What Impact has Work-life Balance on Employees Job Satisfaction in the Retail Sector in Ireland?

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Abstract

Work-life balance (WLB) is an ever growing core attribute to business practices, business developments and this is supported by the growing number of research studies on the impact of WLB on organisations and on their employees (Gregory & Milner, 2009). The literature presented shows that WLB does have a significant bearing on employees and their employers through different ways. Any unbalance of an employee's WLB can have detrimental effects if the unbalance of work/life is favouring work over their lives. This study's primary focus is to assess how employee's job satisfaction is determined by their WLB. The individuals this research is focused on is employees working in the retail sector throughout Ireland.

For the purpose of this study, quantitative research methods was chosen. A specific population sample was chosen amongst participants who are working in Ireland's leading children's toy retailer. 100 surveys were distributed with 50 male and 50 female participants completing and returning the surveys. The scales used in the study were analysed through the SPPS computer data system to study the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients and for analysing the data recovered along with other tests used in the results chapter. The author didn't undertake qualitative research as a large range of participants and responses was wanted with quantitative the best approach for this reason. Literature on this area of research argues that qualitative research is best suited to gain individuals experiences and attitudes towards the topic of discussion. However, literature says quantitative research is more reliable (Pathak, et al., 2013). The author wanted to gain the thoughts and insight of employees who worked as sales assistants and not management and as many as possible to gather greater data and in hindsight achieve more reliable results.

The study confirmed that a WLB is greatly associated with job satisfaction for employees working in the retail sector and based on the participant's responses, this study can confirm that there is a relationship between WLB practices and the well-being of employees.

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WLB: Work-life Balance

HRM: Human resource management

HR: Human resources

1.   Introduction

1.1. Work-life balance & job satisfaction overview

Work-life balance (WLB) is an ever growing core attribute to business practices, business developments and this is supported by the growing number of research studies on the impact of WLB on organisations and on their employees such as Lewis, et al. (2007), Abbott (2013) and Chandra (2012). Dating back to the 1930s, WLB programmes became an inaugural part of organisations culture. W.K Kellogg's was one of the first companies to introduce WLB practices when replacing the standard three 8 hour shifts with new four 6 hour shifts. The aim and result of this action was to gain increases of employee morale, satisfaction and production levels (Malik, et al., 2014). This is supported by Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, et al. (2015) when claiming that during the Celtic Tiger meltdown across the UK and Ireland, companies were encouraging and in some cases making it mandatory for employees to undertake WLB practices and become more flexible between work and the personal lifes. These practices even during years of financial turmoil benefited companies who adopted the practices.

There is many definitions provided for the term WLB throughout various literature with Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, et al. (2015, p. 1629) stating that WLB is ''Work life balance refers to the effective management of multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and within the different aspects of life'' and ''Work/life Balance has additionally been explained as a state of equilibrium in which the needs of each person's job and private life are equal''. The domains of WLB, work and life are two of the most important elements in a person's life and can sculpt how that person's future can develop. A positive WLB is developed when there is no conflict between work and their personal lives and people are satisfied with the relationship they have between work and their overall personal life (Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, et al., 2015). Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska (2015) adds that WLB is a critical aspect of many areas of an organisation such as management, sociology, organisational psychology and the well-being of its employees. A poor WLB can impact the employees mental health, their commitment and productivity in work and conflicts in their personal lifes.

These studies relate to the relationship between WLB and many aspects of an organisation. WLB and the organisation involved, WLB and human resource management, WLB and personal lifes and opinions of employees and WLB and the organisations culture and practices as some examples. For this report, in addition to WLB, there is a large number of studies which suggest that WLB impacts job satisfaction of the employees and the outcomes it can have for the employees and their employers (Gregory & Milner, 2009). Job satisfaction can be simply explained as the employees personal opinion and evaluation of their work based around a specific set of extrinsic and intrinsic factors of their job (Bozionelos & Kostopoulos, 2010).

WLB studies have been dominated by the role between work and the employees personal life but various studies have researched the relationship WLB has on the job satisfaction of the employee. Literature on this area of research has portrayed that a good WLB improves an employees perception of their employment greatly. Employees feel more committed and happy in their jobs and in turn improve their productivity levels while increasing sales for the organisation and reducting costs and time towards absenteeism and recruitment which are factors coming from a poor WLB (Mas-Machuca, et al., 2016). Employees who have greater time commitments to their work in comparison to their personal lifes can lead to great dissatifaction in their job. Absent days rise while costs and other factors become detrimental to the organisation. Further factors as well as a benfit to organisations who have acknowledged that their employees may have poor WLB will be discussed in greater detail throughout this report.

 The retail sector in the Republic of Ireland is the largest private sector employer employing hundreds of thousands of people across different ages, sex, race, nationality and employment experience. The reason to focus on this area of the private sector is due to the nature of work involved. Hours, pay, benefits, work practices and work conditions are all factors which influenece the state of mind of employees working in retail (Ibec, 2016). According to Roche & Teague (2014) in 2008, when the economic crisis cemented itself within Ireland and its ever dynamic and growing economy which was envied by many other developed countries, pressure was exerted on organisations. Increased pressure was out on the organisation regards dealing with and performing through the setbacks of the

economic crisis. Expenditure and staff resources were cut while workloads for remaining staff increased. Unemployment rose between the years 2007 to 2011 by nearly 10% (Roche & Teague, 2014). Roche & Teague (2014) add that sales in the retail sector decrease by 17% across a 2 year period between 2008 and 2010 which was an indicator of the confidence of consumers during that span of time. Retail stores had to increase the workload through less resources. Longer hours increased while conditions and benefits suffered.

1.2. Statement regards research topic and problem

Despite there being a greater number of studies based around WLB and its impact on job satisfaction Mas-Machuca, et al. (2016), there isn't a great degree of research in the retail sector in Ireland. Many studies have researched on WLB and females but across this report both males and females will be recognised as particpants in the study along with particpants of all ages and years of experience working in the retail sector. The fundamental aim of this report is to establish the impact WLB can have on employees job satisfaction who work in the retail sector across Ireland. Participants were chosen from one primary retail organisation across three of their stores. Throughout this study WLB and its impact on an employees job satisfaction through different variable was studies such as male/female, age groups or full or part-time employees. The following question led the foundation of this study and its results:

What Impact has Work-life Balance on Employees Job Satisfaction in the Retail Sector in Ireland?

The paper confirms that WLB can impact job satisfaction both in a positive and negative manner and in turn can impact the employers operations also in a positive or negative way.

1.3. Structure of the study

This report is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter is a brief overview of the primary domains of the study, WLB and job satisfaction. A brief insight into Irelands retail sector is discussed and how its relationship with WLB and job satisfaction is

significant, justified and shows the reader why this research study was worth undertaking.

The literature review is the second chapter which contains definitions of greater detail and past studies relevent to the study. The different variables and demographics which can impact WLB are also presented in this chapter.

The third chapter is a concise piece that explains the problems and rationale of this study. The research question and hypotheses created for the study are given.

The fourth chapter is the methodology which explains the research process involved in the study. Why quantitative research methods was chosen, the cons and pros of this approach, the process the author took to gather data and sub factors such as the participants, errors and bias, demographic questions and ethical considerations.

Results from the statistics, which are descriptive and presumed are a part of the fifth chapter. Various tests from SPSS are used to analysed and provide results from the data gathered for the study. Distribution of values, impact of WLB among participants, job satisfaction amongst the different variables are also presented.

The sixth chapter relates to the fifth chapter and its findings and also the second chapter the literature reiview and its connection . A discussion is presented between each result and any new results or if the results support literature from the data recorded which is reliable.

The seventh chapter is the conclusion which revisits the aims and objectives of the study and provides a brief discussion on the findings and if they support past literature or not.

The final two chapters provide recommendations put forward by the author to improve HR practices for organisations in the future. A reflective learning statement is provided discussing the thoughts feelings of the author throughout the entire process of this study and report.

2. <u>Literature Review</u>

This chapter will identify the literature currently available and which is relevant to this dissertation topic from various sources available. The chapter will begin with Work-life Balance and the factors involved which entail and develop the concept. The effects and benefits involved with this concept are then discussed in general and in relation to the retail sector. The next point of discussion will be based around job satisfaction and the different levels of job satisfaction and its context. The implications of employees satisfied and dissatisfied with their jobs will be brought up next. The next topic briefly discussed will be the impact Work-life Balance has on job satisfaction. This minor paragraph will discuss the implications each concept can have on the other. The final topic and most relevant topic will be the impact Work-life balance has on job satisfaction in the retail sector. Practices and drawbacks of these practices in retail will be discussed as well as women in retail due to their responsibilities which reflects on their position in the workplace. This chapter will be structured in that order. The material applied in this chapter will be drawn and supported from applicable literature through different sources but primarily from past journals based around topics similar or relevant to the report title.

2.1. Work-life Balance

2.1.1 Definition

According to Irfan & Azmi (2015) the concept of Work-Life Balance (WLB) has become a foothold within every sector. This issue has become a topic of debate amongst academics and professionals throughout recent decades. Cutterbacks (2005) simple definition of WLB (cited in Irfan & Azmi, 2015) as the abilitiy to distribute time and energy among different aspects of work and life and having an understanding and awareness of this. How,when and where people work through a correct measure of control and the family and work needs are fulfilled by the person

is another viewpoint of the definition of WLB. Friends, family, work, self and health are 5 factors which Byrne (2005) (cited in Irfan & Azmi, 2015) are related to WLB and aspects an individual will have to juggle at any point throughout their life. WLB is an expansive areas with individuals incorporating their work lifes which includes promotions, deadlines and the overall future career along with their personal lifes such as family, a healthy lifestyle and leisure. Chandra (2012) supports these perspectives of WLB. A sense of control between the individual, their work and the society they live in by having their responsibilities and needs met hrough a mutual understanding. Chandra (2012) similar to Irfan & Azmi explains that after this concept is undertaken correctly, individuals should have a control regards their work in terms of how, when and where. The idea of WLB differs with every person. Certain individuals need more or less time to experience well-being and a common ground and balance between life and work. That being said, it is evident from literature on WLB this concept is seen as very much individualistic. Overall, WLB is a question of choice between work and life and with demands in personal and work life different to every person, the drive within each person can be significantly different with every individuals behaviour different also (Chandra, 2012).

In todays society, the phrase 'so much to do, so little time' is very much active and a concern for individuals. Self-management is a major attribute people require today between the many options outside work as well as the many pressures from work. Abbott (2013) states that when achieving personal and fulfilling WLB, each individual has a different approach and response to the concept. Certain individuals allow work dictate their lives and work long hours while at the opposite end of the scale, people work for the necessity of it and never get stressed or allow work dictate their lives. The challenges facing the Human Resource department to implement WLB vary compared to years ago (Abbott, 2013). Society has become a greater part of the organisations and they must adapt to the society and its needs. New and greater technologies while changes to management styles and approaches have led to different and great challenges. Globalisation, increase in competitors and changes in government policies have all caused changes and new risks and challenges. Employees are now working longer which presents new challenges regards productivity levels and recruitment issues. Standards of living and responsibilites are all increaing with the attitudes in work changing also due to the pressures outside

work (Abbott, 2013). In realtion to retail, all these issues above face this sector as much as it does any other sector. WLB for employees working in retail can be greatly difficult to implement due to the nature of the job. Working hours and conditions, management, customer interactions and low wages are primary issues facing Human Resource managers. In dept analysis on specific issues mentioned above will be discussed based on the research done on past studies.

2.1.2. Work-life Balance Context - Implementing it and its effects

Zheng, et al. (2015) reveal that through current literature, there are four specific methods/groups which represent WLB in an organisational context. The first being working arrangements between employees and employers and the flexibility involved. Flexible work for both full and part time work comes under this bracket. Previous studies focused on how flexibility can have a positive effect on WLB (Zheng, et al., 2015). Results from these studies were inconclusive and showed little connection between flexible working arrangments and the welfare and health of the employee however one study suggested that employees level of stress decreases due to the implementation of flexible working policies and conditions. Health and well being programes for employees is the next initiative from existing literature such as Meyer and Maltin in 2010 regards WLB in an organisation. Healthy breakfasts and lunches were provided along with exercise programes, these were just some of the programes which were set up to improve costs and increase retention levels. Scholars such as Goetzel and Ozminkowski discovered that there was a positive impact from the programes mentioned with employees health as well as their productivity levels improving. A second study by Anshel et al in 2010 regarding the mental and physical wellbeing of employees was undertaken with the results showing the implementation of the programes improved the physical and mental wellbeings of the employees also. The next method was childcare assistance which is greatly important to employees with young children with studies proving it to be very important and have a major impact. Previous studies by Miller in 1984 and Youngblood and Chambers-Cook in 1984 also suggested that childcare practices such as day care facilities within the organisation led to higher commitment from employees along with higher satisfaction levels, a more positive working climate and a reduction in turnover rates.

Another study undertaken by Morrissey and Warner in 2011 (cited in Zheng, et al., 2015) which related to childcare subsideries, 47% of people questioned stated that this programe helped their WLB and wellbeing. Although under 50%, it still shows the impact and effectiveness it can have. The application of leave programes was the final method which was use in relation to WLB. Formal leave provisions such as parental and maternity leave are enforced through legislation and informally arranged with small scale businesses. This was in contrast to informal leave arrangements where management discretion on judging an employees situation was successful towards exerting of leave and WLB policies at work. Lapierre and Allen (2006) (cited in Zheng, et al., 2015) also argued that policies such as social support from management helped regards work/family conflicts and employee wellbeing.

Further studies also noted that organisations with family supportive environments improved the WLB overall. Similar to Zheng et al. (2015), Kalliath & Paula (2008) through different scholars and research based around past papers established 4 dimensions. These were identified from the lack of human resource (HR) policies that showed the impact WLB programs can have on an organisation and the impact it can have on their economic performance.

- The 1st dimension is Planning and alignment. This is based around current measures of WLB outcomes, how its measured and what they would like to measure.The process involved establishing the business plans and aligning the WLB with these objectives and the planning involved throughout the process.
- Customisation follows which is the family initiatives created and the customisation of these initiatives to help reach targets for the employees and the organisation.
- The 3rd dimension is based around a positive work environment, supportive culture and leadership support. Its estalbished around the commitment of the organisation, providing leadership support along with creating a culture to guide and help the family initiatives in place already.
- The final dimension is the Demonstrated value. The importance and value of the programs are displayed and explained to the stakeholders and discussions regards the positive impacts they have and the future opportunities which can benefit both the organisation and its employees.

2.1.3 Benefits

The importance of WLB has come to the forefront of many organisations across the globe with investors, owners and CEO's acknowledging its significance in the workplace (Visser, et al., 2016). There are many contributions which form a positive WLB or at least try and create a positive WLB. Working hours, work location, policies within the company which are family friendly, deadlines and work load are just some of the factors which can influence WLB (Visser, et al., 2016). According to Chandra (2012), advancements in technology, globalisation, the ever changing workplace and workforce characteristics and updated business processes are other reasons for the uprise in the concept of WLB in organisations. The various WLB programs available today have reported positive results for both employees and employers.

According to Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, et al. (2015) who undertook a study on WLB programs and its impact throughout the recession was greatly sightful and significant as the economic downturn at present has troubled the majority of countries across the globe one way or another and is still evident today. Three studies were undertaken Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, et al. (2015), two across southern europe where the recession crippled countries and 1 across Great Britain. Throughout the study in the organisations in the UK study, HR practices transferred to WLB programs when requested by employees in which they worked less and in a more flexible manner. In difficult economic times, these programs were proven to be encouraging and be a success. From an employee perspective, reduction in stress, utility costs and an ability to reduce their estates were some of the findings from the studies. Employers related WLB with the terms efficient, cost reduction and job retention. The studies in the organisations based around southern european countires such as Bulgaria, Romania and Greece were measured to name a few showed up results which showed the impact WLB can have. A total rewards model was implemented and within this model, three elements were discovered which positively impacted the performance of the organisations, with one of these elements being WLB.

The prime finding of this study was that WLB can counter act the reduction in reward style systems in organisations through times of an economic crisis and can be seen as an acceptable alternative for the future. Azmi & Irfan (2015) states that WLB

has many positive outcomes for an organisation. Employee commitment/Loyalty is a result of correctly implemented WLB strategies. Economically, WLB practices impact organisations greatly, increased productivity, motivated and satisfied employees, lower levels of recruitment, high levels of retention and reduced overheads are all proven to outcomes from this concept. In the eyes of an employee and most importantly in relation to this study, Azmi & Irfan state that job satisfaction is a major beneficiary from a successfully planned and executed WLB program within an organisation. As already mentioned WLB brings benefits to both employers and employess and this is widely supported by Cegarra-Leiva, et al. (2012). Organisations results increase overall as a result of the employees benefits from their WLB. Employees motivation and commitment levels increase while the strongest talent is retained and turnover rates are less (Cegarra-Leiva, et al., 2012). A positive knock-on effect of this aspect is that the reputation of the company in terms of employee care and treatment will improve and the strongest candidates will apply for future positions of employment.

2.2. Job satisfaction

2.2.1. Definition

Job satisfaction has been defined in many different ways and through many different theories from Maslows Hierarchy of Needs to the Genetic Theory of Needs. A clear definition of job satisfaction can be defined as the level of fulfillment and satisfaction an employee has with his/her job and which has an impact of their job performance (Landis, et al., 2015). Like WLB, job satisfaction is a vital concept which the employer must be aware and cater for when possible as whatever level of satisfaction the employee is at will affect their mindset and attitude to the organisation (Walt & De Klerk, 2014). Another definition of job satisfaction which supports Landis et al. (2015) defines the concept as a ''direct measure of utility am employed worker derives from his/her current job'' (Tumen & Zeydanli, 2016, pp. 426-427). Tumen & Zeydanli continue on by explaining that job performance and productivity are proven to be affected job satisfaction and reiterate the importance of this concept. A study undertaken showed the importance of job satisfaction had on

productivity as an example with a 6.6% increase in productivity per hour due to a high level of job satisfaction. On the opposite side of the scale, job dissatisfaction is counter productive and involves an employee having a general negative attitude and contentment with their job (Tumen & Zeydanli, 2016). It accounts to an employee having a negative outlook on the organisation that employs them, the work environment and the overall views and requirements needed. Job dissatisfaction can be negative not only to the employer but the employee also in realtion to their physical and mental well-being. Employees who are unhappy in their job can suffer from mental issues and in extreme cases lead to depression.WLB can be a primary contributor towards job dissatisfaction for employees (Tumen & Zeydanli, 2016). The more and more work and hours spent in the employees place of work will lead to discontent and the employee will become aggrivated and displeasure towards their job and the workplace. Regards retail, WLB will have a great bearing on the job satisfaction and dissatisfaction but primary aspects such as wages, conditions and future prospects within the company will influence it to a greater extent. As many people are already aware, attaining job satisfaction in retail can be very difficult due to the factors mentioned with many employees leaving in search of better employment which leads to high turnovers which is the ideology know regards retail work (Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, et al., 2015).

2.2.2. Causes

The protagonist regards employees job satisfaction is the employer and the nature of the job. Managers in the retail sector strive for high job performance and quality so the job satisfaction of their employees is paramount to be successful in meeting targets and demands of the customers and owners. Wages, future opportunities to progress in the job, work environment, administration and relationships with work collegues are factors when job satisfaction is considered (Rutherford, et al., 2012). Employees level of satisfaction increase the most significantly from the nature of their work load and the people they work with compared to wages, promotions etc which hasn't a greater degree of impact on job satisfaction levels. Employers who provide training, encourage empowerment and afilliations and support are all identified to improve employees job satisfaction (Rutherford, et al., 2012). A cause of job satisfaction for many employees, primarily women is flexibility in their work

so they can undertake their personal responsibilities. This topic will be discussed in greater detail in this report. Overall, when an employee is satisfied with their job and the organisation that employs them, this is due to their characteristics, values, aims, visions, job requirements and the overall work environment. An employees personal opinion and thought regards these characteristics has a significant bearing on the satisfaction in that job (Rutherford, et al., 2012).

Regards job dissatisfaction, according to Anon (2008) this concept is primarily developed from the same factors and characteristics which causes job satisfaction. In a study across America, 60% of employees measured were likely to be on the look out for new employment within the next 6 months. Work conditions, stress, working hours, lack of supervision and training, pay and benefits and communications issues internally were highlghted as the key factors which casue job dissatisfaction. Management and the work practices required and used within the company are also major factors for an employees unhappiness in their job. Dissatisfied employees comes at a cost for organisations with the same study showing that $300 billion a year in America is lost to job stress alone. Job dissatisfaction can only be improved upon the factors already mentioned which improves job satisfaction, future career opportunities, incentives and fleixible work arrangments to name a few (Anon., 2008). A report by Marques (2012) revealed that nearly 50% of people employed across Great Britain were dissatisfied about their job and had unhappy feelings towards it which they thought about numerous times on a weekly basis. A mere 6% of employees felt satisfied and content in their work and workplace. A bleaker image is set in America with 84% of employees surveyed stating theyre unhappy in their jobs.

2.2.3. Benefits

Providing the necessary requirements for employees to reach job satisfaction can be time consuming and costly but when correctly applied, its greatly beneficial to that organisation (Menezes, 2012). Menezes (2012) adds that employees who have obtained job satisfaction are most likely to perform better and increase their overall performance levels. Due to the nature of achieveing job satisfaction, employees are likely to commit themselves more to the company and therefore increase their

productivity levels. Another factor which is important in relation to this concept is the customer. A customers experience is affected by the job satisfaction of an employee. Satisfied and committed, employees will provide a greater service and experience for the customer and can determine if they will return in the future or not which in turn will have an affect on the company financially (Menezes, 2012). This point is vitally important for businesses and again shows the importance of positive job satisfaction and especially in the case of retaiL. Customers and sales assistants are the foundation of the retail industry due to their interaction when the customer is requiring or purchasing a good or service.

Gounaris & Boukis (2013) explains that when an employee is unhappy in their job, they put less effort in with their duties and responsibilites and with their interactions with customers. Four primary reasons were established which provided the importance of a customers experiece with employees. Portraying the values of the company to the customers, joining the service system of the company with customers and to provide feedback of the customers experience to the management. The most important point is that a customers experience with employees influences their perception of the company and their future loyalty (Gounaris & Boukis, 2013).

 Greater productivity and commitment leads to another beneficial affect, the quality of the products if under the production of the employees. Better standards of products will allow the organisation to build a platform of reliability and quality for the future and use this as an advantage against its competitors. This is supported by Alex & Paul (2014) when claiming job satisfaction as a significant influence on employee performance and has a great affect of the staff turnover in organisations. Turnover can be a great concern for organisations as the cost of recruiting and training new staff can be costly. Ordinary and day-to-day operations wont be disrupted, the company can focus more so on the business rather than adapting and incorporating the new staff and confidence will grow throughout the organisation as the strong and committed staff remain. Employees who've gained high levels of job satisfaction are reluctant to search for new employment which in turn keeps turnover levels low (Alex & Paul, 2014). This is firmly supported by Amoopour, et al. (2014). They state that employee job satisfaction leads to the customers satisfaction. When an employee is happy in their job, they are more loyal and committed to the company and its customers. The importance of customer satisfaction is key to the

survival of any business. Its seen as an indicator of performance of the company as well as the future profitability. Secured loyalty provide income from existing and new customers through word of mouth.

2.2.4. Drawbacks/ Dissatisfaction

Regards the concept of job dissatisfaction and the troubles it can cause to an organisation, Xiao-Hong, et al. (2012) begin by explaining how turnover levels will increase greatly, interupting the operations of the organisation while personnel leave or in the process of leaving. A knock on effect can be a process of a high percentage of employees leaving as they see their peers doing so. Remaining staff will have to cater for the work left which can increase the levels of stress and tension amongst them. Staff can become overwhelmed with the extra work load left and extra hours required to complete tasks and in turn effect their own job satisfaction. Jodlbauer, et al. (2012) adds, as well as the detrimental effect on turnover levels, job dissatisfaction has many other negative effects. Absenteeism increases as employees are more reluctant to arrive to work and call in absent as an alternative according to Wheeler et al., 2007 (cited by Jodlbauer, et al., 2012). Low morale will spread throughout and productivity will diminish. The wages of the employees must be still paid while overtime payments will have to be paid for the staff who have taken up the extra work from the absent staff. A negative sense of emotion will come over the employees and this emotion will be taken out on the management, fellow staff members and their overall work performance of qulaity and productivity Fitzgerald et al. (2003) (cited by Jodlbauer, et al., 2012). Similar to absenteeism, a degree of tardiness will develop amongst the unhappy employees. Excessive time spent on personal phone calls, lingering around the workplace premises and an overall effort to do little work as possible. This behaviour also increase the the stress and displeasure of the other employees and creates a toxic work environment.

 Unionisation is another concern which comes along with this concept. High levels of dissatisfaction can increase the threat of strikes and therefore tarnish the organisations reputation for the future months or years regards employment and customer sales (Jodlbauer, et al., 2012). Due to the increases in absenteeism and turnovers, employers will have to attract and recruit new employees. Time

consumption and costs involved with this is another concern facing the company. Time constraints regards projects and tasks and with low levels of staff will impact their sales targets and profits. Although Jodlbauer, et al. (2012) discuss the implications of job dissatisfaction primarily, they also add that this isnt always detrimental to the organisation, primarily in the long run. If employees in an organisation are dissatisfied with their jobs, it can be a sign or warning that there needs to be an alternative approach needed. An organisation can review its outlook on the concept of job satisfaction and how it can improve the areas which effected the unsatisfied employees. This minor benefit can help current and future employees as the employers will analyse previous causes of dissatisfaction and employees will reap the rewards from this .In turn improve turnover rates and absenteeism and a postive knock on affect will be for the employers as costs and time will decrease.

2.3. WLB effects on Job satisfaction

2.3.1. Introduction

Before discussing the impact WLB has on job satisfaction in the retail sector, WLB impact on job satisfaction in general will be discussed briefly as introduction to the impact these two concepts have on each other.

Many studies have related job satisfaction and WLB as a key relationship and the effects both concepts can have on each other in a positive and negative manner. When employees gain an equal and flexible balance between work and life, they feel more positive and proud towards the organisation that employs them and in turn increase their job satisfaction according to Mas-Machuca, et al. (2016). Already mentioned previously regards WLB and how supervision improves the concept, this in turn improves the levels of satisfaction. Mas-Machuca, et al. (2016) continue by saying that when managers and organisations realise and understand the importance and benefit of WLB, it will improve their employees job satisfaction and in turn benefit the business. Smith, et al. (2014) contributes by stating a well executed WLB program leads to a positive and healthy level of job satisfaction for the employees. In a study undertaken by Kaliannan, et al. (2016) on doctors and WLB, research discovered that due to their workload, docotrs had poor WLB and therefore had low

levels of job satisfaction. The results also revealed that doctors who have worked in the field longer and have obtained a healthier and strong WLB had a higher degree of job satisfaction than others.

According to Brandt & Orkibi (2015) WLB can be positively linked to employees satisfaction in their jobs. They continue by arguing that a study confirmed the hypothses that there is a positive link between positvity, WLB and job satisfaction. WLB was confirmed as the key mediator between an employee and their outlook on their job satisfaction which was positive. The study also revealed that employees with a positive opinion and view of their job are likely to be involved in less conflicts in their personal lifes. A further study undertaken by Sang, et al. (2009) showed more evidence of the impact WLB can have on a employers satisfaction in their job in a negative manner. Poor WLB policies such as working long hours led to employees being dissatisfied in their job and increased the risks involved with their own health and well-being. Management practices which were time consuming and led to greater hours worked was another factor involved alng with having little opinion or voice in decisions. Another result from the study revealed that in the space of 3 years between 1998-2001, job dissatisfaction increased from 14% to 22%. This was a time when WLB practice and policies werent deemed important as well as employee welfare. In another study by Styhrea (2011) (cited in Kaliannan, et al 2016) results found that people who have poor WLB due to long hours and job insecurity as examples were at risk of developing low level of job satisfaction compared to others. The risks involed with developing job dissatisfaction can influence future employment. Productivity reduces while absenteeism increases which can be factors the current employers can remember when providing references in the future and hinder the employees chances of gaining employment.

2.4. Impact of WLB on job satisfaction in the retail sector

2.4.1. Introduction

The retail sector is one of the largest sectors across the globe and is most common in the eyes of the majority of people. The foundation and basis of the retailers is to sell goods and/or provide services to customers for their own personal use. It can range

from small family run grocery stores to large worldwide known department stores (Rutherford, et al., 2012). In the 21st century in order to be successful, retail companies must be able to retain a strong and effective workforce in order to achieve success. Retailers must understand and impliment high levels of job satisfaction to its employees if possible and encourage them to remain working in the retail sector. The difficulties relating to the retail sector is retaining staff and providing job satisfaction which vary across many aspects of the job (Rutherford, et al., 2012). Physical and demanding work while at the same time working for and with customers and management, low wages, working evenings and most weekends and most importantly in relation to WLB, retail is related to long unpredictable and unsociable hours. An employee in a retailer is a vital position in terms of representing the company and painting the stores image and as already mentioned, employees provide the experience for the customer through their quality of service (Rutherford, et al., 2012).

2.4.2. Retail practices

Beginning with the aspect of long working hours, especially during seasonal months such as Christmas and summer months when college students and young children are on their holidays working hours and length are strenuous . Unfortunately, long working hours which is a major part of retail work has been related to the mental health of employees in a negative manner. Exhaustion and limited energy have led to the poor health of the employees as a result of the demands put on their shoulders and the duration of the working period (Ryu, 2016). As well as that, employees who feel the balance between work and their life is swaying greatly towards work, conflicts at home and work becomes more common and in turn leads to mental health issues. Furthermore, the working conditions involved such as physical and mental demands, dealing with customers and under the control of management all lead to conflicts outside work for employees and leading to negative health issues (Ryu, 2016).

Regarding this report, existance and long hours in the place of employment has a detrimental effect on both the employees satisfaction in work. Working long hours and at a regular occurance affects the employees job satisfaction on a negative basis.

Ryu (2016) adds that ample amount of evidence exists through past studies and literature that shows working long hours effects job satisfaction in a negative light. 2 studies undertaken, a longitundinal and meta-analysis study came up with 3 outcomes, long working hours effects the employees job and life satisfaction as well as their health all with a negative outcome. According to Henly & Lambert (2014) numerous studies on WLB has shown that this concept does be affected due to the unsociable hours which is greatly related to retail work and in turn has impacted families and individuals in different ways in a negative manner. The unpredictable working hours which can be long and exhausting and a normal aspect of the retail work routine which can also create stress and strain relationships and family lifestyles. Appointments for medical reasons, social events with friends and family and childrens events are prime examples.

Throughout Henly & Lamberts (2014) journal on unpredictable hours, three common practices employers deploy in the retail section which is the cause of the inconsistent hours rostered to employees. Short notice of rostered hours, short notice to changes of the roster and the variation of days in work weekly is the final of the three practices. Receiving the schedule for the following weeks hours on short can be unfavourable for employees. The ability to arrange and undertake responsibilities regards their personal life are limited and difficult to achieve. Regards adjustments to the rostered schedule at short notice, conflict can occur as arranged responsibilities or plans can suffer and in turn cause conflicts between the employee and other party involved with the arrangements, The area of various work days patterns every week causes strain on employees to create and try arrange activities or important plans in their personal lifes. According to Henly & Lambert (2014), a survey undertaken among 44,000 employees who worked in the retail sector showed that changed to the weekly roster occurred for over 37% of the men and 33% of the women who took the survey. Furthermore, 20% of the men and 15% of the women stated that they were only informed or discovered of the alteratons of the roster 24-48 hours prior to the next shift in work.

2.4.3. Drawbacks of retail practices

Henly & Lambert (2014) also adds that in comparison to employees who have a fixed time-line regards work hours, their outcomes in relation to their WLB differs.

- The study showed that employers who have more input into their working hours face lower levels work-life conflicts and improve their WLB in that regard. The levels of input an employee has regards their working hours can determine their job satisfaction level to a high degree and have a positive impact on their overall WLB.

Stock, et al. (2012) support the notion that having a flexible and efficient work time pattern is essential for employeers to gain a positive WLB.

- They explain that employees with efficient and fair working hours are less stressed and is an esstential aspect of having a positive WLB with many advantages coming from it for both the employee and employer.

Roberts (2003) undertook a study in Britain and the retail workers and the struggle involved as a result of long and unpredictable hours and the effects it can have.

- 7/10 workers who suffered from stress didn't have flexible working hours in their employment with 1/5 workers visiting the doctors due to this stress. Nearly 25% of staff worked over 60 hours a week with over half the employees surveryed saying that work most likely does come first over already planned arrangements with family or friends. An unusual yet alarming result was that twice as many employees would rather work less hours than win the lotto due to the stress involved.

In the journal by Knight, et al. (2006) which was based around workplace flexibility for retail employees and the impact flexible working options has on an employees WLB is discussed. Similar to previous studies mentioned, they explain that workers within the retail and service economy are unlikely to have an option to gain work-life practices or polocies designed to help improve the employees WLB.

Relating back to the common practices used in retail, Knight, et al. (2006) state that fluctuating work rosters and alterations to the roster with little notice have been

linked with poor job satisfaction and leading to higher turnover rates in retail companies.

- They continue by explaining that flucuating work rosters are a cause of marital problems along with less time spent with children at a young age if the case for employees with young families. Knight, et al. (2006) add that there was a study undertaken on over 1,000 employees from the same organisation which implemented flexible work practices and polices. Workers gained a higher degree of WLB and in turn had higher levels of productivity but importantly, they were more satisfied in their job.

The final piece of literature which supports the negative impact long and changeable hours is discussed by Gamble & Huang (2015).

- They explain that within the retail sector, employees who have little to no control over the rostering of hours of work lead to a greater increase in conflicts in their personal lifes. A study undertaken in the United Kingdom among people working in the retail sector showed that a decrease in working hours led to an increase in their job satisfaction.

Throughout the research on this area, a significant aspect of WLB effects on job satisfaction in retail was established (Gamble & Huang, 2015). Women, primarily mothers had a considerable higher degree of concern about WLB compared to men and it had a greater impact amongst them towards their job satisfaction. Gamble & Huang (2015) again explain that women are most likely to be involved in conflicts between their family life and work and women tend to be more concerned about family instead of work especially if the woman has young children at home. The dominant ideology of men and womens responsibility in the household is evident. Findings found that the more hours women worked, the level of their job satisfaction would drop but in relation to men it was a lesser extent. Men are greatly viewed as the primary worker in many households with young families there it may be less problematic for males to work longer and unsuitable hours (Gamble & Huang, 2015). The sacrifice they make by having a poor WLB can be seen as a positive contribution towards their family. Women through generations gone have gained a greater responsibility in the home furthermore are reluctant to spend time at demanding work schedules and activities.

2.4.4. Women, WLB and Part-time work in retail

With over 884,000 women working a part of the retail labour force, it is the largest occupational group in the United Kingdom (Harris, et al., 2007) . Harris, et al., (2007) states that women can have a greater preference to undertake less hours due to their duties at home and have a greater WLB. Despite retail working involving long and unsociable hours, the option of part-time work and the possibility of flexibility can be a positive note for some employees and the significant impact it has on their WLB i.e women/mothers. High turnover rates and low pay are common in jobs such as retail and part-time and flexibility regards hours is easier to obtain compared to more professional styled jobs (Harris, et al., 2007). This concept of part-time/flexibility consequently improves their WLB and their job satisfaction.

Across the United Kingdom who have similar work and management processes in the retail sector as Ireland does, part-time work is becoming ever more important and especially for women and mothers and for their WLB. As mentioned already above, mothers are most like to undertake part-time work due to their children. The highest rate of this process comes from the countires of Holland, Ireland, Germany and the United Kingdom. Part-time work enables mothers to accomadate their work and familiy responsibiliteies (Harris, et al., 2007). An estimated 60% of women come under the heading of 'Adaptive' a term created by Hakim (2000) in a study she undertook. This term refered to the mothers perception towards her WLB as they are keen to work but aren't committed to the job as their family responsibilities take precedence. McKie et al. (2009) backs the importance WLB and part-time work for women in retail. Discussed in the journal was a project which was funded by the European Social fund that involved women who were working in the retail area. A total of 55 women were interviewed between the ages of 20-60+ with children being the number one reason given for requested part-time work or flexibility in their working hours. The women surveyed stated that caring for their children or other personal matters was just a part of their everyday lifes and they were fortuitous to be able to create a balance between their work and personal lifes. They felt more loyal and committed to the company due to their satisfaction in the job as a result of the flexible options put forward for them. Webber & Williams (2008) opening line of their article reveals that part-time work for women is a solution to tensions at home

as a result from their work demands. They continue on by explaining that in the United States of America, an estimated 26% of mothers work part-time with 17% working part-time with children under the age of 6 only, compared to 4% of males. The ideology of men being naturally suited to the work market and women having a more instinctive ability to care and focus on children and relationships is brought up in discussion again (Webber & Williams, 2008).

2.4.5. Advantages

Subsequently, part-time work and flexibility can be beneficial to the employee and improve their WLB and in turn their job satisfaction, however it can also have a negative impact on the employee (Harris, et al., 2007). The consequences of this are primarily effect women due to the role they play at home regards their responsibilities. Many store managers across different retail outlets felt working part-time hindered employees career progression in that company and for future employment elsewhere. According to Harris et al. (2007) an overall assumption was established that in order to progress in the job and gain a promotion, part-time workers would need to become full-time. Across larger retailers in the United Kingdom, a study showed that senior management who were female, only 15% worked part-time while 63% had worked full-time as sales assistants. This reinforced the perception that full-time employment is required to be undertaken to gain career progression in this sector. Some managers mindset however differed slighty. Some stated that they feel opportunities are available to both full and part-time employees but the part-time employees don't apply for the opportunities due to the self imposed limitations. Webber & Williams (2008) both agree that working part-time can effect employees negatively but they also discuss briefly the impact it can have for the female workers in a positive manner.

2.4.6. Disadvantages

In relation to the negative side of this concept still, a study showed that women working part-time placed them at a disadvantage against their full-time collegues. Further findings disclosed that privileges for women in higher or more professional work decreased such as wage growth. To summarise, women/mothers who worked

part-time accepted that low-pay, little to no benefits and few career opportunites all resulted from the decision they made. However, Webber & Williams (2008) state that research has showen working part-time can be a better alternative especially in retail. Employees can balance the requirements needed both at their place of employment and their personal lifes. When these requirements and responsibilities are needed too such a greater degree, employees can embark on full-time hours again and pursue further career progression. Employees will acknowledge the difficulties women or mothers faced when balancing their personal lifes with work and they loyalty they showed to not leave the company and still work part-time, improve their WLB and work as much as they could for the good of the business. This is supported by Månsson & Ottosson (2011) who discuss the effets part-time work can have in a positive way but also discuss the negative impact it can have and support the points already mentioned previously in this chapter. Discussed first is the idea that working part-time can be seen as a 'stepping stone' to improve the employees chances for future positions in the labour market. Working part-time allows employers cast an eye on the employees, judge and indicate the productivity levels of them which can be difficult to measure and therefore increase the chances of the employee being offered full-time work when possible.

2.4.7. Other best practices for WLB in retail

Throughout literature researched, part-time work as already discussed is one of the best practices to establish a WLB and especially for female employees. WLB in retail is difficult to implement and find but other practices which have a positive effect on it can be used. Lazar, et al. (2010) undertook a study on WLB and its role it plays in organisations. Part-time work was established as a positive practice along with 2 other practices which are suitable for the retail industry and its employees.

1. A compressed work week is the 1st of the practices. Employees reach an agreement with employees to work long shifts so the number of working days can be reduced to allow them carry out their personal duties outside work. Employers benefit as they can increase their production while reducing the aspect of overtime pay. Arbon, et al. (2012) explains that cost savings, employee morale and the fact that

many organisations continued to use compressed work weeks as it kept their employees happy and improved their WLB.

2. Job sharing is an arrangement between 2 employees and their employers. Work responsibilities and hours are split among both employees which allows more time for commitments outside their work life's and can improve the productivity and retention levels of the company. Freeman & Coll (2009) adds that job sharing is great beneficial for employees who have responsibilities with children, elders or people with health issues as examples. They also support that this process improves employee productivity, skill levels and rention levels within the company.

3. Research problem and aim of research

Throughout the literature reviewed pertaining to WLB and its impact on employees such as Alex & Paul (2014), Abbott (2013), Brandt & Orkibi (2015) and Kaliannan, et al. (2016) the author has discovered that WLB has a significant bearing on the job satisfaction levels of these employees. This research study focuses on how the work-place concept of WLB practices and what relationship it can have on an employee's level of job satisfaction. The participants in this study were chosen from Irelands leading toy retailers. The participants all had various periods of employment in the retail company with various age groups, full and part-time employees and males and females.

The reviewed literature proposes that a good WLB has a positive impact on the employee's job satisfaction and other criteria such as productivity while an unbalanced life between an employees' personal and work life leads to job dissatisfaction. Moorman (1993, p. 759) states that "one of the most widely believed maxims of Work- family conflict Work-life balance Family satisfaction Family-work conflict Work satisfaction Psychological distress Wellbeing 32 management is that a happy worker is a productive worker". Parkes & Langford (2008) explain that this research is beneficial to both employees who work in the retail sector and retail companies.

 The study will provide a greater understanding of the importance of a positive balance between the employee's personal life and their work as well as the impact it will have on them and the organisation they work for. From the point of view of an employee, a negative WLB can be detrimental to their personal well-being, physically and mentally. Gaining a deeper understanding of WLB and its benefits can address any issues and improve their overall well-being. Any issues that may occur in their personal lives with their family and friends as a result of their WLB can be addressed and improved. Parkes & Langford (2008) add that WLB practices contribute to the employee engagement in a positive manner and in turn improves their satisfaction in their job as well as their productivity levels. From the organisations perspective who undertake WLB practices, managers from levels such

as Human resources, assistant managers, store managers etc should be given a deeper insight of the relationship between WLB and the employee. The organisations productivity levels will increase along with a decrease in staff turnover.

The question that will be leading the study in question is:

What impact has WLB on employees job satisfaction in the retail sector in Ireland?

The following three hypotheses were developed from this study:

1. *Its proposed that WLB practices are associated with job satisfaction.*

2. *Its proposed that WLB practices have a greater impact on female employees.*

3. *Its proposed that WLB is associated with the well-being of employees.*

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is the opinion and belief of how research and studies should be undertaken and how the theories and data collected are related according to Mkansi & Acheampong (2012). There has been many different definitions and categories provided of research methods with many overlapping each other. Mkansi & Acheampong (2012) adds that the two most recognised research philosophies are positivism and interpretisim and the two main methods of thinking about research philosophy are ontology and epistemology. Positivism is linked to sciences with many scholars such as Bryman (1994) relating positivism to natural science while interpretisim opposes this approach and believe its an approach to social science.

Ontology relates to what there is, how it is, forms of being and is primarily concerned with the overall nature of reality (Mkansi & Acheampong, 2012). In terms of positivisim, theres only one reality and its objective and external to people who study it. Regards interpretivisits, its believed that reality varies as every person has a different sense of reality and they socially construct it on their own. Ritche and Lewis (2003) (cited in Mkansi & Acheampong, 2012, p. 134) states that ontology perspectives include ''realism; materialism, critical realism, idealism and relativism''. Regarding epistemology, interpretivists again believe that information and knowledge is gained through the individual's social construct and it's created through observation and opinions. Positivists feel that the only way any aspect can be measured as knowledge is through a phenomena (Mkansi & Acheampong, 2012).

4.2. Research Approach

Through research on the existing literature related to WLB and job satisfaction in the retail sector, the author has decided that the use of the positivism perspective is the most beneficial regards the research questions desirable. Collecting necessary data will be undertaken using the quantitative approach which is the most common used among past studies and research.

According to Sharp, et al. (2011) the positivist approach is more traditional and provide a greater insight in a clear cut evidence-based style method. Large quantitative data sets which discover a general overview and truth which can be researched and tested. Sharp, et al. (2011, p. 502) continue by stating that ''Positivist research studies an objective world that is stable and predictable. Positivist researchers measure physical and social phenomena in order to characterise them and predict their behaviour''. This is supported by Mackenzie (2011, p. 534) by stating positivism as ''the view that accepts a correspondence theory of truth, that there is a single reality independent of human beings, and that the methods of the natural sciences should be adopted in research on social, and specifically educational, questions''. As already mentioned, positivism is objective and external and the social construct created by people in the world exists externally. Therefore as the author, the research and study carried out was taken on through the role as an objective analyst of the external world in the area of this study. Hanson (2015) argues that positivism isnt flexible and positivists disregard random and unexplained phenomena. Hanson adds that positivism is very much generalistic and difficult to direct to a specific situation or area.

Quantitative research and design is related to the research philosophy positivism using specific and highly structured data collection. This data collected, primarily large samples is used in the data to test theory. Differences and regularities are the common results which are looked for from the perspective of positivism and quantitative research. The data collected by the authoir was in response to the literature review undertaken, Various variables were discovered and studied and data through the specificly structured questions in the surveys distributed was collected to provide verifiable evidence through experience (Saunders, et al., 2008). The literature review provided a foundation and framework for the three hypotheses created which is compared against the evidence collected.

The quantitative research undertaken in this study is based around the specific variable discovered in the literature review and the connection each variable had along with the impact of each one. These variables were measured numerically through various scales and the results were analysed and provided in the analysis chapter in this report. To gain a general and overall perception regards data and

results, probability sampling was undertaken by the author as access to a specific sample within the retail sector was available and granted.

The authors decision to not pursue the qualitative research approach was a simple decision. Although qualitative research is ideally suited for opinions, experiences and beliefs, the data and feedback gained isn't reliable in comparison to quantitative research (Pathak, et al., 2013). Fewer people are required and used qualitative research but the data received is significantly difficult to generalise and often impossible to do so. In addition to this, past literature argues that systematic comparisons are difficult to undertake due to people providing broad and different responses (Kitto, et al., 2008).

4.3. Sampling

The primary reason to undergo sampling is to decide on a specific group of individuals from the population in order to research, analyse and estimates specific trends and characteristics of the population. Saunders, et al. (2008) explains that sampling has benefits to the researcher. Time saved and convenience occur as a result of sampling. Its practically impossible to collect data from an entire population therefore a sample is required. In the case of this report, the populations consisted of employees who work in the retail sector and the subset of individuals is employees from Irelands leading childrens toy retailer. The individuals used in this instance were current and past empolyees and were invited and selected to undertake the research.

Probability sampling and surveys together are one of the most commonly used research strategies regards finding specific data required. Saunders, et al. (2008) divided the process of probability sampling into four stages:

1. Source a suitable sampling area which relates to the objective - In the case of this report, the sample frame is employees who have worked in the retail sector in Ireland.
2. Identify a sample size – According to Henry (1990) (cited by Saunders, et al., 2008) sample cases/Participants under fifthy shouldn't be considered for probability sampling. The larger the sample size the chances of error decrease

while the finding become more accurate and reliable with larger sample sizes. On this basis, the author achieved 100 sample cases from the participants involved.

3. Selecting the most appropriate sampling technique and sample – five different methods were discussed. Simple random selecting, systematic, stratified random, cluster and multi-stage. For the author, stratified random sampling was adapted for this study. Stratified random sampling involves the author dividing the population into a smaller and specific groups (retail employees) which is know as strata. The data collected from the strata is based around their personal experience and attributes. Straightforward, accesible strata and accurate results are primary reasons the author acknowledges the benefits of using stratified random sampling. Along with these benefits, with specific strata required and when accesible, costs related to this sampling technique are relatively low (Saunders, et al., 2008).

4. Checking that the sample is representative – this involves if the data collected in the research is consistent with whats already known about the population (retail employees).

4.4. Participants

The participants involved in this study were obtained from the same company which operated in the retail sector. The participants were employed on full and part-time contracts and all had different years/months of experience with the company. Participants who undertook this study were employed by Ireland and Britain's leading retailer of children's toys and entertainment. There is 80 stores located across the UK and Ireland all of which are various sizes. That said, the workforce in each store varied with some individual stores hiring up to 50 employees on full and part-time contracts. This considerably increases for each store during the seasonal months such as summer and especially the winter months leading up to the Christmas period. Each participant involved in the research are retail assistants in each store and across different designated areas. Each store is separated into various sections such as sports, software, nursey and customer service. Each employee who was a part of the study worked in different areas all of which had various tasks and duties compared to other sections. Full and part-time employees undertook the study

as the author wanted to analyse the results of each and compare as well as studying the data and results from women in both full and part-time employment in relation to WLB and its impact on their job satisfaction. Managers of any kind weren't asked to undertake the study as managers fortunately have a greater degree of fixed hour's week in week out and the salaries earned are far greater compared to retail assistants.

 Through literature reviewed it was evident that WLB had a greater impact on job satisfaction for females which is supported by Gamble & Huang (2015), in that case the author specfically sought after 50 female and 50 male participants to compare both. Ages varied ranging from 18 to 46 and over and put into brackets such as 18-24, 25-31 etc. The sample of 100 participants consisted of 50 males and 50 females. The age ranged from 18 to 46+. For the male participants, 26 (52%) came under the age bracket of 18-24, 12 (24%) particpants were aged between 25-31, 5 (10%) came under the 32-38 age group, another 5 (10%) under the age grouping 39-45 while only 2 males were 46+ (4%). Female participants ranging between 18-24 consisted of 19 (38%) of the 50 in total, 25-31 age group had 14 (28%) participants, 5 (10%) in the 32-38 age bracket, 6 (12%) responses for 39-45 year olds and 46+ had 6 (12%) responses also.

In terms of full or part-time, among the 100 particpants, 32 were part-time and 68 full-time. From the perspective of females, from that 32 participants which were part-time 22 of them were females and only 10 males. Females had 28 full-time while males had 40 full-time in terms of responses. Regards the working period in the company, the average experience of female employees is 2.5 years while males were 3.4 years.

4.5. Research Strategy

Quantitative research and survey research strategies are widely used to obtain general data. Self-completion surveys include both hard copies and on-line copies. Both strategies can and should be answered independently without any supervision unless required (Saunders, et al., 2008). A survey research strategy was chosen in this study with a self-completion survey designed with two sections, each containing ten questions or more. Each question was answered through two various 5 point

Likert scales. Each participant was given the option of a hard copy or on-line copy style survey for their own convenience.

Bell (2005) and Oppenheim (2000) (cited by Saunders, et al., 2008) stress the importance of a well structured and developed survey. The researcher needs to gain a great deal of ensurance that the survey will collect the significant data sought after. The data collected will be reliable and consistemt. They add that other factors which can impact the overall process of surveys which must be considered is finance, distribution, availability of participants and time. This is supported by Rowley (2014, p.314) who states ''a lot of effort goes into creating a good questionnaire that collects the data that answers your research questions and attracts a sufficient response rate''. She continues by explaining that questionnaires are relatively easier regards response rates in comparison to interviews. The data gathered is more generalised and precise due to the specific questions asked and the large sample.

Researcher is clear about the data required and designs a question

Respondent decodes the question in the way the researcher intended

Respondent answers the question

Researcher decodes the answer in the way the respondent intended
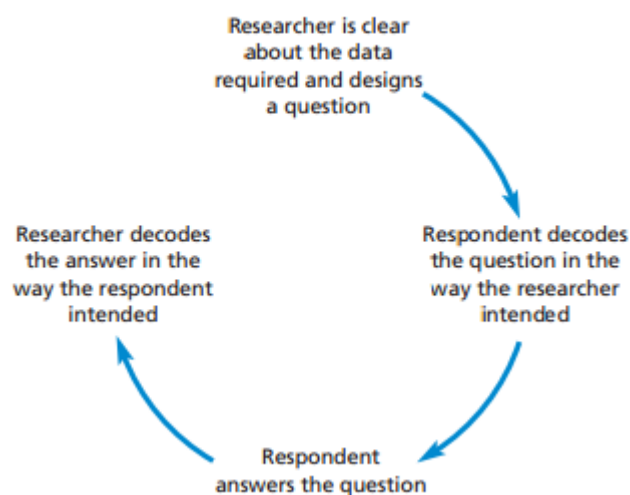
Figure 1.

Saunders, et al. (2008) adds that the internal validity and reliabilty of the questionnaires are significant. Internal validity consists of the data findings and the degree to which it can relate to the process rather than any flaws in the design. Regards questionnaires, it relates to the ability and structure of the questions to measure what the authors seeks to measure and research. Foody (1994) (cited by Saunders, et al., 2008) discusses internal validity and reliabilty and states it as ''the question must be understood by the respondent in the way intended by the researcher

and the answer given by the respondent must be understood by the researcher in the way intended by the respondent''.

Saunders, et al. (2008) argues that when constructing a questionnaire and its validity, three aspects of the validity of questions must be studied and considered. They are as follows:

1. Content Validity – Extent to which the measurement of questions uses has enough and relevant coverage and scope to investigate the desired data.
2. Criterion-related Validity (Predictive Validity) – Relates to the strength of the questions asked to make predicted outcomes and responses based on the purpose of this report.
3. Construct Validity – ''the extent to which your measurement questions actually measure the presence of those constructs you intended them to measure'' (Saunders, et al., 2008, p. 373).

On top of testing the validity, Saunders, et al. (2008) discussed the process of its reliability. Although the reliability of a questionnaire isnt as important compared to the validity, reliability allows the author discover consistent findings at different times and with different participants each time with their own personal opinion and circumstances. Mitchel (1996) (cited by Saunders, et al., 2008) adds that theres three common methods used to test the reliability of a questionnaire. They are:

1. Test re-test – This test is different as it requires the author to distribute the same question twice. The data is then correlated to find its reliability.
2. Internal consistency – Involves the correlating of results of each question against the other questions. The most commonly used form of measuring internal consistency from a variety of methods is Cronbach's alpha.
3. Alternative form – A comparison against other responses of the same questions but through a different process of gaining these responses from the participants such as interviews as example.

The scales used in the author's questionnaire were based around previous varied questionnaires used which incorporated WLB, job satisfaction and the retail environment as the primary factors involved for the creation of the questionnaires. This ensured the author that the validity and reliability of the questions used in this study. Questions from previous researchers were obtained from the NCI database

within the PsycTESTS. The survey was created and distributed by the author with participants receiving either an on-line or paper copy.

4.6. Strengths and weaknesses of questionnaires

Participants are asked to answer a set of pre-defined set of questions which were structured in a specific order by the author of the questionnaire. The answers are then recorded, analysed and interpreted by the researcher. Like all forms of research, questionnaires have both weaknesses and strengths which need to be taken into account when analysing and interpreting the data received. According to Oats (2012) questionnaires are the most common form of research for studies regards quantitative research and has many benefits to the researcher. They benefits commonly accustomed too questionnaires are:

1. Data can be gained from large number of people, the greater number of people the greater likelyhood of more accurate and reliable results.
2. Data obtained can be generalised, brief, uncontroversial and at a low cost.
3. Questionnaires will be answered anonymously allowing genunine and honest responses.

The weaknesses of questionnaires according to Oats (2012) include:

1. Time and effort involved with getting participants to answer the questionnaires and to collecting the responses.
2. Questionnaires can be difficult to design and construct to allow reliable and precise data required to be gained in the responses.

4.7. Pilot study

Prior to the distribution of surveys, the author undertook a pilot study. Goldsmith, et al. (2010, p. 69) states that a pilot study is an ''experimental, exploratory, test, preliminary, trial or try out investigation''. The purpose of the pilot study is to pre-test the questionnaire and discover any problems which can be avoided for the primary participants in the study as well as recording and analysing the data found (Goldsmith, et al., 2010). 5 male and 5 female friends of the author who all had

different levels of experience working in retail were all involved in the pilot study. Saunders, et al. (2008) explains that pilot studies can test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire to a certain degree. The representativeness and suitability of questions for people working in retail and the other factors WLB and job satisfaction will also be studied and measured. Suggestions on how to improve the questionnaire can be put forward also and will allow adjustments be made for the benefit of the author and his research. Adjustments were made on the layout of the survey regards the process of answering the questions and the wording of specific questions too allow the participants on the clarity of question being asked. Two questions were added in the WLB section and at the conclusion of the survey. They were:

1. Your employers accommodate/provide WLB practices for you?
2. I am (insert answer) with the impact my WLB has on my job satisfaction.

This gave the participants to provide a more in-depth, precise and personal answer in relation to their WLB and job satisfaction while working in retail. The adjustments to specific questions were made consisting of minor changes to the wording of questions which made it easier to understand for the participants.

4.8. Job satisfaction scale

The job satisfaction scale was used using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree as well as ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfy. A minor definition of job satisfaction was given to allow the participants understand exactly what it entails. The questions asked were:

1. All in all, I am satisfied in my job

2. The work I do is meaningful to me?

3. My job is boring?

4. I am well paid for my effort at work?

5. I am treated well by management?

The following questions were asked using the Likert scale with the reponse options ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied as previously mentioned.

6. How satisfied are you with the tasks given to you?

7. How satisfied are you with your wages?

8. How satisfied are you with your collaboration with colleagues?

9. How satisfied are you with your workload?

10. How satisfied are you in your job? (All things considered: Pay, promotion, benefits etc)

4.9. Work-life balance scale

The same criteria followed here regards the scales and the method of answering them. The WLB questions explored the participants personal opinion on the process and what impact it has as well as their own WLB experiences in their place of work. The following questions were asked:

1. Having a positive balance between work and your personal life is important for your well-being?

2. Your employers accomadate/Provide WLB practices for you?

3. Consicously managing WLB on a day-to-day basis? (Planning responsibilites on days off, planning holidays, days off etc)

4. Keeping work separate to friends/family?

5. Don't have enough time for responsibilites/Leisure because of work?

6. Don't have enough energy for responsibilites/Leisure because of work?

7. My personal well-being is significantly improved due to positive WLB practices?

8. How satisfied are you with how your time is divided between work and your personal life?

9. The chance you have to perform your job well and yet be able to perform home-related duties also adequately?

10. The way you divide your attention between work and home?

11. You are satisfied with your own personal WLB?

12. Which of these factors impact your WLB the most? Please rate in order
    of importance from 1-5. (1=Very much – 5= Not at all)
       — Hours
       — Weekend Shifts
       — Work Practices (Time consuming practices etc)
       — Work collegues
       — Management

4.10. Demographic Questions

The questions asked on the questionnaires included the age which was separated into age groups as already mentioned, male/female, period of time working within the company in the retail sector and if the participants were working on full or part-time contracts. The questions throughout the survey were both precise and broad with their personal experiences in retail and personal opinions on general topics. The demographic questions allowed the author to bring a degree of separation to help critically analyse certain questions which related to the literature review such as females and their WLB or part-time workers compared to full-time workers.

4.11. Errors and bias

The two most common errors when issuing surveys are non-sampling and sampling errors, all which relate to the participants. Both of these errors could have occurred across the research but the author is confident this isn't the case but it should be taken into consideration regards the analysis of data (Saunders, et al., 2008). Non-sampling errors primarily relate to the response rates of participants being low but the author is confident this didn't occur. The author distributed a specific number of surveys to three different stores of the same company with the permission of management. Each survey was noted with a number and if they responded. Exactly 100 participants, 50 male 50 female which was the original aim of the author returned the surveys fully completed. Sampling errors however most likely occurred

in this research. Personal opinions, experience and interpretations of questions could have impacted the answers when being completed. Distractions, fatigue and any other personal circumstances could have impacted the completion and validity of the survey and should be taken into account regards the analysis of data (Saunders, et al., 2008).

4.12. Distribution methods

The situation for the author regards distribution was relatively convenient due to the accommodation of the company involved. As already mentioned, the participants of the survey came from three stores from Ireland and Britain's leading children's toy retailers which were all located in close proximity to the author. The author, a current employee of the retailer in question discussed the idea of distributing the surveys across the store with the store manager and the option of getting another stores involved due to the amount of participants required. The store manager gratefully discussed this idea with the regional manager and was granted. Two of the three stores in question were situated in greater Dublin area situated near large urban areas, both containing large shopping centres and shopping outlets. The final store was located in an urban area located in County Meath, an ever growing commuter county on the border with Dublin.

Both on-line copies and paper copies were distributed. The author distributed primarily paper copies to the other two stores were participants weren't known by the author, one store in Dublin and the other in the county in Meath. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey was distributed with the surveys and the amount of participants required along with a discussion with each store manager to explain the entire criteria and rationale of the survey. The surveys were distributed across these two stores and the author visited each store on Sunday for three weeks to gather surveys, remind participants about the survey and to thank the participants and managers involved. Between these two stores, 65 employees undertook the survey. Within the store of employment of the author which is the other store located in the greater Dublin area, on-line copies or paper copier were distributed and a brief discussion on the rationale of the survey to each participant. Surveys were gradually

returned throughout the week on different days while weekend visits occurred from the author due to the large number of participants working at the same period of time. Participants in this store who received paper copies. 35 employees from this store alone part took in the research study.

4.13. Ethical Considerations

The primary concern for the participants and ethical considerations of the author was the confidentiality aspect. Each survey completed was done so on a voluntary and independent basis. Participant's names weren't required while the exact age of each individual wasn't asked but broken down into age brackets for even more confidentiality. All demographic questions were explained in the brief cover letter as already mentioned and participants were informed that no personal details were required as well as the name of their employers. The name of the organisation wasn't revealed on the request of the organisation and won't be displayed throughout any point of this entire report. The report with collected data and results included won't be published for viewing for the public however results of the data collected will be available on request of the organisation and any participant involved in the study.

5. Results

The primary objective of this report is to study the impact WLB has on job satisfaction of employees working in the retail sector in Ireland. WLB, job satisfaction and the effects of WLB on job satisfaction are the three main variable used in this study. Three hypotheses proposed were tested also using the data collected through SPSS which created various tables and diagrams which verified if the hypotheses can be supported or not.

In the first subsection, the author presents the tests of reliability for each set of questions used for the purpose of this study. A reliability analysis for each variable is undertaken to assess the internal reliability. Kiliç (2016) argues that if Cronbachs Alpha is above or greater than 0.70 the scale is deemed reliabile.

5.1. Reliability

5.1.1. Job satisfaction

Table 1 below depict the results of the reliability test undertaken through SPSS of all ten questions of the job satisfaction scale used. The test showed that the questions weren't reliable according to Cronbach's Alpha due to the score of .528.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.528	10

Table 1. Reliability statistics – Cronbach's Alpha - Job satisfaction

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.708	6

Table 2. Reliability statistics- Cronbach's Alpha - Job satisfaction

The author re-done the same test minus four questions which were deemed the most unreliable through SPSS. Table 2 shows that the six questions reach the score of .708 which meets Cronbach's Alpha criteria of 0.70. The questions deemed reliable are questions 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, and 10 while questions 3, 4, 7 and 8 were deemed unreliable. In that case, for the remainder of this study, the questions deemed reliable will be used.

5.1.2. WLB

Table 3 represents the WLB scale and shows that the ten questions asked are considerably unreliable and don't reach the 0.70 required. The author manually assessed each question until the 0.70 was reached and the remaining questions were reliable to continue to analysis of the data.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.438	10

Table 3. Reliability statistics- Cronbach's Alpha - WLB

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.723	7

Table 4. Reliability statistics- Cronbach's Alpha - WLB

Table 4 shows a reliable scale with the removal of three questions, questions 4, 5 and 6. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.723 is reached. Like the process taken with job satisfaction scale, for the remainder of this study and results, the data present in Table 2 for the WLB scale will be the data used.

5.2. Characteristics of the participants

Descriptive statistics were used to gain a greater insight into the participants and the characteristics. As already mentioned, the sample size consisted of 100 individuals, 50 male and 50 female.

In Table 5 below which was developed through SPSS shows the overall age bracket contribution amongst the entire sample size. The highest age range was participants aged 18-24 while only 8 participants were 46+.

Age

		Value	Count	Percent
Valid Values	1	18-24	45	44.6%
	2	25-31	26	25.7%
	3	32-38	10	9.9%
	4	39-45	11	10.9%
	5	46+	8	7.9%

Table 5. Age range contribution

Participants working full-time was over 60% with 62 of the entire sample while 38 participants involved in the study worked part-time as shown in Table 4 below.

Full / Part time

		Value	Count	Percent
Valid Values	1	Full-time	62	61.4%
	2	Part-time	38	37.6%

Table 6. Full-time and Part-time contribution

As already stated, all participants in this study worked in the private sector in retail and all worked in the same organisation across three different stores.

5.3. Job satisfaction in the organisation

Through SPSS, general data was analysed to provide a brief guide of job satisfaction in the organisation. In relation to males and females job satisfaction in their jobs at present, in Table 7 and the two histograms below show similar outcomes. Males are slightly more dissatisfied in their job compared to females while more females are satisfied in their jobs. Both full and part-time employees had similar results regards being satisfied in their jobs.

		JS1					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Gender	Male	3	16	14	13	4	50
	Female	3	14	11	19	3	50
Total		6	30	25	32	7	100

Table 7. Job satisfaction

Results also found for full and part-time employees showed differentiated results. 27 participants who are working full-time were either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied in the job while only 9 part-time participants were dissatisfied in their job. Regards the question 'The work I do is meaningful to me', Diagram 1 below shoes the significant response from participants while Diagram 2 which is in relation to the question 'How satisfied are you with your work load' the response is similar but to a smaller extent.
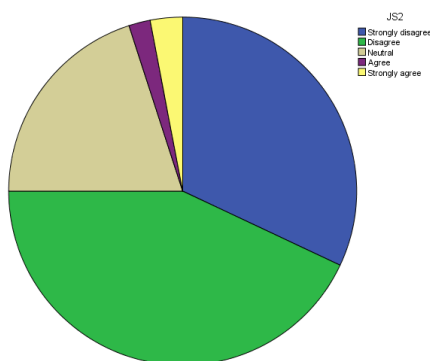

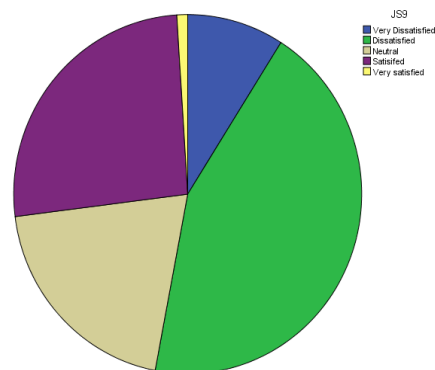Diagram 1: How meaningful job is   Diagram 2: Workload satisfaction

5.4. WLB in the organisation

Diagram 3 shows the overwhelming agreement amongst the participants towards the importance of having a positive WLB. 99% of participants agreed while 1% agreed.
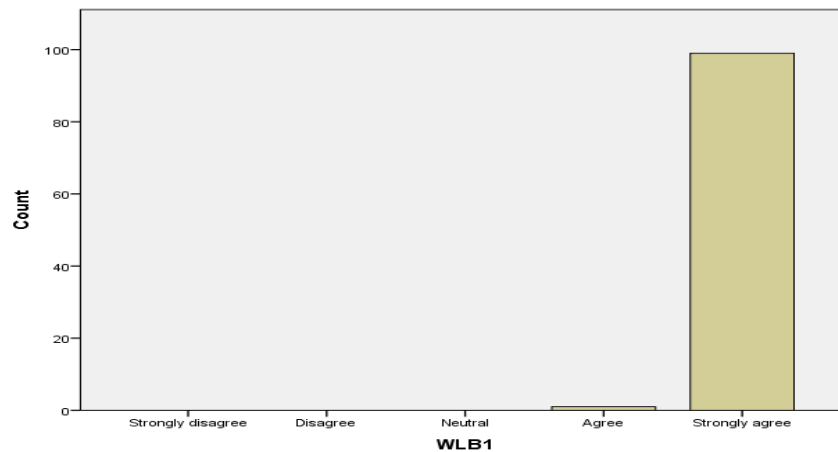

Diagram 3. Positive WLB importance

In a comparison between male and female participants shows how satisfied they are with their WLB at present. From the 50 male's participants, 2% were very dissatisfied in their job and 32% were dissatisfied, this is in comparison to the 50 female participants in which 4% were very dissatisfied and 26% were dissatisfied. Between both males and females, 17% answered neutral. 44% of the male participants were either very satisfied or satisfied with their WLB compared to their female counterparts in which 58% felt they were very satisfied or satisfied with their WLB.

5.5. Distribution of values

Descriptive statistics were used to establish the normality of distribution for varies scales used amongst the different variables. The approach taken by the author involved gaining the Skewness and Kurtosis values through SPSS which provides data regards the normality of the distribution among the different scales. The author used this approach for hypothesis three as two independent values were measured the normality of distribution between the two was desired. Oric, et al. (2009) argues that

the Skewness value when less than +1 or -1 the data is considered to be distributed normally. Oric, et al. (2009) add that when the values for skewness are positive, this suggests the data analysed is skewed in the direction of positive values while when the data is skewed towards negative values this is a result of negative values for skewness. Bao (2013) explains that the Kurtois value when less than +3 or -3 the data is deemed to be distributed normally. Positive values for Kurtosis indicates that the distributions are bundled up and clustered. Negative values relating to Kurtosis illustrates a more flat distribtuion.

5.6. Correlations

The correlations involved in this section of inferential statistics is based around the variable WLB and job satisfaction and what relationship between them in order to determine the impact of WLB on job satisfaction. Three hypotheses were proposed for this study, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used for hypothesis 1, data measured was measured and graphs were created to illustrate the results of hypothesis 2 while a Mann-Whitney U test was undertaken to display the results of hypothesis 3.

According to Fouladi & Steiger (2008) the data discovered through pearsons coefficient should be seen as significant when $p < .05$, the relationship strenght should be noted as small when r =.10 to .29, moderate when r = .30 to .49 and significant when r = .50 to 1.0.

The Mann- Whitney U test is developed to compare and contract the differences between two separate independent grounps when the variable can be either ordinal or continuous (Fischer, et al., 2014)

5.7. Hypothesis 1

Its proposed that WLB practices are associated with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that WLB practices are associated with job satisfaction. The relationship between the two variable job satisfaction and WLB which were both

analysed by the job satisfaction and WLB scales was measured through the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Based on diagram 4 and table 8, there is a moderate relationship between the two variable with a medium positive correlation as r = .484, n = 100 and p < .000. This suggests that the WLB practices impact the job satisfaction of employees in retail. For that matter, hypothesis 1 is supported.

Correlations

		WLBComposit eScore	JobSatisfactio nCompositeS core
WLBCompositeScore	Pearson Correlation	1	.484[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
JobSatisfactionComposit eScore	Pearson Correlation	.484[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
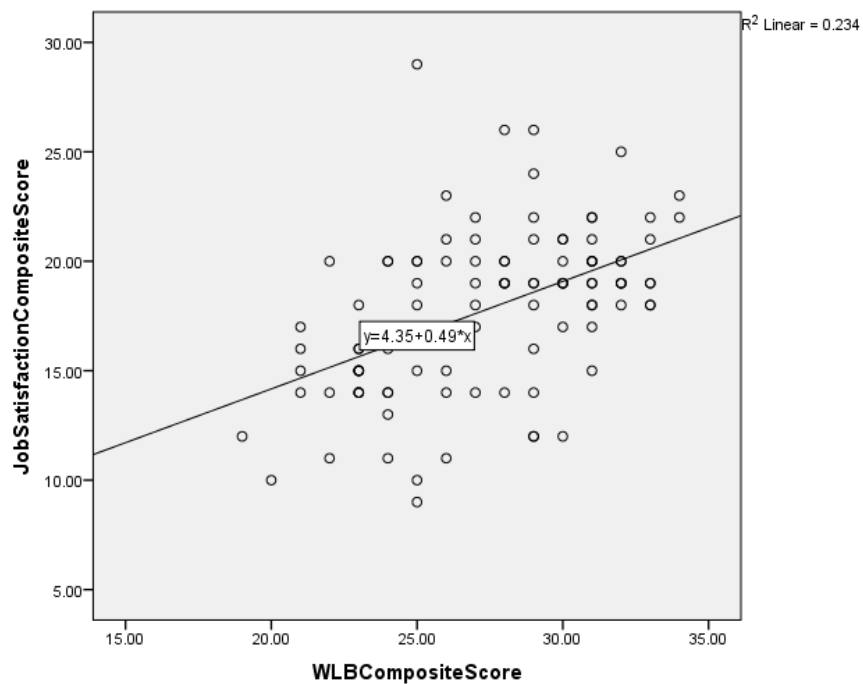
Table 8. Correlations

Diagram 4. WLB association with Job Satisfaction

5.8. Hypothesis 2

Its proposed that WLB practices have a greater impact on female employees.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that WLB practices impact females to a greater extent over their male counterparts. A Mann - Whitney U test was undertaken under the variable WLB and the two independent factors, male and females. Firstly, table 9 shows the Skewness and Kurtosis values of both the female and male participants. The male participant's skewness of -.131 shows that the data was distributed normally although it was a flat distribution due to the Kurtosis value. Females showed similar results with a flat distribution which was distributed normally.

Descriptive

	Gender		Statistic	Std. Error
WLBCompositeScore	Male	Mean	26.7400	.51493
		Skewness	-.131	.337
		Kurtosis	-.848	.662
	Female	Mean	28.2400	.52182
		Skewness	-.351	.337
		Kurtosis	-1.068	.662

Table 9. Descriptive

Ranks

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
WLBCompositeScore	Male	50	44.59	2229.50
	Female	50	56.41	2820.50
	Total	100		

Table 10. Ranks

Table 10 above displays that between the 100 participants, split 50/50 between male and female showed that WLB practices females to a greater extent with a mean rank of 56.41 compared to 44.59.
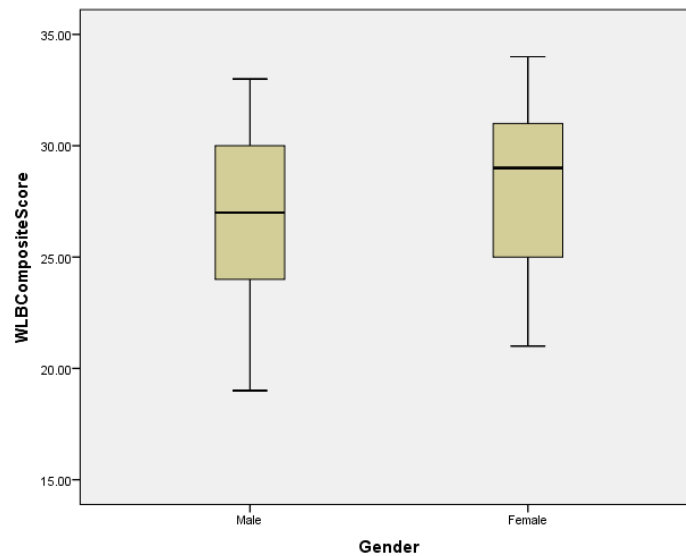
Diagram 5. Boxplot – Females/Males

A boxplot is a graph of data which consists of a line ranging from the minimum to maximum value through the first quartile (Q_1), the median and the third quartile (Q_3). The boxplot shown in this report supports hypothesis 3 further. The boxplot shows that females are impacted more so compared to males. The values between Q_1 and the median and Q_3 and the median is greater in both instances for females compared to males.

5.9. Hypothesis 3

Its proposed that WLB is associated with the well-being of employees.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that employees well-being is impacted as a result of WLB practices. Two questions were asked through the survey regards WLB and the relationship with well –being. The data collected from the participants which was measured through SPSS with the two diagrams displaying the significant response to the aspect of WLB and a persons well-being. Diagram 6 shows that all 100 participants either agree or strongly agree towards the idea that WLB is important for your well-being while diagram 7 shows similare results with majority of participants

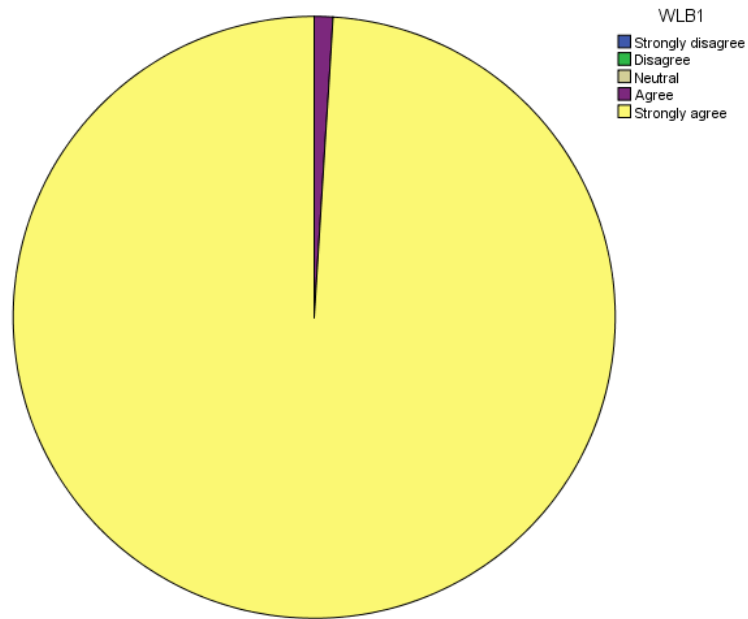agreeing or strongly agreeing that their personal well-being improves when WLB pratices are implemented correctly.
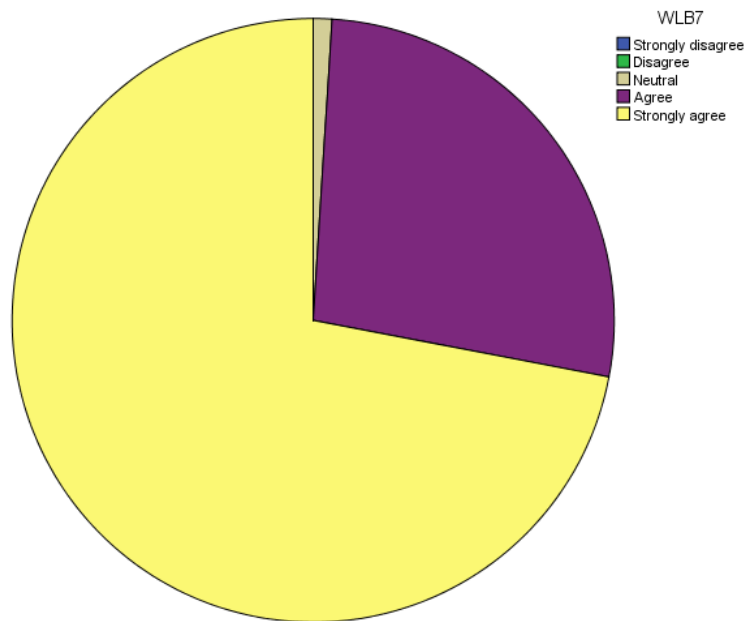

Diagram 6. WLB importance

Diagram 7. WLB improvement on well-being

6. Discussion

6.1. Study objective

The primary objective of this research study was to show the impact WLB had on the job satisfaction of employees who worked in retail in Ireland. The two variables WLB and job satisfaction were focused on and used to discover the relationship between the two. Three hypotheses were proposed from the research of the author based from the literature review presented and were studied and analysed using SPSS various tests.

6.2. Hypotheses discussion

Hypothesis 1 – It was hypothesised that WLB improves the levels of job satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported with the correlation between the variables job satisfaction and WLB in this study at r = .484. This correlation is on the higher end of a 'moderate' relationship between the variables with a correlation of .50 making it significant. These results suggest that when WLB practices are implemented correctly, the level of job satisfaction of employees increases which Mas-Machuca, et al. (2016) supported as previously stated. This aspect of work occurs when the employers implement WLB practices which allow their employees gain a greater balance between their personal lifes along with their work. Diagram 6 showed a moderate increase between the two variables amongst the 100 participants. The greater level of WLB practices showed an increase in their levels of job satisfaction and supports Kaliannan, et al. (2016) argue that employees with a greater WLB leads to greater levels of satisfaction in their job.

As already mentioned, findings in this study are similar and supportive of the previous research on the area of WLB and its relationship with job satisfaction. Smith, et al. (2014) argued that when WLB are executed correclty by the employers, their employees gain a healthier and positve level of job satisfaction. Sang, et al. (2009) argued that a negative WLB can lead to a negative outlook on job

satisfaction. This is supported by the results provided in diagram 6 which showes that the lower score of the WLB variable is corresponding with the lowest job satisfaction variable score.

Hypothesis 2 – It was hypothesised that WLB impacted female employees to a greater degree compared to males. This hypothesis was again supported. The author purposely cited 50 males and 50 females for the participation of this study to create a simple but clear comparison. Both males and females had negative skewness and kurtosis values with the male statistics showing-.131 skewness and -.848 kurtosis against the females statistics of -.351 skewness and -1.068 kurtosis. The negative values of skewness suggest that a weak WLB leads to a negative level of job satisfaction. The boxplot further supported the hypothesis with the WLB score greater for each median and quartile for females against the males.

The results of this study are consistent with that of literature studied such as Harris, et al. (2007) and McKie, et al. (2009) who both argue that women have a greater sense of need and importance towards a postive WLB due to their duties in their personal lifes. They discuss the points of responsibilities women have compared to males in their personal lifes such as childcare and looking after elders as examples. This leads to another relationship which is again supported in this study between males and WLB. Webber & Williams (2008) argued that males had a greater degree of importance towards their work as they were seen as the best equibbed for the work place compared to undertaking responsibilities at home at the expense of work. Both the boxplot and the mean argued that males and WLB had a waeker relationship compared to females.

Hypothesis 3 – It is hypothesised that WLB impacts the well being of employees. This hypothesis is also supported. The author analysed the data through SPSS with clear and precise results supporting the claim. An overwhelming 99 participants stated that they strongly agree that having a postive WLB increas an employees well-being while 1 participant agree to the same statement and none of the participants answered neutral or under. In the second question, 72 participants strongly agreed,

27 agreeed and 1 was neutral regards their personal well-being does improve due to a positive WLB.

The statistics from this study are consistent with that of past literature. Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska (2015) argued that WLB practices are greatly significant for organisations today for various reasons one of which is the well-being of employees. In addition to this, Chandra (2012) stated that each individual working requires different times to experience the impact of WLB on their own personal well-being. The fact that participants involved in this study had various periods of experience working ranging from weeks to years all signifcantly supported the hypostheis with the results provided.

Other findings – Retail work has many aspects which are commonly known to individuals who have and have not worked in the sector. Fators such as hours, weekend work and workplace practices are common aspects which are engaged with WLB and job satisfaction. The author asked participants to rank factors which impact their WLB the most. This aspect of the study was based around the question:

Which of these factors impact your WLB the most? Please rate in order of importance from 1-5. (1=Very much – 5= Not at all)
— Hours **[   ]**
— Weekend Shifts **[   ]**
— Work Practices (Time consuming practices etc) **[   ]**
— Work collegues **[   ]**
— Management **[   ]**

The results from this question are greatly precise and clear to evaluate. From the 100 participants, 91 ranked hours and weekend work as their first choice while work practices was the next most ranked question.

These results are similar to that of literature reviewed previous such as Henly & Lambert, 2014 and Rutherford, et al. (2012) support this by claiming that retaining staff and for employees trying to gain a positve sense of job satisfaction is extremely difficult due to long and unpredictable hours and working on weekends at a regular basis.

7. Conclusion

The research aim of this study was to discover the impact of WLB on job satisfaction on employees who work in the retail sector in Ireland. The sub-objectives consisted of establishing if WLB can improve the levels of job satisfaction, to gain an insight regards females and if they are impacted to a higher degree compared to males and what relationship consists between WLB and the well-being of individuals.This research study can make contributions to WLB studies and the impact WLB can have across Irish employment but primarily the retail sector.The study identified the existance of the association of WLB and job satisfaction.

The study confirmed that a postive WLB increase employees levels of job satisfaction. The correlations shown showed that WLB practices have the desired impact on employees and their levels of satisfaction within their job as their job satisfaction gradually increases. This process can be supported as proven by past literature and studies.The study also confirmed that WLB impacts females to a greater extent compared to men. Through the different charts and graphs which were generated through the responses of the participants, it is clear that the relationship between women and WLB is a far greater concern in comparison to men. Throughout various studies, this objective was supported.

The final confrimation from this study is that WLB has a very significant impact on the well-being of individuals. From the results given on this area, it is very evident that the well-being of employees can be effected due to WLB. Unfortunately, the mental and physical well-being of many individuals across Ireland today has resulted in many trageies Leahy & Davis (2013) and this study can make contributions to organisations across Ireland in this area.

This research also showed and what was greatly supported throughout past literature is that major aspects which impact employees WLB in the retail sector in hours, weekend work and work place practices in that order.The findings of this study can provide important contributions to organisations across Ireland and impact

employees in a positive manner. In hindsight, employees affect organisations productivity and performance and to reiterate the common saying that employees are the most importance asset of an organisation.

8. Recommendations

8.1. Recommendations

As already stated, WLB literature incorporates extensive research on the impact it can have on employee's job satisfaction. Through the authors research of past literature limited research is conducted on the mental well-being of employees as a result of a negative WLB especially amongst male workers as they don't have a greater concern towards WLB. In continuation of this, as the author I recommend that the introduction of wellness programs are put forward. After a trial and error phase, successful programs can benefit both parties, the employer and employee. Examples may include mental and physical health assessments. Discounted gym membership or smoking cessation programs.

A further recommendation to improve the human resource management (HRM) practices across the organisation is the implementation of healthcare and retirement benefits. As an organisation, benefits of any nature will be compared when attracting and retaining the strongest employees. Offering benefits at minimum comparable to your competitor and provide an extra benefit which will tip the scales in your favour. Incorporating a phased retirement may help employees when changing their work title demographic. Introducing job sharing or providing less stressful and less demanding jobs to the older employees may help with the process.

Quantitative research was adopted for this current study and using collected data to analyse and establish results. Quantitative research was time consuming and stressful due to the number of participants required. The author recommends both quantitative research to a smaller degree and qualitative research such as interview for future studies to gain a greater insight and more in-depth data and opinions.

In a broader sense, this study was conducted among employees in the retail sector. Assessing levels of WLB on job satisfaction in the public sector and self-employed people is equally important to understand. In order to gain a greater understanding of employees and the impact of WLB on job satisfaction, its recommended future research to be undertaken on this topic among public sector workers and self-employed individuals. This will provide HR managers a greater insight into what

impacts WLB the most and how they can improve the overall satisfaction and work ethic of their employees.

8.2. Financial Implications

The financial implication for this study would be very insignificant. The project in question can be undertaken across a successive 12 week period. The author suggest this period to be undertaken 6 weeks before and after Christmas so researchers can access the data from participants throughout busy and more reserved working period. The financial burden involved in the study is very little. An estimated €100 is required. The resources are broken down between ink and paper required for the questionnaires which is estimated at €30 while €70 is estimated for transport costs regards travelling to and from each store involved in the research on multiple occasions. Human labour involved would be estimated at two individual's maximum with one individual requiring a clean driver's licence. The information on salaries of each individual can't be established and can't be added into the financial costs in this report and must be taken into consideration by the individual or individuals involved in the financial area.

9. Personal learning statement

The author found this dissertation very demanding and a great challenge but gained a great sense of reward and understanding. This dissertation is the first major project of this significance and length for the author and the overall experience was strenuous. The process involved throughout the entire dissertation was a challenge. Meeting up with management of my current employer to create a specific weekly work timeline for my own benefit was my first task and challenge. Thankfully my employer was very much understanding and helped throughout the entire term. Dedicating time to my studies through the summer months was a difficult task while putting my friends and family in limbo was difficult at many times.

The area of WLB and job satisfaction is very broad but important in today's business world. If it was possible to rewind the last 12 weeks, the author would change a few aspects of the actions taken. A greater reliance and importance towards the author's time frame given and distribution of tasks would have been taken into greater consideration. The overall time and effort in gaining 100 participants was both tiring and stressful and a greater plan of action would have been developed.

The author has years of experience in retail but had little idea of WLB and its impact on job satisfaction to such an extent and its impact on many other individuals who work in the same industry. I would very much like to show the results of my data collected to both my work colleagues and employers and show the significance of WLB.

In hindsight, the author is both pleased and proud of the study undertaken and the outcome of the data gathered and studied. As already mentioned, this is my first major project of this size and importance throughout my education and I am very much delighted it is finished but also delighted I undertook the challenge. This experience will be of great personal benefit for future employment in HRM.

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Appendix

Survey

Brief submitted with survey

Impact Work-life Balance has on Job Satisfaction in the Retail Sector.

Survey 2016

Male/Female:

Age: (Please circle your age bracket)

18-24	25-31	32-38	39-45	46+

Full/Part-time:

Period of time working with company:

Job satisfaction

The level of fulfillment and satisfaction an employee has with his/her job and which has an impact of their job performance.

The following questions are to be answered using a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Please select the one most appropriate to you.

Q1. All in all, I am satisfied in my job? **[   ]**

Q2.The work I do is meaningful to me? **[   ]**

Q3. My job is boring? **[   ]**

Q4. I am well paid for my effort at work? **[   ]**

Q5. I am treated well by management? **[   ]**

The following questions are to be answered using a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, to 5 = Very Satisfied.

Please select the one most appropriate to you.

Q1. How satisfied are you with your tasks given to you? [   ]

Q2. How satisfied are you with your wages? [   ]

Q3. How satisfied are you with your collaboration with colleagues? [   ]

Q4. How satisfied are you with your workload? [   ]

Q5. How satisfied are you in your job? (All things considered: Pay, promotion, benefits etc) [   ]

Work-life Balance (WLB)

A comfortable balance achieved between employees primary priorities of their employment and their personal life's (Family, friends etc)

The following questions are to be answered using a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, to 5 = Strongly Agree.

Please select the one most appropriate to you.

Q1. Having a positive balance between work and your personal life is important for your well-being? [   ]

Q2. Your employers accomadate/Provide WLB practices for you? [   ]

Q3. Consicously managing WLB on a day-to-day basis? (Planning responsibilities on days off, planning holidays, days off etc) [   ]

Q4. Keeping work separate to friends/family? [   ]

Q5. Don't have enough time for responsibilites/Leisure because of work? [   ]

Q6. Don't have enough energy for responsibilites/Leisure because of work? [   ]

Q7.My personal well-being is significantly improved due to positive WLB practices? [   ]

The following questions are to be answered using a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, to 5 = Very Satisfied.

Please select the one most appropriate to you.

Q1. How satisfied are you with how your time is divided between work and your personal life? **[   ]**

Q2. The chance you have to perform your job well and yet be able to perform home-related duties also adequately? **[   ]**

Q3. The way you divide your attention between work and home? **[   ]**

Q4. You are satisfied with your own personal WLB? **[   ]**

Q5. Which of these factors impact your WLB the most? Please rate in order of importance from 1-5. (1=Very much – 5= Not at all)
- Hours **[   ]**
- Weekend Shifts **[   ]**
- Work Practices (Time consuming practices etc) **[   ]**
- Work collegues **[   ]**
- Management **[   ]**

Brief - Dissertation survey

Dear participant,

I am currently studying an MA of HRM in the National College of Ireland with this survey a part of my degree. This survey is based around two simple variables, Work-life balance (WLB) and job satisfaction. The dissertation is based around employees working in the retail sector in Ireland.

WLB is simply the balance you as an individual has between your personal life and work life. Job satisfaction relates to the level of satisfaction you have in your place of employment and what impact it has on your job performance.

This survey contains basic demographic questions and will take less than 10 minutes overall. As the author, I do not want the company name to be printed or written down on the survey as it will not be revealed within the dissertation.

Confidentiality is vitally important to me and you as participants. Your name will not be required and no personal data will be collected. The findings of the dissertation will be published and can be provided to any participant on request.

Finally, I would sincerely like to thank you for your time, effort and co-operation by completing this survey.

If you have any problems regarding the survey please don't hesitate to contact me.

Email: Shanemoran91@hotmail.com

Kind regards,

Shane Moran