance, or WLB, is becoming increasingly important in determining how different industries and sectors approach employee retention. Several research that has looked at the connection between WLB and retention have shown how policies that support a healthy balance between work and personal obligations can lead to increased organizational commitment, lower levels of stress, and improved job satisfaction. A summary of important works that investigate this connection may be found below.

According to research by Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000), workers who have a healthy work-life balance report feeling more satisfied with their occupations and are less likely to quit. According to their research, companies who implement work-life balance initiatives, like flexible work schedules and family support services, see reduced employee turnover.

In a study spanning several industries, Konrad and Mangel (2000) discovered that companies that offered work-life balance programs, like telecommuting and flexible work schedules, had better employee retention. These initiatives improved employees' ability to balance work and personal obligations.

The function of work-life balance (WLB) in multinational corporations (MNCs) was examined by Haar et al. (2014), who also showed that improved WLB policies boost employee engagement and retention. The study found that because workers feel more devoted to the company, multinational corporations (MNCs) with strong work-life balance (WLB) policies have lower employee turnover.

Research in African countries, while limited, shows a growing recognition of the importance of work-life balance. Nyambegera and Gicheru (2016) examined the effect of work-life balance on retention in Kenyan organizations. They found that work-life balance practices, such as flexible working hours and paid maternity leave, were crucial for retaining employees, especially women. Without these practices, employees reported higher levels of stress and were more likely to leave.

Belay (2018) found that workers who could balance their personal and professional obligations were happier and less inclined to look for other jobs. The study focused on the banking sector in Ethiopia. Despite the competitive job market, the study found that banks with stronger WLB policies could keep competent workers for longer. Employee

engagement is one of the ways that work-life balance affects retention. Saks (2006) contends that employee retention and work-life balance are significantly mediated by engagement. Employee engagement increases productivity and lowers attrition rates. Work-life policies that promote balance lower stress levels and foster a sense of devotion to the company boost employee engagement.

Despite the fact that work-life balance has been shown to improve retention, many firms find it difficult to put WLB policies into practice. Caesar and Fei (2018) pointed out that, despite their promotion, insufficient work-life balance initiatives are frequently associated with high employee turnover in certain businesses. They stressed the importance of customizing policies to each employee's unique demands as opposed to using a one-size-fits-all strategy.

Empirical study in Ethiopia indicates a rising understanding of the significance of work-life balance in employee retention, despite its limitations. Research conducted by Belay (2018) and Ashenafi (2020) in Ethiopian banks and public institutions shows that workers who feel that their professional and home life are better balanced are less likely to quit.

In the context of international companies such as Unilever Ethiopia, further research is required to investigate the ways in which Ethiopian workplaces adapt and use worldwide work-life balance policies. Such studies could shed light on how WLB procedures affect employee retention in a market that is competitive and expanding quickly, where there may be a high degree of personal and professional duties.

Research indicates that work-life balance and employee retention are closely related. Good work-life balance practices can lower stress levels, boost job satisfaction, and strengthen a worker's commitment to the company. Consequently, reduced attrition rates and enhanced organizational efficacy follow. Organizations must, however, customize these rules to the unique requirements of their workforce, especially in countries with different cultural and economic backgrounds like Ethiopia. Study conducted especially for Unilever Ethiopia and related companies might shed important light on how WLB regulations affect customer retention in the Ethiopian market.

2.7 Empirical Studies

Work-life balance, or WLB, has become a key component in how long employees stay with a company. With an emphasis on Unilever Ethiopia, the next empirical review investigates the connection between work-life balance and employee retention. Studies conducted on this

subject offer valuable perspectives on how workers' capacity to manage their work and personal obligations can impact their dedication, contentment at work, and choice to stay with the organization.

Numerous empirical research undertaken worldwide indicate a good correlation between employee retention and work-life balance. For example, Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000) discovered that workers who believe they have a better work-life balance are more likely to stay with their companies because they are more satisfied with their jobs and experience less burnout. Furthermore, Konrad and Mangel (2000) proposed that organizations that provide flexible work arrangements saw lower employee turnover because these programs assist staff in better juggling their personal and professional obligations.

Research on work-life balance policies, such as flexible work schedules and family support programs, in multinational corporations (MNCs) by Haar, Russo, Sune, and Ollier-Malaterre (2014) shows that these policies increase employee engagement and loyalty, which are important for retention. These results imply that work-life balance rules can be used by firms in competitive settings to help them retain top talent.

Although there is little research on work-life balance in Africa, what is known about it suggests that supportive work environments are crucial for employee retention. Nzegwu (2015) conducted a study in Nigerian firms and discovered that a lack of appropriate work-life balance rules resulted in increased employee turnover due to employees' struggles managing work-related stress and family obligations. The study underscored the necessity for African firms to implement employee-friendly policies in order to decrease attrition and boost retention.

Comparably, a study conducted in Kenya in 2016 by Nyambegera and Gicheru revealed that work-life balance initiatives have a favorable impact on employee retention, particularly for female employees. Maternity leave, flexible work schedules, and on-site child care were found to be important incentives for workers to remain with their organizations.

A few studies have examined the importance of work-life balance in Ethiopia, despite the fact that the field is still in its infancy. According to Belay (2018), for instance, investigated the effects of work-life balance on employee performance and retention in Ethiopian banks and discovered that workers who could successfully balance their personal and professional lives had higher job satisfaction and were less likely to quit.

This study supports Ashenafi's (2020) findings, which looked at work-life balance in the Ethiopian public sector and found that workers with high workloads and little flexibility were more likely to quit in pursuit of better work settings. The study emphasized the significance of developing policies that address work-life balance and meet the demands of employees, particularly in a nation like Ethiopia where workers frequently have social and family responsibilities.

As a branch of a multinational corporation, Unilever Ethiopia works in a cutthroat industry. The impacts of work-life balance on staff retention at Unilever Ethiopia have not been the subject of any particular empirical research, although the company's worldwide work-life balance practices and policies may provide some useful information.

Unilever is well-known throughout the world for its dedication to creating a supportive work environment that encourages work-life balance. To help its employees successfully manage their personal and professional life, the organization offers employee support programs, wellness initiatives, and flexible work schedules. These regulations have been demonstrated to lower staff turnover and raise retention in established markets. Nonetheless, the Ethiopian environment poses distinct obstacles, including inadequate infrastructure and social expectations that could impose extra pressure on workers, especially women.

If Unilever Ethiopia does a qualitative study on work-life balance, it might investigate how well these global policies are implemented locally and how they affect employee retention. The banking and public sectors are the main subjects of empirical study on work-life balance in Ethiopia; however, there is a dearth of data on NGOs and multinational corporations (MNCs), such as Unilever Ethiopia. Finding a balance between work and personal life is particularly difficult in NGOs and MNCs because of their unique operating environments, which place a strong emphasis on accomplishing both local and global goals. Thus, by investigating how multinational companies in Ethiopia manage work-life balance and its effect on retaining talent in a competitive market, a study centered on Unilever Ethiopia would close a significant gap in the literature.

The dearth of specialized study on work-life balance in international companies operating in Ethiopia, like Unilever, offers a research opportunity. A thorough analysis of this subject could yield practical suggestions on how Unilever Ethiopia and other multinational corporations operating in comparable settings can improve employee retention by

implementing work-life balance initiatives.

Role overload and work pressure are linked to lower job satisfaction, higher stress levels, more weariness, and greater work-life imbalance, according to Boxall and Macky's (2014) analysis of the relationship between work intensity and work-life balance. Weekly hours worked are also linked to worse work-life balance, higher levels of perceived stress, and, to a lesser extent, weariness.

In their study of work-life balance utilizing samples of big firms, Duxbury and Higgins (2003) discovered that excessive time spent at work and insufficient time for family, spouses, partners, or children were the main causes of workers' expressed dissatisfaction with work-life balance. In research of 100 respondents in a government enforcement agency, Omar, Mohd, and Ariffin (2015) found that role conflict was the second most important factor affecting work-life balance, behind workload. More conflict and a lower perception of work-life balance were linked to the number of hours worked, work demands, and organizational time expectations (Shiels, 2015).

In their study on women leaders of commercial organizations in Addis Ababa, Bahiru and Mengistu (2018) discovered that work overload was one of the main organizational issues that presented a difficulty. They claimed that the participants' work duties did not correspond with the regular working hours that the company offered, and that businesses often seem to expect more from their employees than they can provide. The respondents' demands for extra hours at their places of employment stem from the nature of their profession, which also prevents them from working during regular business hours. As they attempt to reconcile work and family obligations, this increases the strain on female leaders.

Lower levels of perceived work-life balance were shown to be associated with a more traditional distribution of household labor, as demonstrated by Crompton and Lyonette (2006). In a 2007 research of university staff, Boyar and Mosley discovered that employees experience family-work conflict when demands on their time are high. Higher family demands were linked to more family-work conflict, according to Shiels (2015), who sought to understand the relationship between work-life balance and family demands and support.

Many workers say that when faced with intense family obligations, formal leave policies that are accessible and available from work are often insufficient to handle additional demands from family members, which exacerbates work-life imbalance and role stress (Greenhaus &

Parasuraman, 2002; Boyar, Maertz, Pearson, & Keough, 2003; Brough, Holt, Bauld, Biggs, & Ryan, 2008; Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, & Sparrow, 2013, as cited by Shiels, 2015).

A study by Bahiru and Mengistu (2018) found that women's lives were unbalanced and under a great deal of stress due to cultural expectations. In their investigation into particular types of informal support, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) discovered that coworker and supervisor support was negatively correlated with stress, quitting intentions, and work-family conflict, and positively correlated with job, family, and life satisfaction.

The work-life balance of employees at Mumbai-based IT companies was investigated by Harshada (2014). The findings emphasized the role that supervisors play in helping employees achieve work-life balance and the significance of creating a work environment that supports this goal.

Additionally, family-supportive supervision has been linked to happier employees, less inclinations to quit the company, and more positive family-to-work spillover (Allen, 2001; Hammer et al., 2009). Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, and Baltes (2011) found in their meta-analytical review of the antecedents of work-family conflict that coworker support and supervisor support had weak negative relationships with work-family conflict, indicating that work-family conflict decreases as social support increases in the workplace.

2.7.1 Research Gaps

No	Topic	Author(s) & Year	Summary of Findings	Gaps Identified
1	The Role of Work-Life Balance in Enhancing Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance"	Susi (2010),	An engaged workforce is 50% more productive than a disengaged one, and work-life balance is key to fostering this engagement. Additionally, 78% of HR professionals view employee engagement as vital for organizational performance.	This study examines how work-life balance enhances employee engagement and its effects on organizational productivity, highlighting that a highly engaged workforce is more productive and valued by HR professionals.
2	The Impact of Environmental Changes and Shifting Employee Values on Work-Life Balance Approaches: Analyzing the Role	(Thornthwaite, 2004).	Environmental changes and shifts in employee values, the demand for work-life balance has increased, leading companies to adopt more proactive approaches It is important to note that work-	This topic highlights the relationship between environmental changes, shifts in employee values regarding work-life balance, and how structural functionalism influences gender-specific roles

	of Structural Functionalism in Gender-Based Work and Family Responsibilities		life balance does not necessarily mean an equal distribution of time between paid and unpaid work.	in the workplace and family dynamics.
3	The Relationship of Work Life Balance and the Quality of Life among Employees Studying Part Time	(Kumar & Janakiram, 2017).	Structural functionalism, men and women should have distinct responsibilities for their families and careers, with a clear division between the two	The study found a significant correlation between work-family conflict and quality of life for part-time students, as well as a positive link between family-work enrichment and quality of life. These findings can help organizations and universities develop strategies to support work-life balance for part-time employees.
4	The effects of work-life balance on employee performance and retention in Ethiopian banks.	Belay (2018),	The study on work-life balance in Ethiopian banks found that employees who effectively balanced personal and professional lives reported higher job satisfaction and were less likely to leave their jobs.	Belay (2018) found that in Ethiopian banks, employees with better work-life balance reported higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates.
5	Outcomes of Work-Life Balance on Job Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction and Mental Health: A Study across Seven Cultures	Haar et al. (2014),	The study examined work-life balance (WLB) in multinational corporations (MNCs), finding that effective WLB policies enhance employee engagement and retention. As a result, MNCs with strong WLB strategies experience lower employee turnover due to increased employee commitment	Haar et al. (2014) showed that multinational corporations (MNCs) with strong WLB policies experienced increased employee engagement and retention due to reduced turnover.
6	The Effect of Work Life Balance on Employee Engagement In Commercial Bank Of Ethiopia	Ashenafis (2020)	The findings indicated that in the Ethiopian public sector, employees with high workloads and limited flexibility were more inclined to leave for better work environments.	Ashenafi (2020) identified that Ethiopian public sector workers with excessive workloads and low flexibility were more likely to quit for better working environments.

7	Work-life Balance	Caesar and Fei (2018)	Pointed out that, despite their promotion, insufficient work-life balance initiatives are frequently associated with high employee turnover in certain businesses. They stressed the importance of customizing policies to each employee's unique demands as opposed to using a one-size-fits-all strategy.	Empirical study in Ethiopia indicates a rising understanding of the significance of work-life balance in employee retention, despite its limitations. Caesar and Fei (2018) pointed out that poorly implemented WLB initiatives are linked to high employee turnover, stressing the need for personalized policies.
8	Extrinsic and Intrinsic Factors Influencing Employee Motivation: Lessons from AMREF Health Africa in Kenya	Nyambegera and Gicheru (2016)	Examined the effect of work-life balance on retention in Kenyan organizations. They found that work-life balance practices, such as flexible working hours and paid maternity leave, were crucial for retaining employees, especially women. Without these practices, employees reported higher levels of stress and were more likely to leave.	Nyambegera and Gicheru (2016) examined WLB practices in Kenya, particularly flexible working hours and maternity leave, which were critical for retaining employees, especially women.
9	Predictors of Work Life Balance in Selected Non-Government Organization in Ethiopia	Harshada (2014)	The work-life balance of employees at Mumbai-based IT companies was investigated by the findings emphasized the role that supervisors play in helping employees achieve work-life balance and the significance of creating a work environment that supports this goal.	Harshada (2014) stressed the importance of supervisory support in achieving WLB in IT companies.
10	The Effect of Work-Life Balance On Employee Performance: The Case Of UNDP Ethiopia	Betelihe m Teklu (August, 2020)	This research revealed that the regression analysis showed how much the combination of independent variables explain the dependent variable, there are a number of predictors for the performance of employees of the sample organization.	Work Overload work related stress and Family role overload were perceived to be factors that negatively affects employee performance; and Organizational support was perceived to be the factor that positively affect the employee's performance.

Table 1: Research Gaps

2.8 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is a visual diagram that captures the main things to be studied that is the key factors, concepts, or variables and the presumed relationships among them.

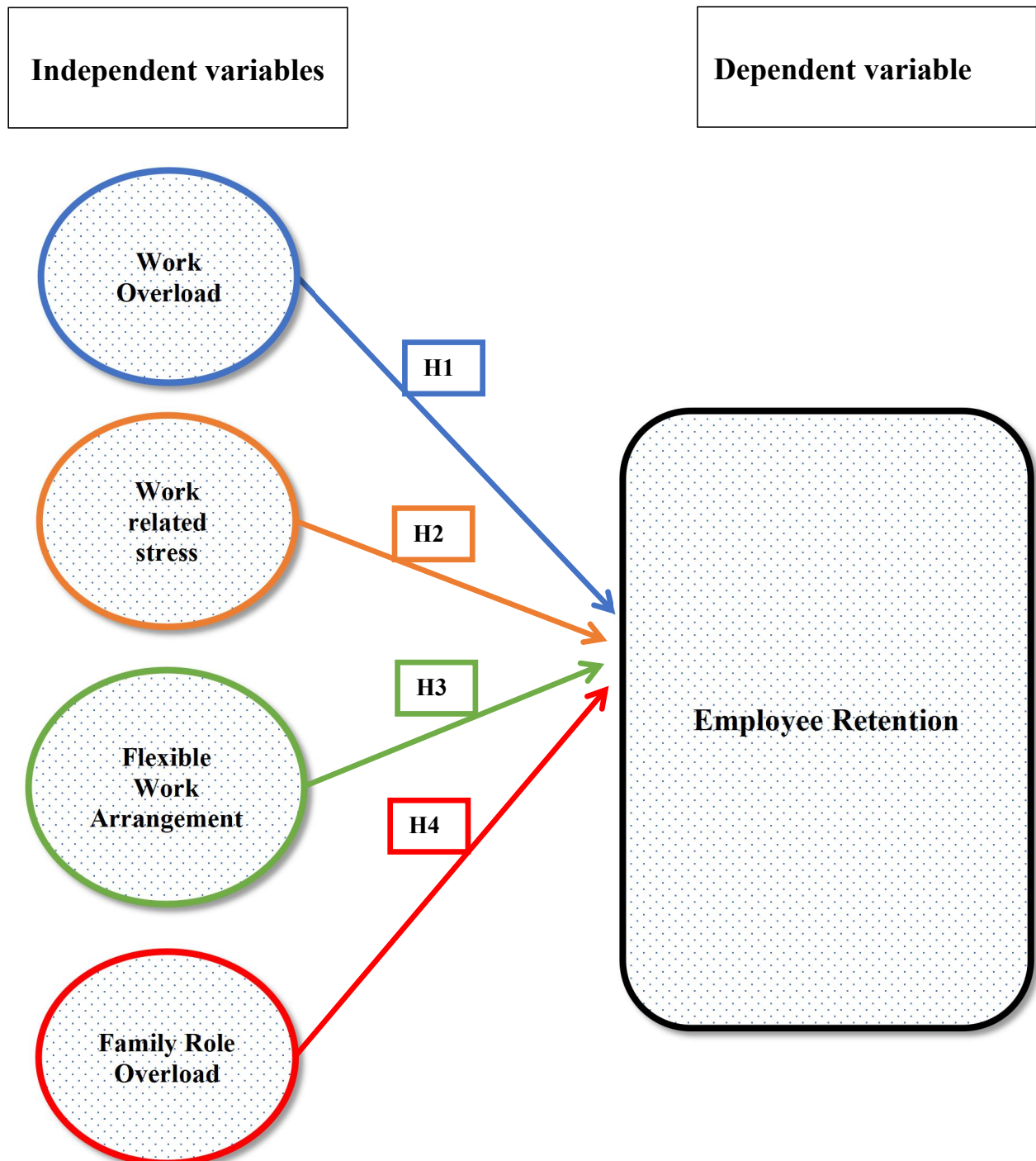


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE:

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the approaches utilized to gather data pertinent to the study. It details the research design, the population under investigation, the sample size and sampling technique, the sampling procedure, as well as the processes for data collection and analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This study employed explanatory and descriptive research designs to illustrate the relationships between the variables' causes and effects. This research has applied an explanatory design, in which the results of the qualitative assess to contextualize and explain the findings of the quantitative investigation. In order to prove or disprove an explanation or prediction, explanatory research searches for causes and reasons. It's carried out to find and document certain connections between various facets of the phenomenon being studied. This design not only addressed the "why" and "how" questions, but it also illustrated the possible connections between the several determinant variables and the outcome variable.

3.3 Research Approach

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The quantitative approach is used for precise measurement and analysis of data from a structured questionnaire, allowing for the identification of patterns and trends. This data is numerically analyzed using statistical techniques, providing objective results that can be generalized.

On the other hand, qualitative data, gathered through open-ended questions, interviews, or observations, captures the respondents' experiences and insights in greater detail. This data adds depth and context to the quantitative findings, rich understanding of the research problem. By combining these methods, the study achieves a balanced analysis, integrating objective statistical data with in-depth qualitative insights to draw well-rounded conclusions.

3.4 Data Sources and Type

This study employed a comprehensive approach to data collection by utilizing both primary and secondary data sources to gather relevant information. This mixed-methods strategy ensures a robust and well-rounded understanding of the research problem, contributing to more accurate and reliable findings.

3.4.1 Primary Data Collection

The study gathered primary data directly from the target population through a carefully designed questionnaire survey, chosen as the most effective method. This questionnaire has focused on collecting specific information related to the research objectives, such as the link between work-life balance and employee retention. A representative sample from the population was selected to ensure the data reflects broader trends. The survey collected both quantitative and qualitative data, with clear and relevant questions to provide accurate and valuable insights for analysis.

3.4.2 Secondary data

The study incorporated secondary data alongside primary data to enhance the research findings. Secondary data, collected by other researchers or organizations, were tailored to align with the study's objectives, focusing on work-life balance and employee retention. This include data on work overload, work related stress, flexible work arrangements, and family role overload. Relevant documents such as academic journals, research papers, and reports were also reviewed to build on existing theories and practices. By integrating both primary and secondary sources, the study was ensured a comprehensive and reliable analysis of the topic.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

The primary data for the research was collected using two complementary methods: questionnaires and interviews, each serving distinct yet interrelated purposes. Questionnaires were designed to gather quantitative data with closed-ended questions that facilitates statistical analysis. In contrast, interviews provided a qualitative dimension, enabling deeper exploration of participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This combination of data collection methods not only ensured a broad and representative data set but also enriched the analysis by integrating numerical trends with nuanced personal insights, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

Close-ended questionnaires were distributed to the employees of Unilever to get a full understanding of the relationship between work life balance and employee retention using the four independent variables. Also pilot test of the questionnaire was made by taking 10% of the sample size to answer the questions and give suggestions. The employees who filled out the pilot test were asked on the clarity, understand-ability and relevance of the questionnaire.

3.5.2 Key Informants Interview (KII)

In this study, Key Informant Interviews (KII) was conducted to gain in-depth insights into the role of work life balance in enhancing employee retention. KIIs are a qualitative research method where individuals with specific knowledge or expertise provide detailed information on the topic of interest. For this study, the selected Key Informants are chosen based on their roles and expertise, which are crucial for understanding how work life balance impacts on employee retention.

Marketing Manager: The marketing managers offered valuable insights into how work-life balance affects employee retention. They illustrated how this balance influences marketing strategies, team dynamics, and retention within the marketing department. Their role was essential in understanding customer preferences, managing diverse teams, and developing inclusive marketing campaigns that appeal to a wide audience.

Human Resources Manager: The human resources manager provided perspectives on the implementation of diversity policies, recruitment practices, and employee development programs which played a crucial role in understanding how work-life balance impacts employee retention.

Logistics and Supply Chain Manager: The logistics and supply chain manager highlighted the effects of work-life balance on employee retention, operational efficiency, team collaboration, and problem-solving within logistics and supply chain functions. The role was important for examining how diverse viewpoints contribute to efficiency and innovation in managing complex supply chains and logistics operations.

By interviewing individuals in these roles, the study aimed to gather comprehensive and nuanced perspectives on the effects of work life balance from various organizational viewpoints. This approach ensured a well-rounded understanding of how diversity influences the effects of work-life balance on employee retention within the organization.

3.6 Population and Sampling Design

3.6.1 Target Population

The target population of this study has included employees from three departments incorporated; finance and administration, human resources and logistic and supply chain departments. The population size is approximate 150 of the three departments.

3.6.2 Sample Size Determination

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The researcher aims to focus on a particular group, specifically expert participants with extensive knowledge in the field. For a small population (fewer than 200 individuals), a census approach, which involves using the entire population as the sample, is preferred. Consequently, data has collected from all program staff at Unilever Ethiopia who meet the inclusion criteria, following a census sampling design.

3.7 Data Analysis

According to research approach, the collected data was analyzed by using both analysis methods. The gathered information was entered into SPSS version 26 to simplify the answers into a small number of categories so that data analysis was done. The Likert scale was employed to measure how strongly respondents to structured surveys feel that were developed based on the variables and their dimensions.

A cross-sectional survey is conducted for the quantitative part, also the demographic data was analyzed by using descriptive method, as frequency and percentage were approached. In addition, the interview data was analyzed as narrative method, data stated separately. To determine the effect of the dependent variables over the independent variable, Regression analysis was employed to establish relationship between work life balance and employee retention.

The study used the following multiple linear regression model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + e$$

Where: Y = Employee Retention

X1 = Work Overload

X2 = Work related stress

X3 = Flexible Work Arrangement

X4 = Family Role Overload

β = Beta coefficients, e = Error term

B coefficient (- or +)

This simply means that each parameter multiplies an independent variable including Work Overload, Work related stress, Flexible Work Arrangement and Family Role Overload, while the regression function is a sum of these "parameter times" independent variable terms.

In the qualitative method KII data is analyzed by using thematic analysis, the interview questions are responded by those identified KIIs whose answers analyzed through thematic analysis approach.

3.8 Reliability and Validity Analysis

3.8.1 Reliability analysis

Reliability will refer to the consistency and stability of a measuring instrument. According to Kothari (2004), an instrument is considered reliable if it consistently produces the same results under identical conditions. This means that repeating the same measurement should yield similar outcomes, indicating that the instrument is stable and dependable.

Cronbach’s Alpha is one of the most commonly used methods to assess the reliability of the research instrument. This statistical measure is used to evaluate the internal consistency of a set of items in a psychometric test or questionnaire. In this research, Cronbach’s Alpha is employed to test the reliability of the research instrument, which is designed to gather data through a set of questions or items. Ensuring the reliability of this instrument is crucial for guaranteeing that the collected data is accurate and trustworthy.

Ensuring the reliability of the research instrument is essential for validating the accuracy of the collected data. Reliable instruments produced stable and consistent results, thereby enhancing the credibility of the research findings. By using Cronbach’s Alpha to assess the reliability of the constructs, the study confirms that the instrument is effectively measure the intended variables and provide trustworthy data for analysis.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.984	29

Source: SPSS 26,2025

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.984 is extremely high. This indicates excellent internal consistency among the 29 items in the scale. The analysis included 29 items, which suggests the scale or questionnaire is fairly comprehensive. A high Cronbach's Alpha value with this many items indicates that redundancy or overlap among items may exist. While this does not

diminish the reliability, it suggests the possibility of evaluating whether some items are repetitive or unnecessary.

Table 3: Reliability Statistics of Variables

Item-Total Statistics	
Items	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Workload	.915
Work related stress	.881
Flexible work arrangement	.866
Family role overload	.870
Employee Retention	.927

Source: SPSS 26, 2025

Workload (0.915): If the item "Workload" is removed from the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha value would become 0.915. Since this value is close to the current Cronbach's Alpha of the full scale (not explicitly provided but assumed to be high), it suggests that "Workload" contributes to the scale's reliability. Removing it would slightly reduce or maintain the scale's internal consistency.

Work-Related Stress (0.881): Removing "Work-Related Stress" would result in an improved Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.881. This suggests that this item might have a slightly weaker correlation with the overall scale compared to others. It is still a significant contributor to the scale, but its removal would slightly enhance reliability.

Flexible Work Arrangement (0.866): Removing "Flexible Work Arrangement" would result in the highest Cronbach's Alpha value (0.866). This indicates that this item has a somewhat weaker relationship with the other items in the scale. Its removal would improve reliability more than removing any other item. It might be worth revisiting the item to check its alignment with the scale's overall construct.

Family Role Overload (0.870): If "Family Role Overload" is removed, the Cronbach's Alpha value would become 0.870. This item has a moderate contribution to the scale's consistency. While its removal would slightly enhance reliability, the impact is not substantial, suggesting that the item is reasonably aligned with the scale's construct.

Employee Retention (0.927): Removing "Employee Retention" would result in a Cronbach's

Alpha value of 0.927, which is lower than the overall reliability of the scale. This indicates that this item is a strong contributor to the scale's reliability, and its removal would negatively impact internal consistency.

3.8.2 Validity Test

Content validity refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument accurately represents the concept it is intended to measure. In other words, it assesses whether the questionnaire or test covers all aspects of the construct being studied and whether the items included are relevant and representative of the topic. This type of validity ensures that the tool accurately captures the full scope of the subject matter. In the context of this study, content validity is crucial because it ensures that the questionnaire used effectively measures the intended variables related to the effects of work life balance on employee retention in the case of Unilever Ethiopia head office employees. Pilot test of the questionnaire was made by taking 10% of the sample size to answer the questions and give suggestions. The employees who filled out the pilot test were asked on the clarity, understand-ability and relevance of the questionnaire.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

In this research, strict adherence to ethical standards was prioritized to protect participants and uphold the study's credibility. Participants agreed to join the study willingly and were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. Participants were able to withdraw at any time without repercussions, respecting their autonomy. Respondents' information was kept confidential, anonymous, and used solely for academic purposes. Collected data was securely stored, encrypted, and accessed only by the researcher. The questionnaire ensured no personal or identifying information was disclosed, preserving respondent anonymity. Clear instructions and reassurances were provided to ensure participants feel respected and encouraged to participate honestly. The study adhered to ethical guidelines set by institutional review boards or ethics committees, ensuring research integrity and quality. These practices were crucial for maintaining trust, enhancing the reliability of the findings, and ensuring the overall quality of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR:

4. DATA ANALYSIS and INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the effects of work life balance on employee retention in the case of Unilever Ethiopia head office employees. Collected data was analyzed using descriptive and regression analysis statistics and interpretations of the results are provided accordingly, also KII interview questions were addressed by asking three selected KIIs. The qualitative data was interpreted by using narrative analysis method.

4.2 Demographic Status of the Respondents

Table 4: Demographic Status of the Respondents

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	72	48.0	52.9	52.9
	Male	64	42.7	47.1	100.0
	Total	136	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	14	9.3		
Total		150	100.0		
Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-20 years	3	2.0	2.2	2.2
	26-33 years	38	25.3	27.9	30.1
	40-41 years	48	32.0	35.3	65.4
	42-49 Years	36	24.0	26.5	91.9
	Above 50 years	11	7.3	8.1	100.0
	Total	136	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	14	9.3		
Total		150	100.0		
Experience					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-5 Years	40	26.7	29.4	29.4
	6-10 Years	35	23.3	25.7	55.1
	11-15 Years	39	26.0	28.7	83.8
	Above 15 Years	22	14.7	16.2	100.0
	Total	136	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	14	9.3		
Total		150	100.0		
Education					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Diploma	5	3.3	3.7	3.7
	Degree	57	38.0	41.9	45.6
	Postgraduate	56	37.3	41.2	86.8
	Other	18	12.0	13.2	100.0
	Total	136	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	14	9.3		

Total		150	100.0		
Marital status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	50	33.3	36.8	36.8
	Married	37	24.7	27.2	64.0
	Divorced	10	6.7	7.4	71.3
	Widowed	19	12.7	14.0	85.3
	Prefer not to say	20	13.3	14.7	100.0
	Total	136	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	14	9.3		
Total		150	100.0		
Department					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Finance and administration	48	32.0	35.3	35.3
	Human resources	20	13.3	14.7	50.0
	Logistic and supply chain	68	45.3	50.0	100.0
	Total	136	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	14	9.3		
Total		150	100.0		
How long have you been employed					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 year	44	29.3	32.4	32.4
	1-3 years	45	30.0	33.1	65.4
	4-6 years	42	28.0	30.9	96.3
	More than 6 years	5	3.3	3.7	100.0
	Total	136	90.7	100.0	
Missing	System	14	9.3		
Total		150	100.0		

Source: SPSS 26, 2025

Gender

Out of a total of 150 respondents: 72 of the respondents of the present study are female and constitute 48.0% of the total while 64 of the respondents are male and represent 42.7% of the total population but have a valid response rate of 52.9% and 47.1% respectively. There were 14 missing responses in the research (9.3%). The analysis mirrored more numerically the responses of females against the total valid responses where females constituted 52.9% of the valid data set.

Age

Among the valid respondents (136 responses): The largest age group is 40-41 years old with 48 participants, 32.0% of the total participants and 35.3% of the valid respondents. The second large group is 26-33 years (38 respondents, 25.3%, 27.9%). The 42-49 years group

follows it (36 respondents 24.0%, 26.5%). We also have the Above 50 years with 11 respondents (7.3%, 8.1%) followed by the 18-20 years with only 3 respondents (2.0%, 2.2%). This means that there is population legitimization towards participants aged between 26 and 49 years (at close to 90%, of the valid responses).

Experience

1-5Years: There are 40 respondents (26.7% of the total sample). When considering only valid responses (excluding missing data), this category represents 29.4% of the respondents. The cumulative percentage for this group is 29.4%. 6-10 Years: There are 35 respondents (23.3% of the total sample), and 25.7% when considering only valid responses. The cumulative percentage after this category is 55.1%, indicating that up to this point, 55.1% of the total valid responses fall within the first two experience categories. 11-15 Years: There are 39 respondents (26.0% of the total sample), and 28.7% of valid responses fall into this group. The cumulative percentage now increases to 83.8%, indicating that 83.8% of valid respondents have 15 years or less of experience. Above 15 Years: There are 22 respondents (14.7% of the total sample), representing 16.2% of valid responses. The cumulative percentage reaches 100%, meaning all valid responses are accounted for by these four categories. The total valid responses are 136 (90.7% of the total sample), while there are 14 missing responses (9.3%), resulting in a grand total of 150 responses.

Education

From the 136 valid responses: Largest employment educational attainment is Degree holders with 57 respondents (38.0%), 41.9% . This is trailed closely by Postgraduates with 56 respondents, 37.3%, 41.2% respectively. Other qualifications are represented by 18 respondents (12%, 13.2%); Diploma holders are the least numerous (5 respondents, 3.3%, 3.7%). According to the data, most employees are well-educated, more than eighty-three percent holds a degree or higher.

Marital Status

Single: There are 50 respondents in this category, which accounts for 33.3% of the total sample. When considering only the valid responses (excluding missing data), this group makes up 36.8% of the valid responses. The cumulative percentage for this group is 36.8%, meaning 36.8% of valid respondents identify as single. Married: There are 37 respondents in this category, which represents 24.7% of the total sample. When considering only valid responses, this group makes up 27.2% of the valid responses. The cumulative percentage after this group is 64.0%, meaning that 64.0% of valid respondents are either single or

married. Divorced: There are 10 respondents who are divorced, representing 6.7% of the total sample. This makes up 7.4% of the valid responses. The cumulative percentage reaches 71.3%, meaning that 71.3% of valid responses fall into the first three marital status categories. Widowed: There are 19 respondents in this category, which represents 12.7% of the total sample and 14.0% of valid responses. The cumulative percentage after this group reaches 85.3%, indicating that 85.3% of valid responses are accounted for by the first four categories. Prefer not to say: There are 20 respondents who prefer not to disclose their marital status. This group represents 13.3% of the total sample and 14.7% of valid responses. The cumulative percentage reaches 100%, meaning that all valid responses are accounted for across these five marital status categories.

The total number of valid responses is 136, which makes up 90.7% of the total sample. There are 14 missing responses, which account for 9.3% of the total responses.

Department

Finance and Administration, Human Resources, and Logistics and Supply Chain. Finance and Administration: There are 48 respondents (32.0% of the total sample), representing 35.3% of valid responses. The cumulative percentage for this group is 35.3%, meaning that 35.3% of valid respondents belong to this department. Human Resources: There are 20 respondents (13.3% of the total sample), which makes up 14.7% of the valid responses. The cumulative percentage for this category is 50.0%, meaning that half of the valid responses come from respondents in either Finance and Administration or Human Resources. Logistics and Supply Chain: This department has the highest representation, with 68 respondents (45.3% of the total sample), which accounts for 50.0% of the valid responses. The cumulative percentage reaches 100% at the end of this category, indicating that all valid responses (136) are accounted for across these three departments. The total number of valid responses is 136, representing 90.7% of the total sample, with 14 missing responses, which make up 9.3% of the total responses.

How Long Have You Been Employed

For the 136 valid respondents: The largest group has been employed 1-3 years. The biggest group consists of 45 respondents (30.0%), and 33.1% by count. Less than 1 year was the second option mentioned with 44 respondents, 29.3%, 32.4%. The last group, including 4-6 years, includes 42 respondents (28.0%, 30.9%). Out of 150 respondents, only five have been employed for more than 6 years, 3.3% and 3.7%. This implies that the workforce mainly comprises of employees with less than 6 years in their organizations.

Missing Data as with the above general findings, there are missing non-response or incomplete cases for this part of the sample and the 14 responses equal 9.3 percent in all categories.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis

4.3.1 Work overload

Table 5: Work overload

Descriptive Statistics						
S/N	Items	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
1	I usually work long hours	136	2.48	.054	.632	.400
2	There isn't much time to socialize/relax with my partner/family in the week	136	2.51	.052	.608	.370
3	I have to take work home most evenings	136	2.51	.052	.608	.370
4	I often work late/weekends to deal with paperwork without interruptions	136	2.51	.053	.621	.385
5	Relaxing and forgetting about work issues is hard to do	136	2.51	.053	.620	.385
	Valid N (listwise)	136				

Source: SPSS 26,2025

I usually work long hours (Mean: 2.48, Std. Deviation: 0.632). All the results for the four items following the same pattern, Mean = 2.48, St. Deviation = 0.632; This means that respondents are, on average, disagreeing with the statement in a slight manner (assuming a Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). The degree of response dispersion is moderate, which is also evidenced by the coefficient of variability of 0.632, although there are some differences. The variance of 0.400 supports the moderate variation of the responses received.

There isn't much time to socialize/relax with my partner/family in the week (Mean: 2.51, Std. Deviation: 0.608). All the participants have agreed to some extent with the statement and their average score of 2.51 also favors this assumption with a standard deviation of 0.608. The overall mean of 0.608 can therefore be interpreted as relatively low and an equal average indicates relative constancy of the responses as can be seen by the fairly low variability (SD= 0.370). This supposes equal understanding of the participants in regards to problems related to work-life balance.

I have to take work home most evenings (Mean: 2.51, Std. Deviation: 0.608) The mean value 2.51 proved that respondents provided slightly disagreeing/neutral answer for item 3 similarly to item 2. The results highlight that the standard deviation (0.608) and variance (0.370) of participants' perception regarding this issue are the same as item 2.

I often work late/weekends to deal with paperwork without interruptions (Mean: 2.51, Std. Deviation: 0.621) : There is the similar perception within these items as the mean too stayed constant at 2.51. The standard deviation resulted to be 0.621, and the variance, 0.385, slightly more than the other items, which supports the idea that there exists a marginal variability in especially in responses for this item.

Relaxing and forgetting about work issues is hard to do (Mean: 2.51, Std. Deviation: 0.620): Thus, the results of the current survey follow the tendency toward neutrality/slight disagreement with the mean score of 2.51. Similar to item 4, we obtained a standard deviation of 0.620 and a variance of 0.385, suggesting participants' perceptions are equally consistent but slightly more diverse.

Summary

The data reveals that employees at Unilever Ethiopia are experiencing challenges in finding a balance between their working hours and personal life due to work overload.

As individuals, the respondents mostly disagreed with the statements about hard working hours, socializing with family, taking work home, and coming to work late or weekends, with means going steadily around 2.51. Still, the variety in the responses (SDs in the range from 0.608 to 0.632) are due to the different experiences of the individuals but it is common. One aspect that has added to the worries is that relaxation and disconnection from work are increasingly becoming impossible, which is confirmed by the uniformity of responses among all the variables and a sense of a common problem. In general, by facing such minor obstacles in the way of a balanced life where they can entertain themselves, the employees really point out that the solution of these issues must be dealt with, if we are to arrange their good living firstly.

4.3.2 Work related stress

Table 6: Work related stress

Descriptive Statistics						
Nu	Items	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
1	I usually work long hours	136	2.48	.054	.632	.400
2	I worry about the effect of work stress on my health	136	2.51	.054	.632	.400
3	My relationship with my partner is suffering because of the pressure or long hours of my work	136	2.51	.053	.620	.385
4	My family are missing out on my input, either because I don't see enough of them/am too tired	136	2.51	.054	.632	.400
5	Finding time for hobbies, leisure activities, or to maintain friendships and extended family relationships is difficult	136	2.49	.054	.632	.400
6	I would like to reduce my working hours and stress levels, but feel I have no control over the current work long hours situation	136	2.51	.054	.632	.400
	Valid N (listwise)	136				

Source: SPSS 26, 2025

I usually work long hours (Mean: 2.48): Respondents generally disagree or are neutral about working long hours. The low standard deviation (0.632) shows that most participants agree on this point.

I worry about the effect of work stress on my health (Mean: 2.51): This item reflects a neutral/slight disagreement, implying that while some participants are concerned, the overall sentiment leans toward disagreement.

My relationship with my partner is suffering because of the pressure or long hours of my work (Mean: 2.51): Responses suggest a neutral/slight disagreement, indicating that work-related pressure has a mild or no noticeable effect on relationships.

My family are missing out on my input (Mean: 2.51): Similar to the previous item, respondents largely do not perceive their work to significantly impact their family life, with responses clustering near neutral/slight disagreement.

Finding time for hobbies, leisure activities... is difficult (Mean: 2.49): A mean of 2.49 implies a neutral/slight disagreement, suggesting that respondents do not overwhelmingly find it

challenging to maintain personal or social activities.

I would like to reduce my working hours and stress levels (Mean: 2.51): With a mean of 2.51, participants express a neutral/slight disagreement, indicating that while reducing stress and working hours might be desirable, it is not perceived as a pressing issue for most.

Summary

The respondents at generally expressed disagreement or neutrality regarding work-life balance issues. They indicated they do work long hours but reached a consensus on this point. Concerns about work stress affecting health and relationships were slight, with minimal perceived negative impacts noted. Similarly, they felt that family life and personal hobbies were not significantly affected by work. Although there was some desire to reduce working hours and stress, it was not viewed as an urgent concern for most participants.

4.3.3 Flexible work arrangement

Table 7: Flexible work arrangement

Descriptive Statistics						
Number	Items	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
		Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
1	There is a flexible working hour management at your organization	136	2.46	.054	.631	.399
2	Flexible working hours allow to balance personal commitments	136	2.45	.053	.618	.383
3	Flexible working hours allow to focus more on the job at work	136	2.43	.055	.641	.410
4	Attendance and punctuality has improved as a result of utilizing flexible working hours	136	2.43	.054	.628	.395
5	Flexible working hours motivate and give sense of satisfaction and Well being	136	2.44	.053	.618	.382
	Valid N (listwise)	136				

Source: SPSS 26, 2025

There is a flexible working hour management at your organization (Mean: 2.46): The slightly low mean suggests participants largely disagree or are neutral about the existence of effective flexible working hour management. This highlights a possible lack of formalized flexible working hour policies.

Flexible working hours allow balancing personal commitments (Mean: 2.45): Responses indicate that participants slightly disagree or are neutral, suggesting that flexible working

hours, if available, are not perceived as significantly helpful in managing personal commitments.

Flexible working hours allow focusing more on the job at work (Mean: 2.43): With the lowest mean among the items, this suggests a slightly stronger disagreement or neutral stance. Employees may not find flexible working hours significantly effective in improving focus on job responsibilities.

Attendance and punctuality has improved as a result of utilizing flexible working hours (Mean: 2.43): Similar to the previous item, this reflects a slightly negative or neutral perception. This implies that flexible working hours, if implemented, are not widely seen as enhancing punctuality or attendance.

Flexible working hours motivate and give a sense of satisfaction and well being (Mean: 2.44): The responses are largely neutral or slightly disagree, indicating that the existing flexible working arrangements are not widely viewed as enhancing satisfaction or well-being.

Summary

According to the descriptive data, the perception of respondents that the management of flexible working hours is ineffective. Slightly negative or neutral responses reveal that the participants do not see flexible working hours as being very useful to them to balance their personal commitments. The findings suggest that flexible working hours are not helpful in improving job focus, enhancing attendance, punctuality, or boosting satisfaction and well-being, which in turn is the potential gap in the implementation or communication of flexible working hour policies. Employees are not experiencing the intended benefits or flexibility in their work arrangements. The reasons are unclear so the issue can be due to other factors, which is a hypothesis that can be tested through further research.

For an employer, the employee is important in which happy work-life balance policies are enhancing. Such initiatives involve the introduction of flexible working hours and the implementation of more remote or hybrid work arrangements, which will provide employees with greater freedom to choose the times that are suitable for them. For example, giving additional paid leave for personal and family-related needs, implementing wellness programs, and ensuring realistic workloads will lead to the improvement of the employee's welfare. Additionally, to limit after-hours communication and to provide family-friendly work related stress, such as childcare assistance, will also significantly improve the conditions. By these measures, not only a more suitable work environment can be created, but also, employee morale and productivity can be lifted and a stable workforce is made certain.

4.3.4 Family role overload

Table 8: Family role overload

Descriptive Statistics					
Number	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
1	I feel I have a lot of responsibility in my home life	136	2.44	.630	.397
2	I feel that I do not have enough time to get everything done at home that I want to	136	2.45	.642	.412
3	I don't have enough time to do what is expected of me in my home	136	2.45	.642	.412
4	I have too much work for one person to do in my home	136	2.46	.631	.399
5	My home life often takes my attention	136	2.49	.621	.385
	Valid N (listwise)	136			

Source: SPSS 26,2025

I feel I have a lot of responsibility in my home life: The average response suggests respondents tend to slightly disagree or remain neutral. They may not feel overwhelmed by home responsibilities overall.

I feel that I do not have enough time to get everything done at home that I want to: Similar to Item 1, respondents slightly disagree, suggesting they may not perceive significant time pressures affecting their goals.

I don't have enough time to do what is expected of me in my home: The mean and standard deviation indicate a response pattern similar to Item 2, with slight disagreement or neutrality.

I have too much work for one person to do in my home: Respondents also slightly disagree, suggesting they do not perceive home tasks as overly burdensome.

My home life often takes my attention: This item has the highest mean (2.49), suggesting respondents are more likely to agree that their home life demands attention, though the agreement is still mild.

Summary

The summarized data indicates that respondents generally tend to slightly disagree or remain neutral regarding feeling overwhelmed by home responsibilities, time pressures, or workload (Items 1-4). However, Item 5 ("My home life often takes my attention") has the highest mean (2.49), suggesting mild agreement that home life requires attention, though this is not perceived as burdensome. Overall, responses reflect minimal perceived challenges related to home responsibilities.

A Logistics and Supply Chain Manager at Unilever Ethiopia emphasized the importance of enhancing work-life balance policies for better employee retention. Suggested improvements include flexible working hours, remote work options, additional leave for personal needs, wellness programs for stress management, realistic workloads, and a culture that respects personal time. These measures aim to create a supportive work environment that boosts employee loyalty and engagement.

4.3.5 Employee Retention

Table 9: Employee Retention

Descriptive Statistics						
No	Items	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
			Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
1	I would plan my further career in this company	136	2.49	.053	.621	.385
2	If I had to do it all over again, I will apply in this company again	135	2.49	.051	.597	.356
3	I will suggest to my friends/relatives to join this company	136	2.47	.054	.632	.399
4	I see a future for myself within this company	136	2.48	.052	.608	.370
5	I would turn down an offer from another organization at this point of time	136	2.48	.050	.583	.340
6	While working in the company, I always feel learning, growing and competitive compared to other similar companies	136	2.49	.047	.544	.296
7	I have a sense of belongingness and loyal to this company	136	2.51	.047	.544	.296
8	I love working for this company.	136	2.57	.046	.540	.292
9	If I want to change my career path I will look for opportunities within the organization first	136	2.76	.040	.463	.215
	Valid N (listwise)	136				

Source: SPSS 26,2025

I would plan my further career in this company (Mean: 2.49, SD: 0.621): Employees are slightly dissatisfied or neutral regarding planning their further career. Moderate spread suggests varying levels of career plan among employees.

Applying for the company again (Mean: 2.49, SD: 0.597): Neutral to slightly negative views applying for the company again. Responses are relatively consistent, indicating shared perceptions.

Suggestion to family and friends (Mean: 2.47, SD: 0.632): Employees feel somewhat unclear about suggesting families/ friends about joining the company. Moderate variability indicates

different views among employees.

Future in the company (Mean: 2.48, SD: 0.608): Employees are neutral to slightly dissatisfied with staying at the company. Responses are moderately consistent.

The feeling of learning, growing and competitive compared to other similar companies (Mean: 2.49, SD: 0.544): Employees perceive learning, growing and competitiveness as neutral or slightly insufficient. Low variability suggests consistent views across the workforce.

Sense of belongingness and loyalty (Mean: 2.51, SD: 0.544): Slightly higher mean indicates moderate satisfaction with feeling part of the company and commitment level. Responses are consistent, reflecting uniform perceptions.

The love of working for the company (Mean: 2.57, SD: 0.540): This dimension scores higher, showing relatively positive perceptions of employees enjoying working in the company. Low variability highlights agreement among employees.

Looking for opportunities within the company (Mean: 2.76, SD: 0.463): The highest mean indicates a stronger sense of satisfaction with benefits of having an opportunity if one wants to change his/her career path. Low SD and variance signify a widely shared positive view.

Summary

There is a general mix of neutral to slightly dissatisfied perceptions among employees as revealed by the overall descriptive findings regarding various aspects of their work life. The aspects of career planning, applying for the company again and The feeling of learning, growing and competitive compared to other similar companies are three areas that need work, with mean ratings of around 2.49, showing that the employees are not very happy but also they are not completely dissatisfied. They are, however, usually neutral to slightly against what is going on.

The key challenges can be summarized as follows: 1. Suggestion to family and friends 2. seeing one's future in the company which is the principal cause of perceived neutrality or slight dissatisfaction.

Some aspects of the organization are positive. The love of working for the company became relatively positive (mean: 2.57), also looking for opportunities within the company (mean: 2.76). The above-mentioned areas provide both employee's intention to stay and they are the most prominent aspects of the company. A conclusion can be made that employees, while showing certain satisfaction, the organization must primarily work on career development, work-life balance, and to make the employees feel loyal to ensure an overall improve in employee retention.

4.4 Regression Analysis

4.4.1 Model Summary

Table 10: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.844 ^a	.713	.704	2.516	.713	78.903	4	127	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Work overload, Work related stress, Flexible work arrangement, Family role overload

Source: SPSS 26, 2025

The model summary suggests a strong relationship between the independent variables (work overload, work-related stress, flexible work arrangements and family role overload) and the dependent variable (employee retention). The R value of 0.844 indicates a high degree of correlation between the predictors and the outcome. The R Square value of 0.713 means that approximately 71.3% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the four predictors, which is a significant proportion, indicating the model's strength.

The Adjusted R Square of 0.704, which accounts for the number of predictors, further confirms that the model is robust. The standard error of the estimate (2.516) shows the average distance between the observed values and the model's predicted values. The F Change value of 78.903, along with the associated significance of 0.000, indicates that the model is statistically significant, meaning the independent variables collectively explain the variation in the dependent variable. This analysis suggests that workload, work-related stress, flexible work arrangements and family role overload are significant factors influencing the outcome of interest.

4.4.2 ANOVA^a

Table 11: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1998.186	4	499.546	78.903	.000 ^b
	Residual	804.057	127	6.331		
	Total	2802.242	131			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention
b. Predictors: (Constant), Work overload, Work related stress, Flexible work arrangement, Family role overload

Source: SPSS 26, 2025

The ANOVA table provides insight into the overall significance of the regression model in explaining the variation in the dependent variable, employee retention. The "Regression" row shows that the sum of squares is 1998.186, which reflects the variance explained by the

independent variables (workload, work-related stress, flexible work arrangement and family role overload). This is divided by 4 degrees of freedom (df), corresponding to the number of predictors, yielding a mean square of 499.546. The F-value of 78.903 is the ratio of the regression mean square to the residual mean square, and it indicates how well the independent variables explain the variation in employee retention.

The associated significance value (Sig.) of 0.000 shows that the model is statistically significant, meaning that the independent variables collectively have a significant impact on employee retention. The "Residual" row represents unexplained variance, with a sum of squares of 804.057 and a mean square of 6.331, which indicates the variance not accounted for by the model. The "Total" sum of squares is 2802.242, representing the total variance in the dependent variable. Given the statistical significance ($p < 0.05$), we can conclude that the predictors significantly influence employee retention.

4.4.3 Coefficients^a

Table 12: Coefficients a

Coefficients ^a										
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coef	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	8.540	1.056		8.091	.000	6.451	10.629		
	Work overload	-.274	.145	-.173	-1.882	.062	-.562	.014	.266	3.757
	Work related stress	.237	.195	.158	1.215	.227	-.149	.623	.134	7.465
	Flexible work arrangement	-.273	.255	-.180	-1.070	.287	-.778	.232	.080	12.514
	Family role overload	1.461	.195	.986	7.482	.000	1.075	1.848	.130	7.681

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

Source: SPSS 26, 2025

The coefficients table provides insights into the relationship between the independent variables (work overload, work-related stress, flexible work arrangement, and family role overload) and the dependent variable, employee retention. The constant value of 8.540 represents the baseline level of employee retention when all predictors are zero.

Work overload has a negative unstandardized coefficient of -0.274, meaning that as workload increases, employee retention is likely to decrease. The t-value of -1.882 and a significance level of 0.062 suggest that this effect is borderline significant, but not at the typical threshold (0.05), meaning its impact may not be strong enough to draw firm conclusions.

Work-related stress has a positive coefficient of 0.237, indicating that higher levels of work-related stress are associated with a slight increase in employee retention. However, with a t-value of 1.215 and a significance of 0.227, this relationship is not statistically significant.

Flexible work arrangement shows a negative coefficient of -0.273, suggesting that flexible work arrangements may slightly reduce employee retention, although the relationship is not significant, as indicated by a t-value of -1.070 and a significance of 0.287.

Family role overload has a large positive coefficient of 1.461, implying that as family role overload increases, employee retention tends to increase significantly. This relationship is highly significant, with a t-value of 7.482 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that family role overload has a strong and positive influence on employee retention.

The **VIF** values suggest that multicollinearity is not a significant issue for the model, with values below 10 for all predictors. The **tolerance** values are also relatively high, further confirming that collinearity is not problematic.

In conclusion, family role overload is the strongest and most significant predictor of employee retention, while work overload, work-related stress, and flexible work arrangements do not exhibit strong, statistically significant effects on retention in this model.

4.4.4 Correlations

Table 13: Correlations

		Work overload	Work related stress	Flexible work arrangement	Family role overload	Employee Retention
Work overload	Pearson Correlation	1	.840**	.643**	.552**	.378**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	137	137	137	137	137
Work related stress	Pearson Correlation	.840**	1	.836**	.719**	.541**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	137	137	137	137	137
Flexible work arrangement	Pearson Correlation	.643**	.836**	1	.921**	.689**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	137	137	137	137	137
Family role overload	Pearson Correlation	.552**	.719**	.921**	1	.794**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	137	137	137	137	137
Employee Retention	Pearson Correlation	.378**	.541**	.689**	.794**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	137	137	137	137	137

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

Source: SPSS 26,2025

The correlation matrix provides insights into the relationships between work overload, work-related stress, flexible work arrangements, family role overload, and employee retention. Key interpretations include the following:

Work overload and Work-Related Stress: The strong positive correlation ($r=0.840$, $p<0.01$) indicates that higher work overloads are strongly associated with increased work-related stress. This suggests that employees experiencing heavier work overloads are likely to report higher levels of stress.

Work overload and Flexible Work Arrangements: A moderate positive correlation ($r=0.643$, $p<0.01$) suggests that employees who perceive higher work overloads may also perceive a need for better flexible work arrangements. This relationship indicates that flexible arrangements could be a mitigating factor for workload-related challenges.

Flexible Work Arrangements and Family Role Overload: A very strong positive correlation ($r=0.921$, $p<0.01$) highlights a significant relationship between flexible work arrangements and family role overload. Employees struggling to balance work and family roles may perceive flexible arrangements as critical for managing this overload.

Family Role Overload and Employee Retention: A strong positive correlation ($r=0.794$, $p<0.01$) demonstrates that higher levels of family role overload are closely linked to challenges in employee retention. This implies that if employees struggle to balance family and work, they may be less likely to stay with the organization.

Employee Retention and Work-Related Stress: A moderate positive correlation ($r=0.541$, $p<0.01$) suggests that work-related stress negatively affects employee retention. Alleviating stress could therefore contribute to retaining employees.

Employee Retention and Flexible Work Arrangements: A moderately strong positive correlation ($r=0.689$, $p<0.01$) indicates that flexible work arrangements positively influence employee retention. This supports the idea that providing flexible policies can improve employee satisfaction and reduce turnover.

The data underscores the interconnected nature of these variables, with flexible work arrangements playing a central role in mitigating family role overload, reducing stress, and improving employee retention. Addressing work overload and offering more robust flexible work policies can significantly enhance employee satisfaction and retention.

4.4.5 Collinearity Diagnostics^a

Table 14: Collinearity Diagnostics^a

Collinearity Diagnostics ^a								
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions				
				(Constant)	Work overload	Work related stress	Flexible work arrangement	Family role overload
1	1	4.922	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.039	11.260	.71	.01	.00	.02	.03
	3	.029	13.075	.21	.22	.04	.01	.06
	4	.007	26.473	.07	.63	.47	.04	.23
	5	.003	40.874	.00	.14	.48	.94	.67

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

Source: SPSS 26, 2025

Eigenvalues: The eigenvalues represent the variance captured by each dimension of the independent variables. The first dimension has a large eigenvalue (4.922), indicating it captures a substantial amount of the variance. In contrast, later dimensions have much smaller eigenvalues, suggesting a concentration of variance in the first dimension.

Condition Index: The condition index measures the extent to which multicollinearity might be present. Generally, a condition index above 30 suggests potential multicollinearity problems. Here, the condition index increases with higher dimensions (ranging from 1.000 to 40.874), particularly in dimensions 4 and 5. These values indicate that there may be some multicollinearity among the independent variables, especially between flexible work arrangements and family role overload (with a condition index of 40.874), which could distort the interpretation of their individual effects on employee retention.

Variance Proportions: These values show how much of the variance of each variable is associated with the dimensions. For example, in the fifth dimension, the variance proportion for family role overload (0.71) and work-related stress (0.41) is particularly high, which suggests that these variables may be highly correlated, potentially leading to multicollinearity issues. Workload and flexible work arrangements show lower variance proportions across all dimensions, suggesting they are less correlated with the other variables.

In summary, while the model overall may be effective, there is evidence of potential multicollinearity, particularly between family role overload, work-related stress, and flexible work arrangements, which could impact the accuracy of the estimated effects on employee retention. Further steps may be necessary, such as removing highly correlated variables or using methods like variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis to address this issue.

4.5 Inferential Analysis

Table 15: Inferential Analysis

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differen ce	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Work overload	50.196	136	.000	12.526	12.03	13.02
Work related stress	48.675	136	.000	12.628	12.11	13.14
Flexible work arrangement	47.454	136	.000	12.307	11.79	12.82
Family role overload	46.785	136	.000	12.343	11.82	12.86
Employee Retention	56.785	136	.000	22.599	21.81	23.39

Source: SPSS 26, 2025

The given data represents the results of a One-Sample t-test performed on five variables: Work overload, Work-related stress, Flexible work arrangement, Family role overload and Employee Retention. The test compares the sample means of these variables to a test value of 0. Here's how the results are interpreted:

Work overload: $t = 50.196$, $p = .000$: The sample mean is significantly different from 0. Mean Difference = 12.526: The average work overload score in the sample is 12.526 units above the test value (0). 95% CI = [12.03, 13.02]: The true mean difference is likely between 12.03 and 13.02. This narrow range shows high precision in the estimate.

Work-related stress: $t = 48.675$, $p = .000$: The sample mean is significantly different from 0. Mean Difference = 12.628: The average work-related stress score in the sample is 12.628 units above 0. 95% CI = [12.11, 13.14]: The true mean difference is between 12.11 and 13.14, showing consistent results.

Flexible work arrangement: $t = 47.454$, $p = .000$: The sample mean is significantly different from 0. Mean Difference = 12.307: The average score for flexible work arrangements is 12.307 units above 0. 95% CI = [11.79, 12.82]: The true mean difference lies between 11.79 and 12.82.

Family role overload: $t = 46.785$, $p = .000$: The sample mean is significantly different from 0. Mean Difference = 12.343: The average score for family role overload is 12.343 units above 0. 95% CI = [11.82, 12.86]: The true mean difference is between 11.82 and 12.86.

Employee Retention: $t = 56.785$, $p = .000$: The sample mean is significantly different from 0. Mean Difference = 22.599: The average employee retention score in the sample is 22.599 units above 0. 95% CI = [21.81, 23.39]: The true mean difference is between 21.81 and 23.39, indicating much higher precision compared to other variables.

Statistical Significance: All variables have a p-value of 0.000, meaning the sample means are significantly different from 0. Mean Differences: The largest mean difference is observed for Employee Retention (22.599), indicating it is the highest-rated variable. The others have similar mean differences, around 12, suggesting consistent levels of significance across these factors.

Confidence Intervals: All CIs are relatively narrow, reflecting precise estimates of the mean differences. The significant positive scores indicate that the variables (Work overload, Work-related stress, Flexible work arrangements, Family role overload, and Employee retention) are perceived as relevant and impactful by the respondents.

Employee Retention stands out as particularly significant, implying it could be a critical focus area for interventions or further analysis. The high work overload and stress levels might indicate areas for improvement in work-life balance and organizational policies.

Conclusion

The results of the One-Sample t-test reveal that all five variables Work overload, Work-related stress, Flexible work arrangements, Family role overload and Employee retention show statistically significant positive mean differences from the test value of 0, with p-values of .000 across the board. Employee retention emerges as the highest-rated variable, with a mean difference of 22.599 and a narrow confidence interval of [21.81, 23.39], indicating its critical importance and high precision. The other variables have similar mean differences, around 12, with consistently narrow confidence intervals, demonstrating their relevance and the reliability of the estimates. These findings suggest that while Employee retention warrants significant attention for further interventions, high scores for work overload, stress, and family role overload highlight potential areas for organizational improvement in work-life balance and stress management policies.

4.6 Discussion of the findings

On the level of intensity, the findings shows that the challenges faced by employees at Unilever Ethiopia concerning work and life balance are mild but persistent problems with a slight disagreement on issues such as long working hours, taking work home, and difficulty relaxing; This finding is in line with Boxall and Macky (2014) who to assess the hours worked of the pressure workers experience with preferred hours or to take the work home in order to comprehend.

Overall, Unilever employees do not see many adverse work–life characteristics; they are

either neutral or disagree slightly with matters such as hours of work, work pressure and its resulting effect on health or family bond. However, there is just a minor concern in terms of time, namely personal activities time and the need to cut down working hours and stress levels is not pressing here. The study by Haar, Russo, Sune, and Ollier-Malaterre (2014) on the availability of work-life balance provisions including flexible work schedules and family support programs for employees, and the widely implemented work flexibility arrangements among MNCs reveals that the adoption of these provisions is positively associated with carryover and commitment levels, both critical aspects of retention. Marketing Manager at Unilever Ethiopia says that the current work-life balance policies, including flexible working hours and remote working options: While supporting the current approach taking what needs to be done to further guide employees on work-life practices, there is need for wellness Program, workload reconsideration and feedback sessions.

The policy of flexible working hours is not viewed very positively by respondents in Unilever Ethiopia, as they maintain a slightly negative or neutral stance towards achieving work-life balance, focus on their work, attendance, and their general well being. This, however, points towards a gap in the application or communicating of the mentioned policies as employees are not reaping the benefits as intended. On the other hand, some employees like the Human Resources Manager, say otherwise about the company's work-life balance policies and report feeling good about them claiming that flexible options, wellness services, and a healthy culture has positively impacted their job satisfaction, improved their stress levels and improved their achievement and commitment to the organization. Role overload and work pressure are associated with reduced job satisfaction, higher levels of stress, increased fatigue, and a worsen to work-life imbalance, as demonstrated by the analysis of the relation between work intensity and work-life balance by Boxall and Macky (2014). The number of hours worked per week is more likely to affect the work-life balance negatively, as well as increases the level of stress perception and, to lower extent, fatigue.

One of the interesting insights that can be drawn from the correlation matrix is the presence of significant associations between work overloads, work-related stress, flexible work arrangements, family role overload and employee retention. A strong association between work overloads and work-related stress is revealed by the fact that the higher the work overloads, the less satisfaction the employees have in general. Employees who have heavy work overloads are the same ones who demand better flexible work arrangements. The

flexibility of the work schedule is a very important tool for the management of family role overload, thus it is necessary to set aside time for yourself before deciding to retire. The cause of these issues can be related to the fact that family role overload leads to high turnover rates through the logistics and supply chain department. Work-related stress is a negative force in employee retention, and on the other hand, flexible work arrangements are a positive force for retention. As indicated by Belay (2018) who gave an example of a study in which he examined the effects of work-life balance on employee performance and retention in the banks of Ethiopia and found out that the staff who could maintain a balance between the professional and personal aspects were happier and planned to stay on their job.

All variables Work overload, Work-related stress, Flexible work arrangements, Family role overload and Employee retention show positive mean differences in One-Sample t-test with p-values=.000 for all and test value=0. The main determinant of the significance is which of the five variables is described. Employee retention is the one with the highest mean difference of 22.599 and a narrow confidence interval indicating its top position among the factors contributing to the employees' success. The other variables, like workload, stress, and family role overload, show mean differences of around 12, similarly, pointing to these other areas that need attention. These results are conclusive regarding their impact and even illuminate the work-life balance, stress management, and employee retention issues as the necessary areas for interventions. But, Teklu (2020) found that Work Overload work-related stress and Family role overload were the main causes of the decrease in performance.

CHAPTER FIVE:

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This section covers the essential concepts of summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations. As per the three specific objectives' findings are concluded and stated recommendations accordingly.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study focused on employees of Unilever Ethiopia. The purpose of the study was to see effect of work life balance on employee retention. 150 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of Unilever Ethiopia and 136 responded. The questionnaires used were structured that analyzes that factors that affect employee retention.

The research studied the effect of four predictors of work life balance (WLB) which are work overload, work stress, flexible work arrangement and family role overload on employee retention at Unilever Ethiopia.

Gathered data on work overload indicates that employees at Unilever Ethiopia struggle to balance their work hours with personal life due to significant work overload. Respondents generally disagreed with statements regarding long working hours, family socialization, taking work home, and weekend commitments, with average responses around 2.51. However, the variability in responses (SDs ranging from 0.608 to 0.632) reflects diverse individual experiences, highlighting a shared concern. A notable issue is the increasing difficulty in relaxing and disconnecting from work, which is evident in the consistent responses across various variables, underscoring a common challenge. Overall, employees emphasize the need to address these obstacles to improve their quality of life.

The respondents generally showed disagreement or neutrality about work-life balance issues regarding work related stress. They acknowledged working long hours but largely agreed on this aspect. Their concerns about work stress impacting health and relationships were minimal, with few negative effects perceived. Likewise, they believed that their family life and personal hobbies were not significantly influenced by work. While there was some interest in reducing working hours and stress, it wasn't considered a pressing issue for most participants.

The descriptive data indicates that respondents perceive the management of flexible working hours as ineffective, with slightly negative or neutral responses suggesting that these hours do not significantly aid in balancing personal commitments. Findings reveal that flexible working hours fail to enhance job focus, attendance, punctuality, or overall satisfaction, pointing to a potential gap in the implementation or communication of these policies. Employees are not experiencing the anticipated benefits of such arrangements, and the reasons for this remain unclear, warranting further research. Employers should prioritize employee well-being by enhancing work-life balance policies, such as introducing more flexible hours, remote work options, additional paid leave for personal needs, wellness programs, and realistic workloads. Additionally, limiting after-hours communication and providing family-friendly support, like childcare assistance, could improve conditions, boost employee morale and productivity, and foster a stable workforce.

The model summary reveals a strong correlation between the independent variables—work overload, work-related stress, flexible work arrangements, and family role overload—and the dependent variable, employee retention. An R value of 0.844 reflects a high degree of correlation, while the R Square value of 0.713 indicates that about 71.3% of the variance in employee retention can be explained by these predictors, demonstrating the model's strength. The Adjusted R Square of 0.704 further supports the model's robustness. Additionally, a standard error of 2.516 shows the average deviation between observed and predicted values. The F Change value of 78.903, with a significance of 0.000, confirms the model's statistical significance, indicating that these independent variables significantly influence employee retention.

The regression analysis reveals varying impacts of the independent variables on employee retention. Work overload has a negative coefficient of -0.274, suggesting that increased workload may lead to decreased retention, although its borderline significance (t-value of -1.882, $p = 0.062$) indicates the effect is not definitively strong. In contrast, work-related stress presents a positive coefficient of 0.237, indicating a slight association with increased retention, but this relationship lacks statistical significance (t-value of 1.215, $p = 0.227$). Flexible work arrangements also show a negative coefficient of -0.273, implying they may slightly decrease retention, yet this finding is not significant (t-value of -1.070, $p = 0.287$). Conversely, family role overload has a substantial positive coefficient of 1.461, indicating that higher levels of family role overload significantly enhance employee retention, supported

by a strong significance (t-value of 7.482, $p = 0.000$).

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 The effects of work overload on the employee retention

This study confirms that mild challenges of work-life balance are experienced by employees in Unilever Ethiopia and their overall attitude is to disagree to some extents on long working hours, spending time with families, take work at home, and working during late hours or weekends. The mean scores remain apparently close to 2.51 and suggest a neutral to slightly disagreeing with these aspects. The latter can be considered rather moderate thanks to the SDs lying between 0.608 and 0.632, proving that while these are the challenges encountered frequently, their impact is rather diverse. Further, data provided have shown that employees have poor shut-down experiences and the results are homogeneous revealing common concerns. Even in this sense the findings underscore the need for enhanced interventions on aspects of work-life balance concerns since the challenges highlighted are considered mild.

The implications highlight the need to pay particular attention in strengthening work-to-family (and vice versa) balance practices as these have a huge impact in the levels of satisfaction and turnover intentions of the employees. Suggestions include increasing the level of working /flexible hours and options for remote or partially-home based work to give people more choices in this regard at work. Workload and Work-Related Stress has also significant positive correlation ($r=0.840$), whereby higher levels of workloads are highly related to higher levels of work-related stress ($p<0.001$). This means that employees with more number of tasks are bound to report high stress levels than those with fewer tasks.

5.3.2 The effects of workplace stress on the employee retention

In general, it appears that most workers at Unilever Ethiopia do not have a perception that there is negativity about the impacts that work has on one's life. The majority of employees have a neutral or even slightly negative attitude to statements regarding working long hours, effect of work stress on health, and work pressure on relationships/family. Little difficulty is perceived in making time for the activities, though this is seen not as overwhelming, and the perceived need to cut the working hours and stress is there but not extremely pressing. Overall there seems to be a lack of major issues concerning work-life impact for employees.

The current work-life balance policies are seen as a positive evolution because they

understand there is still more that can be done. The measures that have been currently in place, which include: options for working from home, staggered working time as well as the offer for flex-hours offer very useful loophole and occasionally the pressures of work and fast paced environment of the industry makes it straining to fully capitalize on such aspects. However, to fill the gaps to a greater extent of needed and actual healthy balance, the measures like wellness programs, workload evaluating, and regular feedback might also be incorporated into the policies. A moderate positive correlation ($r=0.541$, $p<0.01$) indicates that as work-related stress increases, employee retention decreases. This suggests that higher levels of stress in the workplace can lead to a greater likelihood of employees leaving their jobs. Given the statistical significance of this finding, it highlights the importance of addressing work-related stress to improve retention rates.

5.3.3 The effects of flexible work arrangement on the employee retention

Regarding the flexible working hour management, it has been seen in most of the foregoing discussions that a majority of the respondents at Unilever Ethiopia fail to find it as highly effective. Workers expressed moderate disagreement or non commitment towards flexible working hours and their advantages such as time trade off of other responsibilities, concentration at work, increased attendance and punctuality and satisfaction and well-being. They suggest failed implementation or communication of flexible work policies and indicated that employees do not encounter advantages or flexibility as decided.

A moderately strong positive correlation ($r=0.689$, $p<0.01$) suggests that flexible work arrangements have a positive impact on employee retention. This finding underscores the effectiveness of offering flexible policies, such as remote work options, flexible hours, and hybrid work models, in enhancing employee satisfaction. By allowing employees to tailor their work schedules to better fit their personal lives, organizations can create a more supportive work environment. This flexibility can lead to higher job satisfaction, as employees feel trusted and valued, which in turn fosters loyalty and reduces turnover rates. As employees experience a better balance between their professional and personal responsibilities, they are more likely to remain with the company long-term. Consequently, implementing flexible work arrangements not only benefits employees but also helps organizations retain talent and maintain a stable workforce.

5.3.4 The effects of family role overload on the employee retention

The results shows that family role overload has significant relation on employee retention as

it has a large positive coefficient of 1.461. Despite a large positive coefficient of 1.461, which implies that increased family role overload significantly influences retention, the overall responses from employees reveal a tendency to slightly disagree or remain neutral regarding feelings of being overwhelmed by home responsibilities. The overall responses of Unilever Ethiopia employees suggest minimal perceived challenges related to home responsibilities, which influenced employee retention positively.

5.4 Recommendation

- Generally, most of the employees of Unilever Ethiopia have minor issues to working long hours, balancing family responsibilities or obligations and taking work at home as there is slight disagreement or no agreement at all. Based on the identified weaknesses it is suggested to consider offering flexible working hours.
- To improve work-life balance and enhance employee satisfaction, it is recommended to introduce more flexible working hours, expand remote or hybrid work options, and assess workload management. Deploying flexible work schedules will enable employees balance between work and economic demands compared to other activities. Moreover, presenting frequent feedback-based meetings for considering the issues with concerns such as how to turn off the work or control stress levels could be implemented.
- Future improvements to the current work-life balance policies should include the addition of wellness programs, structured workloads, and the opportunity for employees to provide feedback on their work. These changes can help reduce stress and further enhance work-life balance.
- Because workload stress can be damaging to employees and lead to staff turnover, either a more strategic hiring process or reconsideration of the possibilities of flexible working could be of value.
- Flexible working hour policies are not perceived as highly effective in promoting work-life balance at Unilever Ethiopia, with employees reporting slight disagreement or neutrality regarding their benefits. With regard to this gap it is suggested that the organization communicate and enforce use of flexible working policies.
- Expanding flexible work options, such as remote work and staggered working hours, will help employees manage both professional and personal responsibilities. Incorporating flexible arrangements into the work culture could also alleviate family role overload, helping employees balance their personal lives and work commitments, ultimately enhancing retention and job satisfaction.

- Fostering a culture that respects personal time, promoting work-life balance, and offering flexible work options will reduce burnout, increase employee engagement, and positively impact retention. By addressing these areas, Unilever Ethiopia can create a supportive and effective work environment that encourages long-term employee commitment.
- Many employees have other commitments in their lives such as child care or elderly care therefore increasing flexibility like teleworking and asynchronous or nontraditional schedules would benefit working citizens.. Adaptive working can also reduce the family role overload in a work culture and improve the retention of the employees and job satisfaction.
- Incorporating flexible arrangements into the work culture could also alleviate family role overload, helping employees balance their personal lives and work commitments, ultimately enhancing retention and job satisfaction.
- Some suggestions like offering more caregiver leave or the so-called sick days to look after one's mental health or chronic illness or children to allow people to be present for their families and work at the same time, especially remotely.

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ANNEX



I. Consent Form

Dear respondents:

This questionnaire is prepared for a research study purpose entitled “to examine the effects of work life balance on employee retention in the case of Unilever Ethiopia head office employees”. I am sure you will give attention to forward your correct and complete information to have a representative finding on the current status of the effects of work life balance on employee retention in the case of Unilever Ethiopia. In doing so, I confirm you that the information that you share will be kept confidential and used for the academic purpose only. I would like to thank you in advance for your honest cooperation.

Please read each question carefully.

Encircle the option you think best suits you.

Sincerely,

Tsega Berhe

II. Section One: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

- Male
- Female

2. Age:

- 18-25
- 26-33
- 34-41
- 42-49
- Above50

3. Working Experience:

- 1-5 Years
- 6-10 Years
- 11-15 Years
- Above 15 Years

4. Education status:

- Diploma
- Degree Masters
- Postgraduate
- Other

5. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Prefer not to say

6. Department?

- Finance and administration
- Human resources
- Logistic and supply chain

7. How long have you been employed with the organization?

- Less than 1 year

- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- More than 6 years

Section Two: Questionaries

The table that follows in the next section consist list of items, please put —√mark for every statement based on your level of agreement.

- 1.Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

III. Work overload

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I usually work long hours					
2	There isn't much time to socialize/relax with my partner/family in the week					
3	I have to take work home most evenings					
4	I often work late/weekends to deal with paperwork without interruptions					
5	Relaxing and forgetting about work issues is hard to do					

IV. Work related stress

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I worry about the effect of work stress on my health					
2	My relationship with my partner is suffering because of the pressure or long hours of my work					
3	My family are missing out on my input, either because I don't see enough of them/am too tired					
4	Finding time for hobbies, leisure activities, or to maintain friendships and extended family relationships is difficult					

5	I would like to reduce my working hours and stress levels, but feel I have no control over the current situation					
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V. Flexible work arrangement

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	There is a flexible working hour management at your organization					
2	Flexible working hours allow to balance personal commitments					
3	Flexible working hours allow to focus more on the job at work					
4	Attendance and punctuality has improved as a result of utilizing flexible working hours					
5	Flexible working hours motivate and give sense of satisfaction and Wellbeing					

VI. Family role overload

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel I have a lot of responsibility in my home life					
2	I feel that I do not have enough time to get everything done at home that I want to					
3	I don't have enough time to do what is expected of me in my home					
4	I have too much work for one person to do in my home					
5	My home life often takes my attention					

VII. Employee Retention

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I would plan my further career in this company					
2	If I had to do it all over again, I will apply in this company again					
3	I will suggest to my friends/relatives to join this company					
4	I see a future for myself within this company					
5	I would turn down an offer from another organization at this point of time					
6	While working in the company, I always feel					

	learning, growing and competitive compared to other similar companies					
7	I have a sense of belongingness and loyal to this company					
8	I love working for this company.					
9	If I want to change my career path I will look for opportunities within the organization first					

Section Three : Interview Question

1. How do you perceive the current work-life balance policies at Unilever Ethiopia?

2. Can you provide examples of how the work-life balance initiatives at Unilever Ethiopia have impacted your job satisfaction and decision to stay with the company?

3. What specific work-life balance challenges have you encountered while working at Unilever Ethiopia, and how have these challenges affected your view of staying with the company?

4. How does Unilever Ethiopia's approach to work-life balance compare with other organizations you have worked for or are familiar with?

5. In your opinion, what improvements could be made to the current work-life balance policies at Unilever Ethiopia to enhance employee retention?

