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MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE, PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT AMONG TEACHERS IN GOVERNMENT AIDED PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN GULU CITY**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS
SCHOOL FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

MAY, 2024

PLAN A

DECLARATION

I declare that this research dissertation is my original work and has never been presented to any institution of learning for any award.

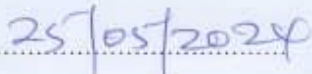
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APPROVAL

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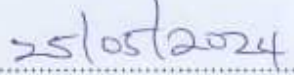
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
PWC	Price Water Coopers
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease
ILO	International Labour Organization
SET	Social Equity Theory
IT	Information Technology
ISR	International Survey Research

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my uncle, Prof. Kerali Henry Rupiny, who has been a constant source of financial support and encouragement. I am truly thankful for having you in my life. This work is also dedicated to my mother, Late Betty Kerali who has always loved me unconditionally and whose good examples have taught me to work hard for the things that I aspire to achieve.

I am thankful to my brother, Onen Godfrey Omony Kerali for the encouragement, my sisters, Ocaki Jane Kerali, Ocaki Susan Kerali and Ocaki Hellen Kerali for always being by my side when I needed them and finally to my children Akera Liberty Gift and Pigen Darren Chrispus for giving me time and space to carry on with my studies even though they needed my attention. More thanks to Dr Grace Kerali, Eng. Ceaser Kerali and Aunty Margaret Kerali for the financial support towards this achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Janat Kyogabiirwe Bagorogoza and Dr. Obedgiu Vincent my research supervisors, for their patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and useful critiques of this research work. I would also like to thank Prof. Bagire Vincent, for his advice and assistance in keeping my progress on schedule. My grateful thanks are also extended to Mr. Apire Samuel for his help in doing the data analysis.

Finally, I wish to thank the Kerali Family for their financial support and encouragement throughout my life and study.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine the predictive potential of work-life balance and psychological safety on employee engagement among teachers in Government Aided Primary Schools in Gulu City. The study used quantitative and cross-sectional research design. A sample size of 191 teachers were selected out of 378 teachers guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. Validity and reliability of the instruments showed that all variables under the study were reliable with Cronbach's alpha for all of the variables measuring above 0.70. The researcher issued questionnaires to 191 teachers in 21 government aided primary schools and received questionnaires from 165 teachers giving a response rate of 86.4%. The findings showed a significant positive association between work life balance and employee engagement. There was a positive significant relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement implying that the level of work life balance and physiological safety is associated with employee engagement. The result further showed that work life balance predicts employee engagement by 51.2% while psychological safety predicts employee engagement by 62.7%. When the task at hand is executed with the maximum possible efficiency, there is a reduction in risk. The division of work ensures that the work is done on time and deadlines are not extended. A fair work distribution ensures that every teacher or every working unit, executes any task at hand, with the best possible efficiency. School management should give some freedom for teachers to make decision to pursue their goals in the school, offer opportunities for personal growth and development, sense of achievement and utilize all their talents and skills. The management should also involve teachers in the decision-making process. This will enhance and improve teacher engagement because the teachers will be empowered to take timely decisions to address the staff grievances. Moreover, the teachers are the main sources of innovative ideas which help the schools to sustain a meaningful relationship with the students. The researcher recommends that the management of government aided primary schools should put more emphasis on psychological safety since it has more predictive power (62.7%) on employee engagement, school heads should ensure that there is an equal and fair distribution of work within the school. Management should also reward best performing teams who achieve on termly basis or yearly basis. This would encourage the rest of the teaching staff to working harder to benefit from such reward as a result, teacher engagement would be achieved. The result of this study can be used by the management to formulate policy regarding teacher engagement within government aided primary schools by considering work life balance and psychological safety.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This study is about Work Life Balance, Psychological Safety and Employee Engagement. Section one of the work covers the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study and the conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the study

Employee engagement has attracted a significant amount of research among scholars due to the fact that engaged employees give their hearts, spirits, minds, motivation, satisfaction, and hands to deliver high level of performance to the organization (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Sanchez & Duran (2021) define employee engagement as an emotional state where employees feel passionate, energetic, and committed to their work. Employee engagement is exhibited in form of vigor, dedication and absorption (Sangeeta & Chanana 2020). It has immediate impacts on organizational outcomes like increased employee safety, better employee health, happier employees, greater employee satisfaction, better home life, lower absenteeism, higher retention, greater employee loyalty and greater productivity (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Employee engagement has dropped across the globe. Willberger et al. (2020) state that employee engagement is at 35%, 48% in Africa and 51.2% in Uganda. And during the steady rise in COVID infections, employee engagement decreased globally by two percentage points, from 22% in 2019 to 20% in 2020, Gallup (2010). However, employee engagement is experiencing a low-turn in the world, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic ILO, 2021), Willberger et al (2020). While economies in the whole world struggled with a new wave

of COVID-19, over 70% of employees were left rethinking their careers and safety at work place (Schreiner, 2021). According to Rathore (2023), more than 50% of employees contemplated if they are fully engaged with their jobs, while a larger percentage of 67% questioned themselves of their psychological safety at their work places. It was not clear what could be causing poor employee engagement, but present studies by Roopavathi & Kishore, (2021); Zheng et al., (2015) seemed to suggest that work-life balance and psychological safety could have a bearing with employee engagement.

Work-life balance is the maintenance of balance between “work” (career and ambition) and “life” (non-work activities such as; leisure, family, studies, spiritual development, health, etc.) (Yawalkar et al., 2016). According to Bhumika et al. (2020), involvement, career satisfaction, family satisfaction measure work-life balance. During the pandemic, work-life balance was poor Arntz & Francesco (2020). Leisure hubs, social events were banned (Ministry of Health Uganda, 2020). Boundaries between work and personal life were blurred (ILO, 2020). It became hard separating work and private life (Duran & Sanchez, 2020). For example, workers who did preparatory work from home such as teachers faced increased distractions from children as well as managing a more chaotic working environment (Arntz & Francesco, (2020) leading to disengagement. These can affect employee mental health and well-being and ultimately impact on his/her engagement to work.

Psychological safety on the other hand is “a condition in which one feels included, safe to learn, safe to contribute, and safe to challenge the status quo, without fear of being embarrassed, marginalized or punished in some way” (Clark, 2019: 6). According to

Pappa et al. (2020), risk-taking behavior, common belief, respect and trust for each other are some of the measures of psychological safety. During the pandemic, work environment was perceived by workers as a threat for fear of exposure, infection and transmission of the virus to family members and others (ILO, 2020). These conditions have a strong impact on the mental health of health workers, causing them anxiety, depression, insomnia (Pappa et al., 2020), post-traumatic stress (Preti et al., 2020), physical and mental exhaustion, as well as fear or emotional disorders (Kang et al., 2020) and other psychosocial risks, such as isolation (Chawla et al., 2020).

In Gulu City, COVID-19 pandemic brought mixed effects of employee engagement among teachers of government aided primary schools. For example, teachers in Gulu City are facing various problems like high level of absenteeism from schools, few teachers' houses, and lack of social support systems like medical care and duty free shopping. The implementation of Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) came with unique concepts such as online teaching, teaching over radio, television and hand-delivered materials as methods to deliver knowledge to learners (UNICEF, 2020). This has led to employee disengagement and low productivity of teachers in the education sector in Gulu City, (UNATU 2020, News Letter, UNATU's position on school reopening & Talk of the Nation at NTV News, October 17th 2020). It's possible that the poor employee engagement could be attributed to poor work-life balance that in turn affected the psychological safety during the pandemic. Thus, this study was set to fill the gap in literature by examining the relationship between work life balance, psychological safety and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The government of Uganda introduced online teaching, teaching over radios, televisions and hand-delivered materials as methods to deliver knowledge to learners during COVID 19 pandemic, (UNICEF, 2020). The newly adopted ways of teaching, (UNICEF, 2020), adversely affected the teachers' engagement in government aided primary schools in Gulu City. Despite these interventions, primary school teachers' engagement in Gulu City remained low (ILO, 2022). Evidence shows that 28.3% of teachers who taught using the new methods were not performing effectively and not meeting the set targets (MoES, 2020). There were concerns at the time when the COVID 19 measures were relaxed that the situation did not improve the teachers' engagement either, thereby affecting the quality of learning, (MoES, 2020) and (Lakuma & Sunday, 2020). This situation needed to be reversed, and one possible solution was to assess the relationship between work-life balance, psychological safety and employee engagement. Studies have established that work life balance and psychological safety are among the factors affecting employee engagement (Bick, Blandin & Mertens, 2020). Although studies have been conducted to analyze critical factors affecting employee engagement, (Bick, Blandin & Mertens, 2020) and Rathore (2023), none has shown the relationship between work-life balance, psychological safety and employee engagement in the COVID-19 era in Gulu City. It therefore appears that, the poor employee engagement among primary teachers in Gulu City is related to poor work-life balance and psychological unsafety. This study therefore, sought to examine the relationship between work-life balance, psychological safety and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between work-life balance, psychological safety and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City.

1.4 Research objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. Examined the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City.
- ii. Examined the relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City.
- iii. Examined the relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City.
- iv. Examined the mediating effect of psychological safety on the relationship between work life balance and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study;

- i. What was the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City?
- ii. What was the relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City?
- iii. What was the relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City?

- iv. What was the mediating role of psychological safety on the relationship between work life balance and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Geographical Scope

The research was conducted in Gulu City. The teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City were the respondents.

1.6.2 Content Scope

The study put emphasis in content scope on the relationship between work-life balance, psychological safety and employee engagement.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study emphasized on the significance to government policy, practice, practitioners and future areas of research.

- i. The findings would be of importance to the practitioners so that they would understand particularly how Work-Life-Balance and psychological safety can have an effect on employee engagement in Gulu City and the whole country.
- ii. The study would influence government policymakers and the private sector in policy formation concerning Work-Life-Balance (WLB), psychological safety and the outcome on employee engagement.
- iii. Furthermore, the findings of the study would help the academicians and other intellectuals undertaking similar research studies.

1.8 Conceptual framework

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Bhumika et al., (2020), Pappa et al., (2020), Chanana & Sangeeta (2020).

Explanation of the model: The model means that work-life balance which includes Personal life, Career satisfaction and Family satisfaction leads to psychological safety which includes risk-taking behaviour, common belief and respect and trust for each other, psychological safety leads to Employee engagement where there is vigor, dedication and absorption. Or work-life balance leads to Employee engagement.

In the discipline of human resource management, work life balance (WLB) is an aspect that involves the welfare of employees who are the key assets of any establishment. This is because general quality of employee's life in its relation to their working life is of utmost importance in the achievement of organizational goals (Guest, 2002). The knowledge of Work Life Balance (WLB) has helped organizations over the years to understand their human capital needs and to find ways to provide enabling environments that improve work relations and consequently improve productivity, leading to achievement of set goals (Guest, 2002).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section reviewed the existing literature on work life balance, psychological safety employee engagement. It covered the theory, concept and the relationship between the variables which form the focus of this study.

2.1 Employee engagement

Kahn, (1990) an organizational behaviour professor at Boston University, provided what has become the first definition of employee engagement. He defined employee engagement as “harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances”.

According to Allen (2020), employee engagement is the emotional commitment employees feel towards their organization and the actions they take to ensure the organization's success. Engaged employees demonstrate care, dedication, enthusiasm, accountability and are results focused. She further adds that when employees are ‘engaged’, they use discretionary effort. They stay behind to get a job done because they are committed and feel accountable and want to work; they pick up the cups left behind on the table in the meeting room or the rubbish that missed the bin because they care about their workplace. They stand up for their company because they are proud to be part of it, they find solutions to problems and create ideas to improve; they are emotionally engaged with their organization and they care.

Similar to the definitions of employee engagement as provided by Allen (2020) above, Wellins, Bernthal & Phelps, (2015) also define employee engagement as “the extent to which people enjoy and believe in what they do and feel valued for doing it” and is divided into three aspects; enjoyment, belief and value. Enjoyment means people tend to be more satisfied in what they do if they are in the jobs that match their interest and skills; belief means people feel more engaged if they feel their contribution to the job is meaningful; and value comes from the recognition and reward for their contributions. All in all, the definition of employee engagement is related to how people “feel inside”. (Wellins, Bernthal & Phelps, 2015, p. 2). Referring to the psychological conditions of Kahn mentioned above, the engaged employees involve themselves in the job performance. Engagement is seen as a result of psychological and emotional state, where regardless of time and tasks, is found as “being charged with energy and fully dedicated to one’s work”. (Markwich & Robertson-Smith, 2019, p. 10) Employee engagement is defined by Robinson, Perryman & Hayday (2014) as “a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its value. An engaged employee is aware of the business context, and works with colleagues to improve the performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee.” (Markos & Sridevi, 2010, p. 90).

The Gallup Organization simply states that ‘it is the involvement with, and enthusiasm for work’ (Vance 2016a, b). The Gallup Organization (2016) has elaborated their understanding by referring to ‘engaged employees’ as those who ‘work with a passion and feel a profound connection to their company, drive innovation and move the

organization forward’. In the UK, the CIPD (2017) refers to it as ‘passion for work’ and the willingness to go an extra mile.

Academic researchers have defined employee engagement as ‘the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances’ (Kahn 1990). Others have noted the centrality of ‘vigor’ in the idea of engagement, that is, feelings of strength and emotional energy in the workplace (Shirom, 2013). Shaw (2015) defined engagement as ‘translating employee potential into employee performance and business successes. This means changing the way employees perform ‘by utilizing the tools in the armoury of internal communication professionals.

International Survey Research (ISR, 2019) defines employee engagement as ‘a process by which an organization increases commitment and the continuation of its employees to the achievement of superior results’. The ISR separates commitment into three parts: cognitive commitment, affective commitment and behavioural commitment. In other words, the three dimensions are; think, feel and act. Engaged employees work with passion and feel an emotional connection to their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward. They are characterized as being loyal, committed, productive and deliver results. This study defines employee engagement as the trait by employees to have positive outlook on life and work, state of feelings of energy and absorption, or behaviour extra-role towards achieving organization’s success as adopted from Sanchez & Duran (2021).

2.2 Work-life balance

Various definitions of work-life balance have been suggested by different scholars. According to Pink board (2021), work-life balance involves juggling workplace stress with the daily pressures of family, friends, and self. Work-life balance is a process in which people seek to change things in accordance with changes in their own priorities, physical, psychological or both, and these can be triggered in their turn by factors such as age, changes in working conditions, the demands of new technology; and poor management.

Given the long-standing tradition of scholarship on and practical interest in Work life balance, definitions within the field have recently been criticized as beset with problems of inconsistencies (Ozbilgin et al., 2021 and Grzywacz and Carlson, 2021).

According to European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2019), work-family balance is the “extent to which an individual is equally engaged in and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role”. Work-family balance consists of three components; Time balance which refers to equal time being given to both work and family roles; Involvement balance refers to equal levels of psychological involvement in both work and family roles; and finally, satisfaction balance refers to equal levels of satisfaction in both work and family roles. The concept of work, family and study life balance as a typology of four categories has not yet been explored by many researchers. The definition of work, family and study life balance has been mainly for work-life balance and work-family balance as indicated below;

According to Guest (2012), work-life balance comes from two words “work” which refers to employment and “life” which are the activities outside work. Work/life balance is defined in this study as the harmonious and holistic integration of work and non-work,

so that the working class can achieve their potential across the domains of work, family, personal life and community in which they play out their life roles (Bailyn, Drago & Koshan, 2011).

The scholarly works concerning WLB have increased, mainly because of the increasing strength of the women workforce, technological innovations, cultural shifts in attitudes toward the relationship between the work and the family and the diversity of family structures (Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014). The research works on WLB include several theoretical work-family models. Though the research on WLB has expanded to a greater extend, there are considerable gaps in our knowledge concerning work-family issues (Powell et al., 2019).

Work-Life Balance (WLB) has been an issue of concern for many researchers and practitioners for the last few decades (Kelly et al., 2018). The current world of work is marked by the changing demographics, intense pressure; fast pace of change, constant deadlines, increased use of technology and the resulting co-existing virtual workplace (Wharton, 2020). Juxtaposed with this, the average increase in income and incremental rise in living standards have resulted in individuals striving for better working conditions and improved family and personal life.

However, debates do exist about the term work-life balance in relation to the appropriateness of the underpinning symbol indicating an attainable goal of equalizing or balancing commitments. The term has even been described as an oxymoron and a tautology (Van Eijnatten & Vos, 2012). In addition, the work/life balance theoretical discourse focuses on the interface between work and personal life (Kossek & Lambert, 2016) and includes changes in workplace practices, structures and culture supports

(Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher & Pruitt, 2012), providing links between work/life issues and organizational capability, capacity building, sustainability and leadership.

Casper, Wayne, DeHauw, & Greenhaus (2018) concluded that work-life balance is a self-appraisal of how well one combines work with non-work roles. Similarly, Greenhaus & Allen (2011) define life balance as a multi-modal approach derived from a sense of effectiveness and satisfaction in multiple life roles. Work-life balance can be further defined as a transition towards flexible and fluid boundaries between one's work and life outside of the workplace (Sorenson, 2017), which correlates with the life balance definition most applicable to educators, the ability to manage external pressure from a competitive work environment with leisure and or family (Khallash & Kruse, 2012).

The primary theory behind the concept of work-life balance is that individuals have varying, and sometimes mutually exclusive demands on them due to the roles that they play in the different facets of their lives (for example, wife, mother, worker) (Ford, Heinen, and Langkamer, 2020; Kahn et al 1964). As Shelton, Danes and Eisenman summarized, meeting the demands from one domain reduces the time and energy available to function in the other domain and this tends to create conflict when individuals seek to function effectively in both domains (2009, p. 318). This results in a negative spillover effect with its potential conflict. Work-life balance practices therefore assist individuals to gain greater control over their circumstances, in order to manage their life effectively (Ruderman et al, 2020; Shelton, Danes and Eisenman, 2018).

The concept of work-life balance focuses on minimizing the tensions between work and other parts of one's life (Hayman, 2015). This concept contrasts with work-family balance, which refers to the assessment of whether work and family resources are

adequate to meet work and family demands, such that participation is effective in both domains (Voydanoff, 2015). Therefore, based on the above definitions, this study defines work, family and study life balance as the balance between work, family, study and life roles as adopted from Lockwood (2013), and the study also seeks to get solutions to the existing challenges where teachers are not able to balance their work and life styles.

Work life balance has significant variations with demographic variables (Waters and Bardoel, 2006). A significant difference was found between age (Powell *et al.*, 2019), gender (Thilagavathy and Geetha, 2020) and marital status (Powell *et al.*, 2019) regarding WLB. There is a significant rise in women's participation in the workforce (Jenkins and Harvey, 2019). WLB issues are higher for dual-career couples (Crawford et al., 2019).

High work pressure and high family demand lead to poor physical, psychological and emotional well-being (Jensen and Knudsen, 2017), causing concern to employers as this leads to reduced productivity and increased absenteeism (Jackson and Fransman, 2018).

An employee spends most of the time commuting (Denstadli et al., 2017) or meeting their work and family responsibilities. Dual career couple in the nuclear family finds it difficult to balance work and life without domestic help (Dumas and Perry-Smith, 2018; Srinivasan and Sulur Nachimuthu, 2021). Difficulty in a joint family is elderly care (Powell et al., 2019). Thus, family demands negatively predict WLB (Haar et al., 2019).

Spouse support enables better WLB (Dumas and Perry-Smith, 2018). Family support positively impacted Work life balance, especially for dual-career couples, with dependent responsibilities (Groysberg and Abrahams, 2014)

Though the organizations implement many Work life balance policies, employees still face the problems of Work life balance (Dave and Purohit, 2016). Employees achieve better well-being through individual coping strategies (Zheng et al., 2016). Individual resources such as stress coping strategy, mindfulness emotional intelligence positively predicted WLB (Kiburz et al., 2017). This indicates the imperative need to improve the individual's ability to manage work and life.

Organizational factors are those relating to organization design in terms of framing policies, rules and regulations for administering employees and dealing with their various activities regarding Work life balance (Kar and Misra, 2013). In this review, organizational factors and their impact on the Work life balance of the employee have been dealt with in detail.

The organization provides a variety of Work life balance policies (Jenkins and Harvey, 2019). Employee-friendly policies positively influenced Work life balance (Berg et al., 2003). Further, only a few IT industries provided Flexi timing, work from home and crèches facilities (Downes and Koekemoer, 2012). According to Galea et al. (2014), industry-specific nuance exists.

Organizations expect employees to multi-task, causing role overload (Bacharach et al., 1991). The increasing intensity of work and tight deadlines negatively influenced Work life balance (Allan et al., 1999). The shorter time boundaries make it challenging to

balance professional and family life (Jenkins and Harvey, 2019). Job demands negatively predicted Work life balance (Haar et al., 2019).

Work does vacuum up a greater portion of the personal hours (Haar et al., 2019). This causes some important aspects of their lives to be depleted, undernourished or ignored (Hughes et al., 2018). Thus, employees find less time for “quality” family life (Jenkins and Harvey, 2019).

Organizational productivity is enhanced by the synergies of work-family practices and work-team design (Johari et al., 2018). Enhanced Work life balance leads to increased employee productivity (Jackson and Fransman, 2018).

Work life balance is significantly influenced by work exhaustion (burnout). Negative psychological experience arising from job stress is defined as burnout (Ratlif, 1988). Increased work and non-work demands contribute to occupational burnout and, in turn, negatively predict Work life balance and employee well-being (Jones et al., 2019).

Support from Colleagues, supervisors and the head of institutions positively predicted Work life balance (Ehrhardt and Ragins, 2019; Yadav and Sharma, 2021). Family-supportive organization policy positively influenced Work life balance (Haar and Roche, 2010).

The employee’s perception regarding their job, work environment, supervision and organization positively influenced Work life balance (Fontinha et al., 2019). Employees’ awareness concerning the existence of Work life balance policies is necessary to appreciate it (Matthews et al., 2014). The employee’s perception of the need for Work life balance policies differs with respect to their background (Kiburz et al., 2017).

2.3 Psychological safety

First explored by pioneering organizational scholars in the 1960s, psychological safety experienced a renaissance starting in the 1990s and continuing to the present. To date, various definitions of psychological safety have been identified and include; Psychological safety describes people's perceptions of the consequences of taking interpersonal risks in a particular context such as a workplace (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Psychological safety helps to explain why employees share information and knowledge, speak up with suggestions for organizational improvements and take initiative to develop new products and services (Baer & Frese 2013).

Psychological safety is the perception of interpersonal risk in the workplace (Edmondson, 2013). Psychological safety is a subjective perception of ease and security. When individuals feel safe in a work setting, they do not worry about the negative influences caused by self-expression, challenging their boss, or interpersonal conflict (Kahn, 1990), such employees are more likely to voice or take the initiative to change.

The Centre for creative leadership (2021) defines psychological safety as the belief that you won't be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes. "When you have psychological safety in the workplace, people feel comfortable being themselves. They bring their full selves to work and feel okay laying all of themselves on the line (Altman, 2021).

According to Professor Edmondson (2021), Harvard business school, "psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes. Used in this study during the pandemic, psychological safety refers to a state where employees feel comfortable being themselves. They bring

their full selves to work and feel okay laying all of themselves on the line as adopted from Altman (2021).

Psychological safety is “a condition in which one feels included, safe to learn, safe to contribute, and safe to challenge the status quo, without fear of being embarrassed, marginalized or punished in some way” (Clark, 2019: 6). Psychological safety describes people’s perceptions of the consequences of taking interpersonal risks in a particular context such as a workplace (Edmondson and Lei, 2014). Psychological safety helps to explain why employees share information and knowledge, speak up with suggestions for organizational improvements and take initiative to develop new products and services (Baer & Frese 2013).

Although several definitions of psychological safety have been proposed, the majority of studies have followed Edmondson (2019) by defining it as a shared belief amongst individuals as to whether it is safe to engage in interpersonal risk-taking in the workplace (Edmondson et al., 2007, Edmondson and Lei, 2018). In a psychologically safe work environment, employees feel that their colleagues will not reject people for being themselves or saying what they think, respect each other's competence, are interested in each other as people, have positive intentions to one another, are able engage in constructive conflict or confrontation, and feel that it is safe to experiment and take risks (Edmondson, 1919). Behaviorally, psychological safety leads employees to engage in open communication, voice their concerns, and seek greater feedback; all of which are interpersonally risky behaviors (Pearsall & Ellis, 2021). This, in turn, has been found to influence a range of workplace outcomes (e.g., learning and performance) at different levels of analysis (Edmondson & Lei, 2018). Although psychological safety shares some

overlap with trust, psychological safety is conceptually different as it focuses on how group members perceive a group norm, whilst trust focuses on how one person views another.

Edmondson and Lei's (2019) review looked at the antecedents and outcomes of psychological safety, their work did not cover more recent articles that have made substantive theoretical and empirical advancements (e.g. Gu et al., 2013, Halbesleben and Rathert, 2018, Liu et al., 2020, Post, 2022, Roussin and Webber, 2022, Roussin et al., 2020, Singh et al., 2020), including recent work that has begun to look at the negative aspects of psychological safety (Pearsall & Ellis, 2021). Edmondson and Lei (2019), like Frazier et al. (2018), also did little to highlight the theoretical perspectives that have been adopted by researchers to explain how psychological safety develops and influences work outcomes.

2.4 The relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety

Job performance and mental health of individuals increase when the organizational principles encourage work-family balance. An employee is happy when he/she has psychological contentment in work achievements certainty, family satisfaction and job security (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012). Work-family relationship contributes to the creation of psychological climate at work, whereas a favorable psychological climate creates the perception of psychological safety within the organization (Cartwright & Pappas, 2018). The organization is considered to have a psychologically safe climate when an employee feels that the working environment complements his/her well-being (Faragher et al., 2014). In the absence of favorable psychological climate, the psychological safety level is likely to be low. Work-family conflict has also been linked to mental health problems,

and it may lead to a decline in an individual's mental abilities (Zapf et al., 2016). When individuals' work-stress is reflected in their relationship with family members, reducing the effectiveness of their work and family roles may harm their psychological well-being and psychological safety.

Team psychological safety (TPS) is a shared belief that people feel safe about the interpersonal risks that arise concerning their behaviors in a team context (Edmondson, 2018). "Project Aristotle," which explored over 250 team-level variables, found that successful Google teams have five elements in common: psychological safety, dependability, structure and clarity, meaning, and impact of work (Google, 2015). The findings argue that psychological safety is the most critical factor and a prerequisite to enabling the other four elements. However, surprisingly, despite the importance of that psychological factor, only 47% of employees across the world described that their workplaces are psychologically safe and healthy (Ipsos, 2012).

Psychological safety is a critical psychological circumstance that "shapes how people inhabited their roles [in the organization]" (Kahn, 1990). Psychological safety embodies a feeling that employees can "show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990). According to recent studies and extensions on COR theory, conflict is related to the downward change in resources (Oren & Levin, 2017). Stressful situations disrupt employee's perception of psychological safety as key resources are found to be endangered. Stress is elicited with each threat to loss of resources, such as economic uncertainty, the threat to self-esteem, fear for one's marital status or job security, financial downfall or a sick relative (Reizer et al., 2010). Married status and tenure are depicted by this theory valued and sought

resources considering that those who are married have more influx to draw on, such as emotional support, empathy and finances, while tenure ensures greater performance and increased psychological safety. For instance, when a partner's resources at work increase, the other spouse may provide encouragement and contribute to the latter's well-being. COR model was found to have a suitable explanation for both intra-and inter-role stress, where job and family distress are mutually related, for example, trouble in one domain leads to problems in another (Grandey & Cropanzano, 2019).

Furthermore, according to the crossover model (Westman, 2011), psychological stress and work-family conflict may transmit via the spill over effect on the other team members. These negative experiences are related to a desire to minimize the loss of resources, which may have a less favourable result for the organization, such as quitting the job or filing for sick leave. Work-life interaction is a significant factor affecting employee life quality, and it can influence individual satisfaction, safety, and health (Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2011). Work-family conflict occasionally has detrimental consequences such as depression (Higgins et al., 2012; Frone et al., 2017a, b), and alcohol abuse. There is also a positive effect of reduced work-family conflict, leading to greater work engagement and personal satisfaction (Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2011; Robertson et al., 2012), factors conducive to psychological safety.

2.5 The relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement

With psychological safety, individuals are expected to feel more inclined to take risks, try new things, and actively engage their interests in work tasks, leading to an increased level of engagement. Dollard & Bakker (2010) found two significant correlation measures of

psychological safety and engagement over the course of 12 months, one at $r = .19$, and the other at $r = .29$. While May et al., (2014) found a significant correlation of .35 between two constructs. While psychological safety and engagement appear to be positively linked, there is a reasoning as to why those in a psychologically safe environment may feel obliged to reciprocally contribute to the betterment of the organization through higher levels of engagement.

Psychological contracts describe the reciprocal obligations between the employee and the organization, perhaps the very core of the employee-organization exchange relationship (Morrison & Robinson, 2017; Rousseau, 2019). Psychological contracts represent the expectations that the employee and the organization have regarding the resources owed to one another (Schein, 2010). Employees perceive their psychological contract in three ways; from the implicit or explicit promises received from recruiters and interviewers, from interactions with co-workers and managers, and from the various structural signals communicated by the organization itself (for example, company handbooks and mission statements). Therefore, while psychological contracts concern implicit social exchanges, they are also representatives of the formal, explicit contracts and structure between the employee and the employer.

MacNeil (2015) in his continuum of contracts, defined relational contracts by an intrinsic focus, open-ended time frame, and comprehensive scope. Transactional contracts (on the other end of the continuum) were characterized by extrinsic focus, close-ended time frame, and narrow scope of work. A transactional contract reflects a short-term agreement for exchange, and that is the transaction. Relational contracts were proposed to promote higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB), higher

performance in uncertain environments, and higher organizational support and are thought of as an employee and organization relationship.

Transactional contracts have been found to reduce employees' job satisfaction, intention to remain with the organization, and extra-role behaviours (Robinson & Morrison, 2010). Rousseau & Parks (2012) suggested that transactional contracts result in lower employee contributions such as performance and attendance, but also lower employer investments such as retention efforts, development, and promotion. Employees' perceptions that it is safe to speak out in the workplace may be unaffected, but their willingness to do so for the benefit of the organization may be reduced. A transactional employee who feels psychologically safe maybe less inclined to engage (i.e., increase his/her expenditures) than relational employees because the exchange is less likely to be reciprocated by the organization. That is, we expect that the relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement will be weaker in the presence of a transactional psychological contract. When individuals develop relational psychological contracts, employees engage in organizational citizenship behaviours and contribute efforts not strictly mandated by their employers as a means to repay the organization for benefits received. Furthermore, the exchange is bilateral, so the organization is expected to reciprocate such positive behaviours with higher levels of support and benevolence to employees such as investments in staff development (Rousseau & Parks, 2012).The unprecedented uncertainty and complexity of today's workplace environment mark a period of deep change that imposes a need for innovation and experimentation within organizations. Consequently, recent research focuses on highlighting the correlation between leadership, psychological safety, and learning behaviors. A recent meta-analysis (Edmondson &

Bransby, 2023) showed that psychological safety has increasingly captured the interest of academic researchers. Previous studies have extensively explored how psychological safety impacts a range of organizational outcomes. This includes areas like innovation, employee attitudes, creativity, knowledge sharing, voice behaviors, and communication (Newman et al., 2017). Factors such as organizational support and a positive safety climate are intrinsically linked to work performance. This perspective suggests that the benefits of psychological safety could extend beyond its immediate impact on work engagement; when organizations cultivate a supportive environment and a climate that prioritizes safety, the sense of security among employees is enhanced and their engagement and productivity are also stimulated (Kim et al., 2020).

2.6 The relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement

The relationship between work-life balance practices and work engagement can be explained using the social exchange theory (Blau, 2014). This theory states that when employers provide care and opportunities for their employees, these employees will show certain attitudes and behaviours. More specifically, when employees receive favourable treatment they reciprocate, which in turn leads to beneficial outcomes for both employers and employees (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2012). Applying the social exchange theory to work-life balance, when employees feel that organizations help them balance their work and family demands, they probably feel cared for and supported by their organization. Following the norm of reciprocity, it can be said that employees feel obligated to reciprocate by showing more favourable attitudes and behaviours at work. These employees respond with increased positive feelings regarding their job and the organization (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2015). Similarly, when

employees are provided with particular resources by their employer, they respond with a certain degree of engagement (Saks, 2016).

Improving employee's skills to prepare for future challenges can seriously contribute to the perception of safety and help to deal with uncertainty. Acquiring certain social and professional training and expertise may help to induce psychological safety, as self-efficacy, and performance improve over time, concern about losing job reduces. In line with this, Airila et al. (2014) found that work and personal resources, including self-esteem, are associated with time investment, e.g., investing time into one's work is related to increased job performance. In addition, enhancing job abilities and increasing work performance is an asset ensuring psychological safety. In line with COR theory, feedback for performance, social support from co-workers and supervisors act as job resources predicting work engagement and performance output (Costa et al., 2015). When there is a safe psychological climate employee put more focus and resources to improve their performance. In a psychologically safe climate employees also report more job resources and more endurable job demands, which lead to a high level of work engagement (Dollard and Bakker, 2010).

The results of a study by Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill, & Brennan (2018) has revealed that supportive work-life policies and perceived flexibility are positively related to employee engagement. In addition, a study by Sonnentag (2013) has suggested that recovery, which can be seen as a part of work-life balance, can contribute to employees' work engagement. Recovered employees are more willing and able to invest effort and show more resilience than employees who have not been recovered. This means that recovery might have a positive effect on employees' vigor. Recovery can also influence

dedication since recovered employees possess enough resources to become strongly involved in their work. Finally, recovery can also have a positive effect on the last element of work engagement and absorption. Recovered employees are able to fully concentrate on their tasks and to ignore irrelevant signals (Sonnentag, 2013).

According to Gregory et al. (2013), work-life balance has an influence on the manager's behaviour in the work environment. The problem of the job strain for employees today is increasingly mental instead of physical, and employees become overwhelmed without work-life balance, which leads to ineffective employee engagement at (Lokke & Madsen, 2014). Studies show that active employee engagement predicts organizational performance, financial performance, and employee performance (Ardichvili, & Tkachenko, 2014). Relationships with the immediate supervisors are critical in the effective employee engagement (Shuck, 2010). The extent of the manager's work-life balance fosters a positive employee work-life balance (Kishino, 2015). Employees who do not feel connected to the organization are less likely to commit their various degrees of self in support of the organization objectives (Kahn, 1990). These employees respond with increased positive feelings regarding their job and the organization (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2015). Similarly, when employees are provided with particular resources by their employer, they respond with a certain degree of engagement (Saks, 2016).

Chiang, Birtch, & Kwan (2010) used the Valcour (2017) work-life balance scale in a study focused on the relationship of job stress, coping resources, and job stress in hotel and catering industry. Food service workers in the hotel and catering industry responded to understand job stress and job demand, and work-life balance (Chiang et al., 2010). The

study showed positive work-life-balance is high and perceived job stress is low when there is a higher control over the job (Chiang et al., 2010).

2.7 The mediating effect of psychological safety on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement

Research in the role of psychological safety as a mediator between work-life balance and employee engagement is minimal but employees with a high level of work-life balance experience a high level of work engagement when the employees feel psychologically safe. Additionally, there has been some research on the relationship between work-life balance and employees' well-being and quality of life (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2013). Studies have assumed that employees who perceive a balance between work and their private lives experience low levels of stress in both roles they fulfil (Marks & MacDermid, 2016). One explanation of this could be that, these employees fulfil roles that are salient to them. In addition, these employees are able to allocate their energy and time to the demands they experience, when they are psychologically safe (Whittington et al., 2011). Furthermore, as previously mentioned by (Reindl et al., 2011), work-life balance leads to psychological safety and organizational commitment.

A study by Halbesleben et al. (2014) proposed COR as a theory of motivation with the basic tenet that humans are motivated to protect their current resources and acquire new ones. We argue that this directly concerns well-being. COR theory is a stress and motivational theory, a proposed explanatory model for investigating how employees are to be affected by stressful circumstances, identifying those circumstances, and speculating on how individuals cooperate in order to cope with them. Application of COR theory was previously found to be related to job burnout, work-overload, and loss

of organizational and human resources. Using the JD-R framework helps to understand how perceived organizational support can mitigate the impact of job demands on workload and emotional demands, thus decreasing absenteeism from work. The theory further argued that providing the holistic organizational support to employees while balancing their family and job demands, may be a key tool for organizations to reduce the dispersion or even loss of valuable resources by adjusting or redesigning job demands.

In a mediation model, work-family conflict impacts job performance via psychological well-being and psychological safety. The above reviewed literature using the COR theory has built a strong justification for the mediating model, supporting individual relationships between variables of the model. COR theoretical framework application on the interaction of work-family conflict in a context of a common resource-exchange economy (Hobfoll et al., 2018) is applied to better understand the mediating effects. According to COR theory, work and family are a reservoir of resources, where a loss or a gain in one domain affects the state of the other (Hobfoll, 2002), impacts personal burnout, distress symptoms (Noor, 2002), and employee well-being (Ibrahim et al., 2009; Fotiadis et al., 2019). Negative work-family interaction decreases well-being due to increased psychological strain and diminished mental resources (Grandey and Cropanzano, 1999; Voydanoff, 2002; Eby et al., 2005). A sense of control over work and family activities has positive implication for psychological well-being (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012). Work-family conflict, as a result of the inability individuals to handle the responsibilities of their family life (Frone and Cooper, 1992) impact on job performance is assessed in the mediating model. Such conflict translates to the psychological states of employees, which have a stronger impact on the job performance. Prior studies have also

identified significance of work-family conflict for job performance (Frone et al., 1992; Netemeyer et al., 2005), which is an assumption of the valid mediating model. The mediator variables of psychological well-being and psychological safety explain how work-family conflict affects job performance.

The relationship between work-life balance practices, psychological safety and work engagement can be explained using the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). This theory states that when employers provide care and opportunities for their employees, these employees will show certain attitudes and behaviours. More specifically, when employees receive favourable treatment, they develop a sense of psychological safety that they reciprocate, which in turn leads to their engagement (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2012). Applying the social exchange theory to work-life balance, when employees feel that organizations help them balance their work and family demands, they probably feel cared for and supported by their organization, thereby a sense of psychological safety. Following the norm of reciprocity, it can be said that employees feel obligated to reciprocate by showing more favourable attitudes and behaviours at work. These employees respond with increased positive feelings regarding their job and the organization (Aryee, Srinivas & Tan, 2015). Similarly, when employees are provided with particular resources by their employers, they respond with a certain degree of engagement (Saks, 2016).

The results of a study by Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill, & Brennan (2018) has revealed that supportive work-life policies and perceived flexibility are positively related to psychological safety and employee engagement. In addition, a study by Sonnentag (2013) has suggested that recovery, which can be seen as a part of work-life balance, can

contribute to employees' work engagement only when there is employee psychological safety. Recovered employees are more willing and able to invest effort and show more resilience than employees who have not been recovered. This means that recovery might have a positive effect on employees' vigor. Recovery can also influence dedication since recovered employees possess enough resources to become strongly involved in their work. Finally, recovery can also have a positive effect on the last element of work engagement, absorption. Recovered employees are able to fully concentrate on their tasks and to ignore irrelevant signals (Sonnentag, 2013).

2.8 Conclusion

Based on the above empirical evidence, it's true that combining work life balance and psychological safety could have a better explanatory power in employee engagement. Consequently, this study argues that work life balance alone in primary schools in Gulu City without psychological safety may not fully enhance the employee engagement. Therefore, an aggregate of work life balance and work psychological safety is presumed to improve employee engagement. However, during the pandemic, employee engagement dropped (Willberger et al, 2020; Bick, Blandin & Mertens, 2020). It could be work-life imbalance and safety issues during the pandemic that caused a drop in employee engagement. Little data is available on what impact work-life balance and psychological safety have on employee engagement in Uganda. This study seeks to fill that gap. But due to limited resources and for convenience, the study will use teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu city as a case study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section covers research methodology, research design, study population, data source, research procedure, study variables and the measurements, validity and reliability, ethical considerations, data analysis and anticipated limitations.

3.1 Research design

Crosses sectional design was used to conduct this research as the data were collected at one single point in time. This research design provided a clear understanding of the relationship between work-life balance, psychological safety and employee engagement.

3.2 Study population

There were 21 government aided primary schools in Gulu City having a total of 378 teachers on the government payroll in the city (Gulu City Education Office, January, 2021). The unit of analysis is the government aided primary schools and unit of inquiry is the teachers.

SN	SCHOOL	NO OF CORRESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS
01	GULU PRISON P/S	08	38
02	PECE P/S	10	41
03	PAGEYA P/S	10	28
04	HOLY ROSARY P/S	15	56
05	LAYIBI P/S	08	27
06	MAMA CAVE P/S	08	32
07	ST JOSEPH P/S	10	20
08	MARY IMMACULATE P/S	10	26
09	ST PETERS' P/S	10	35
10	LABOURLINE P/S	10	22
11	GULU PUBLIC P/S	15	60
12	LAYIBI CENTRAL P/S	08	29
13	LAROO P/S	10	26
14	HIGHLAND P/S	08	29
15	GULU P/S	10	42

3.3 Sample size

To determine the sample size from the population, Krejcie and Morgan 1970 table for sample size determination was used. According to this table, when the population is 378, a sample size of 191 is used.

$$n = \frac{[(N) (p) (1 - p)]}{[(N - 1) (B/C)^2 + (p) (1 - p)]}$$

Where;

n = the sample size,

p = the probability.

N = the finite population

B/C = the level of significance or limit of tolerable error

1 = unit or a constant

Where N = 378, p = 0.5, B = 0.05, C = 1.96

$$n = [(378) (0.5) (1-0.5)] / [(378-1) (0.05/1.96)^2 + (0.5) (1-0.5)]$$

$$n = [(378) (0.5) (0.5)] / [(377) (0.0255102041)^2 + (0.5) (0.5)]$$

$$n = (94.5) / (0.2453404835 + 0.250)$$

$$n = 94.5 / 0.4953404835$$

$$n = 191.$$

3.3.1 Sampling procedure

A sample size of 191 teachers from 21 primary schools was used. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents as it gives each respondent equal chance of selection. The selection of the respondents was based on a raffle where all the names of 378 teachers were assigned numbers. The numbers written on pieces of paper

and rolled into balls, the balls put in a box, shaken or mixed completely and 191 numbers picked randomly without replacement. The first 10 pieces picked formed the selected number per school. All the numbers of teachers picked by the researcher formed the sample for the study. The unit of analysis was the primary schools while the teachers acted as units of inquiry.

3.4 Data source

Information for the study was collected from primary sources. Primary data was collected from the teachers in the government aided primary schools in Gulu City.

3.4.1 Data collection method

The primary data was collected by the use of questionnaires which were distributed to the respondents and then collected after.

3.5 Research procedure

The researcher first sought for introduction letter from MUBS authorities to introduce her to school management of the selected schools and research participants. The questionnaires were filled by the respondents themselves and collected after completion.

3.6 Study variables and their measurement

The study variables include; work-life balance, psychological safety and employee engagement. Work-life balance was measured using personal life, career satisfaction and family satisfaction as adopted from Bhumika *et al.*, (2020)'s research.

Psychological safety was measured using risk-taking behaviour, common belief, respect and trust for each other as adopted from Pappa *et al.*, (2020)'s research.

Employee engagement was measured using vigor, dedication and absorption adopted

from Sangeeta (2020)'s research.

The above variables were measured using a well-designed questionnaire built on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 as follows; “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

3.7 Validity and reliability

For validity test, the questionnaire developed was given to at least two experts to ascertain its correctness and measure the extent to which the results of the study were generalized (Campbell & Stanley, 1966). The questionnaire was developed and Cronbach's (1951) Alpha reliability test was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the measures to be used. Only variables that have Cronbach's Alpha values of more than 0.7 was be accepted. This helped to yield consistent measurements, and drew satisfactory conclusions.

The questionnaires were given to 30 teachers to give their opinion regarding the relevance of the questions using a 5-point Likert scale.

TABLE 1: RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT FOR EACH VARIABLE

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items that passed test	Total number of item tested
Work-Life Balance	.882	20	26
Psychological Safety	.884	25	30
Employee engagement	.734	17	24

Source: Primary data from analysis

According to Nunnally, (1978) and Field, (2009) recommended a cut-off alpha coefficient of 0.7 is sufficient to prove that the instrument is reliable. Therefore, the reliability coefficients of the research instruments were higher than 0.7, implying that the instrument was reliable.

The accuracy and consistency of questionnaire forms a significant aspect of research methodology which are known as validity. Validity basically explains how well the collected data covers the actual investigation it was intended to measure (Taherdoost, 2016). In this study, validity was ensured by having only objective statements included in the questionnaire and obtaining expert opinions (Mustafa, 2010).

TABLE 2: VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Variable	Content Validity index	Total number of item valid (K)	Total number of Items (N)
Work-Life Balance	0.769	20	26
Psychological Safety	0.833	25	30
Employee engagement	0.708	17	24

Source: Primary data

From Table 2, the computed content validity index for all the variables range between 0.708 and 0.833 which are above the threshold of 0.6. Thus, the variables are relevant and accurate to measure the constructs.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The study would protect the rights of research participants, enhance data validity, and maintain confidentiality. Voluntary participation, respect of respondents' time, respect of anonymity, informed conscience, no data falsification and introduction letter for data

collection and acknowledgement of previous studies are the considerations that where used for data collection.

3.9 Data analysis

The data collected was captured and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Both descriptive statistics such as frequency mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation was used to analyse the data. Regression analysis was also used to determine the prediction of a potential model.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the data analysis, presentations and interpretation of the findings. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between work life balance, psychological safety and employee engagement. Therefore, the presentation of the findings was guided by the research objectives.

4.2 Response rate

The study targeted a sample size of 191 teaching staff from which 165 filled in and returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 86.4%. This response rate was satisfactory to make conclusions for the study as it acted as a representative. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. Based on the assertion, the response rate was excellent. This non response of 13.6% may be attributed to factors like failure to get time due to their tight work schedules.

4.3 Demographic characteristics

TABLE 3: GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	89	53.9	53.9
	Female	76	46.1	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	

Source: Primary data from analysis

The study established that male respondents were the majority at 53.9%; while female respondents were 46.1%. This shows that generally, there is a margin between males and females in the teaching profession in primary schools in Gulu city in Uganda. This also implies that more men respond to teaching profession as compared to women in government aided primary schools in Gulu city. However, this does not affect study findings since it was not based on gender.

TABLE 4: AGE BRACKET OF RESPONDENTS

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 25 years	23	13.9	13.9
	26 - 34 years	63	38.2	52.1
	35 - 43 years	51	30.9	83.0
	44++	28	17.0	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	

Source: Primary data from analysis

The results in Table 3 show that majority of respondents were in the age bracket of 26 - 34 years which was 38.9%. Only 23 respondents were between 18 -25 years at 13.9%. This means that teachers in government aided primary schools had a fairly matured, energetic and productive and most likely to work hard. However, this could imply that such a young group of teachers are to get easily satisfied on job due to limited responsibilities. The findings on age also show that the sample was fairly selected to include all characteristics of the teachers under study.

TABLE 5: MARITAL STATUS

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	54	32.7	32.7
	Married	81	49.1	81.8
	Widowed	20	12.1	93.9
	Divorced	10	6.1	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	

Source: Primary data from analysis

Table 4 above reveals that most of respondents were married (49.1%) and (6.1%) were divorced. This implies that the study was dominated by married teachers. However, this did not influence the findings of the study because the study was not based on marital status.

TABLE 6: HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A'level	1	.6	.6
	Tertiary institution	134	81.2	81.8
	University education	30	18.2	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	

Source: Primary data from analysis

On respondents' level of education attained, the study revealed that most of the respondents as shown by 81.2% had attained tertiary education whereas 18.2% of the respondents had attained university education and 0.6% of the respondents had A 'level education. This implies that respondents were fairly educated and therefore they were in position to respond to the research questions with ease.

TABLE 7: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THIS SCHOOL?

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 - 4 years	28	17.0	17.0
	5 - 9 years	64	38.8	55.8
	10 - 14 years	41	24.8	80.6
	15 and over years	32	19.4	100.0
	Total	165	100.0	

Source: Primary data from analysis

The study sought to establish the period which the respondents had served for in the schools. From the research findings, the study revealed that majority of the respondents

as shown by 38.8% had served the institution for between 5 - 9 years whereas 17.0% of the respondents had served the institution for a period of between 0 - 4 years. This implies that majority of the respondents had served the schools for a considerable period of time and thus they were in a position to give credible information rating to this research. Such a finding could imply that majority were sufficiently conversant with the issues affecting the schools.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to measure the strength of the linear relationship between two variables and compute their association. The purpose of correlation analysis is to find out whether a relationship exists between variables and then determining the magnitude and action of that relationship.

In this analysis we determined the extent to which changes in teachers' engagement in government aided primary schools in Gulu city in Uganda is associated with changes in work-life balance and psychological safety. To quantify the strength of the relationship between the variables, the study used Pearson's coefficient of correlation. The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient is a measure of the strength and direction of a linear association between two variables and is denoted by r . The Pearson correlation coefficient, r , can take a range of values from +1 to -1. A value of 0 indicates that there is no association between the two variables. A value greater than 0 indicates a positive association, that is, as the value of one variable increases the value of the other variable also increases. A value less than 0 indicates a negative association, that is, as the value of one variable increases the value of the other variable decreases. The Pearson's coefficient

was used to verify the existence or non-existence of linear correlation between and among the variables. The findings are presented in the Table 7 below;

TABLE 8: PEARSON’S PRODUCT MOMENT CORRELATION ANALYSIS

	1		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Personal Life (1)	1.000											
Career Satisfaction (2)	.125	1.000										
Family Satisfaction (3)	-.110	.245	1.000									
Work Life Balance (4)	.799**	.613**	.341	1.000								
Risk taking behavior (5)	-.315	.643**	.228	.108	1.000							
Common Belief (6)	-.293	.610**	.263	.123	.706**	1.000						
Respect and trust for each other (7)	-.315	.643**	.228	.108	1.000**	.706**	1.000					
Psychological Safety (8)	-.389	.496*	.087	-.058	.836**	.890**	.836**	1.000				
Vigor (9)	.145	.583**	.241**	.485**	.188*	.626**	.580**	.603**	1.000			
Dedication (10)	.101	.469**	.143	.357**	.148	.587**	.575**	.566**	.645**	1.000		
Absorption (11)	.214**	.198*	.128	.282**	.239**	.173*	.191*	.258**	.228**	.203**	1.000	
Employee Engagement (12)	.243*	.450*	.253*	.467*	.524*	.480*	.524*	.538*	.812**	.809**	.648**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.288	.041	.269	.033	.015	.028	.015	.012	.020	.013	.021	
N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21

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

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Source: Primary data from analysis

4.4.1 The relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City

The first objective of the study was to examine the relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety. Results from Table 7 above reveal that there is none significant negative relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety ($r = -.058$, $P\text{-value} > 0.803$). In this finding the correlation between work-life balance and psychological safety is none significant at 0.05 levels (2-tailed). This implies that increase in work-life balance is attributable to decrease in psychological safety.

4.4.2 The relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City

The second objective of the study was to examine the relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement. Results from Table 7 above reveal that there is a significant positive relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement ($r = .538^*$, $P\text{-value} < 0.05$). In this finding, the correlation between psychological safety and employee engagement is significant at 0.05 levels (2-tailed). This means that an increase in employee engagement is attributable to psychological safety.

4.4.3 The relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City

The third objective of the study was to examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement. Results from Table 7 above reveal that there is a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement ($r = .467^*$, $P\text{-value} < 0.05$). The finding of the correlation between work-life balance and

employee engagement is significant at 0.05 levels (2-tailed). This means that an increase in employee engagement is attributable to work-life balance.

4.4.4 The mediating effect of psychological safety on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City

The fourth objective of this study was to examine the mediating roles of psychological safety on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement of government aided primary schools in Gulu city. The study found that there was a positive significant relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement ($r = .467$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that if there is a change in work-life balance, it leads to change in employee engagement and vice versa.

4.5 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is the statistical technique that identifies the relationship between two or more quantitative variables: a dependent variable, whose value is to be predicted, and an independent or explanatory variable (or variables), about which knowledge is available. The technique is used to find the equation that represents the relationship between the variables. Multiple regressions provide an equation that predicts one variable from two or more independent variables. Regression analysis is used to understand the statistical dependence of one variable on other variables. The technique can show what proportion of variance between variables is due to the dependent variable, and what proportion is due to the independent variables. The regression model was used to examine the effect of work-life balance and psychological safety on employee

engagement of teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu city. The results are summarized in the Table 8 below:

TABLE 9: THE HIERATICAL REGRESSION OF WORK LIFE BALANCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY ON EMPLOY ENGAGEMENT

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	Err.	Sig.	B	Err.	Sig.	B	Err.	Sig.
(Constant)	3.679	178	.000	1.247	375	.001	.605	.325	.065
Gender	-.056	.090	.532	-.023	.079	.770	-.059	.066	.372
Age bracket	-.034	.049	.480	.030	.043	.492	-.001	.037	.969
Marital Status	.002	.054	.970	.012	.047	.795	-.010	.040	.799
Work life balance				.614	.086	.000	.353	.079	.000
Psychological Safety							.532	.065	.000
R	0.084			0.496			0.686		
R square	0.007			0.246			0.470		
Adjusted R Square	-0.011			0.227			0.454		
R square Change	0.559			0.489			0.411		
F change	0.386			13.058			28.25		
Sig. (F change)	0.784			0.000			0.000		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological Safety, Work-Life Balance

The relationship between the variables can be illustrated graphically, or more usually using an equation. The study adopted simple hieratical regression guided by the following model: $Y = C + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + E$, where Y= employee engagement, X_1 = Work-life balance, X_2 = psychological safety, β_1 and β_2 = coefficients, C = is a constant term and E = Error term in the equation. Table 8 above present results of the simple hieratical regression of the effect of work-life balance and psychological safety on employee engagement in government aided primary schools in Gulu city in Uganda. We can see that work-life balance and psychological safety contribute significantly to the

model by looking at the Sig. Column. We can derive a simple hierarchical regression analysis equation from column B as $Y = 0.605 + 0.614 X_1 + 0.532X_2 + 0.325$

Model 1 takes into account control variables; gender, age bracket and marital status of primary schools in Gulu city. Gender, age bracket and marital status were not a significant predictor of employee engagement of teaching staff of primary school in Gulu city ($\beta = -.056, p > 0.532$; $\beta = -.034, p > 0.480$ and $\beta = 0.002, P > 0.970$). This may be partially explained by the fact that employee engagement is equally important to teachers in primary schools in Gulu city regardless of the gender, age bracket and marital status.

Model 2 takes into account work life balance whose results indicate that it is a positive and significant predictor of employee engagement of teachers in primary schools in Gulu city ($\beta = .614; p < .001$). Work life balance accounts for a considerable predictive power of 48.9 per cent of the variance in employee engagement of teachers in primary schools in Gulu city ($\Delta R^2 = .489; p < .01$). This finding therefore extends further support to research question (i) with respect to the correlation results. Therefore; there exists a positive and significant relationship between work life balance and employee engagement of teachers in primary schools in Gulu.

However, gender, age bracket and marital status teachers in primary schools in Gulu city were found not to be significant predictors of employee engagement with the following respective beta coefficients and significance values ($\beta = -.056; p > .532$); ($\beta = -.034; p > .480$) and ($\beta = .002; p > .970$).

Model 3 introduces psychological safety and the results also revealed positive and significant predictors of teachers engagement in primary schools in Gulu city ($\beta = .532; p < .001$). Psychological safety contributes sizeable predictive power of 41.1 per cent of

the variance in teachers employee engagement of primary schools in Gulu city ($\Delta R^2=.411$; $p<.001$). The results provide further support to research question (ii) whose findings reveal a positive and significant relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement of teachers in primary schools in Gulu city.

4.6 Meditation effect of psychological safety on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement

TABLE 10: MED GRAPH

Type of mediation		Significant	
		t	
Sobel z-value		2.653473	$p = 0.007967$
95% Symmetrical Confidence interval			
Lower		0.13851	
Higher		0.92146	
Unstandardized indirect effect			
a*b		0.52998	
se		0.19973	
Effective Size measures			R ² measures
<u>Standardised Coefficients</u>			-
Total:		0.467	
Direct:		0.564	
Indirect:		-0.03	
Indirect to Total ratio		-7	

In Table 9 above, it reveals that psychological safety mediate work-life balance and employee engagement since the Sobel Z – value is large with a P – value was greater than 0.001 (Sobel Z-value 2.653473, sig. $P > 0.007967$), the study concludes that a mediation effect does exist. Since there is positive significant relationship between independent

variable and dependent variable, independent variable and mediating variable. It means that mediating effect exists (Jose, 2013).

The med graph was used to establish the mediating effect of psychological safety on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement.

This result shows that psychological safety has a mediating effect on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement as the inclusion of psychological safety in the model reduced and remained significant thus a partial mediation as in the model below.

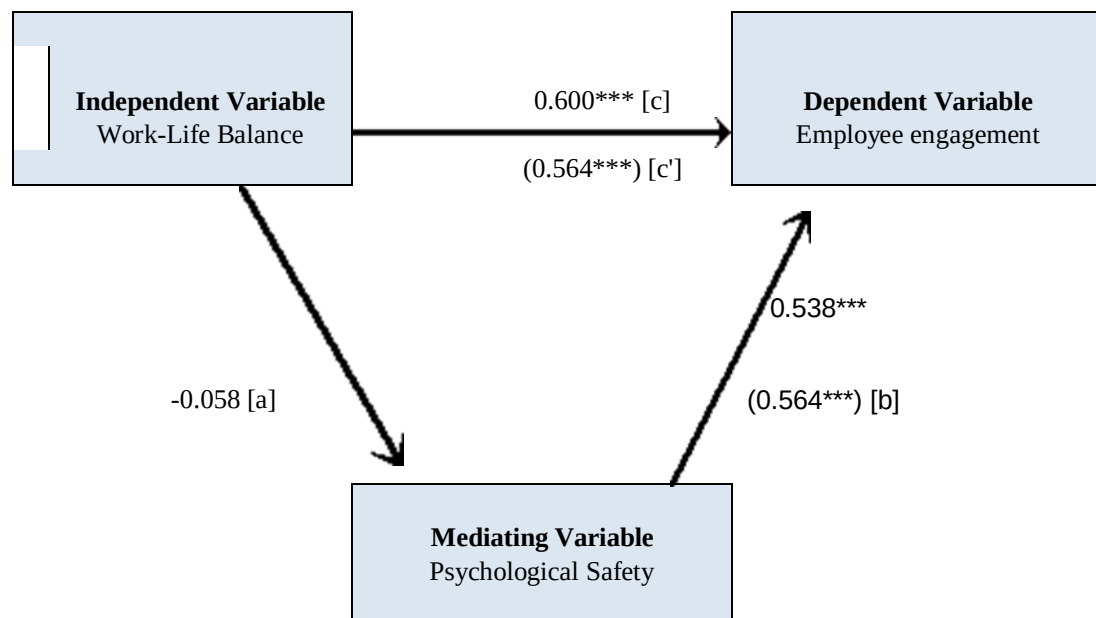


FIGURE 1.2: MED GRAPH

This result in figure 3 above shows that the association between work-life balance (predictor variable) and employee engagement (dependant variable) has been increased from (0.600*** to 0.564***) by inclusion of psychological safety (mediating variable) in the model thus leading to a partial type of mediation. The ratio index of $(0.564/0.538 \times 100 = 104.8\%)$ implies that the direct effect of work-life balance on psychological safety is 56.4% (i.e., 0.564) and -3% (i.e., -

0.03). Partial Mediation happens when the independent variable (X) still has a direct effect on the dependent variable (Y) even after the mediator variable (M) is introduced. The mediator M explains part of the effect, but not all of it. The direct path from X to Y (c') is reduced in absolute size but remains different from zero.

This therefore, implies that there is not only a significant relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable, but also some direct relationship between the independent and dependent variable.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the discussion, conclusions and recommendations derived from the findings of the study in chapter four presented in order of objectives.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

The study focused on the predictive potential of work-life balance and psychological safety on employee engagement as discussed below:

5.2.1 The relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City

The results of Pearson correlation coefficient reveal that there was negative relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety which was not significant. This implies that an improvement in work-life balance such as improvement in personal life, growth in career and family well being is associated with negative changes in teachers' engagement in terms of having no risk-taking venture, no common belief and no respect and trust for each other in government aided primary schools in Gulu city. This finding concurs with the results reported by Fitzpatrick et al., (2012) who found that job performance and mental health of individuals increase when the organizational principles encourage work-family balance. An employee is happy when he/she has psychological contentment in work achievements certainty, family satisfaction and job security.

Psychological safety is a critical psychological circumstance that “shapes how people inhabited their roles [in the organization]” (Kahn, 1990). Psychological safety embodies a

feeling that employees can “show and employ one’s self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career” (Kahn, 1990). According to recent studies and extensions on COR theory, conflict is related to the downward change in resources (Oren & Levin, 2017). Stressful situations disrupt employee’s perception of psychological safety as key resources are found to be endangered. Stress is elicited with each threat to loss of resources, such as economic uncertainty, the threat to self-esteem, fear for one’s marital status or job security, financial downfall or a sick relative (Reizer et al., 2010).

An increased experience of psychological safety may result in work engagement (Lyu, 2016), as psychological safety reflects upon the belief that an individual can be engaged without any fear of negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999; Eggers, 2011; Roussin & Webber, 2011). Where a work environment displays ambiguity, unpredictability and is threatening, the opposite would be true as subordinates would perceive the environment as being psychologically unsafe. Subordinates working in a perceived psychologically unsafe work environment may disengage from their work and may be reluctant to attempt new things (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004).

Work-family relationship contributes to the creation of psychological climate at work, whereas a favourable psychological climate creates the perception of psychological safety within the organization (Cartwright & Pappas, 2018). The organization is considered to have a psychologically safe climate when an employee feels that the working environment complements his/her well-being (Faragher et al., 2014). In the absence of favourable psychological climate, the psychological safety level is likely to be low. Work-family conflict has also been linked to mental health problems, and it may lead to a

decline in an individual's mental abilities (Zapf et al., 2016). When individuals' work-stress is reflected in their relationship with family members, reducing the effectiveness of their work and family roles may harm their psychological well-being and psychological safety.

5.2.2 The relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City

The results of Pearson correlation coefficient established that there existed a positive relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement which was significant. This means risk taking behavior, common belief and respect and trust for each other of teachers enhances employee engagement in term of them having vigor, dedication and absorption in duty. In addition, the results of the regression model revealed that psychological safety was significant and best predictor compared to work life balance. Thus, indicating a unit increase in psychological safety that can cause a change in employee engagement by 0.627.

This result is similar to the findings reported by Dollard & Bakker (2010), found two significant correlation measures of psychological safety and employee engagement over the course of 12 months, one at $r = .19$, and the other at $r = .29$. While May *et al.*, (2014) found a significant correlation of .35 between two constructs. While psychological safety and employee engagement appear to be positively linked, there is reasoning as to why those in a psychologically safe environment may feel obliged to reciprocally contribute to the betterment of the organization through higher levels of engagement.

Psychological contracts describe the reciprocal obligations between the employee and the organization, perhaps the very core of the employee-organization exchange relationship

(Morrison & Robinson, 2017; Rousseau, 2019). Psychological contracts represent the expectations that the employee and the organization have regarding the resources owed to one another (Schein, 2010). Employees perceive their psychological contract in three ways; from the implicit or explicit promises received from recruiters and interviewers, from interactions with co-workers and managers, and from the various structural signals communicated by the organization itself (for example, company handbooks and mission statements). Both psychological safety and trust involve vulnerability or the perception of risk through choices which seek to minimize negative consequences (Edmondson, Kramer, & Cook, 2004). Psychological safety is conceptualized as an individual's view of the risks and consequences associated with his or her work environment, stemming from a subconscious conviction of how others will respond when an individual finds him/herself in a particular situation (Edmondson et al., 2004; Roussin, 2008). The presence of psychological safety creates confidence in an individual that others will accept and not reprimand his or her actions (Edmondson, 1999).

Therefore, while psychological contracts concern implicit social exchanges, they are also representatives of the formal, explicit contracts and structure between the employee and the employer.

5.2.4 The relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu City

The results of Pearson correlation coefficient established that there was a positive relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement which was significant. This means that good personal life, career growth and family life of teachers enhances employee engagement in terms of them having vigor, dedication and

absorption to do their work. Furthermore, the results of the regression model revealed that work-life balance was significant and least predictor compared to psychological safety. This means that a unit changes in work-life balance can cause a change in employee engagement by 0.512.

The findings of this study concur with the Richman, Civian, Shannon Hill & Brennan, (2018) who revealed that supportive work-life policies and perceived flexibility are positively related to employee engagement. In addition, a study by Sonnentag, (2013) has suggested that recovery, which can be seen as a part of work-life balance, can contribute to employees' work engagement. Recovered employees are more willing and able to invest effort and show more resilience than employees who have recovered. This means that recovery might have a positive effect on employees' vigor. Recovery can also influence dedication since recovered employees possess enough resources to become strongly involved in their work. Finally, recovery can also have a positive effect on the last element of work engagement and absorption. Recovered employees are able to fully concentrate on their tasks and to ignore irrelevant signals (Sonnentag, 2013).

According to Gregory et al., (2013), work-life balance has an influence on the manager's behaviour in the work environment. The problem of the job strain for employees today is increasingly mental instead of physical, and employees become overwhelmed without work-life balance, which leads to ineffective employee engagement at (Lokke & Madsen, 2014). Studies show that active employee engagement predicts organizational performance, financial performance, and employee performance (Ardichvili, & Tkachenko, 2014). Relationships with the immediate supervisors are critical in the effective employee engagement (Shuck, 2010). The extent of the manager's work-life

balance fosters a positive employee work-life balance (Kishino, 2015). Employees who do not feel connected to the organization are less likely to commit their various degrees of self in support of the organization objectives (Kahn, 1990). These employees respond with increased positive feelings regarding their job and the organization (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2015). Similarly, when employees are provided with particular resources by their employer, they respond with a certain degree of engagement (Saks, 2016).

Furthermore, work-life balance practices and work engagement can be explained using the social exchange theory (Blau, 2014). This theory states that when employers provide care and opportunities for their employees, these employees will show certain attitudes and behaviours. More specifically, when employees receive favourable treatment they reciprocate, which in turn leads to beneficial outcomes for both employers and employees (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski & Rhoades, 2012). Applying the social exchange theory to work-life balance, when employees feel that organizations help them balance their work and family demands, they probably feel cared for and supported by their organization. Following the norm of reciprocity, it can be said that employees feel obligated to reciprocate by showing more favourable attitudes and behaviours at work. These employees respond with increased positive feelings regarding their job and the organization (Aryee, Srinivas & Tan, 2015). Similarly, when employees are provided with particular resources by their employer, they respond with a certain degree of engagement (Saks, 2016).

5.3.4 The mediation of psychological safety between work-life balance and employee engagement

These findings have an important implication for school administrators. Today, improvement of teachers' vigor, dedication and absorption are considered very crucial for all schools. However, if managers do not pay attention to managerial practices, this may negatively affect psychological safety of the teachers, and then may lead to poor engagement of teachers. Psychological safety level of the teachers in the study is moderate. Considering that psychological safety is related to work-life balance and engagement, it is necessary for the supervisors to behave thoughtfully and friendly towards the teachers, to show personal interest, to value them, to empathize with them, to listen to and to support their opinions. Teachers having the perception that they are supported by the school managers will have more psychological safety and this will be reflected in the job engagement and performance positively. This will serve to the improvement of the success and efficiency of schools. This research examines the mediating effect of psychological safety on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement.

5.3.1 Conclusion

The objectives of this study were to; first examine the relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety. Second was to examine the relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement. Thirdly was to examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement. Lastly was to examine the mediating roles of psychological safety on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among teachers in government aided primary schools in Gulu

City. The above objectives were achieved through a questionnaire survey of 21 government aided primary schools in Gulu city in Uganda. Teacher engagement in government aided primary schools was measured using 17 statements on Likert scale. The study found a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement of teachers in government aided primary schools. Equally, there existed a significant positive relationship between psychological safety and employee engagement and the relationship between work-life balance and psychological safety was negative and non-significant. The Pearson correlation coefficient, r , can take a range of values from +1 to -1. A value of 0 indicates that there is no association between the two variables.

The linear regression model showed that the two predictor variables accounted for 53.9% of the total variation in teacher engagement of government aided primary schools. Results indicated that work-life balance and psychological safety are significant predictor of employee engagement in government aided primary schools in Gulu city. A unit increase in work-life balance and psychological safety leads to an increase in the employee engagement. It also concluded that balancing personal life, family life and career growth with work of teachers can facilitate employee engagement. Furthermore, when teachers are contented and pleased with their managers (head teacher/deputy head teacher), they always feel good and have vigor, dedication and absorbed in their duties.

5.3.2 Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the finding of the study and discussions as follows:

Head teachers of government aided primary schools in Gulu City need to encourage work life balance in order to improve employee engagement and more attention should be given to personal life, career satisfaction and family satisfaction.

Head teachers of government aided schools should foster interventions that can influence work life balance in order to improve psychological safety and more attention should be given to risk taking behaviour, common belief, respect and trust for each other by encouraging sufficient time after work, utilizing full skills and potential, schools should have culture of respect, etc)

Head teachers of government aided primary schools in Gulu City need to emphasize on psychological safety in order to improve employee engagement more attention should be given to vigor, dedication and absorption. This can be through commitment to work, comfortable working conditions and good compensation initiatives.

Head teachers in government aided schools in Gulu City should strive to improve teachers' psychological safety as it contributes more in improving employee engagement than work-life balance. This could be done by providing freedom of speech without fear of being intimidated, inclusive school culture of respect and personal growth avenues.

Other issues including provision of maternity leave and childcare, husband care, and parental care should also be satisfactorily dealt with as they have bearings on employee commitment that could ultimately drive to their employee engagement.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The following were the limitations in this study;

First of all, social distance that was in force due to COVID-19. Some respondents were not willing to meet the researcher for discussions. This hindered data collection process.

Funding limitations. Raising the budgeted money for the research especially from personal sources was a problem hence distorting the planned research schedule.

Now that schools have reopened, many teachers are not staying in the teachers' quarters, they commute from their various homes which are far from schools, and they either come late or leave the school early to catch up with time. That made data collection from such respondents difficult. Distant schools with bad roads especially during rainy season. Since data collection was done during the rainy season (June-November), it made data collection difficult and burdensome.

5.6 Areas for further study

Future research can focus on the longitudinal research with qualitative approach to underpin the effect of temporal changes in the environment. This will help to establish the correct sequence of events, identify changes over time and provide insight in to cause and effect relationships. This research investigated the influence of work life balance and psychological safety on employee engagement, future research can examine the effect of work life balance and psychological safety using mediating variables. There is need to determine the other predictors of employee engagement since work life balance and psychological safety only predicted 53.9% of the variance in employee engagement in Gulu city in Uganda. Future scholars should carry out similar studies on the effects of

work life balance and psychological safety on employee engagement in other cities apart from Gulu city and comparison of the findings be made.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

MASTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Dear respondent,

The questions that follow are intended to facilitate a study on **Work-Life Balance, Psychological Safety and Employee engagement among teachers in Government aided primary schools in Gulu City.**

Please, take a few minutes of your precious time to answer them. Your responses will be used for academic purposes only & will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: DESCRIPTIVE DATA (Please tick where appropriate).

1. Gender:

Male	Female
☐	☐

2. Age: 18-25 ☐ 26-34 ☐ 35-43 ☐ 44- + ☐

4. Marital status: Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced ☐

5. Highest education level: Primary ☐ O-level ☐ A-level ☐
Tertiary education ☐ University education ☐

7. How long have you been in this school?

0-4 years ☐ 5-9 years ☐ 10-14 years ☐ 15 and over ☐

SECTION B: NON-DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Please estimate to what extent the following statements related to **Work-Life Balance**, **Psychological safety** and **Employee engagement** apply to you as a staff in this school. Please, **circle one choice** for each of the following statements that most applies to you; (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither disagree nor agree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree).

A. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

S/n	Statement	Options available				
A.I PERSONAL LIFE						
1	My work time table allows me to do my work and get involved in my private life	1	2	3	4	5
2	I have sufficient time to live my life after work/teaching	1	2	3	4	5
3	My work hours do not interrupt my times for health exercises and prayers	1	2	3	4	5
4	I have taught in this school for more than 5 years	1	2	3	4	5
5	My school work ends once I go home	1	2	3	4	5
6	Teaching interferes with my family responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
A.II CAREER SATISFACTION						
1	I have up scaled my Education in line of my job	1	2	3	4	5
2	I feel satisfied with the work I do and the hours of the work	1	2	3	4	5
3	I find my teaching job interesting and I have got new experiences	1	2	3	4	5
4	I feel I am utilizing my full skills and potential.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I have acquired professional and new skills while on my job	1	2	3	4	5
6	I have attended several trainings while on my teaching job	1	2	3	4	5
7	I have faced new challenges and learned new things while on my job	1	2	3	4	5
A. III FAMILY SATISFACTION						
1	I have ample time for my family as a teacher	1	2	3	4	5
2	I’m able to visit my village and have time with my relatives	1	2	3	4	5
3	I do not get enough support from my family members in domestic chores	1	2	3	4	5
4	Giving time to my partner and children is part of my life priorities	1	2	3	4	5
5	Doing house chores is one of my priorities to satisfy my family	1	2	3	4	5
6	I am always in a hurry to get home after work to meet family responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
7	I have time to access community resources to help my family	1	2	3	4	5

B. PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Sn	Statement	Options available				
B.I RISK TAKING BEHAVIOR						
1	My fellow teachers consult me for risky work	1	2	3	4	5
2	I undertake risky jobs to keep the reputation of my school	1	2	3	4	5
3	Citizenship behavior is part of my work ethics	1	2	3	4	5
4	I like doing the work my fellow teachers shy away from	1	2	3	4	5
5	My supervisors like to have me when there are risky jobs to do	1	2	3	4	5
6	I do not manage to work and live my personal life well	1	2	3	4	5
7	I have taken risky decisions to save my school	1	2	3	4	5
B.II COMMON BELIEF						
1	The teachers code of conduct is the major tool in our profession	1	2	3	4	5
2	No one is to be punished or humiliated for speaking up at workplace	1	2	3	4	5
3	Teachers should not be embarrassed, rejected or punished for speaking up about the profession and issues of the school	1	2	3	4	5
4	Teachers feel comfortable for being themselves	1	2	3	4	5
5	A common belief at work place begins with sense of belonging	1	2	3	4	5
6	A coaching culture helps fellow teachers with the courage to speak up the truth	1	2	3	4	5
7	I encourage learning from failures and openly share my hard-won lessons from mistakes	1	2	3	4	5
8	I always have a genuine curiosity in telling the truth to my work-mates	1	2	3	4	5
9	I promote dialogue, productive debate and work to resolve conflicts productively	1	2	3	4	5
B.III RESPECT AND TRUST FOR EACH OTHER						
1	I respect and trust the work I do	1	2	3	4	5
2	My workmates respect the work I do	1	2	3	4	5
3	My supervisors trust the work I do	1	2	3	4	5
4	I trust the assignments my fellow teachers do	1	2	3	4	5
5	Our supervisors have full confidence in the work we do in the different classes	1	2	3	4	5
6	I belief in trust at work place	1	2	3	4	5
7	I believe in the respect fellow teachers have for each other in my school	1	2	3	4	5
8	My school has a culture of respect	1	2	3	4	5
9	The trust among my fellow teachers is strong	1	2	3	4	5

C. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Sn	Statement	Options available				
C.I VIGOR						
1	At my work I feel strong and vigorous	1	2	3	4	5
2	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	1	2	3	4	5
3	I can continue working for very long periods at a time	1	2	3	4	5
4	I find meaning in my work because I do it with all my strength	1	2	3	4	5
5	I find it easy and feel strong at my work when my supervisor gives me the opportunity to share my experience with others	1	2	3	4	5
6	I have the energy to do my work as expected.	1	2	3	4	5
C.II DEDICATION						
1	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am encouraged to come up with better ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5
3	At my job, I have the opportunity to make good use of my skills.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I ‘am proud of the work that I do and my profession	1	2	3	4	5
5	To me, my job is challenging enough	1	2	3	4	5
6	I feel inspired by the vision, code of conduct and values of my profession	1	2	3	4	5
C.III ABSORPTION						
1	When I ‘am working, I forget everything else around me.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I feel happy when I am working intensely	1	2	3	4	5
3	When I ‘am working, I always lose track of time	1	2	3	4	5
4	I always get carried away by what I am working on	1	2	3	4	5
5	Nothing can distract me when I am working	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your time and response.