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Educated Married Women's Perceptions on Work-Life Balance in Egypt: A Comparative Analysis Between Public and Private Sector Workers

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EDUCATED MARRIED WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN EGYPT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR WORKERS

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DEDICATION

I am dedicating this thesis to my beloved mother, father, sister and brothers for their endless support, encouragement and sacrifices.

Special thanks to my husband, Youssef, who has been a constant source of support and encouragement during the challenges of the graduate studies.

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ABSTRACT

Both supervisors and coworkers' support and the perceived family-friendly policies contribute to achieving work-life balance. The aim of this study is to examine the perceptions of educated, married working women in the Egyptian public and private sector on the role of their supervisors and coworkers' support and perceived family-friendly policies in helping them achieve work-life balance. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with working women in different public and private organizations and in different life stages, in order to achieve the objectives of this study. The findings of this study revealed that working conditions in the public sector are more convenient and suitable than private sector for married women. According to the educated married women's perceptions in this study, the public sector supports the idea of work-life balance in terms of providing flexible working arrangements that suit married women's lifestyles. Thus, this study offers different recommendations to help Egyptian married working women to achieve work-life balance.

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Introduction

Due to the dramatic change in the workplace, the family-friendly policies have been an issue of interest among the human resource managers (Moon & Roh, 2010). Because the number of women, dual-earner couples, and single parents have increased in the workforce, many employers started to provide their employees with work-life balance programs to help them cope with family demands (Cheung & Chou, 2013). This change is very important for the married women with young children in order to be able to balance between work and family duties that positively affect their job satisfaction and work productivity (Moon & Roh, 2010).

To begin, the notion of work-life balance was first initiated in the early 1970s in the United Kingdom in order to help working mothers to balance between their work and family duties (Frame & Hartog, 2003). Thus, we must define how work-life balance is explained in the previous studies. Delecta (2011) defined the work-life balance as the ability of the individual to meet both work and family commitments (Kumar & Janakiram, 2017). Work-life balance has been an issue of interest for people who are looking for quality of work life in relation to quality of private life (Guest, 2002). Moreover, the work-life balance is not only a western phenomenon, but also, due to globalization, it reached the eastern culture which worldwide influences the organizational settings (Lewis et al., 2007; Rehman & Roomi, 2012). The concept of work-life balance represents the condition by which the organization creates the environment that assists its employees to achieve a harmony between work balance and family demands (Jeyalakshmi & Lakkoju, 2015). Grosen (2005) stated that "work-life balance is not about working less, it's rather about working 'smart', so that individuals energize themselves and give everything that needs for both work and home, without jeopardizing one for the other" (Gorsen, 2005; Jeyalakshmi & Lakkoju, 2015).

This research examines the challenges that the educated working married women in the Egyptian public and private sector face in order to achieve the balance between work and

family responsibilities. To clarify, the focus of this study is to examine the perceptions of the educated, married working women about the role of their supervisors and co-workers and the perceived family-friendly policies and practices in achieving the balance between work and family responsibilities.

The workplace culture and policies contribute in facilitating the work-life balance among working women. Organization can help and support employees in achieving work-family balance through different mechanisms, formal policies or flexible working arrangements (Facer & Wadsworth, 2008; Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein, 2001; Feeney & Stritch 2017). Based on previous studies, some of the employers consider implementing the family friendly policies such as sharing jobs, flexible working hours, compressed work weeks, on-site child care, telecommuting and parttime jobs (Naithani, 2010). Moreover, a main element in the organizational culture is supervisor who supports and encourages the implementation of work-life balance initiatives (Groner, 2018). The supervisor is the one who allows his/her employees to take advantage of all offered benefits (Groner, 2018).

Consequently, the lack of work-life balance practices and policies can negatively affect the employees' efficiency at work. Previous studies demonstrated the effects of family-friendly policies on achieving job satisfaction, employee commitment, retention and organizational performance (e.g. Beauregard & Henry, 2009; De Cieri et al., 2005; Zheng et al., 2015). Studies revealed that the quality of work-life balance contributes in increasing employees' job satisfaction and performance and reducing the turnover rate (Avci, 2017). Moreover, introducing work-life balance practices improves the employees' ability to balance between work and personal life (Bailey, Bradley, Brown, Lingard & Townsend, 2007).

Many studies have been conducted to explore different challenges, reasons and consequences that working women face when trying to balance between life and work

responsibilities; however, few have tackled the issue of educated, married women who work in the private and public sector in Egypt. Thus, this research was built on interviewing twenty-one Egyptian middle class working women in the private and public sector. In 2015, middle class people in Egypt represented close to 30% of the population (World Bank, 2019). The characteristics of the middle class people is that they have higher education, better connectivity to basic services, more assets and spend a large part of their income on education and health compared to poor and vulnerable people (World Bank, 2019). The selection criteria were based on a purposive sampling technique and covered a certain age group of graduates and a few are post graduate students. All the interviewees are married women who are live with their husbands and either have children or are pregnant. The interviews' results gave more insights on the issue of work-life balance and the different challenges that educated working married women face in the public and private sector. It was shown from the results of the interviews that there are major challenges that affect the ability of Egyptian working women to achieve the balance between their family and work responsibilities. These challenges are the degree of support the Egyptian educated, married women receive from the workplace to achieve work-life balance. Thus, if the married working women received the appropriate support from their workplaces, they would be able to achieve this balance. Hence, this issue can be solved by providing different work-life balance practices that suit the working woman's life style.

Background

The female labor market participation rate in Egypt has increased over the last 20 years, from 21% in 1998 to 27% in 2006, before dropping down back to 23.1% in 2016 (CAPMAS, 2017; World Bank, 2018). Despite the remarkable increase in health and educational attainment among Egyptian women, their labor force participation rate is considered as the lowest in the world (Assaad, Hendy, Lassassi and Yassin, 2018; Hendy, 2020). Despite the fact, the more the increase in women's participation rate in the labor market in Egypt, the faster economic

growth (Hendy, 2018). The most recent CAPMAS labor survey and Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE) reveal that the reason behind the low female participation rate in the Egyptian labor market is due to several factors which are: the social norms and values, lack of childcare services, the burdens of marital responsibilities, sexual harassment and poor transportation (World Bank, 2018). The "traditional gender paradigm" does not allow women to participate in the Egyptian labor market (Assaad, 2015). To clarify, the main concept of the traditional gender paradigm in the Arab culture is due to the primacy of women's familial roles in addition to the gender norms that are defined as men are always the breadwinners and women are homemakers (World Bank, 2004; Assaad, 2015).

Moreover, marriage is also one of the major obstacles for the employment of women in Egypt as research has revealed that almost 30% of married women are less likely than unmarried women to participate in the labor market (Assaad, Krafft & Selwaness, 2017; Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020). Another reason is because of the additional bulk of other responsibilities, such as childcare and elderly care that still fall on women, which it is similar to other parts of the world, married women tend to find it very difficult to participate in the labor market (Assaad, Krafft & Selwaness, 2017; Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020). To clarify, in Egypt, the share of domestic duties on women does not change regardless whether they are working or not. Women spend almost 31 hours per week which is nearly a full "second shift" on domestic responsibilities (Assaad, Krafft & Selwaness, 2017; Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020). In addition, the arrangement of childcare can act as an obstacle for a consistent work, due to the difficulties that require multiple arrangements with different relatives (Assaad, Krafft & Selwaness, 2017; Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020).

Another reason why women's participation rate is low in Egypt over the past two decades, it is because of the low employment opportunities in the formal sector outside the

public sector (Assaad et al., 2018; Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020). In addition to the fact that women tend to leave their jobs in the private sector, the employers are also reluctant to hire them due to women's reproductive roles (Assaad, 2015). For example, the employers have to provide women with paid maternity leaves and to abide by the legal mandates of providing child care facilities (Assaad, 2015). Thus, the private sector employers are not willing to create a family- friendly environment to increase women's participation in the private sector jobs (Assaad, 2015). For example, the length of the working day is over 9 hours per day in the private sector, whereas the average working hours per day in the government sector is 7.5 hours (Assaad, 2015). On the other hand, jobs in the public sectors are relatively stable and provide good working conditions, in addition to wages that are more equitable between men and women (Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020). Moreover, the public sector implements the anti-sexual harassment and anti-discrimination policies and provides employees with maternity leaves and working hours that are compatible with family duties and responsibilities (Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020). Thus, the conflict between work and family roles prevents the highly educated women to remain in the labor market in Egypt (Sieverding, 2012).

Public and private sector in Egypt

A report by the World Bank revealed that almost 37% of women are employed in the public sector in Egypt and another report stated that more than half of all young women aged from 18 to 24 years old are new workers (they started their first job in the last six months) considered the public sector as their first job (World Bank, 2013; Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020). Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, and Garber (2020) revealed in their study that almost 70% of male youth and 73% of female youth, who are currently enrolled in schools, prefer to work in the public sector after graduation. Notably, based on research on

young women's unemployment, women are willing to wait as unemployed for a long time to wait for a government job (Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020).

Treating both male and female employees fairly is one of the government responsibilities. On the other hand, the private sector discriminates between male and female in terms of hiring and compensation (Said 2015, Assaad and El-Hamidi 2009; Assaad, 2015). Regardless of the fact that this discrimination of women in the private sector is for a reason or not, it contributes in creating preferences among women to work in the government (Barsoum 2015; Assaad, 2015). These preferences are based on different factors that differentiate both the public and private sectors (Assaad, 2015). Some of these factors are the working hours' length, eligibility for paid vacations, maternity leave and sick leave (Assaad, 2015). For example, the maternity leave law does not secure mothers who returned from their maternity leaves with a position of equal value (Constant, Edochie, Glick, Martini, & Garber, 2020).

According to a study done by Barsoum in 2016, it examined why Egyptian youth queue for public sector jobs and one of the findings from the ELMPS 2012 survey (it is wide- ranging survey that includes data collected on several issues such as employment, unemployment and job characteristics) revealed that the access of social insurance is one of the benefits for employees who work in the public sector (Barsoum, 2016). This study demonstrated that the public sector offers more job benefits to its employees, whereas, the private sector offers some benefits to only one fifth of its employees, such as for legal work contracts around 20.6 % and for social insurance around 21.9% (Barsoum, 2016). On the other hand, the government sector provides access to these figures to almost 84.4% of its employees (Barsoum, 2016). Lastly, the data results of the paid leaves of absence and sick leaves describe the difference between public and private sectors benefits given to their employees (Barsoum, 2016).

Due to the poor working conditions in the private sector, both genders prefer to work in the public sector (Sieverding, 2012). According to a study done by Sieverding in 2012, males

and females are more likely to complain about the mistreatment of the private sector by 21% for males and 25% for females than the public sector, which is 18% for both genders (Sieverding, 2012). For example, one of the poor working conditions that both genders experience in the private sector is long working hours (41% of males and 52% of females youth) (Sieverding, 2012). In addition, around 38% of males and 45% of females experience exhaustive workload in the private sector. It is worth mentioning that females suffer more from both long working hours and exhaustive workload than males, because of the other domestic responsibilities they preform beside their work (Sieverding, 2012).

According to Sieverding's study results in 2012, 34% of female youth prefer to work in government, 34% prefer to work in the informal private sector and 12% of female youth prefer to work in the formal private sector. Young women are more likely to prefer to get employed in the public sector than the private sector because the public sector is providing working women with practices that accommodate their family roles (Assaad and El Hamidi 2009; Sieverding, 2012). In addition to providing both employed females and those who are searching for a job with social protection (Sieverding, 2012). Thus, by improving the family-friendly practices in the private sector, this will help female employees to balance between work and family commitments that keeps them at home (Sieverding, 2012). This could be done through providing a variety of options such as part-time employment and work-from-home (Sieverding, 2012). Moreover, by increasing the number of employers that provide certain benefits, such as maternity leave, nursing breaks, childcare services and health insurance, this can help female employees to participate more in the labor market (Sieverding, 2012).

A study done by Hendy in 2020 revealed that the private sector does not promote a hospitable business environment for women to work (Hendy, 2020). For example, there are several factors that make women prefer to work in the public sector and not in the private sector such as the family-friendly environment, higher job, gender norms and income stability

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(Hendy, 2020). To enable women to participate in the labor market and stay active over their life cycle, they should improve the labor market law and regulations (Hendy, 2020).

In addition, marriage is another factor that influences the ability of women to participate in the labor market in Egypt (Assaad, 2015). Similarly, Hendy (2015) stated that one of the main factors that hinders women's participation in the labor market in Arab countries is marriage. Women's time after marriage is very important as there is an increase in other duties such as domestic responsibilities (Hendy, 2015; Assaad, 2015). For example, married women who work in the private sector can leave their jobs as they cannot balance between their jobs and other domestic duties due to the long working days (Hendy, 2015; Assaad, 2015). Whereas, women who work in the public sector will remain in their jobs after marriage (Hendy, 2015; Assaad, 2015).

A study done by Assaad in 2015 revealed that when women get married, they tend to leave their jobs in the private sector due to inability to balance their domestic duties after marriage with the long working days and poor working conditions (Assaad, 2015). Whereas, many women who work in the public sector tend to remain working after marriage (Assaad, 2015). Moreover, this study also demonstrated that women are more likely to participate in non-wage employment, such as unpaid family labor or self-employment, after marriage to be able to fulfill women's domestic duties (Assaad, 2015). This study showed that the tendency of women to remain in the private sector after marriage is very low compared to working women in the government sector which increases after marriage, thus women tend to participate in other unpaid family work and self-employment after marriage (Assaad, 2015).

Beside education, marriage is strongly related to what extend female youths are economically active (Sieverding, 2012). According to a study done by Sieverding in 2012 by analyzing the 2009 Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE). SYPE is based on 15,000 youths which includes youth aged 15-29 in Egypt, working age from 15-29 and youth who are not

currently attending schools (Sieverding, 2012). This study revealed that married females' participation rate in the labor market is 11.4% compared to 25.3% for females who never married (Sieverding, 2012). In addition, the study demonstrated that 66% of female youths who are not participating in the labor market are due to being housewives (Sieverding, 2012). The fact that almost 87% of female youth are not in the labor market although they are university certificates holder (Sieverding, 2012). This is due to the conflict between work and family roles that prevents highly educated women to remain in the labor market in Egypt (Sieverding, 2012). This study concluded that regardless of the level of education, married females' labor force participation rate is lower than unmarried females, and this is because of the incompatibility between work and family duties (Sieverding, 2012).

Women are considered as the main caretaker for all the household responsibilities such as caring for their children and domestic duties (Hendy, 2015). A study by Assaad and Hendy (2013) explained that marriage has different effects based on which sector women are working in (Hendy, 2015). Public sector female employees tend to remain working in the public entities even after marriage and childbearing (Barsoum, 2018). On the other hand, the participation in the labor force among married women in the private sector reduces dramatically (Hendy, 2015; Barsoum, 2018). A study done by Nazier and Ramadan in 2016 to examine the factors that affect women's employment status in Egypt. One of the findings of this study is that there is no relationship between the total number of kids a woman has and her participation in the labor force (Nazier & Ramadan, 2016). Women who have many kids are less likely to get employed, however, once they are employed, they are more likely to be working in the public sector than the private sector (Nazier & Ramadan, 2016). This is because the public sector promotes the family-friendly environment more than the public sector (Nazier & Ramadan, 2016). Because the private sector does not want to deal with the cost of hiring married women, they tend to hire fewer women in private entities (Hendy, 2018). On the other hand, due to the extended

working hours in the private sector, women do not find enough time to spend on domestic activities (Hendy, 2018).

The number of hours spent on domestic duties and care work is equal to three times more for young married women than single women, however, there is no difference between employed and unemployed married women concerning their domestic duties (Assaad, 2015). According to this study, married employed women aged from 18-34 spend 34.3 hours on domestic work and 36.4 hours on market work while single employed women spend almost 12.1 hours on domestic work and 43.2 hours on market work (Assaad, 2015).

Another study done by Barsoum in 2018 to examine the challenges that the educated, married and unmarried women face in the labor market in Egypt. Interviews were conducted on a total of 18 unmarried and 9 married educated women in Egypt (Barsoum, 2018). One of the findings of this study is that in order for educated women to participate in the labor market and continue working before and after marriage, they depend on whether the work is suitable with other family arrangements or not and opportunities structure offered to them (Barsoum, 2018). For unmarried women, the issues of job quality overlap with gender respectability issues and reputational fears, which make 'stay at home' as a feasible option among some educated young women (Barsoum, 2018). Whereas, for married women, in order for educated women to combine between work and family, it depends on the level of support these women can receive (Barsoum, 2018). Some of the interviews conducted with women revealed that work is considered as a family duty in order to help with the increase in cost of living (Barsoum, 2018).

Labor Regulations in Egypt: Differences between public and private sectors

The labor law of 2003 is being implemented in both the public and private sectors, while the new Civil Service 2015 Law is only enforced in the public sector, however, the implementation of the articles of these laws in the private sector will encourage more female employees to participate in the labor market. There are certain differences between both laws

concerning the length of the maternity leaves for women. The labor law of 2003 allows women to take up to three months, whereas the new Civil Services 2015 Law allows women to take up to four months. Below are some of the articles in the Labor law of 2003 and Civil Services 2015 law that are related to working women:

- The working woman can have her maternity leave fully paid if she spent ten months working with her employer.

- Any mother can get an unpaid vacation after giving birth for a maximum of two years.

- For the nursing break, mothers can have one hour nursing break that can be divided into two breaks.

- Employers who have more than 100 female employees are required to have child care facilities.

Consequently, the improper implementation of these regulations by the private organizations results in creating preferences for women to work for the public sector rather than the private sector (Barsoum, 2016).

Statement of the problem

Based on the existing literature, women's participation rate in the private and public sector in Egypt is very low due to different factors such as marital status, domestic duties, employment conditions and benefits. Egyptian women cannot balance between their jobs and life responsibilities. Because of the unsupportive working conditions in the private sector, Egyptian women tend to leave their jobs. On the other hand, jobs in the public sectors are relatively stable and provide good working conditions, in addition to wages that are more equitable between men and women. Thus, the conflict between work and family roles prevents highly educated women from staying in the labor market in Egypt. Most of the existing literature reveals a number of studies that emphasis on the significance of work-life balance for the

organization and employees as well. Thus, this research examines the challenges that the educated, married working women in the Egyptian public and private sector face in order to achieve the balance between work and family responsibilities. To clarify, the focus of this study is to examine the perceptions of the educated, married working women about the role of their supervisors and co-workers and the perceived family-friendly policies and practices in achieving the balance between work and family responsibilities.

1.4. Objectives of the research

This research examines the challenges that the educated working married women face in order to achieve the balance between work and family responsibilities, specifically in the Egyptian public and private sector. This research can be helpful for the public and private sector to identify which factors influence the work-life balance among female married employees. Thus, the Egyptian public and private sectors will take measure to reestablish this balance by enforcing policies and enhancing organizational culture.

Main Objectives:

1. To examine the workplace challenges that educated, married working women face when trying to balance between work and family responsibilities and how they can be improved.

2. To examine the perceptions of educated, married working women about their managers and co-workers' support in order to achieve work-life balance.

3. To examine the perceptions of the educated, married working women about the effectiveness of the perceived family-friendly policies and practices on achieving work-life balance.

Research question and specific questions

1.5.1. Main research question

According to the above-mentioned objectives, the proposed research questions in this study will be as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of the educated, married working women in the public and private sector in Egypt about the role of their supervisors and coworkers' support and the perceived family-friendly policies on achieving work-life balance?

This question examines the challenges that the educated working married women in the Egyptian public and private sector face in order to achieve the balance between work and family responsibilities. To clarify, the focus of this study is to examine the perceptions of the educated, married working women about the role of their supervisors and co-workers and the perceived family-friendly policies and practices in achieving the balance between work and family responsibilities.

1.5.2. Specific questions

1. What are the perceptions of the educated, married working women about their managers and co-workers' support in order to achieve work-life balance?

2. What are the perceptions of the educated, married working women about the effectiveness of the perceived family-friendly policies and practices on achieving work-life balance?

3. What do educated, married working women recommend in the private and public sector in Egypt have to their organizations to help achieve work-life balance?

The answers to these questions are very important for understanding the work-life balance issue in the public and private sectors in Egypt. They reveal the roles of workplace policies and supervisors support in achieving work-life balance among educated, married women in the private and public sectors in Egypt in addition to the possible recommendations that can be implemented to achieve work-life balance.

Research outline

This research study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one includes the introduction that presents an outline for the issue of work-life balance among educated, married working women in the public and private sector in Egypt. After that comes the research approach, which reveals the significance of the current issue, and the research question. Chapter two is the literature review which contains the definitions, effects, policies of work-life balance. Chapter three is the methodology adopted in this current study in addition to the conceptual framework. Chapter four includes all the data analysis and the discussions concerning the research study. Finally, chapter five gives a concise conclusion about the current issue and recommendations to be implemented to improve work-life balance among educated, married women working in the public and private sectors in Egypt.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The term work-life balance serves as a definition of work and the rest of life (Guest, 2002). Much of the research has been focusing on the issue of the spillover of work into family life (Guest, 2002). However, family life is considered one of the aspects of life outside work (Guest, 2002). There are other aspects of life rather than family such as free time and leisure time (Guest, 2002).

There are elements of work-life balance that exist in home and work domains (Guest, 2002). At the work domain, the work demands may be too low or too high, thus the organizational culture may support the work-life balance through various policies and practices such as time off work and flexible working hours, however, some employers may ignore these practices (Guest, 2002). Whereas, at the home domain, the demands of this sphere exist in obligations and commitments outside work (Guest, 2002). For example, these demands may exist either in the family, leisure activities or in the community (Guest, 2002). However, the level of demands is different among young women, single and mothers (Guest, 2002).

This study will focus on reviewing the existing literature of two main research streams which are the role of supervisors and coworkers' support and the effectiveness of the perceived workplace policies in achieving work-life balance among working married women. To illustrate, the workplace is divided into two main factors which are different family-friendly policies offered by the organization and the organizational culture that encourages the use of these policies. As a part of the organizational culture, the supervisors and coworkers have a significant role in creating the organizational culture that promotes the family-friendly environment.

Women's roles as caregiver

Due to the fact that the care needs are increasing tremendously, the family caregivers tend to face difficulties in managing both work responsibilities and caregiving commitments

(Lee & Tang, 2013). The burden of a caregiver is measured based on two aspects which are the number of daily living activities and instrumental activities that the care-receiver can perform (Wang et al., 2018). Wang et al.'s (2018) study examined the conflicts between work and caregiving demands. This study revealed that the more the job demands, the higher caregiving demands which included many factors such as long working hours, inflexible work arrangements and difficulty in balancing between work and caregiving. The study also demonstrated that employed family caregivers are more likely to experience the care burden than the unemployed caregivers, that is due to multiple roles and commitments. Another study by Lee & Tang (2013) examined the relationship between the amount of caregiving roles and the labor force participation. This study revealed that women are being negatively affected by the caregiving roles more than men do. This study concluded that women leave the labor force because of two reasons which are either they want to give better care to their family member or they cannot tolerate the high level of role strain of being caregivers and workers.

Thus, some of the recommendations presented in Wang et al.'s (2018) study are introducing more flexible employment policies such as working from home, flexible working hours and job sharing, which could help in reducing the caregiving burden and role conflicts. In addition, a study by Hilbrecht et al. (2015) proposed recommendations to balance between caregiving duties and work responsibilities. For example, in order for the employed female to find time for the caregiver duties, the employers to provide access to flexible and reduced hours' options (Hilbrecht et al., 2015). Moreover, the supportive managers and colleagues at work who appreciate employees' caregiving demands are very essential as they help employed females to manage between employment and caregiving duties. In addition to the supportive government and workplace employment, who play a vital role in providing income subsidies to employees such as child care facilities or paid leave requests, help in reducing the conflict between work and caregiving duties (Hilbrecht et al., 2015). Consequently, employed

caregivers are more likely to remain in the workplace if they found that their employers offer different options such as unpaid family leave and paid sick or vacation days that support the caregiving domain (Lee & Tang, 2013).

The role of workplace arrangements
Workplace Support

One of the important factors that contribute in achieving the work-life balance among employees is workplace support. The workplace support is divided into two main factors which are different family friendly policies offered by the organization and the organizational culture that encourages the use of these policies. As a part of the organizational culture, the supervisors and coworkers have a significant role in creating the organizational culture that promotes the family friendly environment. Moreover, coworkers' support plays a vital role at increasing other coworkers' family performance through providing both instrumental and emotional support.

Organization can help and support employees achieving work-family balance through different mechanisms, formal policies or flexible working arrangements (Facer & Wadsworth, 2008; Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein, 2001; Feeney & Stritch 2017). Moreover, organization may adopt an organizational culture by supporting the family through helping employees to choose work-life balance practices that suit their lifestyles (Wadsworth & Owens, 2007; Feeney & Stritch 2017). Hence, there are two mechanisms that can help employed women to achieve work-life balance which is: the perceived work-life balance policies and family-friendly organizational culture that supports work-life balance.

First, alternative work schedules or the work-life balance policies such as job sharing, part-time job, flextime, compressed workweeks and on-site child care are very important for promoting work-life balance (Society for Human Resource Management, 2007; Feeney & Stritch 2017). It was found that when an organization offers organizational programs that

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support work-life balance, employees tend to show higher organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Bhutto, Cheema & Shujat, 2011). Moreover, introducing work-life balance practices improves the employees' ability to balance between work and personal life (Bailey, Bradley, Brown, Lingard & Townsend, 2007).

Second, despite the fact that many organizations have a wide range of work-life balance programs and policies, most of them did not change the organizational cultures to help employees and managers who want to benefit from the work-life balance options (Lazar, Osoian, Ratiu, 2010). Research revealed that although the formal work-life balance policies in the organization are available, these policies may be underutilized (Feeney & Stritch 2017). For example, organization may put pressure on employees such as working while they are sick or staying late, which impede work-life balance (Wadsworth & Owens, 2007, p. 78; Feeney & Stritch 2017). Another example of an organization that does not promote organizational culture is when a manager does not encourage the maternity leave available for her team by not taking it herself (Feeney & Stritch 2017). Moreover, managers who work extra hours barely take time off and send emails after working hours to discourage the use of time leave among employees (Feeney & Stritch 2017).

There are important effects of implementing formal policies and organizational culture that help employees to achieve work family balance (Feeney & Stritch 2017). First, if the public organizations seek to increase gender diversity, it would be a great initiative to adopt these policies that support work-life balance (Ezra & Deckman, 1996; Feeney & Stritch 2017). Based on a study done by Feeney & Stritch in 2017, it revealed that in order to encourage the work-life balance among women, the organizations should provide women with work-life balance practice options that fit their family situations. For example, they have to encourage flexible time and freeing up funds for child care rather than promoting the one type fits all practices such as on-site child care or compressed work schedules (Feeney & Stritch 2017). Second, the

adaptation of these family-friendly policies and organizational culture can help organizations to be able to recruit, retain, and attract employees more easily (Feeney & Stritch 2017). In addition, Caillier (2013) found out that employees who are being satisfied by the policies that support work-life balance can positively contribute to organizational commitment and performance (Lee & Hong, 2011; Feeney & Stritch 2017).

Supervisor support

One of the significant roles of the supervisors is to create an organizational culture that promotes work-life balance. One of the roles of organizational culture is to create a positive environment and encourage work-life balance among employees (Groner, 2018). The culture is created by its founder, however, when the organization grows, the subcultures are formed and supervisors changed (Groner, 2018). Thus, because the organizational culture will change, it is crucial to create a strong culture that supports work-life balance (Groner, 2018). A main element in the organizational culture is supervisor support who encourages the implementation of work-life balance initiatives (Groner, 2018). The supervisor is the one who allows his/her employees to take advantage of any offered benefits (Groner, 2018). When the supervisor is family oriented, he/she creates cultural leadership style that allows the employees to have stronger work-life balance (Groner, 2018). There are several ways that the supervisors implement to create strong work-life balance (Groner, 2018). For example, some of the negative practices are that the leader or supervisor requires his/her employees to work for long days and overtime, which results in poor work life-balance (Groner, 2018). On the other hand, leader or supervisor who cares about creating strong work-life balance does not require his/her employees to work over the weekends or evening and to go home after a long day (Groner, 2018). Through different flexible working arrangements such as flexible working hours, child care facilities, paid maternity, telecommuting and job sharing, employees will be able to create a balance between work and life responsibilities (Groner, 2018). Both work-life balance

policies and organizational culture that supports work-life balance should be available to achieve strong work life-balance among employees (Groner, 2018).

Regarding the role of managers in implementing and promoting the use of work-life balance policies and practices, there is a study examined the managers' responsibilities towards developing and implementing the work-life balance policies. This study was done by Maxwell (2005) on six UK organizations in the service sector. The study revealed that managers have a significant role in transforming the work-life balance policies to practices. To illustrate, the implementation of the work-life balance policies is not only a sign of the successful organizational culture, but also it ensures the mutual benefit of the organization and employees through controlling the parameters of work-life balance arrangements (Maxwell, 2005). Similarly, another study examined the effects of both the diversity management that protects employees' different needs of work-life balance and supervisor support (Kim & Mullins, 2016). This study was done on 266,376 federal government employees in the U.S (Kim & Mullins, 2016). Kim and Mullins revealed in their study that the interaction between the supervisors' support for employees' work-life balance and diversity management is positively linked to the employees' use of family-friendly policies such as child care and elder care programs, employees' assistance programs and alternative work schedules (Kim & Mullins, 2016).

Moreover, another study revealed the significant roles of supervisors in encouraging their employees to use the work-life balance programs. This study done by Cleveland, Darcy, Grady, Hunter and McCarthy in 2012 on 15 human resource managers, 133 supervisors and 729 employees in 15 large organizations in Ireland. The study examined the perceptions of supervisor and organizational support for work-life balance in the public and private sector organizations in Ireland (Cleveland, Darcy, Grady, Hunter & McCarthy, 2012). The study revealed that supervisors' support plays vital role in encouraging their employees to use the

formal organization work-life balance programs (Cleveland, Darcy, Grady, Hunter & McCarthy, 2012). Moreover, employees report more positive work-life balance outcomes when their supervisors are perceived as supportive; more precisely, employees reported to be satisfied more with their jobs, less role conflict and less turnover intentions (Cleveland, Darcy, Grady, Hunter & McCarthy, 2012). Similarly, another study by Goodman and Mazerolle in 2013 examined the factors that influence the work-life balance among the athletic training staff in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The study revealed that the supervisor support is considered as a gatekeeper by implementing the work and life initiatives that have been established by the organization to facilitate the balance between work and life responsibilities (Goodman & Mazerolle, 2013). One of the participants in this study is the head of athletic training in ABC University who revealed that he values the contributions of his staff members to the workplace and also care about their family responsibilities (Goodman & Mazerolle, 2013). This happens through encouraging them by giving them flexibility to create and develop their own work schedules in order to achieve the balance between work and family responsibilities (Goodman & Mazerolle, 2013).

On the other hand, another study examined the relationship between perceived supervisor support and work-family conflict in Northern Cyprus hotels on 296 frontline employees (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007). This study revealed that there is lack of family-friendly environment in the hotel industry which also points to the lack of supervisor support (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007). Due to the nature of the frontline hotel employees job who are subjected to the pressures of long working hours, inflexible and irregular shift patterns and excessive job demands, they are in need of their supervisors' support to reduce the conflict between work and family responsibilities (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007). The perceived supervisor support is not only solving the work-family conflict, but also makes the employees satisfied with their jobs (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007). Similarly, a study done based on data came from the Work–Life

Balance Survey of the Hong Kong Working Population 2010, which includes 1009 participants in Hong Kong (Cheung & Chou, 2013). This study by Cheung and Chou argued that if the family-friendly policies are not supported by organizational cultural norms, they will not be effective in reducing the work-life conflicts. Thus, it is necessary to create a family-friendly environment or culture at the workplace, because otherwise these policies will be underutilized which will negatively affect the employees (Cheung & Chou, 2013). Another finding from this study is that there are three significant family-friendly policies that reduce the work-life conflicts which are: the availability of flexible work time, a five-day work week and career breaks (Cheung & Chou, 2013).

Moreover, there is informal type of support which is the emotional support from the supervisor that helps the employees balance between work and private life (Khan, Talukder & Vickers, 2017). Employees are more likely to manage both their work and family duties in a better way, because of the perceived supervisor support (Khan, Talukder & Vickers, 2017). A study done by Khan, Talukder and Vickers in 2017 that examined the relationship between the supervisors' support, work-life balance, job attitudes and performance of 305 employees working in the Australian financial sector organizations. The findings of this study revealed that the emotional support at work, which is the support received from supervisors, plays an important role in promoting work-life balance among employees (Khan, Talukder & Vickers, 2017). There are many types of support in the workplace, however, the result of this study revealed that an empathic supervisor who is cooperative and good listener to employees, and is very considerate to employees personal and family commitments can have a great influence in encouraging employees to achieve the balance between work and family duties (Khan, Talukder & Vickers, 2017).

Resource drain can daily happen due to the high workload, as a result, it affects the employees' family roles performance and leads to work-family conflict (Edwards & Rothbard,

2000; Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015). This conflict occurs due to the lack of time and energy needed to achieve the family duties (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015). A study done by Goh, Ilies and Wilson in 2015 on 135 full-time married employees (95 females and 40 males) who are working in a state university in Singapore. This study examined the effects of supervisor work-family support on the relationship between work-family conflict and workload (Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015). The positive relationship between workload and work-family conflict was controlled by the effects of supervisor support for work-life balance (Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015). The results of this study demonstrated that this relationship is very weak among employees who receive high support from their supervisors, unlike those who receive less work-family supervisor support (Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015). Thus, this study concluded that the employees who receives support from their supervisors are less likely to experience daily conflict between their family performance from high workloads on the jobs (Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015).

In addition, the relationship between both work-family conflict and organizational commitment can be moderated by perceived supervisor support (Casper, Harris, Taylor-Bianco & Wayne, 2011). A study by Casper, Harris, Taylor-Bianco and Wayne in 2011 was done on 168 Brazilian professionals, such as managers, directors, engineers, and consultants, who are full-time workers in different industries (banking, telecommunication, law, automotive, textile and hospitality). This study revealed that the participants who receive support from their supervisor, they reported higher affective organizational commitment (Casper, Harris, Taylor-Bianco & Wayne, 2011). Supervisors are considered as agents of the organization, thus the employees understand their support as a benefit given from the organization (Casper, Harris, Taylor-Bianco & Wayne, 2011). In turn, the employees respond to this perceived support with being emotionally attached to the organization and they stay because they want to not because they have to (Casper, Harris, Taylor-Bianco & Wayne, 2011). Similarly, another study

examined the impact of organizational support and supervisor support on employees' life satisfaction (Hooke, Nielsen, Newman & Smyth, 2015). This study was done by Hooke, Nielsen, Newman and Smyth in 2015 on 393 nurses from two hospitals in Ningbo City in South-East of China. The study revealed that there is a positive relationship between perceived supervisor support and life satisfaction as the supervisor acts as antecedent to perceived organizational support (Hooke, Nielsen, Newman & Smyth, 2015). In addition, the perceived supervisor support might lead to greater organizational support as supervisors' act as agents of the organizations (Hooke, Nielsen, Newman & Smyth, 2015).

Coworkers support

Moreover, co-workers support is another actor in the workplace that contribute in promoting work-life balance. The coworkers support can contribute in meaningful experience, while the negative relations with colleagues can lead to miserable work-life balance (Chamberlain & Hodson, 2010; Rumens, 2009; Avci, 2017). The coworkers may offer two types of supports which are instrumental and emotional support. The instrumental support is offering tangible assistance to other coworkers, whereas the emotional support is showing that you care, listening and being empathetic (Kumar, Channa, & Bhutto, 2018). For example, coworkers can provide support to each other's in juggling work and family responsibilities by covering job duties or shifts and providing information to a coworker he/she has missed while attending family related issue, or backing up a coworker who had to leave my work early to attend to a sick child (Mesmer-Magnus, Murase, Dechurch, & Jiménez, 2009).

According to a study by Kumar, Channa and Bhutto (2018) concluded that there is a relationship between the increase in family performance and coworkers support. The study findings revealed that the instrumental support offered by coworkers help other coworkers to accomplish their family tasks. On the other hand, if some of the coworkers cannot help their colleagues by offering tangible assistance, they are able to provide them with emotional

support. In addition, a study done by Mcmullan, Lapierre and Li (2018), they concluded that there are four main reasons for coworkers' support. First, the coworkers are building personal relationships and a team bond in order to grantee that this supportive action will continuously be exchanged (Mcmullan, Lapierre, & Li, 2018). Second, coworkers believe that when they support each other to improve work-family balance, this will positively reflect on coworkers' work quality and productivity (Mcmullan, Lapierre, & Li, 2018). Third, coworkers may personally benefit from providing support by gaining work experience through the provision of support (Mcmullan, Lapierre, & Li, 2018). Fourth, coworkers believe that their coworkers' personal characteristics matter when they decide to give support to them such as their continuous dedication at work and competency (Mcmullan, Lapierre, & Li, 2018). Moreover, a study by Major, Fletcher, Davis and Germano (2008), demonstrated that workplace relationships are linked to decreased in work-family conflict especially the coworkers support.

Another study by Goodman and Mazerolle in 2013 examined the factors that influence the work-life balance among the athletic training staff in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The study revealed that the co-worker support is considered as a significant factor in retention for the athletic training and effective way to achieve work-life balance (Goodman & Mazerolle, 2013). Flexibility in the work schedule is important to working parents in addition to the co-workers support that can help foster flexibility with work schedule (Goodman & Mazerolle, 2013). This is through different ways such as helping their colleagues when there is family emergency or having previous commitment at home (Goodman & Mazerolle, 2013).

Moreover, a study by Wolter et al. in 2019 done to examine the self-efficacy and work-family conflict and their relationship with social support and work engagement among police officers. The study revealed that the supervisors and coworkers support are considered as a very important kind of support in the workplace (Wolter et al., 2019). The supervisors are

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aware of the employees' needs and consider their problems that they may have in regard to work-family interference (Wolter et al., 2019). The supervisors and coworkers can support through shift swapping with coworkers in need, shift schedule or listen to each other's personal problems (Wolter et al., 2019). Similarly, a study done by Parmar and Sharma in 2015 to examine the impact of supervisors, coworkers, spousal support on work-life balance and its dimensions among 216 nurses and 141 doctors in various government hospitals of Himachal Pradesh. The study revealed that the three support actors which are: supervisors, coworkers and spouses have significant roles in reducing work-family conflict and achieving work-life balance (Parmar & Sharma, 2015). The support from supervisors is through their behavior by showing care and eagerness to listen to their employees' problems that can reduce the conflicts between work and family demands (Parmar & Sharma, 2015). The coworkers give moral support to their colleagues to reduce the interference of the work problems in their family lives (Parmar & Sharma, 2015).

One the other hand, a study done by Hwang in 2018 to examine the effects of family-friendly policies (childcare leave, on-site childcare, and flexible working hours) and workplace support (supervisor and coworker support) on parenting stress among 223 employed mothers with nonstandard work schedule in South Korea. The supervisor support is negatively related to the parenting stress among working mothers with nonstandard hours (Hwang, 2018). However, the coworker support is not related to parenting stress. Thus, Hwang argued that the supervisor support has more significant role in improving parenting stress among mothers with nonstandard work schedule than coworkers support. Similarly, a study done on 60 medical doctors in six geo-political zones of Nigeria in order to examine the impact of organizational culture on work-life balance policies and practices (Adisa, Mordi & Osabutey, 2017). The result of this study revealed the reason for unsupportive coworkers who do not encourage to use work-life balance policies (Adisa, Mordi & Osabutey, 2017). Adisa, Mordi and Osabutey

argued that doctors do not encourage their colleagues to use work-life balance practices when they have any family-related issues, because they will have to replace them when they are absent so their workload will increase. In addition, a study by Meier, Spector and Zhou done to examine the effects of spillover of workplace incivility from inside the organization (coworkers and supervisors) and organizational outsiders (patients and their visitors) on work-family conflict among 84 full-time nurses. The workplace incivility from coworkers and outsiders that are experienced over a week leads to increased stress among nurses (Meier, Spector & Zhou, 2019). Nurses became stressed, because of the depletion of emotional, physical, cognitive and personal resources which make them less likely to handle any additional family demands and experience more work-family conflicts (Meier, Spector & Zhou, 2019).

Family-Friendly Practices and Policies

Family-friendly practices are being implemented to improve the work-family or family-work conflicts (Cheung & Chou, 2013). Family-friendly policies are considered as a new issue in the human resource management (Moon & Roh, 2010). They are organizational programs and their roles to help the employees to accomplish both duties and responsibilities at work and family life (Moon & Roh, 2010). Due to the dramatic change in the workplace, the family-friendly policies have been an issue of interest among the human resource managers (Moon & Roh, 2010). Because number of women, dual-earner couples, and single parents have increased in the workforce, many employers started to provide their employees with family-friendly programs to help them cope with family demands (Cheung & Chou, 2013). This change is very important for the married women with young children in order to be able to balance between work and family duties that positively affect their job satisfaction and work productivity (Moon & Roh, 2010).

The family-friendly policies are divided in two three broad subsets which are: flexible arrangement practices, family support practices and parental leaves practices (Legaz &Lopez, 2015). Flexible arrangement practices are defined as all policies that give the employees the flexibility in working time and place (Legaz &Lopez, 2015). Family support practices are a variety of services that are provided by the employers, such as nurseries and cafeterias, in order to help the employees to meet their obligation within the workplace (Legaz &Lopez, 2015). Finally, the parental leave practices are all practices that help employees to reduce their working hours in order to provide time for family care-giving (Legaz &Lopez, 2015). All these practices greatly contribute in achieving work-family balance, but in different ways (Legaz &Lopez, 2015). Family-friendly employment practices have a significant role in creating a family-friendly work environment that helps the employees to control over when and where they work (Cheung & Chou, 2013). The family friendly policies create a balance between work and family responsibilities through offering job sharing, sick leave, childcare leave, flex site, flextime and maternity leave (Moon & Roh, 2010). For example, these practices may include having flexible working time, place or load and reducing working hours (Cheung & Chou, 2013).

Moreover, there are various family friendly policies or work-life balance programs which include the following: telecommuting, flexible working hours, compressed work week, part-time work, parental leave, on-site child- care facility (Lazar, Osoian, Ratiu, 2010). The flexible working defines the employees' work environment such as homework, or the structure of work such as flexible working hours, part-time working, job sharing, tele-working, compressed working hours, shift working, overtime and annualized hours (Abdullah, Dizaho & Salleh, 2017). Abdullah, Dizaho and Salleh's study in 2017 revealed that there is a relationship between flexible working schedule and arrangement and work-life balance. To clarify, the job sharing, working from home, flexi-time, part-time and tele-working are

included in the flexible working schedule and arrangement which many scholars agreed that they are means of achieving work-life balance (Abdullah, Dizaho & Salleh, 2017).

Compressed working hours

Compressed working hours are a system that helps employees to achieve the work-life balance. It is about that the employee can work the required working hours per week in a shorter period like working for four days instead of five days (Garg &Yajurvedi, 2016). Thus, this makes the employee has another day off other than the official one (Garg &Yajurvedi, 2016). Studies revealed that number of hours influences the feelings of work and non-work conflict (Guest & Sturges, 2004). In addition, Facer and Wadsworth (2008) found out that the compressed work schedule positively contributes to reducing work-family conflict (Feeney & Stritch 2017). The flexible work arrangements such as compressed schedule does not have a direct effect on work-life balance, however, they give the employees a sense of control over their work schedule (Feeney & Stritch 2017). For example, a study done on 220 government employees working in the University of the Philippines in Los Banos (Fujii &Sundo, 2004). The study examined the effects of compressed working weeks on lifestyle pattern changes such as changes in activity-time patterns (Fujii &Sundo, 2004). Fujii and Sundo revealed that the compressed working weeks significantly affect the activity-travel patterns of commuters. The commuters were able to reduce the duration of the household activities to accommodate a two-hour work-time increase (Fujii &Sundo, 2004). In addition, the result showed that the commuters reduced their pre-sleep household duties by one hour, their sleep by 20 minutes and their pre-work preparation time decreased by 30 minutes (Fujii &Sundo, 2004). Most importantly, the compressed working weeks' option is very effective in reducing the travel times for each commuter (Fujii &Sundo, 2004).

Another study by Bradley, Brown, Ling, Lingard and Townsend in 2011 examined the impact of a work schedule change on the work-life balance of employees. The study revealed

that the compressed working weeks have a significant effect on employees' satisfaction with working arrangements and help employees to increase the duration of leisure time over a weekend (Bradley, Brown, Ling, Lingard & Townsend, 2011). Consequently, the compressed working weeks helped the employees to undertake other activities other than their leisure time such as spending quality time with family members (Bradley, Brown, Ling, Lingard & Townsend, 2011). On the other hand, a study done on 6,000 municipal government full-time employees located in the southwestern USA to examine the employees' satisfaction with the employer- imposed compressed working week schedule (Coslor & Hyatt, 2017). Coslor and Hyatt revealed that the employer-imposed compressed working weeks that are considered as one-size-fits-all solution is not effective as the flexible working scheduling. However, the study results demonstrated that almost 65% of the participants were generally satisfied by the compressed working, this is because they previously experienced the same schedule, they approved this option before the implementation process, and they have a preference for the compressed working weeks' format (Coslor & Hyatt, 2017).

In regard to compressed work schedule, around 43% of the U.S cities offer a compressed work schedule (Feeney & Stritch 2017). A study done by Feeney & Stritch in 2017 revealed that although the compressed work schedule is considered as an effective flexible arrangement, it does not give the same flexibility as flexible working hours do (Feeney & Stritch 2017). For example, the flexible working hours allow employees to fulfill family emergencies, illness, or any unpredictable matter (Feeney & Stritch 2017). Similarly, Whealtley's study in 2016 examined the impact of the use of flexible working arrangements using the British Household Panel Survey and Understanding Society, 2001–10/11 of 40,000 households. One of the findings of this study is that the employers prefer the flexi-time more than the compressed hours because they perceive that the employees are contributing the same work effort (Wheatley, 2016). In addition, it is very challenging for the employer to schedule

meetings, because the employees might be absent for one or more days per week (Wheatley, 2016). Another finding is that the part-time work is highly used by women (44.7% of the participants) and mainly found in the public sector (Wheatley, 2016). In addition, 14.4%of men and 24.8% of women reported the availability of job sharing in their workplace, but only 2.1% of respondents are using it (Wheatley, 2016).

Child care facilities

The organization should give attention to the child and eldercare responsibilities as the demand in term of time interfere with achieving the balance between work and life responsibilities (Hasan & Teng, 2017). Research revealed that the childcare issue is to be solved by providing on-site childcare service to employees (Lazar, Osoian, Ratiu, 2010). Moreover, the on-site child care reduces the time parents spend on transportation to reach any other outside child care facilities (Feeney & Stritch 2017). Studies revealed that availability of on-site child care allows the parents to work more hours and earn more income that will help in the household spending (Glynn & Corley, 2016; Shellenback, 2004; Feeney & Stritch 2017). Moreover, studies demonstrated that the more the time woman spends with her dependent child, the less she will be able to get promotions at work (Duke, 1992; Purcell & Baldwin, 2003; Feeney & Stritch 2017).

Many organizations are being aware of the cost of child care; thus they tend to give employees with young children the support they need (Feeney & Stritch 2017). Thus, the company-sponsored child care facility has great contribution in increasing employees' satisfaction and commitment to work in addition to decreasing the turnover rate (Morrissey & Warner, 2011; Zheng et al., 2015). In addition, the parents will also be very close to their children whenever any emergency happens (Feeney & Stritch 2017). Thus, the employers will show to their employees that they support commitment to family by allowing parents to be close to their children (Feeney & Stritch 2017).

The importance of the availability of child care facilities is very crucial to avoid the conflicts that women face between their work and the care for their children (Glick, 2003). Thus, providing decent child care facilities is very important (Glick, 2003). What is meant by decent child care facilities are that they should not limit their services to child minding and feeding, but they should include child's development such as social interaction that develops the social and cognitive development (Glick, 2003). According to Glick's (2003) study, in the developing countries, there is national legislation on childcare that enforces firms by law to offer child care facilities to their employees. However, the firms tend to avoid implementation this law by not hiring many female employees as not to be enforced to provide them with child care services (Glick, 2003).

In Egypt, according to the Egyptian labor law, law number 12 that is issued in 2003, states that both the public and private sectors are required to provide childcare facilities with the condition of having more than 100 females hired in the organization (Barsoum, 2018). Although, this law is being implemented in some of the public sector entities, however, other public entities tend to hire less than 100 females in order not to implement the childcare facilities law (Barsoum, 2018). The employers are not willing to participate in investing in the cost of women's benefits such as paid maternity leave and the law of childcare facilities (Assaad, 2015; Barsoum, 2018). Thus, the lack in the existence of social policies such as maternity leave and childcare services negatively influences the participation of women in Egypt's economy (Assaad, 2015; Barsoum, 2018).

An exploratory study done by Morrissey and Warner in 2011 to gather information from 986 employees at one of the largest U.S universities on child care arrangements offered by their employers. The result of this study revealed that the participants receive a voucher to help them pay for the child care services which decrease the work-family stress and frees funds for other family activities (Morrissey & Warner, 2011). Moreover, another study done on 333

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Jordanian nurses to examine the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction (AbuAlRub, AlAzzam & Nazzal, 2017). AbuAlRub, AlAzzam and Nazzal revealed that the unavailability of child care services at the workplace increase the family-work conflict. To clarify, this study showed that because of the absence of child care services, the load on parent nurses increases as they have to search for a safe place to leave their children at during the official working hours (AbuAlRub, AlAzzam & Nazzal, 2017). In addition, parent nurses might be worried about their children if they are not in a safe place, thus this might lead to being absent to work, dissatisfied and willing to leave the work due to the family requirements that interfere with work tasks (AbuAlRub, AlAzzam & Nazzal, 2017).

Moreover, another exploratory analysis of a U.S federal workgroup that is not adopting family-friendly environment due to its mission requirements (Yu, 2019). This study was done on 1,111 female officers who are working in a large federal law enforcement agency (Yu, 2019). Yu revealed in this study that over a third (39.6%) of women suffer from work-family conflict that leads to turnover intentions. There is a constant theme in this study which is balancing the family duties with the mission requirements (Yu, 2019). One of the family-friendly policy proposals is the childcare such as the on-site and after-hour emergency daycare (Yu, 2019). Because of the full-time federal female officers extended working hours and the on call 24/7 job requirements, it is very difficult for female officers to send their children to the daycare at that time due to the unavailability of any childcare facilities after the regular working hours (Yu, 2019). Similarly, another study done by Hwang in 2018 to examine the effects of family-friendly policies (childcare leave, on-site childcare, and flexible working hours) and workplace support (supervisor and coworker support) on parenting stress among 223 employed mothers with nonstandard work schedule in South Korea. The study revealed that the on-site child care and flexible working hours are negatively related to parenting stress among mothers with nonstandard hours (Hwang, 2018). Thus, the study showed that the

family-friendly policies improve the burden of parenting among working mothers with nonstandard hours (Hwang, 2018).

In addition, a study done on 316 university facilities and staff who are having children under school age in order to understand the childcare satisfaction and its effect on workplace outcomes (Cook, Diaz & Payne, 2011). The working parents do not have enough time to commute to a childcare facility that is far away from their workplace, thus this study revealed that parents who have a convenient childcare facility are more likely to conserve time and effort than those who have inconvenient childcare facility (Cook, Diaz & Payne, 2011). Cook, Diaz & Payne argued that the convenient childcare facility makes parents less worried about their children because they can reach them easily whenever there is an emergency (Cook, Diaz & Payne, 2011).

On the other hand, a study revealed that it depends on the number of children the employees have, they will seek childcare assistance from the workplace. A study done to examine the impact of family-friendly policies such as child-care benefits and work flexibility benefits on organizational commitments and work-family conflict in four developing countries: China, India, Kenya and Thailand (Lawler, Shi & Wang, 2010). Lawler, Shi and Wang argued that one of the unique findings is that the child-care policy does not have a significant role in organizational commitment and work-family conflict in China. This is because of the one-child policy that is implement in China that makes it easier for the parents to take care of one child by managing the childcare demands (sending him to the extended family members) without the need of the childcare family-friendly policies at the workplace (Lawler, Shi & Wang, 2010).

Telecommuting

Another flexible work arrangement that is very beneficial to working mothers is telecommuting or working from home. There are many alternative names to telecommuting which is: telework, flexible work, flexplace, virtual work and distance work (Allen, Golden &

Shockley, 2015). Telecommuting is defined as working part of the time from home not in the workplace and communicating through computers (Golden, 2006; Allen, Golden & Shockley, 2015). Telecommuting is a common practice in many organizations when the employers allow their employees accomplish their normal work duties from home instead of being physically at work (Lazar, Osoian, Ratiu, 2010).

One of the advantages of the advancements in workplace technology is that you cannot figure out whether this employee is working from home or from work (Kim & Wiggins, 2011). It found that telecommuting helps in reducing job stress and it has been reported that it has significant effects on organizational commitment and job dedication (Brummelhuis & Lippe, 2010). In addition, employees who tend to have high quality supervisory relationships and greatly telecommute, they reported an increase in commitment level, job performance and job satisfaction (Golden & Veiga, 2008; Allen, Golden & Shockley, 2015). The study by Schmidt and Duenas (2002) examined that since 1980s, the computers' accessibility increased which resulted in the increase of employees' interest in benefiting from telecommuting that decrease the rate of absenteeism, retention and decrease cost of recruitment (Kim & Wiggins, 2011). Research demonstrated that the more time spent commuting, the more the employees have time to childcare as they are working from home (Peters et al. 2004; Chung & Lippe, 2018).

A study done by Brummelhuis and Lippe in 2010 on employees who work in 24 different Dutch organizations revealed that both telecommuting and flextime do not contribute to improving parents' work outcomes. The study demonstrated that employees are more likely to spend the time of telecommuting with their children rather than working because they cannot concentrate fully at work. Similarly, a study done to examine the impact of mobile telework on family life among teleworkers in a large national corporation (Hawkins, Hill & Miller, 1996). Almost three fourths of mobile teleworkers revealed that they benefited from the telecommuting option, and the majority of teleworkers in the study reported having a positive

impact on their work-family life (Hawkins, Hill & Miller, 1996). However, some of the respondents revealed the drawbacks of telecommuting, which is not having time for family life (Hawkins, Hill & Miller, 1996). To clarify, they revealed that because they work from home, they tend to work more hours than the official working hours, thus they do not have time to enjoy the family (Hawkins, Hill & Miller, 1996).

On the other hand, another study done on 523 women in the UK to examine how flextime and teleworking can help them maintain their career after childbirth (Horst & Chung 2018). Results of this study revealed that women who used the flexi-time and teleworking options they were able to sustain their employment status after childbirth. In addition, the relationship between using flexi-time/teleworking and reducing working hours among mothers was found in all the respondents (Horst & Chung 2018). Similarly, a study done by Andrey, Hilbrecht, Johnson and Shaw in 2008 to examine the relationship between work-life balance and time flexibility among married female teleworkers with school-aged children. The study findings showed that women in this study viewed time flexibility and telecommuting as very effective in terms of allowing them to not only balance between work and family demands, but also be available whenever there are temporal dimensions at work or home (Andrey, Hilbrecht, Johnson & Shaw, 2008). Thus, to control over work schedule among married female teleworkers positively contributes to their quality of life (Andrey, Hilbrecht, Johnson & Shaw, 2008).

An exploratory analysis of a U.S federal workgroup that is not adopting a family-friendly environment due to its mission requirements (Yu, 2019). This study was done on 1,111 female officers who are working in a large federal law enforcement agency (Yu, 2019). Yu revealed in this study that over a third (39.6%) of women suffer from work-family conflict that leads to turnover intentions. There is a constant theme in this study which is balancing the family duties with the mission requirements (Yu, 2019). The second most significant family-

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friendly policy proposal in this study after maternity leave is the flexible work arrangements, such as alternate work schedule and telework, because the federal officers are required to maintain a 50-hours work schedule and to be available 24/7 in order to fulfill the occupational requirements (Yu, 2019). In addition, a study by Bae and kim in 2016 was done to examine the effects of telework on job satisfaction using the 2013 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The study findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between adopting telework and job satisfaction among employees (Bae & Kim, 2016).

Flexible working hours

Not only is working from home considered as a family friendly policy, but also flexible working hours are one of the successful work arrangements. Flexi-time is defined as a flexible job setting in terms of starting and finishing hours, sometimes it is centered on core hours such as from 10 am to 3 pm (Lee and DeVoe, 2012: 299; Wheatley, 2017). When the employees to control over when to work through employer who gives their employees the flexibility and control over the time between work and family duties, they are more likely to suffer less from work-family conflict (Chung & Lippe, 2018). For example, because the normal working hours is from 9 am to 5 pm, it is very difficult to fulfill family demands such as school or childcare pick up times at 3 pm, the flexible working hours will resolve some of conflict arise from work-family conflicts (Chung & Lippe, 2018).

Studies revealed that long working hours affect the employees' quality of life and health. In addition, the excessive working hours result in many health issues, which are: depression, sleep disturbances, and anxiety (Hsu et al., 2019). On the other hand, recent studies demonstrated that flexible working practices contribute in improving the workplace morale and positively influencing work-life balance (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014). Research revealed that implementing the flexible working hours contribute in the work-life balance and decreases work pressure (Russell et al., 2009: 89–91; Wheatley, 2017). Moreover, the flexi-

time policies in an organization can contribute in increasing profitability (Lee and DeVoe, 2012: 31; Wheatley, 2017). A study done by Kim and wiggins in 2010 concluded that the flexible time contributes in increasing employees' performance without increasing costs, thus these arrangements offer more advantages to the employees rather than policies that require deduction from the organization's budget.

A study done on 1688 women in the service sector in Queensland to examine if women's perceptions of work-family balance are being affected by the access and use of different family-friendly policies such as part-time jobs, childcare services, working hours and different types of leaves (Baxter & Chesters, 2011). Baxter and Chesters's study revealed a significant factor that the more the increase in the working hours, the more negative perception of work-family balance the female employees have. To clarify, the study demonstrated that working more hours, taking work home, having to work at short notice or to not have control over the work schedule are greatly related to negative assessments of work-family balance among female employees (Baxter & Chesters, 2011). On the other hand, a study done by Hill, McGovern, Mills, Smeaton and White in 2003 that examined the impact of selected high-performance practices and working hours on work-life balance by using data from national surveys of British employees in 1992 and 2000. The results showed that the actual working hours has a great influence on job-to-work spillover, however,there are other workplace practices that influence this spillover (Hill, McGovern, Mills, Smeaton & White, 2003). Thus, based on this study, the flexible working hours' schedule tends to reduce this problem because it gives the employees control over when to start and finish work (Hill, McGovern, Mills, Smeaton & White, 2003).

Similarly, a study done by using data from 2011 study with a nationwide sample of state government employees that examined the impact of take-up leave policies, employer's support to access childcare services, alternative work schedule and work environment culture

support on work-life balance (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). Feeney and Stritch revealed that from the results of this study, flextime and pre-tax child care savings are the most effective and significant factor for women to achieve work-life balance. This is because of the ability of women to make choices in order to achieve work-life balance and to be able to balance between their domestic duties with employer responsibilities (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). Moreover, another study done on 710 administrative employees in a large university in Western Australia to examine the relationship between the perceived usability of flexible work schedules and work-life balance (Hayman, 2009). Hayman revealed that the flexi time has a great influence on employees in this study, as almost 44% of the respondents are currently using the flexi time option. In addition, the organization is investing in the flexi time option which reflects positively on the employees by being able to integrate between work, family and personal life (Hayman, 2009).

Moreover, a study done by Houkes, Galea and Rijk in 2013 to examine the appreciation of flexible working hours in relation to work-life balance. The findings of this study revealed that if working with flexible working hours are supported by the management and the organizational culture, they highly appreciate both work and non-work related reasons (Houkes, Galea & Rijk, 2013). The study revealed that the flexible working hours' option is very important for the respondents who have young children and carry family responsibilities (Houkes, Galea & Rijk, 2013). Because without the flexible working hours, the respondents revealed that they will not be able to combine work and family responsibilities (Houkes, Galea & Rijk, 2013). Although, the majority of the respondents said that their organizations do offer the flexible hours, but it is based on the managers' decision to implement it or not (Houkes, Galea & Rijk, 2013).

Part-time work

Part-time job can be defined as accommodation tool for employees who choose to balance work and life duties better (Wheatley, 2017). In addition, Part-time work system is allowing people who have disabilities, health issues or limited time such as students to take part in the labor force, enhance their skills and gain work experience (Lazar, Osoian, Ratiu, 2010). On the other hand, the part-time jobs are often perceived as jobs with poor quality and temporary employment (Fagan et al., 2012; Wheatley, 2017).

Some studies mentioned that women who take part-time jobs will be able to be in touch with both the labor market and break up the monotony of housework; in addition, they will combine between being workers and mothers (Warren, 2004). Russell et al., (2009: 89) found out that the part-time job has a significant effect on reducing work pressure (Wheatley, 2017). Research revealed that part-time working women are more likely to suffer less from work-family conflict (Crompton & Lyonette, 2007; Lyonette, 2015).

Regarding part-time employment and work-life balance, a study done on 710 employees in six different divisions in Australian organization to examine the impact of demographic and organizational factors on employees' work-family balance (Hayman & Rasmussen, 2013). Hayman and Rasmussen argued that, according to the study findings, that female employees who utilize a part-time job are more satisfied with work-life balance than full-time employees. Because of the reduced working hours, they were able to manage both work and family responsibilities (Hayman & Rasmussen, 2013). Similarly, a study done by Baierl, Beham, Drobnic, Eckner and Präg in 2019 to examine the satisfaction with work-life balance among workers in 22 European countries. The study revealed that across 22 countries and regardless of their gender equality status, part-time workers were more satisfied as they were able to balance between work and family responsibilities than the full-time worker (Baierl, Beham, Drobnic, Eckner & Präg, 2019).

In addition, a Dutch study done by Peters, Dulk, & Lippe in 2009 revealed that giving the employee the privilege of having control over work (flextime and part-time work) reduces the negative perception of employees towards work home interference. Similarly, a study by McGinnity, O'Connell and Russell in 2009 was done to examine the relationship between four flexible working arrangements; flexi-time, part-time hours, working from home and job. sharing and two key employee outcomes; work pressure and work-life conflict in Ireland. The study revealed that part-time employment has a positive impact on reducing work pressure and work-life conflict, however, the reduction in work pressure was found only in women (McGinnity, O'Connell & Russell, 2009).

A study done by Maxwell in 2005 examined the role of managers who themselves work for long hours, in work-life balance policies and practices among the UK retailing, tourism and finance sectors. According to the Royal Bank of Scotland, the Chief Executive is supporting and integrating the existing and emerging work-life balance policies into one work-life balance policy called "Your time" (Maxwell, 2005). Thus, in Scotland, there are 70,000 of the 85,000 are female employees in the Royal Bank and around 30% are working part-time, thus this example is reflecting the feminization of the workforce in Scotland (Maxwell, 2005).

A study done on 12 organizations in UK to address and improve the provision of quality of part-time work using a variety of methods (Lyonette, 2015). Lyonette argued in this study that the most important factor in implementing the part-time working is the organizational context which consists of supportive line managers and HR policies. Moreover, an exploratory analysis of a U.S federal workgroup that is not adopting a family-friendly environment due to its mission requirements (Yu, 2019). This study was done on 1,111 female officers who are working in a large federal law enforcement agency (Yu, 2019). Yu revealed in this study that over a third (39.6%) of women suffer from work-family conflict that leads to turnover of intentions. There is a constant theme in this study which is balancing the family duties with the

mission requirements (Yu, 2019). The third most cited policy proposal in this study, after maternity leave and flexible work arrangements, in order to improve the work-family conflict is the part-time agent program (Yu, 2019). Both male and female can participate in the part-time agent program which will reduce the working hours from the required 50-hours work schedule to 20 or 32 hours per week (Yu, 2019).

Other family-friendly policies

In Egypt, one of the government benefits is the social insurance plan, however, there are almost 57% of workers have access to it in Egypt as it depends on the sector of employment (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics [CAPMAS], 2011; Barsoum, 2018). To clarify, both the public and private sectors in Egypt are different in the access of such plans (CAPMAS, 2011; Barsoum, 2018). For example, in public sector employees in Egypt, employees have access to health insurance and other benefits such as maternity leave (Barsoum, 2018). However, both public and private sectors are eligible to take 90 days of paid maternity leave, nursing leave, and allowed to take leave without pay for not more than two years per child (Labor Law 12, 2003; Barsoum, 2018). On the other hand, despite the fact that these rights are available and assured to women working in the public sector, they are not guaranteed in the private sector and are being neglected by the informal sector (Barsoum, 2018).

A study of business policies was conducted by the UNICEF in 2020 to examine the adaptation of family-friendly policies among businesses. The study focused in three policies which are parental leave, such as maternity and paternity leave, support of breastfeeding in the workplace and support of childcare needs of employees (UNICEF, 2020). This study was done on 307 businesses in 14 countries which includes Argentina, Botswana, China and its Special Administrative Region Hong Kong, Finland, India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam (UNICEF, 2020). Concerning paid leaves, the study results revealed that although many businesses adopt maternity leave

policies, they are not compatible with the UNICEF policy recommendations in their duration and remuneration (UNICEF, 2020). Among all the family-friendly policies, maternity leave is the most implemented by businesses as 86% of the participants confirmed having the paid maternity leave policy (UNICEF, 2020). However, there is a variation in the duration of the maternity leave among businesses. For example, some participants reported a minimum of four weeks to 90 weeks of maternity leave, whereas over half of the participants reported the maternity leave provision of 18 weeks, which is below the UNICEF's policy recommendation of 18 weeks (UNICEF, 2020). On the other hand, breastfeeding support is not widely implemented among all businesses, only 39% reported having one or more policies for breastfeeding (UNICEF, 2020). However, the only common workplace policy that is offered by 59 businesses is the breastfeeding breaks (UNICEF, 2020). In addition, 57 businesses offer rooms for breastfeeding (UNICEF, 2020). Concerning the childcare support, the study revealed that only 24% of the businesses give support to parents with childcare needs (UNICEF, 2020). The businesses either support the parents to access the community or governmental childcare centers or give cash to parents to make their own care arrangements in private centers (UNICEF, 2020). Only 7 out of 307 businesses offer on-site childcare services to their employees (UNICEF, 2020).

Moreover, among the 31 rich countries, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Estonia and Portugal are the best countries who offer family-friendly policies, whereas Switzerland, Greece, Cyprus, United Kingdom and Ireland rank the lowest (UNICEF, 2019). They Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Union (EU) ranked those countries based on their national family-friendly policies (UNICEF, 2019). These policies are ranked based on the duration of parental leave and childcare services offered to children from age 0-6 (UNICEF, 2019). Estonia is ranked as the best country that offers the longest fully paid maternity leave of 85 weeks, then Hungary (72 weeks) and Bulgaria (61 weeks) (UNICEF,

2019). Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland offer the least paid-leave for mothers, which is less than 10 weeks (UNICEF, 2019). On the other hand, UK is listed, near the bottom, as number 34 out of 41 OECD countries that offer paid leave for mothers which is 6 weeks at just 90% of their average weekly pre-tax earnings and 13 weeks of unpaid leave (UNICEF, 2019). For the United States, it is considered the only country included in the analysis that does not offer national paid leave to mothers and fathers (UNICEF, 2019).

Moreover, a study by Moon and Roh in 2010 examined the impact of the family-friendly policies on job motivation, work performance and employee morale. This study was conducted on 87 employees in the public elementary school teachers in South Korea (Moon & Roh, 2010). This study demonstrated that although some of the family-friendly policies are widely used in the elementary school, such as childcare leave and maternity leave, other family-friendly policies, such as flextime and flex site, are not being implemented to facilitate the balance between work and family duties among elementary school teachers (Moon & Roh, 2010). An exploratory analysis of a U.S federal workgroup that is not adopting a family-friendly environment due to its mission requirements (Yu, 2019). This study was done on 1,111 female officers who are working in a large federal law enforcement agency (Yu, 2019). Yu revealed in this study that over a third (39.6%) of women suffer from work-family conflict that leads to turnover of intentions. There is a constant theme in this study which is balancing the family duties with the mission requirements (Yu, 2019). On the top of the most effective family-friendly policy proposal in this study is paid maternity leave which helps female employees improve work-family conflicts (Yu, 2019).

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework & Methodology

Conceptual Framework

Work-life balance has been an issue of interest for people who are looking for quality of work life in relation to quality of private life (Guest, 2002). The demand at work may be too low or too high, in addition to the support perceived from the organizational culture by implementing the work-life balance policies (Guest, 2002). Moreover, the demands at home and outside work commitments are different among women who are young, single and mothers (Guest, 2002).

The core of the work-life balance concept relies on two main variables. The first variable is the work-life balance or family-friendly policies, and some of which are part-time, full time, job sharing, compressed working hours, term time working, flexi-time, annualized hours, temporary reduced hours and cafeteria benefits (Maxwell, 2005). In addition to the second variable which is the supervisors, coworkers and spouses who have significant roles in reducing work-family conflict and achieving work-life balance (Parmar & Sharma, 2015). The support from supervisors is through their behavior by showing care and eagerness to listen to their employees' problems that can reduce the conflicts between work and family demands (Parmar & Sharma, 2015). The coworkers give moral support to their colleagues to reduce the interference of work problems in their family lives (Parmar & Sharma, 2015).

The first variable is the perceived work-life balance or family-friendly policies which Abdullah, Dizaho and Salleh's study in 2017 revealed that there is a relationship between flexible working schedule and arrangement and work-life balance. To clarify, the job sharing, working from home, flexi-time, part-time and tele-working are included in the flexible working schedule and arrangement which many scholars agreed that they are means of achieving work-life balance (Abdullah, Dizaho & Salleh, 2017).

Regarding the role of supervisors in implementing the work-life balance policies and practices, there is a study done on examining the supervisors' responsibilities towards developing and implementing the work-life balance policies. This study was done by Maxwell (2005) on six UK organizations in the service sector. The study revealed that managers have a significant role in transforming the work-life balance policies to practices. To illustrate, the implementation of the work-life balance policies is not only a sign of a successful organizational culture that encourages the family-friendly environment, but also it ensures the mutual benefit of the organization and employees through controlling the parameters of work-life balance arrangements (Maxwell, 2005).

In addition, co-workers' support has a significant role in the workplace that contribute to promoting work-life balance. The co-workers support can contribute in meaningful experience, while negative relations with colleagues can lead to miserable work-life balance (Chamberlain & Hodson, 2010; Rumens, 2009; Avci, 2017). A study done by Mcmullan, Lapierre and Li (2018), they concluded that there are four main reasons for coworkers' support. First, the coworkers are building personal relationships and a team bond in order to grantee the employee that this supportive action will continuously be exchanged (Mcmullan, Lapierre, & Li, 2018). Second, coworkers believe that when they support each other to improve work-family balance, this will positively reflect on coworkers' work quality and productivity (Mcmullan, Lapierre, & Li, 2018). Third, coworkers may personally benefit from providing support by gaining work experience through the provision of support (Mcmullan, Lapierre, & Li, 2018). Fourth, coworkers believe that their coworkers' personal characteristics matter when they decide to give support to them such as their continuous dedication at work and competency (Mcmullan, Lapierre, & Li, 2018).

These variables will be used by the researcher as main concepts in order to examine the work-life balance among educated, married women who are working in the public and private sector in Egypt.

Based on the existing literature, the conceptual framework shown in figure 1 was constructed. There are different factors that contribute to the work-life balance satisfaction among educated working married women. These factors are the perceived workplace social support (from supervisors and coworkers) and work-life balance or family friendly policies and practices. Thus, increasing the supervisors and coworkers' support and encouraging the proper implementation and availability of the family-friendly policies and practices leads to achieving work-life balance among educated, working married women. To illustrate, due to different duties and responsibilities performed by married women such as caregiving and preforming other roles, they cannot balance between their work and non-work activities. Thus, the existence of the supervisors and coworkers' support in addition to the family-friendly policies will decrease the conflicts between work and family responsibilities. Consequently, when the conflicts decrease, married women will achieve the balance between work and non-work responsibilities.

The workplace includes the perceived work-life balance policies and practices such as telecommuting, flexible working hours, compressed work week, part-time work, parental leave and on-site child- care facility, in addition to the supervisors and coworkers' support.

Figure (1): Achieving work-life balance among educated married women in the Egyptian public & private sector
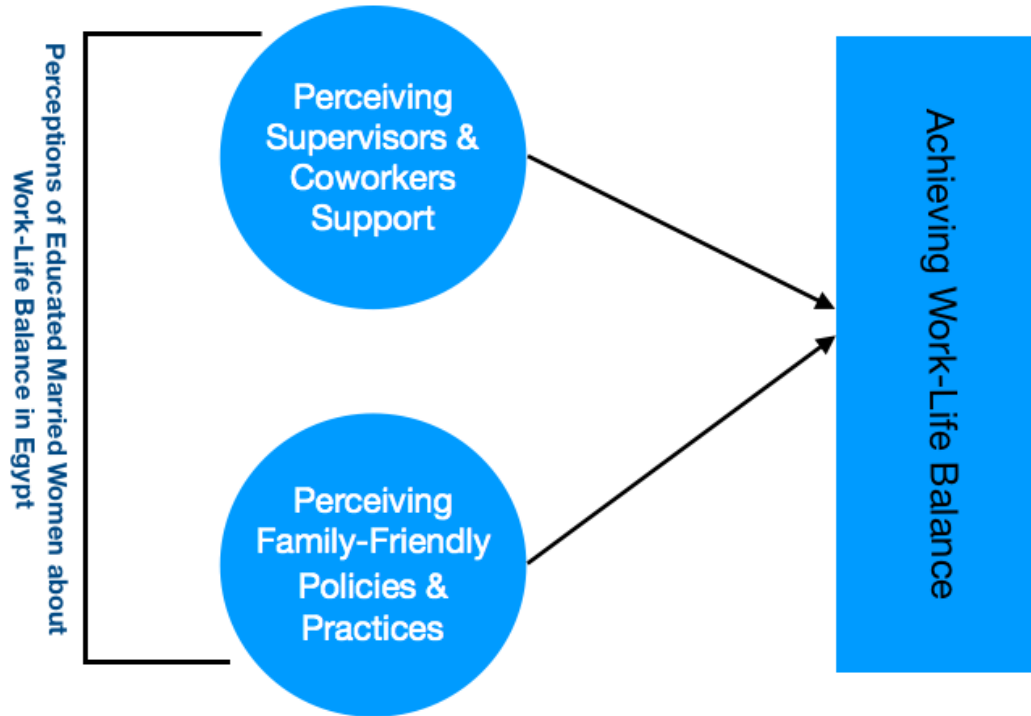
Source: Author's conceptualization based on (Maxwell, 2005), (Mcmullan, Lapierre, & Li, 2018) and (Abdullah, Dizaho & Salleh, 2017).

Chapter 4: Methodology

Design

To give more insights on the issue of work-life balance in the public and private sector in Egypt, the case study is designed to examine the challenges that the educated working married women in the Egyptian public and private sector face in order to achieve the balance between work and family responsibilities. To clarify, the focus of this study is to examine the perceptions of the educated, married working women about the role of their supervisors and co-workers and the perceived family-friendly policies and practices in achieving the balance between work and family responsibilities. According to Stake (2005), case studies were well known as a tool to do qualitative inquiry, however, they are not new and are essentially qualitative inquiry. Yin (1989, p. 23) defined the case study as an empirical research method by which we try to examine a contemporary phenomenon through focusing on the case dynamics and its real life setting when the link between both the phenomenon is not clear enough (Larrinaga, 2016).

Methods

Qualitative research approach describes in detail the participants' feeling, experiences, opinions and understands the meaning of their actions; moreover, it also holistically examines the participants' experience in specific settings (Denzin, 1989; Rahman, 2016). As the work-life balance issue is considered an organizational culture approach, data gathering relied on a qualitative method to deeply examine the issue. Semi-structured in depth interviews were conducted with employees at diverse life stages and in both public and private sector in Egypt. Interview is one of main qualitative research methods by which the researcher will directly collect date from the participants (Parveen & Showkat, 2017). The in-depth interviews are effective and less structured and also very beneficial in terms of helping the researcher to uncover in-depth information and details about the study more than any other date collection methods (Parveen & Showkat, 2017).

Sampling

The purposeful sampling is a technique that is commonly used in any qualitative study for identifying and selecting cases with adequate information for benefiting the most from them given the limited resources (Patton 2002; Palinkas, et al., 2013). Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011) argued that using the purposeful sampling strategy involves identifying and selecting cases that are knowledgeable and experienced about the topic or the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas, et al., 2013). A purposeful sampling technique was used while choosing the participants; the criteria of selecting the participant is relevant to the objective of the research study. These selection criteria cover: all participants should be working in the public or private sector in Egypt. Diversity of work fields and only educated middle class married women are included in the sample. In addition, it was taken into consideration that whether the females are married with kids or not having kids, the age group is from 25 to 45 where women are at their productive and reproductive years.

Data Analysis

The in-depth interviews were mixed between Arabic and English language. According to Marshall & Rossman (2006), the qualitative research greatly depends on in-depth interviews. Marshall & Rossman (2006) defined qualitative interviews as "a construction site of knowledge" where mutual interest themes are being discussed by two or more people. The interviews are categorized by themes through using the thematic index. Thematic analysis is described as iterative process by which we translate the disorderly data collected from the interviews into the most significant themes in the data (Mortensen, 2019).

Table 2: Interviewee Profile

Interviewees	Pseudonyms	Age	Educational Level	Dependents	Tile	Sector
1	**Mona**	25-30	AUC BA Graduate & AUC Master holder	6 months old son	Executive Assistant	Private institution
2	**Sanaa**	30-35	AUC BA Graduate & Studying Master degree at AUC	Two Children (Son 6 years old & daughter 4 year old)	Career Advisor	Private Institution
3	**Safaa**	25-30	Faculty of Engineering Credit Hours System	8 months old son	Communication Engineer	Private Information Technology Organization
4	**Nourhan**	25-30	BUE BA Graduate	Pregnant	Marketing & Public Relations Senior Officer	Private Services of the Chamber of Commerce Organization
5	**Aya**	25-30	GUC BA Graduate	Pregnant	Media Associate	Private sector Social Media Agency
6	**Soad**	25-30	MIU BA Graduate	10 years old son	Customer Service	Private Banking sector
7	**Lara**	25-30	AUC BA Graduate	Pregnant	Dealing Room Officer	Public Banking sector
8	**Sarah**	30-35	Faculty of Commerce Ain Shams University (English Section)	Two Children (Son 9 years old & daughter 6 year old)	Administrative Assistant	Public Petroleum corporation
9	**Donia**	30-35	Faculty of Economics & Political Science Cairo University (English Section)	Two 6 years old twin daughters	Credit Risk Officer	Public Banking sector
10	**Heba**	30-35	Faculty of Commerce Cairo University (English Section)	Pregnant	Architectural Engineer	Public Financial corporation
11	**Nehal**	25-30	Faculty of Engineering Cairo University (English Section)	1 year child	Interior Designer	Public ministry
12	**Seham**	30-35	Faculty of Engineering Cairo University	4 years old son	Engineer	Private Telecommunication company

13	**Rana**	40-45	AUC BA Graduate	20 and 15 years old sons	Marketing Manager	Private Real Estate Company
14	**Hinar**	40-45	Faculty of Commerce Cairo University (English Section)	15 and 12 years old son and 10 years old daughter	Business Development	International Legal Firm Office
15	**Amany**	25-30	Faculty of Pharmacy Cairo University	3 years old son	Sales Representative	Private Pharmaceutical Company
16	**Rawan**	25-30	Faculty of Commerce Cairo University (English Section)	2 years old daughter and pregnant	Junior Accountant	Public-Owned Company
17	**Passant**	40-45	AUC BA graduate	10 and 9 years old daughters	Researcher	Public Ministry
18	**Rahma**	30-35	AUC Master holder	8 and 6 years old son and 2 years old daughter	Project Manager	Public Agency
19	**Dalia**	40-45	Faculty of Commerce Ain Shams University (English Section)	20 years old daughter	Researcher	Public Ministry
20	**Marwa**	25-30	BIS Helwan University	Pregnant	Media Specialist	Public Agency
21	**Shahd**	30-35	Helwan University	3 years old son	Software Engineer	Public Ministry

Profile of interviewed participants (Source: the researcher)

Ethical Consideration

All the interviews are held after taking the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

Before starting the interviews, I informed the interviewees about the nature of the study through

the consent form. People who participated in this study are volunteers, and whoever wanted to

leave the interview at any time, he/she was free to do so. All information provided by the

participants is confidential as not to cause any harm to them. The interviews were recorded

after taking the interviewees' consent in addition to, the transcript and recordings were kept

confidential in a safe place.

Limitation of the Study

The data was collected from different public and private organizations; however, it does not represent the whole Egyptian labor market. Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and due to the fact that the IRB approval was received in mid of March, the data was collected during the period from March to June 2020, thus the physical face to face interviews were not conducted. The interviews were conducted via video calls such as Zoom and FaceTime. During the data collection period, most of the interviewees were working from home. However, it was clear to the interviewees that they will share their experiences before the COVID-19 pandemic when they normally were working from their workplaces. However, some of the interviews were not suitable to conduct them through video calls because of many reasons. First, the connection was not good, and second, because most of the interviewees have kids, it was very distracting during the interviews. In addition, the interviews were limited to 30 to 45 minutes due to the fact that the interviewees were having other duties to perform, such as work and family duties.

Chapter 5: perceptions of women about the role of workplace's support in achieving work life-balance

"work-life balance is not about working less, it is rather about working 'smart', so that individuals energize themselves and give everything that they need for both work and home, without jeopardizing one for the other" (Gorsen, 2005; Jeyalakshmi & Lakkoju, 2015). To investigate the phenomenon of work-life balance among educated, married working women in the public and private sectors, the research focused on three main objectives. First, to examine the perceptions of the educated, married working women about their managers and co-workers' support in order to achieve work-life balance. Second, to examine the perceptions of the educated, married working women about the effectiveness of the family-friendly policies to achieve work-life balance. Third, women's recommendations in order to achieve work-life balance. The data analysis was based on twenty-one in-depth interviews that were conducted with the participants for this research study. The data analysis was divided into three themes and sub themes. First, to examine the perceptions of the educated, married working women about their supervisors and co-workers' support. This theme is divided into two sub-themes which are: **(a)** Supervisors support **(b)** Coworkers support. Second, to examine the perceptions of the educated, married women about the effectiveness of perceived family-friendly policies, and this theme included one sub-theme which is family-friendly policies. Third, women's recommendations in order to achieve work-life balance.

Perceptions of women about the support of supervisors, coworkers and perceived family-friendly policies.

Supervisors' support

It was argued that employees who feel that their organization is less family supportive are more likely to experience work-family conflict than the employees with organizations that supports family (Abendroth & Dulk, 2011). Sanaa pointed out in this statement that her manager is very family supportive even if there is an urgent task that has to be accomplished which makes conflict with other non-work related responsibilities. Sanaa stated:

> *"For example, we have an event next week at work for four days, and on Tuesday we have a conference, and at the same time I have an event on Wednesday for mother's day at my kids' school that I have to attend. No one is allowed not to come to work on these days, but my manager told me I wont include in the tasks that will be distributed that day, and if we have something urgent and we need you to come, you can come for one hour and leave."*

(Sanaa, Private Sector, March 2019).

Sanaa clarified that her manager is very considerate and understanding of the fact that she has commitments towards her children. For example, if there are emergency situations such as her kids are sick so she did not come to work or she has an event in her children's schools, she allows her to leave my work to attend the event. This finding is in agreement with Feeney & Stritch (2017) who argued that the organizations that value their employees' personal leave by enabling them to take leaves without punishment they contribute to increasing employees' trust, satisfaction, commitment.

Similarly, Soad also clarified that her manager is very supportive by being flexible if there are any unexpected non-work events or situations. For example, she stated that she let her husband pick up the kids every day from school, but when he was traveling for a week, the manager allowed her to leave my work early this week to pick them up. Thus, Soad highlighted that her manager contributed to avoiding any conflicts between work and family life. Evidence

from literature showed that employees' perceptions of organizational work-life balance support are based on that employees feel that their organization cares about achieving the work-life balance by implementing strategies to integrate both work and life roles (Ueda, 2012).

Sarah mentioned that the organization itself does not encourage the usage of any organizational policies that supports the flexible work arrangement, but her manager is understanding of unexpected circumstances. She stated:

> *"I wanted to leave my work early to attend a parents' meeting as my son behaved inappropriate at school, my manager allowed me to come anytime on that day"*
> (Sarah, Public Sector, March 2020).

Sarah highlighted that even if there are official policies that support the balance between work and other non-work duties, the organization does not encourage them to use these policies, but the managers help to encourage that balance. Thus, she clarified that a good manager can create a good work environment by encouraging effective organizational culture practices. Evidence in the literature revealed that if the public organizations seek to increase gender diversity, it would be a great initiative to adopt these policies that support work-life balance (Ezra & Deckman, 1996; Feeney & Stritch 2017).

On the other hand, Donia highlighted that her manager is not supportive of her private life commitments. She stated that it depends on her manager's mood, she can leave early to accomplish non-work related tasks. She mentioned:

> *"Last month, I wanted to come to work late to attend an event at my kids' school, she was very supportive, and she gave me the permission. Whereas, last week, I asked her to leave my work early as my son is having a tournament at our sporting club, she refused by saying that "we have a lot of tasks to finish"."*
> (Donia, Public Banking Sector, March 2020).

Donia clarified that the problem with her manager is that she has to be considerate in terms of the urgency of the situations. She urges her to encourage them to balance between work and life duties and not to give permissions based on her mood. She illustrated that due to her manager's attitude, she feels that she is not satisfied with the working environment, and if

she gets any other job opportunity, she will leave the organization. This finding is in line with Caillier (2013) who argued that employees who are satisfied by the policies that support work-life balance can positively contribute to organizational commitment and performance (Lee & Hong, 2011; Feeney & Stritch 2017).

Similarly, Lara mentioned that her manager is not considered and understanding to any family commitment or non-work activities. She stated:

"The manager does not encourage us to balance work with family commitments. For example, if you want to leave my work early, he can tell you, you better stay at home with your baby. In addition, the work responsibilities take over my private life commitment. For instance, my father was doing a surgery and I cannot take this day off from work."

(Lara, Public Banking Sector, March 2020).

Lara's manager is not considerate and hostile to women. She commented that he is very aggressive and offensive when any mother tells him that she wants to leave my work early because her son or daughter is sick. Lara's manager assumes that if you are not going to be fully committed to work, it would be better if mothers stayed at home beside their children. In addition, she highlighted that when she was having an emergency in her family like her father is doing a surgery, her manager refused to let her take that day off or even leave early to be with her father. Evidence from the literature demonstrated that despite the fact that many organizations have a wide range of work-life balance programs, most of them did not change the organizational cultures to help both managers and employees to benefit from the work-life balance arrangements (Lazar, Osoian, Ratiu, 2010).

Safaa mentioned that it depends on the manager you are working with, you will feel that he/she is supportive and considerate to any non-work related commitments. She stated that:

"My current manager does not consider the work-life balance as he does not encourage any flexible work arrangements. While my previous manager was very supportive and encourages us to use any flexible arrangement at work and he always makes exceptions to help us achieve the balance. For example, he used to rearrange any tasks assigned to me to other members in the team, when I was having a family commitment, and he encourages me not to worry about the work and concentrate in my family issue."

Safaa commented that her current manager is not supportive of any family commitment issues. She mentioned that he was not encouraging them to work from home, however, they have been doing this with their previous manager. She illustrated that a good manager should consider his/her employees' private commitment in order for them to be more productive and committed to work. Evidence from literature showed that the work-life balance is being encouraged by supportive supervisors by implementing family-friendly policies and practices by the organizations. Thus, whenever the employees feel that their employer is helping them to achieve the work-life balance, they tend to show more commitment to their organization (Khan, Talukder & Vickers, 2017).

On the other hand, Seham commented on how her manager is not considerate to the fact that she is a mother. She stated:

> *"My supervisor is overloading me with work because I am working part-time and he is not supportive of the fact that I am a mother who has other duties. however, my coworkers are very supportive they tend to help me in the tasks to reduce the burden of work"*

<div align="right">(Seham, Private Sector, June 2020).</div>

Seham illustrated that she accepted being a part timer with lower salary in order to balance between work and her family duties, however, her manager is not allowing her to achieve this balance. She highlighted that she is overloaded by work as if she is working part-time which is unfair and very exhausting to her. This finding is in line with Goh, Ilies and Wilson's study (2015) that revealed that the positive relationship between workload and work-family conflict was controlled by the effects of supervisor support for work-life balance. The results of this study demonstrated that this relationship is very weak among employees who receive high support from their supervisors, unlike those who receive less work-family supervisor support (Goh, Ilies & Wilson, 2015).

Similarly, Hinar pointed out that her supervisor is not emotionally supportive of any family emergencies. She mentioned:

> *"My supervisor is not supportive when there is any family issue. For example, my younger child was very sick at school, and I had to leave my work two hours early to pick him up, my manager allowed me to leave, however, he sent me an email to compensate for those two hours the next day."*

<div align="right">(Hinar, Private Sector, June 2020).</div>

Hinar commented that the only thing that matters for her supervisor is that the work is going to be done properly. She mentioned that he does not support them emotionally by listening to their problems or care about their family issues. This finding is in line with Khan, Talukder and Vickers's study (2017) that revealed that emotional support at work, which is the support received from supervisors, plays an important role in promoting work-life balance among employees.

On the other hand, Rawan highlighted that not only does her public company provide them with flexible working hours, but also her supervisor is very considerate to any family-related or personal issues. She stated:

> *"Beside the fixed working hours in the public sector, I am happy that I have a considerate manager and a company to any family-related issues. For example, because I am pregnant and I have health issues with my pregnancy, I used to leave my work early or take many vacations. My manager and company never complained about being ill during this period as they always tell me that this normally happens with a lot of pregnant women."*

<div align="right">(Rawan, Public Sector, June 2020).</div>

Rawan pointed out how much she is satisfied with her company and supervisor. She mentioned that her supervisor is very understanding of her health issue during her pregnancy, and he never complained about this issue. This finding is in line with Goodman and Mazerolle's study (2013) who revealed that the supportive supervisors are encouraging them by giving them flexibility to create and develop their own work schedules in order to achieve the balance between work and family responsibilities.

Co-workers support

The co-workers also have a role in helping each other to achieve work-life balance. Mona pointed out that her colleagues at work are very supportive and helpful when it comes to having personal life commitments. She stated:

"I was doing my master's degree, and I wanted to attend my graduation commencement. However, I had to submit an important report on that day. My colleagues worked on it and they submitted it on behalf of me in order to attend the graduation. I feel that they will support me if I am in any urgent situation."

(Mona, Private Sector, March 2019).

Mona highlighted that her colleagues appreciate each other's personal commitments by helping out even if they are going to help in any tasks aside from their own work duties. On the other hand, Soad is very frustrated from her colleagues as they do not support her if she is having any urgent personal commitment. She stated:

"I had to leave my work early as my son is having a tournament in Alexandria, but I had to wait for a client to deliver him his credit card, and my manager was on a vacation. So I requested from my colleagues to help me out, they said that this is not their responsibility"

(Soad, Private Sector, March 2020).

Soad illustrated this statement by clarifying that their colleagues are unsupportive as they wanted to get a promotion and she is the one who got promoted. Thus, they treat her in a bad way, and they never offer help to her. This finding is in line with Avci (2017) who mentioned that the coworkers' support can contribute in meaningful experience, while negative relations with colleagues can lead to a miserable work life (Chamberlain & Hodson, 2010; Rumens, 2009).

On the other hand, Lara highlighted that although her manager is not supportive of any non-work related issue, her co-workers show her support when she has any family commitments. She stated:

"My colleagues support me if I cannot come to work on any day due to family emergency. For example, I had an emergency and I could not come to work, but I had to finish a deal at work and it is part of my work. However, my colleagues worked on that deal and it was counted in my records even if I did not do it myself."

Lara commented that you can have an unsupportive manager, but having supportive colleagues is very crucial. She illustrated that although her colleagues have a lot of work to accomplish, they are willing to help her in her difficult times. She also added that even if her colleagues can count the task to their records, they prefer not to do it as not to negatively affect her work. This finding is in line with Avci (2017) who mentioned a study for Kales' (2015) who examined the effects of both supervisor and peer support on life satisfaction.

Organizational policies and benefits

Flexible working arrangements

Shahd explained her experience in both public and private sectors in terms of the flexible working hours and workload. She stated:

> *"Right after graduation, I tried to work as a software engineer in a private company, it was a nightmare, the workload and working hours were horrible. I was still single and I could not tolerate their working conditions. I could not imagine if I was still working with them untl now given that I am married with a 3 years old son. Thank god for finding a job in the public sector where they are very considerate to your private life."*

> (Shahd, Public Sector, June 2020).

Shahd pointed out that she is very happy for finding a job in a public sector where working conditions are much better than the private sector. Evidence from literature revealed that around 38% of males and 45% of female's experience exhaustive workload in the private sector in Egypt. It is worth mentioning that females suffer more from both long working hours and exhaustive workload than males because of the other domestic responsibilities they preform beside their work (Sieverding, 2012).

Nourhan highlighted that her organization is very flexible in the working hours. She mentioned that she can arrive work late, but she has to stay at work the official eight working hours. She stated:

> *"We have a policy at work that we can arrive between 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM and leave after spending the official working hours which is 8 working hours daily. I prefer to arrive work*

early and leave early in order to spend time with my husband so this policy is very useful to my own lifestyle."

(Nourhan, Private Sector, March 2020).

Nourhan pointed out that she prefers to arrive at work early and leave early as her husband arrives home before she does. She illustrated that this flexible work arrangement makes her life easier as she can avoid any conflict between her work and private life because she can spend more time with her husband. Evidence from literature demonstrated that when employees to control over when to work through an employer who gives their employees the flexibility and as well as control over the time between work and family duties, they tend to suffer less from work-family conflict (Chung & Lippe, 2018).

Heba pointed out that one of the benefits that is very convenient for working mothers is the flexible working hours. She mentioned:

"The management is implementing a policy which makes you leave my work 2 hours early by deducting the amount of the 2 hours from your salary. I used to work the whole working hours, however, after getting pregnant, I applied for this policy to make my life easier."

(Heba, Public Sector, March 2020).

Heba commented that the management of her organization promotes a flexible work arrangement that the working mothers can benefit from. She mentioned that if they want to leave early two hours, they are allowed to do so, but the organization will deduct these two hours from their salaries. She illustrated that most of the working mothers are benefiting from this policy as they want to reach home early before their children are back from schools. This finding is in agreement with Chung & Lippe (2018) who argued because the normal working hours are from 9 am to 5 pm, thus it is very difficult to fulfill family demands such as school or childcare pick up times at 3 pm, the flexible working hours will resolve some of conflict arise from work-family conflicts.

Similarly, Rawan commented on how her organization is flexible and considerate to the employees' private life. She stated:

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> *"I used to work in the private sector and I left it because I could not balance between work and my caregiving or household responsibilities. The working hours were the main reason as I had to leave my work late everyday which made me unsatisfied with my job and my private life. Thus, when I moved to the public sector, it was more convenient to me as I have fixed working hours."*
>
> (Rawan, Public Sector, June 2020).

Rawan highlighted that she left the private sector because of its inhuman working hours that does not allow her to balance between work and family duties. In addition, Marwa is also satisfied with the flexible and fixed working hours in her public agency by mentioning:

> *"I finish work at 3:00 PM which is very convenient to me now and later when I deliver my baby as my husband is a business owner who does not have fixed working hours, thus these flexible working hours unlike the private sector, where you had to leave my work at 6, it is suitable for the married women who want to accomplish any household activities before their husbands arrive home."*
>
> (Marwa, Public Sector, June 2020).

Marwa commented on how she is satisfied with the public agency she is working at as she can meet both work and family demands. Thus, both Rawan and Marwa are satisfied by the public sector organizations working conditions. This is in line with Sieverding's study (2012) that revealed that due to the poor working conditions in the private sector, both women and men prefer to work in the public sector, one of the poor working conditions in the private sector is the long working hours (41% of males and 52% of female's youth).

On the other hand, Donia clarified that the problem with offering variety of work-life balance practices is that you have to compromise another benefit in return. She stated:

> *"For example, if I want to take long vacation, I can take it, but I will not get promoted, I will not get the benefits and profit share."*
>
> (Donia, Public Banking Sector, March 2020).

Donia pointed out that as much as their organization offers very effective work-life balance policies, they have to punish them for using them. She mentioned that if their organization is going to provide them with any flexible arrangement, they have to comprise other benefits which are unfair. This finding is in line with Peper, Dikkers, Vinkenburg, & Engen (2010) who explained that the leave of absence has affected a manager to get promoted

and even receive a salary increase because the employer may judge the use of any flexible arrangement as being not committed and perhaps even not performing well at work.

Sarah pointed out that her organization has many policies, but those policies are not effective for many reasons. She stated:

"Some of the policies offered are maternity leaves and maternity hours for two years. However, the problem with these flexible practices is that they last for only two years, but our kids need us more after being two years old. So they have to come up with flexible working hours for mothers"

(Sarah, Public Sector, March 2020).

Sarah highlighted that the policies are not compatible with having kids as she mentioned that her kids need her more after being two years old. Thus, she is not opposing the policy, but she thinks that making arrangements that fit the working mothers would be more effective and efficient, such as working from home or a part-time job. This finding is in line with Lyonette, (2015) who argued that part-time working women tend to be suffering less from work-life conflict.

Lara pointed out that there are many flexible arrangements that her organization offers. She highlighted that these arrangements are beneficial for both men and women, in addition to the financial support the organization offers to its employees. She mentioned:

"There are new flexible policies such as when an employee's father got a new baby, he can take up to one-week vacation that is fully paid. In addition, we can take up to one-month vacation for the hajj and the organization supports us financially by providing discounted loans. Moreover, in case of having private life emergencies, we can get up to ten times our salary in advanced and pay back the amount into an installment with only 5% interest rate which makes our organization supports us financially in case of private life emergencies"

(Lara, Public Banking Sector, March 2020).

Lara highlighted that her organization is very supportive of certain non-work related aspects. Not only does the organization support the mother to stay with her newly born baby, but also they support the father to stay one week with his baby without deducting from his salary. In addition, she commented on how the organization supports the employees' spiritual needs such as the Hajj. She illustrated that besides giving them one-month vacation, the

organization supports them financially by giving them discounted loans with installments. Evidence from the literature revealed that the effects of work-life balance policies and culture are different from those of women to men concerning their effects on work-life balance (Feeney & Stritch 2017).

Heba pointed out that unlike the private sector, the public sector is very flexible in terms of providing its employees with long vacations. She mentioned:

> *"I used to work in the private sector, and I resigned because I wanted to take unpaid leave to be with my husband as he is working outside Egypt. Thus, this flexible arrangement is implemented in the public sector only, however, the private sector is much better in terms of gaining experience in your field"*

(Heba, Public Sector, March 2020).

Heba commented on how the public sector accommodated her private life needs more than the private sector. She mentioned that she has special private life circumstances where her husband is working outside Egypt, and she has to travel each year to stay with him for three months. She highlighted that the public sector is more convenient for her to balance between work and private life commitment, however, she stated that she learned more in her field, when she was working in the private sector. This finding is in harmony with Sieverding (2012) who mentioned that in order to encourage women to participate in the labor market, we have to improve the family-friendly policies in the private sector. In addition to the introduction of flexible work arrangements such as part-time employment and work from home (Sieverding, 2012).

Similarly, Dalia pointed out that her public ministry accommodated her when she was having a family-related emergency. She stated:

> *"I am really grateful for working at this ministry because of the working conditions that allow us to balance between work and family commitments. For example, I had to travel abroad with my mother as she had to do a surgery, but I had to stay for three months with her. The ministry was very understanding of this matter, and they gave me three months' unpaid vacation."*

(Dalia, Public Sector, June 2020).

Dalia highlighted how she is very satisfied with the ministry because they always support the employees' family-related issues by offering flexible working arrangements such as the three months' unpaid vacation. Evidence in the literature demonstrated that some of the factors why women and men prefer working in the public sector to the private sector is the working hours' length, eligibility to paid vacations, maternity leave and sick leave (Assaad, 2015).

Nehal highlighted that her organization is very flexible during vacations, especially when she gave birth to her son. She mentioned:

> *"After I gave birth, my son was very sick and I had to stay with him for at least one year. My organization was very supportive and flexible in extending the maternity leave for one year."*

<div align="right">(Nehal, Public Sector, March 2020).</div>

Nehal illustrated unlike other private organizations, the public sector is very flexible in vacations. She mentioned that her organization was considered and understanding to her need for extending her maternity leave which makes her satisfied with working in her organization. Evidence in the literature demonstrated that in the Egyptian public sectors' employees can access the health insurance plans and other benefits such as maternity leave (Barsoum, 2018). However, both public and private sectors are eligible to take 90 days of paid maternity leave, nursing leave, and allowed to take a leave without pay for not more than two years per child (Labor Law 12, 2003; Barsoum, 2018).

Similarly, Passant wished to work at the public sector since she was at school because of her father's love to the public sector. She stated:

> *"Because my father used to work at the public sector, I have always loved to take his career path and get hired in the public sector. Working in this public ministry is my first job after graduating from university. I got married very late in my mid-30s, but I have always heard from my colleagues that they are very satisfied with the working conditions here as mothers. When I had my first child, the ministry was very convenient and flexible with the maternity leave extension without affecting my position or my salary increase."*

<div align="right">(Passant, Private Sector, June 2020).</div>

Passant commented on how she is very stratified by the working conditions in the public sector and how the ministry is flexible in extending her maternity leave without affecting her job title or salary. In addition, Passant pointed out that the flexible working hours are also a privilege for those who are working in the public sector. She mentioned:

> *"The flexibility in the working hours is one the best flexible working arrangements. For example, because during my daughters' exams at school, I have to take days off or leave my work early to study for them, the ministry is understanding and encouraging us to fulfill any family-related issues without any problems."*
>
> (Passant, Private Sector, June 2020).

Passant highlighted that due to the flexible working hours, she has time to study for her daughters. Thus, she is satisfied with her work as she can balance between work and family responsibilities. As mentioned in the literature, women prefer to work for the public sector. Thus, these preferences are based on different factors that differentiate both the public and private sectors (Assaad, 2015). Some of these factors are the working hours' length, eligibility for paid vacations, maternity leave and sick leave (Assaad, 2015).

On the other hand, Rana highlighted that she works in the private sector and there are flexible working hours, however, she had to work over the weekends. She mentioned:

> *"There is flexibility in the working hours, however, I work over the weekends most of the time. Thus, I do not have the chance to see my children or spend quality time with them."*
>
> (Rana, Private Sector, June 2020).

Rana commented that although her children are old enough to depend on themselves, but they emotionally need her as their age (there are teenagers) is very critical. She clarified that because she works over the weekend, which is the only time when they are both in a vacation, she could not stay with them and listen to their problems. This finding is in line with Baxter and Chesters's study (2011) that demonstrated that work more hours, take work home, have to work at short notice or do not have control over the work schedule are greatly related to negative assessments of work-family balance among female employees.

Child care facility

Heba pointed out that her organization offers on-site child care which is one the benefits that any working mother needs. She mentioned:

"W*e have a nursery that is located in the same building I work in. It is a good option to leave your newborn baby, however, for children who want to learn something, it is not good."*

(Heba, Public Sector, March 2020).

Heba mentioned that having a nursery that is in the same workplace is a privilege because any mother who wants to breastfeed her baby several times during the working hours, she can do this easily. However, she commented on the quality of education in the nursery. She stated that the nursery is not suitable for the kids who wants to learn before going to schools. As mentioned in the literature, the Egyptian labor law, law number 12 that is issued in 2003, states that both the public and private sectors are required to provide childcare facilities with the condition of having more than 100 females hired in the organization (Barsoum, 2018).

Sanaa mentioned that the on-site child care facility is one of the benefits that encourage working mothers to stay in the organization. She stated:

"I used to send my kids, when they were young, to the nursery in the university campus. When my son got sick, it was very easy for me to reach him in just 5 minutes which makes me not being worried about them all the time"

(Sanaa, Private Sector, March 2019).

Sanaa commented on how beneficial, convenient, safe and affordable is the nursery in the university she works at. She highlighted that she will concentrate at work and give it more because she feels not worried about her son if any emergency happens in the nursery. Evidence in literature revealed that the parents will be very close to their children whenever any emergency happens (Feeney & Stritch 2017). Thus, the employers will show to their employees that they support and commitment to family by allowing parents to be close to their children (Feeney & Stritch 2017). On the other hand, Seham who is working in the private sector complained about the unavailability of any child care facility offered by organization which

made her work as part timer instead of full timer with less salary in order to stay with her son. Seham clarified that she sends her son to her mother for a part of the day because her mother is very sick.

Similarly, Rahma pointed out that her public agency provides them with an accessible nursery. She stated:

> *"My agency provides us with an affordable, accessible and safe nursery which makes me not worried about my daughter."*
>
> (Rahma, Public Sector, June 2020).

Rahma illustrated that she can concentrate at work without any fears about her daughter, because the nursery is very safe and close to her workplace. Rahma is also very satisfied with the amount she pays in the nursery. She clarified that she pays 1,500 EGP instead of 4,000 EGP. This is in line with AbuAlRub, AlAzzam and Nazzal's study (2017) that revealed that parent nurses might be worried about their children if they are not in a safe place, thus this might lead to being absent from work, dissatisfied and willing to leave the work due to the family requirements that interfere with work tasks.

Safaa pointed out that their organization does not offer on-site nursery, but they give discounts on a certain nursery. She mentioned:

> *"We do not have on site nursery, but they give you up to 30% discount on a nursery that is located beside our workplace, however,it is not the best option because it is the only nursery that I can send my son to and it is not the best in terms of its services and care."*
>
> (Safaa, Private Sector, March 2020).

Safaa mentioned that the discount her organization gives to them is very good compared to the prices of the nurseries, however,the service is not as other nurseries. She highlighted that the only benefit is that it is located in the building next to her workplace, so she feels safe and not worried about her son. This finding is in line with Zheng et al. (2015) who mentioned that the company-sponsored child care facility has great contribution in increasing employees' satisfaction and commitment to work in addition to decreasing the turnover rate.

On the other hand, Amany commented that the nursery is not convenient because of its location. She stated:

"The only nursery that we have discount in is far away from work and home, thus I have to wake up really early to send my son to the nursery then go to work. I have a budget for fuel each week which is a lot and I waste a lot of time to reach the nursery. Besides, I feel worried about my son because I cannot reach him easily in case of emergency."

(Amany, Private Sector, June 2020).

Amany highlighted that she is not satisfied with the location of the discounted nursery offered by her company as it is neither safe nor saving money. She added that she is always worried about her son because she cannot reach him easily whenever anything happens. In addition, Aya and Nourhan who are also working in the private sector mentioned that they are very worried about what they will do when they give birth as there are not any child care facility offered by their employers. This finding is in line with Cook, Diaz and Payne's study (2011) revealed that parents who have a convenient childcare facility are more likely to save time and effort than those who have inconvenient childcare facility. Cook, Diaz & Payne argued that the convenient childcare facility makes parents less worried about their children because they can reach them easily whenever there is an emergency.

Work from home

Safaa mentioned that one of the options that satisfies her at her organization is the work from home option. She pointed out that she efficiently adjusts her life based on working remotely. She stated:

"*Work from home is a great option for me because on Fridays there is no nursery so I have no option except to work remotely in order to stay with my son. My organization is very flexible in this option; given that it is not easily implemented by the management. In my previous organization, they do not allow work from home, but they have a part-time job opportunity. However, work from home is much better as you get paid for the whole amount, but* the *part-time you take half the salary."*

(Safaa, Private Sector, March 2020).

Safaa clarified that not all the organizations in her field offer the work from home option and although her organization does, but it is not encouraged by the management itself. She

mentioned that she left her previous job as they do not offer flexible arrangements that fit her new lifestyle when she delivered her baby. She illustrated that her current job is much better as they offer the work from home option with a fully paid salary, however,her previous job only offers the part-time job which you partially get paid for it. This finding is in agreement with Chung & Lippe, (2018) who explained that the more time spent commuting, the more the employees have time to childcare as they work from home.

Heba pointed out that working from home is another flexible arrangement in case you have an emergency that prevents you from going to work. She stated:

> *"For example, during the 2011 revolution and now due to the Corona virus outbreak, we work from home. In addition, if someone is having a temporary medical condition, he/she is allowed to work from home. For example, one of our colleagues, her son had a car accident and she had to stay with him, our manager allowed her to work from home."*

(Heba, Public Sector, March 2020).

Heba mentioned that her organization is very flexible when it comes to private life commitments. She highlighted that her organization makes their life easier when there is an emergency in the country or in their private life in general. She mentioned that her organization did not force her colleague to take from the annual vacations to stay with her son, but they allowed her to work from home and paid her the salary. Similarly, Rahma pointed out that she can work from home whenever she wants. She stated:

> *I have the option of working from home if I want to do so. For example, I had to stay with my daughter for one week as she was very sick, my supervisor told me that instead of taking a vacation, I can work from home.*

(Rahma, Public Sector, June 2020).

This finding is in line with Andrey, Hilbrecht, Johnson and Shaw's study (2008) that showed that women in the study viewed the time flexibility and telecommuting as very effective in terms of allowing them to not only balance between work and family demands, but also be available whenever there are temporal dimensions at work or home.

Similarly, Aya pointed out that working from home is an option but is maximum for two days. She mentioned:

"I can work from home if I have a personal life situation that prevents me from being physically at work, but with maximum two days."

(Aya, Private Sector, March 2020).

Aya illustrates that her organization is not forcing her to come to work when she is having any personal life issue, but she can work from home. She highlighted that this work arrangement makes the employees feel that they are appreciated and the organization cares about them. Evidence from literature revealed that a study by Schmidt and Duenas (2002) since the1980s, the computers' accessibility increased which resulted in the increase of employees' interest in benefiting from telecommuting that decreased the rate of absenteeism, retention and decreased cost of recruitment (Kim & Wiggins, 2011).

On the other hand, Hinar commented that she can work from home, but she works more than the official working hours. She stated:

"I have the option of working from home however, I work more than the official working hours which is not a benefit to work from home as when I work from the office I leave my work after I finish only the official working hours and go back home spend time with my family and accomplish other family duties. However, when I works from home I feel like I do not have time to stay with my children or accomplish the household activities."

(Hinar, Private Sector, June 2020).

Hinar highlighted that it is not a benefit to work from home as the company treats her as if she is relaxing at home not working. She illustrated that she takes more work tasks and work more working hours than when she used to work from the office. Thus, she revealed that working from home is not effective for her to balance between work and family because she does not find time to accomplish her duties. This finding is in line with Hawkins, Hill and Miller's study (1996) that revealed that because they work from home, they tend to work more hours than the official working hours, thus they do not have time to enjoy the family.

Compressed work weeks

Nourhan mentioned that one of the flexible working arrangements that her organization offer is working a certain number of hours weekly and taking one day off. She stated:

"*We do have compressed working weeks for example, we can accomplish all our tasks in 4 days by staying late at work and take the 5th day off.*"

(Nourhan, Private Sector, March 2020).

Nourhan highlighted that implementing the compressed working weeks allows her to have time to spend on her own leisure time. She mentioned that she can take a part in the week end by accomplishing all her tasks in four days and she can take Thursday off. This finding is in agreement with Feeney & Stritch 2017 who argued that the flexible work arrangements such as compressed schedule do not have a direct effect on work-life balance, however, they give the employees a sense of control over their work schedule

Nehal pointed out that her organization allows them not to work the whole week days. She stated:

"*I can work three days the whole working hours and the other two days, I can work only few hours and leave early.*"

(Nehal, Public Sector, March 2020).

Nehal highlighted that the flexibility in the working hours makes her very satisfied to work in the public sector as she can be a manager to work and take care of her one-year-old son. She mentioned that working fewer hours allows her to stay with her son, handle household activities and spend time with her husband. This finding is in line Feeney & Stritch (2017) who argued that the compressed work schedule positively contributes to reducing work-family conflict.

Other facilities

Mona highlighted that the university she works in is providing them with free access to the gym, other aerobics classes and the swimming pool. She stated:

"It is very convenient to have a gym in your workplace because most of the time I feel like I want to recharge my energy and relief the stress from work and life responsibilities."

(Mona, Private Sector March 2019).

Mona pointed out that the university is keen to increase their employees' productivity and performance through offering facilities that enhance their health and well-being. This finding is in line with Lazar, Osoian & Ratiu (2010) who mentioned that there are variety benefits that are associated with the health and wellbeing of employees which include health insurance for both the employee and their dependents and services that increase employees' mental and physical health.

Food court facility

Food court facility is another factor that contributes to enhancing employees' health. Mona and Sanaa agreed that their university provides them with variety of healthy food and fast food as well on campus. Mona stated that:

"I do not have to leave campus to get food and I guarantee the quality of food as well"

(Mona, Private Sector, March 2019).

Sanaa highlighted that she does not have to waste her time searching for food options. In addition, she will take care of her health as not to eat any unhealthy food. Evidence in literature revealed that there is a link between family friendly policies and employees' well-being and health (Mirshekary, Molineux, Scarparo & Zheng, 2015).

Summer activities

Sanaa pointed out that her university offers summer activities to the employees' children. She stated:

"The university offers summer camps to the kids in order to spend their summer doing something beneficial. This makes them benefit and at the same time very convenient to me as I cannot leave them alone at home"

(Sanaa, Private Sector, March 2019).

Sanaa clarified that the summer activities offered by her workplace enrich her life as she cannot leave her kids alone during the summer vacation. She illustrated that she finds it very beneficial to her kids to develop their skills. Thus, she feels that she can balance between her work and her commitments towards her children. This finding is in agreement with what Feeney & Stritch (2017) highlighted that there are important consequences of implementing formal policies and organizational culture that helps employees to achieve work-family balance in organizations.

Women's recommendations to achieve work-life balance

Mona wants her organization to encourage their work-life balance through offering training, activities and workshops. She stated:

> *"The university has to focus more on stress relief and motivational training in order to enhance our performance and productivity at work."*

(Mona, Private Sector, March 2019).

Mona highlighted that her organization has to focus more on their psychological needs by helping them overcoming stress through providing trainings that tackle these issues.

Sanaa pointed out that her organization should give more care to the training as they are very beneficial to the employees. She stated:

> *"one of my colleagues was having a conference at Suma Bay and he was resistant to go, however, when he went to the conference he came back happy and refreshed. He thought that he would not benefit from the conference but surprisingly he did. He said that he relieved his stress and meet new people even if they are his colleagues but he did not get the chance to sit with each other for a week to get to know each other."*

(Sanaa, Private Sector, March 2019).

Sanaa suggested that the training should be outside the university to encourage the employees to attend. She clarified that employees tend not to attend the on campus trainings because they give priority to their work. Thus, she pointed out that when her colleague attended a training outside the workplace, he was very happy as it relieved his stress.

Mona suggested that in order to motivate the employees to work and make them committed to the university, the university has to reward them. She stated:

> *"I think the university is now celebrating an important event and they are doing nothing to their employees. The employees do not feel rewarded as administration staff, I feel as if they are focusing more on other people like the popular, celebrities and public figures who belong to the university as graduated students and not on the employees who produce the work here at the university"*

<div align="right">(Mona, Private Sector, March 2019).</div>

Mona clarified that there should be appreciation from the management for their efforts as psychologically this matters the most because they feel they achieve something. She mentioned that not being recognized affects their level of motivation, dedication, performance and commitment to the organization.

On the other hand, Donia recommended that we do not necessarily focus on both work and life responsibilities to be satisfied with our lives. She mentioned:

> *"The work can influence our private life and vice versa. If you succeeded in one domain e.g. life duties and responsibilities, this will positively impact the work domain by being motivated to work"*

<div align="right">(Donia, Public Banking Sector, March 2020).</div>

Donia clarified that being satisfied with our lives by performing all private duties from caregiving to other roles such as leisure time, this will make the employees enthusiastic and willing to effectively preform work duties.

Lara pointed out that the financial aspect in their organization is negatively affecting the employees' other non-work commitments. She stated:

> "*Firstly, the profit share is not received at the same time every year. For example, one of the employees wrote a cheque due on the 1st of March as we usually receive the profit share on February of each year, but this time we received it end of March. Secondly, we do not usually get the same monthly salary each month. Due to certain issues such as taxes, increase in bus fees or membership payment.*"

<div align="right">(Lara, Public Banking Sector, March 2020).</div>

Lara commented on the transparency when it comes to the financial issues. She highlighted how the employees are being affected by the time they get the financial

compensation. She illustrated that most of the employees in the organization wait for the profit share to pay for other non-work commitments. In addition, she mentioned that the monthly salary has to be fixed. Because, many employees adjust their monthly spending based on their fixed monthly salaries. Thus, Lara suggests that their organization has to be more transparent and communicate any financial adjustments to the employees to be able to adjust their family commitments accordingly.

Sanaa wants her workplace to consider the flexible working hours' option. She suggests that the university has to adapt special working hours for working mothers. For example, working mothers can leave my work at 3:00 PM instead of 4:00 PM in order to be able to pick up their children from schools. She stated:

> *"Because the school finishes at 3:00 PM and I do not have anyone to pick them up so I have to send them to after school nursery where they stay at the nursery until I finish work at 4:00 PM and I pay for the teacher who picks them up and to the nursery as well. If we compared what I get from the extra hour I work, it is not equivalent to what I pay to the nursery."*

(Sanaa, Private Sector, March 2019).

Similarly, Donia mentioned that her organization has to be more flexible in the internal transfers of employees between departments. She clarified that she wants to move from her department to another department that is located near her home. She illustrated that she takes two hours daily to reach her work and vice versa. Thus, she suggests that her organization should be more flexible in this aspect to encourage employees to balance between their work and private life duties by spending more time with their children, on household duties and leisure time. In addition, Donia suggested that they have to offer part-time job option in their organization to facilitate mothers' lives.

In addition, Safaa also suggested that her organization has to consider working mothers when they issue any policies. She clarified how working mothers are in need of special working

hours as they perform other duties during the day that makes them not being able to meet the

official working hours. She mentioned:

> *"For example, the working mom has to wake up really early to finish her duties as a mother and wife. I wake up at 6:00 AM in the morning to finish all the household activities and prepare my son to send him to the nursery before I go to work at 9:00 AM. Due to my son is being awake during the night, I cannot have enough sleep to perform well at work. Thus I request from my organization to be more flexible in the working hours. For example, they assign certain number of hours such as 8 working hours per day, if I came work at 10:00 AM then I have to leave at 6:00 PM."*

<div align="right">(Safaa, Private Sector, March 2020).</div>

Safaa highlighted that the flexible working hours will allow her to perform well at work

because of her son, she cannot get enough sleep at night. She also illustrated that she performs

the household activities before she is off to work, because she does not have time to preform

them after work. Hence, she suggests that her organization has to think about the fixed number

of hours not the fixed working hours.

Lara pointed out that there are several flexible working arrangements that need to be

adjusted to contribute in the employees' satisfaction and commitment to work. She stated:

> "*In our organization you can take up to one-month unpaid vacation for any reason, however, this vacation can reflect negatively on you profit share. In addition, the organization transferred me to another department and it was unexpected decision without my consent, thus this contributed to several conflicts between work and life responsibilities. I was not able to plan my life as I used to do, due to being transferred to a department that has more work load and late working hours.*"

<div align="right">(Lara, Public Banking Sector, March 2020).</div>

Lara is complaining about how it is an official policy to take a one-month vacation,

thus she will get affected in the amount of money she receives from the profit share. Moreover,

she highlighted that not taking her consent while she is being transferred from one department

to the other, it negatively reflects on her private life as she was adjusting her life with her

husband on certain working hours.

In addition, Lara suggested that the working hours should be more flexible in order to give the employees flexibility to accomplish other non-work duties and commitments. She stated:

> "I am a morning person, so I can come at 7:00 AM instead of 8:00 AM and leave my work early so that I can accomplish other life commitments. For example, I can go to the gym before being crowded and leaving work before the traffic rush hours as well."

(Lara, Public Banking Sector, March 2020).

Lara commented on how the working hours' adjustment could help her organize her day by accomplishing other non-work activities that she could not do after the working hours. She mentioned that leaving one hour earlier than the official working hours will help her to improve her health by going to the gym and she will avoid the traffic congestion as well.

Safaa pointed out that not all the flexible arrangements are beneficial as they affect other aspects. She mentioned that her organization's flexible policies negatively affect the financial aspect. She stated:

> "The organization offers a flexible arrangement such as the maternity leave that can be up to 2 years per child, however, it negatively reflects on the annual raise. I worked for 8 months last year before giving birth and I was being awarded as the best employee, however, when I took my 4 months' maternity leave, this affected my annual raise. For example, if the average score in the appraisal got an amount of X, I took 30% only of this amount which is unfair."

(Safaa, Private Sector, March 2020).

Safaa mentioned that although she worked for almost eight months the whole year, she got affected by her annual raise. She illustrated that the maternity leave is a national policy and it has to be respected not to take it against the employee because it is not a normal vacation.

Heba commented on how the flexible working arrangement is affecting them financially. She stated:

> "The only problem with taking a long vacation, you pay a lot of money. For example, I paid around 1,000 EGP for taking a one-month vacation. I suggest that they take it from the end of service pension or they have to implement a system where we can pay the amount in installments."

(Heba, Public Sector, March 2020).

Heba highlighted that the long vacations option in the public sector is a great opportunity for them to balance between work and private life, however, they pay a lot of money for taking these vacations. She clarified that this money is being paid for the employer as a part of the employees' insurance. She mentioned that she pays a lot of money compared to what she gets as a salary; thus she suggests that they have to implement other options to facilitate the payment of these amounts.

Aya pointed out that she is not satisfied by her organizations' policies concerning the maternity leave. She mentioned:

> *"The organization is inflexible in the maternity leaves. I wanted to take an additional 3 unpaid months, they refused, thus I find it very difficult to arrange what I will do when I deliver my baby."*

(Aya, Private Sector, March 2020).

Aya highlighted that her organization does not allow any mother to extend her maternity leave after the official three months. She commented that due to this inflexibility, she will not be able to adjust her work with her family commitment after she gives birth. She illustrated that she would not be able to leave her baby with her parents as they are working. Thus, she will consider searching for a nursery to leave her baby in during the working hours, however, she is not satisfied with this option as she will be worried about her baby while she is working.

Moreover, Lara illustrated another point that makes her very frustrated with the organization which is the latest adjustment in their annual vacations. She mentioned:

> *"One of the policies that was recently implemented is that if you have been working for 10 years, you are eligible for 21 days' annual leave, while if you have been working for more than 10 years, you are eligible for 30 days. However, before this decision, we were taking vacations based on the promotions not on the number of years and they can reach up to 45 days' vacation."*

(Lara, Public Banking Sector, March 2020).

Lara commented on how this policy affected many employees in the organization as they were adjusting all their family commitments with the number of days they usually get as annual vacations. She illustrated that many employees tend not to take their annual vacations

at the beginning of the fiscal year and postpone them until their children have their summer vacation at schools. Thus, due to this new policy many employees tend not to spend the whole summer vacation with their children.

Nourhan pointed out that her organization has to implement certain policies to be more flexible. She stated:

> *"They have to apply 2 hours of work from home and the rest of the daily working hours from the office. In addition, my previous private company used to offer us discounts in nurseries and gyms and I would love to see this in my current organization to make us more committed to it."*

<div align="right">(Nourhan, Private Sector, March 2020).</div>

Nourhan mentioned that because her organization work environment is similar to her previous organization, she suggests that they have to offer them two hours working from home daily in order to help them arrive at work early. She added that her organization does not offer any discounts on the nurseries or gyms.

To conclude this chapter, concerning the unsupportive supervisors in both sectors, it is very crucial that there should be an evaluation from the employees' side on their supervisors' performance about whether they encourage the family-friendly environment or not. In addition, some organizations in both sectors do not encourage family-friendly practices due to the service provided, thus the proposed solutions are to adapt other flexible arrangements such as flexible working hours and part-time jobs. Moreover, there should be a valid and reliable performance indicator in order to measure employees' performance who would seek to take long vacations such as maternity leave or leave without pay for two years. Concerning the limited and unavailable childcare facilities in the private sector, the proposed suggestion is that the government should adopt a monitoring and evaluation program to ensure the proper implementation of these policies in the private sector. Moreover, the private organizations should increase the number of sponsored child care facilities to meet the preferences of all employees such as offering one nursery in each district based on the demographic distribution of their employees. Concerning the inflexible working arrangements in the private sector, the

proposed suggestions are to give working women the options to work from home, part-time job and reduced working hours. On the other hand, some of the organizations tend to provide their employees with on site or sponsored gyms which makes them feel that their organization cares about their health and wellbeing.

Chapter 6: Conclusion & Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

The work-life balance concept is not only a western phenomenon, but also, due to globalization, it reached the eastern culture which worldwide influences the organizational settings. The notion of work-life balance represents the condition by which the organization creates the environment that assists its employees to achieve a harmony between balancing work and family demands. Most of the people find it very difficult to balance between work and family commitments. However, the work-life conflict tends to be more among working women because work is associated with other duties such as household activities aside from caring for children and elder people. Due to the fact that the care needs are increasing tremendously, women as caregivers, tend to face difficulties in managing both work responsibilities and caregiving commitments. Thus, the conflict emerged due to the different activities of caregiver and other roles preformed which makes it difficult to be properly done within the limit of time and energy. There are different types of support that encourages working married women to achieve work-life balance which are the perceived support from supervisors and coworkers who create family-friendly environments for married women. Moreover, the perceived family-friendly policies and practices have a significant role in helping married women achieve work-life balance. As a result, there are many consequences for supporting the work-life balance among married working women who are the increase in the level of job satisfaction, commitment, performance and life satisfaction in general.

The female labor market participation rate in Egypt has increased over the last 20 years, from 21% in 1998 to 27% in 2006, before dropping down back to 23.1% in 2016. Despite the remarkable increase in health and educational attainment among Egyptian women, their labor force participation rate is considered as the lowest in the world. There are many reasons why

women's participation rate is low in the Egyptian labor market one of which is because of the "traditional gender paradigm" which means that men are always known as breadwinners while women are always considered home makers. Moreover, marriage is also one of the major obstacles for the employment of women in Egypt as research has revealed that almost 30% of married women are less likely than unmarried women to participate in the labor market. In addition, because of the additional bulk of other responsibilities, such as childcare and elderly care that still fall on women, which it is similar to other parts of the world, married women tend to find it very difficult to participate in the labor market.

Another reason why women's participation rate is low in Egypt over the past two decades it is because of the low employment opportunities in the formal sector outside the public sector. The private sector employers are not willing to create a family- friendly environment to increase women's participation in the private sector jobs. On the other hand, jobs in the public sector are relatively stable and provide good working conditions, in addition to wages that are more equitable between men and women. Thus, women tend to prefer working the public sector due to the fact that the public sector considers different factors such as working hours' length, eligibility for paid vacations, maternity leave and sick leave.

This research study aimed at examining the perceptions of educated, married working women in the Egyptian public and private sector about the role of their supervisors and coworkers' support and the perceived family-friendly policies in achieving work-life balance. Thus, this study identified that married women who work in the public sector are more satisfied with the working conditions more than those who work in the private sector. To clarify, many public sectors married female employees reported having flexibility in the working hours, leaving without pay, sick leave, maternity leave and access to child care facilities. On the other hand, many private sector females married employees suffered from the inflexibility in the working hours, the extension in maternity leave period and inconvenient child care facilities.

Whereas, for the supportive supervisors and coworkers, there are no significant differences in the public and private sector in Egypt, because this aspect depends on the supervisors and coworkers who create the family-friendly environment among educated, married women.

6.2. Recommendations

According to what the current study has reached from analysis and findings, the following suggestions and recommendations are possible solutions for organizations in the public and private sector in Egypt to adopt in order to encourage the work-life balance among working women. Consequently, these solutions will contribute to increasing women's level of job satisfaction, performance, commitment, and life satisfaction in general. The proposed solutions and recommendations are as follows:

First, based on the results of the interviews which revealed that some female employees in the public and private sector suffer from unsupportive supervisors. Thus, it is very crucial that there should be an evaluation from the employees' side on their supervisors' performance about whether they encourage the family-friendly environment or not. Because some of the supervisors in both sectors are not encouraging their subordinates to use the existing family-friendly policies and practices, due to the fact that they want to accomplish their work regardless of whether their employees are satisfied or not. Consequently, this leads to employees' dissatisfaction with their jobs and they think about quitting their jobs.

Second, some of the private and public organizations do not implement a work flexible arrangement due to the type of service they perform. Although these organizations already have flexible working arrangements, they tend not to encourage them because they are not applicable to the nature of their work. For example, the Egyptian banking sector, either private or public bank, is adapting certain policies that encourage the work-life balance, however, due to the nature of the service provided, it is very difficult to implement flexible arrangement such as

telecommuting. The proposed solutions are to adapt other flexible arrangements such as flexible working hours and part-time jobs.

Third, there should be a valid and reliable performance indicator in order to measure employees' performance who would seek to take long vacations such as maternity leave or leave without pay for two years. According to the current study findings, long vacations negatively affect employees' financial benefits and it is unfair to punish the employees financially while they preform very well at their work. The organization should calculate the financial benefits based at the performance not on the number of months they worked in the fiscal year.

Fourth, the private sector employees suffer more than the public sector from unavailability and inconvenience of child care facilities. Although, according to the Egyptian labor law, all Egyptian sectors either public or private should implement certain policies such as the child care facility and the leave without pay for two years. Based on the findings of the current study, many private sector employees complain about the time they travel to reach the child care facilities, because there are limited child care facilities to choose from in addition to the unavailability of any child care facility offered by their organizations. The proposed suggestion is that the government should adopt a monitoring and evaluation program to ensure the proper implementation of these policies in the private sector. Moreover, the private organizations should increase the number of sponsored child care facilities to meet the preferences of all employees such as offering one nursery in each district based on the demographic distribution of their employees.

Fifth, based on the current study findings, private sector employees tend to suffer more from long working hours and inflexible working arrangements than the public sector. For example, married working women cannot leave early in case of family emergency, unable to extend their maternity leave or take long vacations which negatively affect their work-life

balance. The proposed suggestions are to give working women the options to work from home, part-time job and reduced working hours.

Sixth, according to the findings, many employees tend to perform well at their work if their organizations offer different personal development workshops and health fitness clubs. Some of the organizations tend to provide their employees with on site or sponsored gyms which makes them feel that their organization cares about their health and wellbeing.

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Annex 1: Informed Consent Form

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: The Perception of Work Life Balance Practices and Job Satisfaction Among Women in the Public and Private Sectors in Egypt.

Principal Investigator: Yara Amr Metawea, mobile+201007247349, email address: yaraamr@aucegypt.edu, address: BLDG 95 South Investors Area, New Cairo, Egypt.

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is to study the perception of women who are working in the public and private sector in Egypt on how they balance between work and life responsibilities. In addition to the factors that contribute to work life balance and job satisfaction and their outcomes on employees. The expected duration of your participation is one-hour in- depth interview.

The procedures of the research will be as follows I will meet you at your organization or workplace and I will ask you questions about the following topics:

1. What is the perception of women working in the public and private sector in Egypt towards work life balance practices and job satisfaction?

2. What are the factors that influence work life balance and job satisfaction?

3. What are the work life practices being implemented by public and private sectors in Egypt?

4. What are the outcomes of work life balance on the employees?

5. What are the barriers of implementing the work life balance practices?

6. What are the suggested work life balance practices to be implemented?

There is no certain risks or discomforts associated with this research and there is no benefits or compensation to you from this research.

The information you provide for purposes of this research is confidential and the information included in this study will not cause any harm to the participant.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

My contact information is mentioned above, do not hesitate to contact me if you have and questions or inquiry.

Signature   _____

Printed Name   _____

Date   _____

Annex 2: IRB Approval

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

To: yara Amr

Cc: Menna Youssef

From: Atta Gebril, Chair of the IRB

Date: March 14 , 2020

Re: IRB approval

This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled "The Perception of Work Life Balance Practices and Job Satisfaction Among Women in the Public and Private Sectors in Egypt" and determined that it required consultation with the IRB under the "expedited" category. As you are aware, the members of the IRB suggested certain revisions to the original proposal, but your new version addresses these concerns successfully. The revised proposal used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the participants.

This approval letter was issued under the assumption that you have not started data collection for your research project. Any data collected before receiving this letter could not be used since this is a violation of the IRB policy.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counsellor, Dr. Ashraf Hatem. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.

Atta Gebril

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