

# Work-Life Integration and Leaveism



a study of workplace practices  
in business excellence award winning organisations  
in the UAE

An Applied Research Thesis for MBA (Business Excellence)  
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## **Dedication**

Dedicated to my pillars of strength, my parents

## Acknowledgement

***“The best teacher is the one who is most capable of reducing knowledge to that simple compound of the obvious and wonderful.”***

— H.L. Mencken

I am extremely thankful to my mentor Mr. Mohammad Meraj for guiding me so expertly through this challenging but rewarding task. I am indebted to him for the time and energy he has spent reviewing the progress of this project. Along with Prof Meraj, I am also thankful to my teachers Mr. Keith Reynolds, Mr. Ajith Karnik, Mr. Rajesh Mohnot, Ms. Pallavi and Mr. Don Vimal for the interesting sessions; the knowledge they imparted; and for influencing my thinking over the course of my studies over these two years.

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## **Executive Summary**

The concept of work-life is a major business issue which has a huge impact on people practices. Today, businesses emphasise on **work-life integration** and **flexible work arrangements (FWA)** to help employees achieve focus on both work and personal life while coping in fast-paced work-environments such as the UAE. In this context, “**Leaveism**” where employees use not only their evenings / weekends, but also their paid leave to get work done; brings another dimension to the integration discussion. Leaveism tends to skew actual data companies have in place to measure performance and workforce well-being (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.146), and could hence have implications on long-term performance of businesses. With the current market dynamics, slow-down in economy and large-scale redundancies, employees are having to deal with work overload and increased job pressures; making Leaveism even more significant in this region.

This research investigates whether Leaveism is relevant in UAE, what its triggers are and whether it is a matter of personal preference. Being one of the first of its kind in the UAE, this study determines the extent of Leaveism in the country and impact of FWA on it. By conducting this research in Business Excellence award winning organisations, the study focuses on environments that already place lot of importance on people resources.

The study commenced with an elaborate systematic literature review focusing on the key constructs mentioned here. For the empirical part, a mixed methods approach was adopted by combining data from qualitative and quantitative methods. The data were collected from the 10 participating organisations and consisted of 21 semi-structured interviews of senior managers and 506 respondents to an online survey. These have been analysed individually using various methods such as thematic and statistical analyses. These were then triangulated and have helped in drawing various conclusions.

The study concludes that Leaveism is prevalent in the UAE and the practice is predominantly discretionary in the qualitative research. However, there are indications of it being enforced as well, from the quantitative research. The research establishes the major trigger o Leaveism as work overload. FWA is a relatively new concept in UAE. However employees are seen to practice it mostly through manager’s discretion. The quantitative study confirms that FWA can increase employee commitment. Even though the research does not identify FWA to have a direct link with Leaveism, it can impact Leaveism behaviours as it is seen to decrease its main trigger, work overload. The paper recommends adopting measures to identify costs related to Leaveism and productivity losses; role-model managers to facilitate healthy work-life integration; improve internal efficiencies to work smarter and finally introduce various flexible practices to tap into its various benefits for both the organisation as well as the employee. Future research recommendations include focusing on gender and cultural influences for a similar study and to undertake a detailed study focusing on the 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of Leaveism.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

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### 1.1 The Context

#### 1.1.1 Work-Life Integration and Leaveism

The concept of work-life has been a major business issue of this century (Harrington and Ladge, 2009, p.148) and has huge impact on current day's workforce management practices. In a fast-paced work-environment like UAE, employees struggle to achieve a healthy balance as professional commitments overshadow personal lives (Faisal Masudi, 2015). Today however, the modern-day businesses are focused on "**work-life integration**" (Employeralliance.sg, 2016; People-equation.com, 2011), rather than work-life balance, as the demands from work and life are becoming omnipresent. Organisations are employing various flexible work arrangement (FWA) ranging from flexible working to work-based child-care facilities (Liu, 2016) to providing technology to assist work-on-the-go (Kalra, Lewis and Wong, 2014). However such practices may have led to increase in occurrence of "**Leaveism**" (Hesketh & Cooper, 2014, p.146) where employees use not only their evenings/weekends, but also their paid leave to get work done. Leaveism tends to skew actual data companies have in place to measure performance and workforce well-being (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014, p.146), and could hence have implications on long-term performance of businesses.

#### 1.1.2 International Trends

CIPD reports that the phenomenon of Leaveism is on the increase (Cipd.co.uk., 2015), along with evidence of excessive work pressure (CIPD, 2013, p.4) and long working hours (Cipd.co.uk., 2016). In a study of 1,000 working parents in UK, it was found that employees often put in an additional of 10 hours a week. This reportedly led to a third of them (29%) being burned out and close to half the participants (40%) being unable to cope with familial obligations (Working Families, 2016, p.3). It is hence no surprise that in another survey conducted by Xpert HR in the UK, it was found that offering flexible working is the third most popular measure for employers in reducing or preventing employee's stress at work (XpertHR.co.uk, 2016). This is similar to another study carried out by PWC on millennials across 75 countries in 2011, where personal development opportunities and flexible working hours took precedence over even cash bonuses (PWC.com., 2016). The importance of FWA are reiterated in a recent CIPD research report, where an overwhelming majority of HR professionals surveyed believe that it not only improves work-life balance (60%) but also morale, engagement (58%) and retention (53%) (CIPD, 2016a).

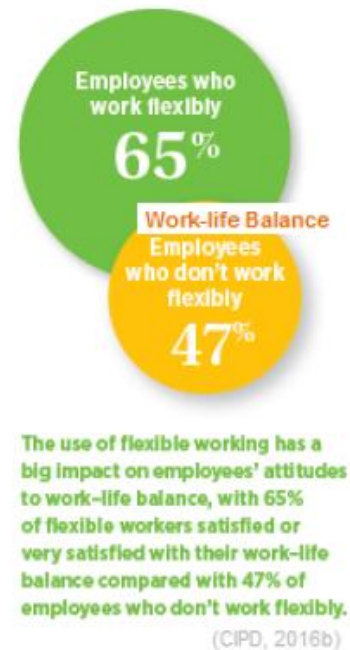
Evidence of overworking and aspects of Leaveism is found in the USA as well, as reported by the Society of HR Management. Though US workers are reportedly using lesser vacation days (fallen from 20.3 in 2000 to 16 days a year in 2015), many are continuing to work via phones and laptops



when they do go on leave (SHRM.org, 2016). This apparently comes from the fear that no one else can do that job or that a seeming lack of dedication can hurt chances to grow within the company.

### 1.1.3 Regional Trends

Employees in the UAE also have the tendency to carry forward leave which is an average of 10 days as per Hay group's compensation report (Hay group, 2012,p.97). Despite this, it is alarming that a Bayt survey (2,773 respondents) found 86.5% employees in MENA region continuing to work even during holidays with tasks ranging from checking and responding to mails, to staying contactable at all times (Gulfbusiness.com, 2014). In another UAE study (564 employees), 42% of employees under the age of 45 describe their offices as stressful and only 47% believe their organisations take an interest in their wellbeing and health (Gulfbusiness.com, 2015). To further aggravate the problem, there are reports of majority of UAE employees being fearful of divulging mental health issues to employers (Gulfbusiness.com, 2016). The financial impact of lack of wellbeing also cannot be overlooked, as drawing on UK figures, workplace mental health is estimated to cost circa 70 billion pounds a year to the economy (Gulfbusiness.com, 2016) and cost of absence at 554£/employee/year (Cipd.co.uk., 2016).



Managers' attitude towards these issues is also of concern with surveys reporting their dislike for FWA (Working Families, 2016,p.11) and lack of support for time-off (Project: Time Off, 2016). However, managers are increasingly appreciating the link between good mental health and productivity (CIPD, 2016c), probably as they themselves experience the most pressure, being connected to workplace while on leave (Project: Time Off, 2016).

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives

### 1.2.1 The Purpose

Keeping the above in mind, this research aims to investigate whether Leaveism is relevant in UAE, especially in terms of employees using their personal time and leave to finish work. UAE Government's current focus on happiness through a dedicated ministry to tackle health issues (Thenational.ae,2016) and empower people (Khaleejtimes.com,2015) makes this study very relevant at this point in time. However, with the current market dynamics, employees are forced to deal with work overload and increased job pressures; perhaps making Leaveism even more significant. On one hand, organisations are taking drastic steps like freezing increments and promotions (Graves, 2015; Nair, 2016), and on the other, employees are going beyond their job boundaries to produce results. This mismatch can negatively impact intrinsic motivation of employees (Malik, Butt and Choi,

2015,p.70) and can lead to low morale (Leiter and Schaufeli, 1996,p.237) job burnout or even attrition (Ahuja, Chudoba, George, Kacmar and McKnight, 2002).

### **1.2.1.1 Significance of Business Excellence**

This research aims to focus primarily on excellence award winning organisations in UAE which have implemented some form of business excellence frameworks that place lot of importance on people resources and their well-being. EFQM's criteria-3e (EFQM, 2012) for example, talks about ensuring a healthy work-life balance keeping the reality of new ways of working in mind.

### **1.2.1.2 Significance of FWA**

Along with the growing popularity of FWA (Section-1.1), it is considered a well-being initiative and has been shown to reduce another related phenomenon called Absenteeism (Desrochers and Sargent,2004,p.43). For those employees who are seen to indulge in Leaveism, the study could also assess if its impact varies in people utilising flexible work options.

## **1.2.2 Research Questions**

The above problem leads to the following research questions:

- 1) What is the extent of Leaveism and its triggers in business excellence awards winning organisations in UAE?
- 2) What is the extent of employee take-up of FWA in UAE
- 3) Does Leaveism impact differently in organisations which have less take-up of FWA?

As a summary, this study, one of the first of its kind in the UAE, is expected to contribute to the existing literature on Leaveism and **seeks to determine the extent of Leaveism and its triggers in excellence award winning organisation in UAE. It also aims to determine the prevalence of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) in these organisations and to uncover links between Leaveism and FWA if any.**

## Chapter 2 Systematic Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

A **systematic review** of literature was carried out to rigorously assess the various concepts and behaviours relating to work-life integration, Leaveism and flexible working are discussed and evaluated in literature. Systematic review has been chosen as it can be replicated and provide a transparent means with minimal bias to search and identify relevant literature (De Menezes and Kelliher, 2011,p.453).

### 2.2 Methodology

#### 2.2.1 Search Strategy

To scope out the articles to be included for the study, the SPICE framework (Mace-Michalik, 2012) was adapted which helped in building search terms directly from the research topic by defining the primary variables and research questions as follows:

**Figure 2-1: SPICE Framework**

Setting	Population	Intervention	Comparison	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional (Small, Medium, Large (SML)) organisations that have won business excellence awards in UAE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult working national and expatriate community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellence and HR strategies and policies</li> <li>Workplace and wellness initiatives</li> <li>Flexible working practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare different views, findings and opinions</li> <li>Compare theories</li> <li>Compare interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate views, findings, methods employed by articles</li> <li>Evaluate citation strength</li> </ul>

The search was conducted during Jul-Aug'16 using the below keywords in titles and/or abstracts of journals. Boolean operator "AND" was used in some instances to get appropriate articles in output

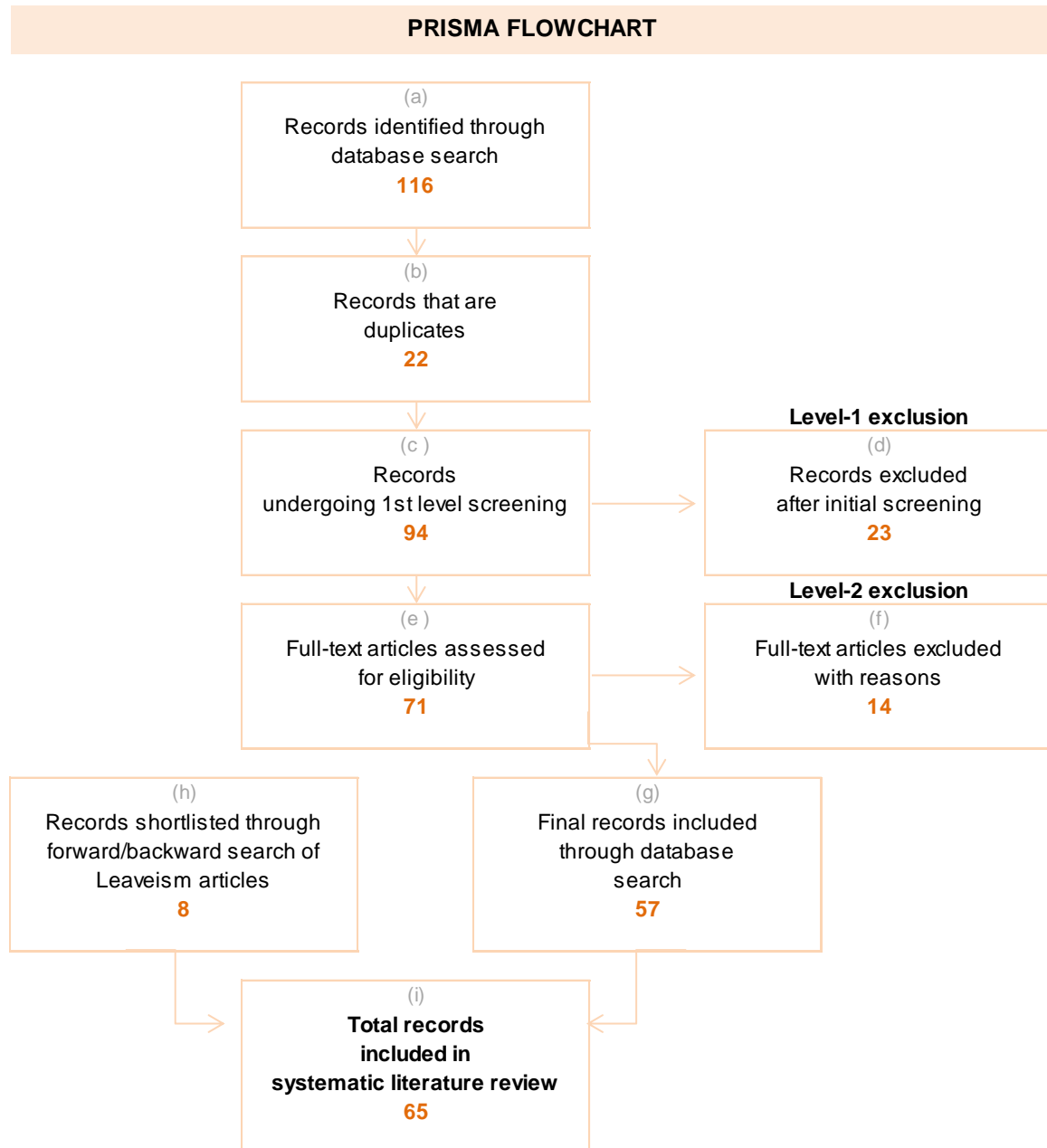
**Figure 2-2: Database Search**

Keywords	Database	Fields
<i>July 2016:</i> "work life integration" "work family integration" "work personal life integration" <i>Aug 2016:</i> "leaveism" <i>Sep 2016:</i> "EFQM" AND "flexible work" * "Business Excellence" AND "flexible work" * "TQM" AND "flexible work" * "TQM" AND "work-life" *	(1) EBSCOhost - Business Source - PsycINFO - PsycARTICLES (2) Emerald (3) ScienceDirect (4) Oxford Journal	Title and Abstract Title and Abstract Title, Abstract and Keywords Title and Abstract

\* Boolean operator 'AND' used to locate combinations of words to increase appropriateness of articles from the search output

The queries returned 116 articles from the above databases. Backward and forward searching of Leaveism articles (those in its references and those citing these articles) were conducted and 8 more journals were identified based on their relevance to research topic after screening their titles. A request for unpublished articles if available, was sent to the main author of Leaveism but was not met with any response. Though grey literature such as reports from industry/governments sources is part of the secondary data for this study, their analysis is provided separately and is not included in the systematic literature review. A total of 65 journals have been included in the review.

**Figure 2-3: PRISMA Flowchart**



*(Based on the PRISMA flowchart by Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff and Altman, 2009 cited in Zurynski, 2014,p.7)*

## **2.2.2 Eligibility Criteria**

### **2.2.2.1 Inclusions**

The following criteria were used for including articles:

- Peer-reviewed or academic journals in English
- Articles with full-text available
- Studies focusing on adult working population
- Relevant studies published any point in time

### **2.2.2.2 Exclusions**

The following criteria were used for Exclusion:

- Book reviews and books
- Inaccessible articles which didn't have their full-texts available for download
- Studies with population other than adult working population (i.e. college students)
- Studies with setting other than SML organisations (i.e. studies on domestic workers)
- Studies where primary focus is not relevant to this study
- Semantic filter (Hidalgo Landa et al,2011, cited in Margaret,2013,p.50) to exclude based on terms used (same terms but with alternate meaning)
- Studies focusing on the broader context of personal life; i.e. community

In the first screening, duplicates (22), book reviews (11), non-English (1) articles and those without full-texts (11) were excluded. The 14 articles that were excluded during second screening are as follows:

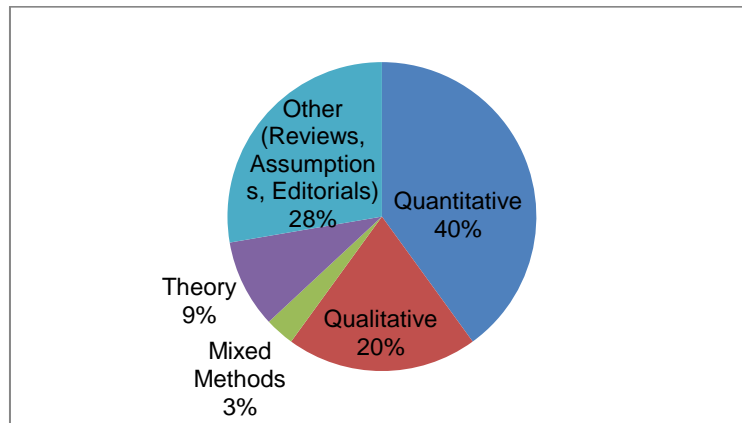
**Figure 2-4: Excluded Articles with Justification**

SL	AUTHOR(S)	YEAR	COMMENTS
01	Tajlili	2014	Population included are college students and not working population and focuses on helping them identify goals and clarify their authentic selves in all realms.
02	Jones	2003	The journal primarily focuses on corporate social responsibility and does not focus on WLI, FWA or employee attitudes in a way that would be beneficial for this study.
03	O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria	2015	The journal primarily focuses on women's leadership development and does not focus on WLI, FWA or employee attitudes in a way that would be beneficial for this study.
04	Cheung and Halpern	2010	The study is about work-family conflict of women leaders. The focus is more on leadership theories and does not focus on WLI, FWA or employee attitudes in a way that would be beneficial for this study
05	Quick and Macik-Frey	2004	Focuses on impact of coaching on behaviours, relationships, development and work-life. Does not focus on WLI, FWA or employee attitudes in a way that would be beneficial for this study
06	Rosenzweig, Brennan, Huffstutter and Bradley	2008	Focuses on challenges faced by parents of children with disabilities and difficulties in locating capable child care providers. Does not focus on WLI, FWA or employee attitudes in a way that would be beneficial for this study
07	Brennan and Brannan	2005	Explores relationship between school-age children's emotional and behavioural symptoms and workforce participation of their family caregivers. Does not correlate to study
08	Eddy and Gaston-Gayles	2008	Focus is on discovering various stressors for new faculty members and to test if people trained in higher ed programs would be equipped. WLI is one stressor but does not have enough focus to include here
09	McNeil, Leggat and Bartram	2015	Population included are fellows in a medical college and the study focuses to understand factors that influence them to volunteer their time to the College.
10	Korunka, Scharitzer, Carayon, Hoonakker, Sonnek and Sainfort	2007	The study focuses on understanding perceived customer orientation. It does not touch upon WLI, FWA or employee attitudes in a way that would be beneficial for this study
11	Boyer	2014	Focuses on an Act which grants women the right to combine lactation with wage-work. Article does not focus on WLI, FWA or employee attitudes in a way that would be beneficial or this study.
12	Baker	2010	Examines gendered strategies to accommodate parenthood and employment, comparing participants in different circumstances. Does not have enough focus on WLI, FWA or employee attitudes or related theories.
13	Lawthom and Kagan	2016	Looks at integration predominantly from the view-point of integrating into community for Chinese immigrant women. Article does not focus on WLI in a way that would be beneficial for this study.
14	Eräranta and Moisander	2011	Focuses heavily on fatherhood and male parenting and explores male identity. Article does not focus on WLI, FWA or employee attitudes in a way that would be beneficial for this study

### 2.2.3 General Observations

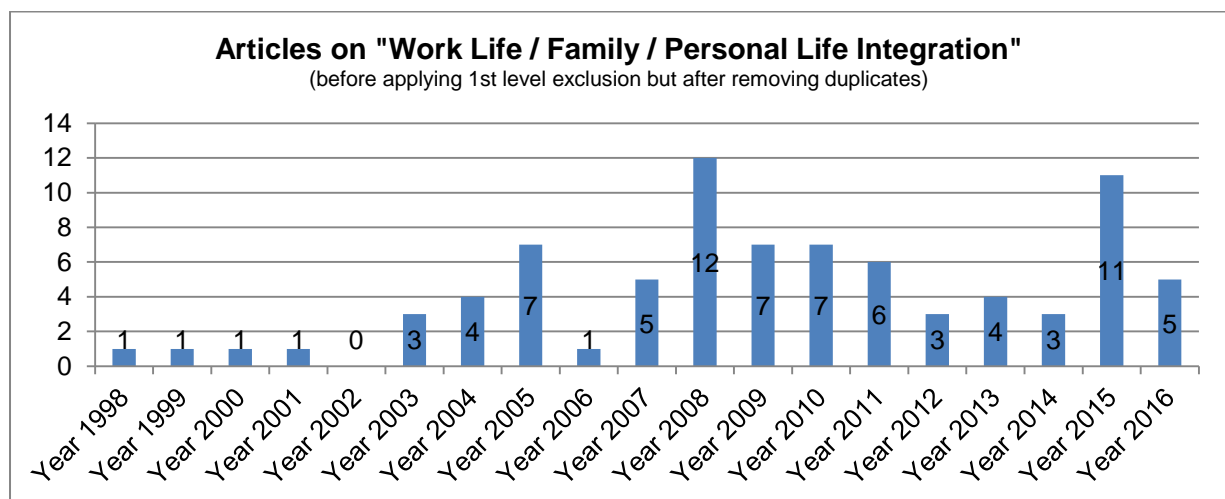
Majority of articles were empirical studies which used “mixed”, “quantitative”, and “qualitative” research. The remaining ones consisted of those focusing on discussing/formulating “theories” and “others” which consisted of literature reviews, editorials, case studies, analysis and discussions based on assumptions. Of the 45 journals which published these 65 studies, maximum (15%) were from “Community Work and Family” journal.

Figure 2-5: Types of Literature Reviewed



With regards to the articles on work-life interface, it is noticed that the earliest article in the search results with “integration” keyword was published in 1998. Though studies on work-family intersection have been around since the 70s (Kanter,1977 cited in Burke, 2004,p.299) it can be assumed that “integrating” the two domains is a fairly recent research concept. Interestingly, the number of articles is seen to spike during the years 2008 and 2015 which indicates researchers’ interest in exploring the work-life construct in relation to the period of the recession (Conservapedia, 2016) and oil-price driven economic downturn (Investopedia, 2015).

Figure 2-6: "Work-Life Integration" Publication Trend



## 2.3 Literature Review

A **narrative review and synthesis** is followed below where the focus has been to integrate and discuss diverse forms of evidence from literature in order to provide substance to the research argument (Kastner et al, 2012).

The review and critical analysis is categorised as follows:

1. Leaveism
2. Work-life Integration
3. Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA)
4. Excellence and Work-life Initiatives
5. Manager and Employee Attitudes
6. Decoding Leaveism

### 2.3.1 Leaveism

#### 2.3.1.1 Presenteeism and Absenteeism

Leaveism, along with concepts like presenteeism and absenteeism are employee responses to being overloaded or feeling unwell (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.146). While measures for absenteeism (i.e. not attending work (Johns, 2010,p.521) have highlighted trends related to general sickness and mental illness based on absence; presenteeism articulates that these may be applicable to employees who are at work (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.146). Stress is considered the most widespread hazard at workplace (Cooper and Dewe, 2008,p.521) and presenteeism argues the case for its' existence even among employees who may be present at work and is sick (Johns,2010,p.535; Hesketh, Cooper and Ivy, 2015,p.186). Along with sickness presence; presenteeism, initially thought of as an antonym of absenteeism (Johns, 2010,p.520) also includes face-time, i.e. working extra hours to impress managers, and focusing on acquiring a good record in attendance (Johns, 2010,p.521,525;Hesketh et al., 2015,p.186).

With regards to absenteeism, there are contradicting views regarding its triggers. During downsizing for example, Johns (2010,p.525) states that while it can escalate due to broken psychological contracts and dented job attitudes; the inverse is also prevalent where it is reduced due to workload, fear, or flatter structures. In latter cases, presenteeism becomes prevalent as sickness absence is suggested to get substituted with sickness presence during redundancies (Gerich, 2015,p.1; Caverley, Cunningham and MacGregor,2007,p.306). Presenteeism is also practiced with the expectation of improving promotion chances; to combat fear of losing job (Gerich, 2015, p.6); over-commitment (Hansen and Andersen, 2008,p.958) and to abide by organisation's attendance control measures (Johns, 2010,p.524). Presenteeism, specifically sickness presence has had increased focus in terms of research over past decade as it is believed to have more (negative) impact on productivity than sickness absence (Johns, 2010 cited in Gerich, 2015,p.1). It is also believed to be a



more sensitive measure of employee's health than absenteeism (Caverley, et al.,2007,p.318), and is believed to not only increase chances of future sickness (Hansen and Anderson, 2008 cited in Gerich, 2015,p.1) but also lead to serious long-term health issues (Caverley et al, 2007,p.306).

Traditional sickness absence measures hence do not convey a true picture of workforce well-being (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014, p.146) as employees may continue working despite feeling un-well (Gerich, 2015 p.5). At least combining data from sickness presence and sickness absence would provide more effective indication of health (Gerich, 2015,p.1); however these still may not reveal the full picture (Hesketh et al, 2015, p.186).

### **2.3.1.2 The missing link**

Leaveism provides the link that is missing in absenteeism and presenteeism, with regards to sickness and stressors like workload (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.146, 147; Gerich, 2015,p.5), while also challenging the current thinking and status quo (Hesketh, Cooper and Ivy, 2014,p.207) related to absence and workload (Hesketh et al., 2015,p.184). It adds a new dimension to how performance is managed (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.147). Aspects of Leaveism are also heightened by the shifting view that work and life are more an integration rather than a balanced relationship (Hesketh et al, 2015, p.185). With globalisation, the invasiveness of paid work is progressively spreading to non-western cultures and isolating employees more and more from leisure/family (Lewis, Rapoport, and Gambles, 2003,p.2). This, increasingly enabled by the various communication technologies (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007,p.592), is leading to blurred boundaries and the question whether individuals can depend on their instincts to draw a line, if any (Hesketh et al, 2015, p.184).

As Leaveism can be assumed to be generalisable across public sector (Hesketh et al, 2014,p.210) and is linked with well-being, Hesketh and Cooper (2014, p.147) point out that organisations should consider the associated cost implications as Leaveism can have fiscal impact on organisations. Hesketh et al (2015,p.185) point out that presenteeism too comes with a cost impact, stating that it costs around £15 billion in the UK every year. And this apparently is more important than absenteeism costs, which was calculated by CIPD at £659/employee every year (Cooper and Dewe, 2008,p.522-523). Such costs however are unfortunately not monitored rigourously by organisations (Cooper and Dewe, 2008,p.523).

### **2.3.1.3 Leaveism Triggers**

A true reflection of the extent of Leaveism is essential as it can skew an organisation's perception of existence of work overload and effectiveness of absence policies (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.146). Though reasons for Leaveism are not very clear (Hesketh et al, 2014,p.210); Hesketh and Cooper (2014,p.146-147) state that many counterproductive HR policies as well as austerity, financial and other external pressures may trigger these kind of unintended behaviours. Employees' loyalty can also influence (Hesketh et al.,2014,p.210) as in the case of presenteeism (Hansen and Andersen, 2008,p.958). Hesketh, Cooper and Ivy (2016,p.4) stress the need to differentiate such

positive employees attitudes from negative ones as positive attitudes indicate high performance and low turnover.

Leaveism, along with absenteeism and presenteeism (Johns, 2010,p.525; Gerich,2015,p.1), also becomes relevant as organisations are experiencing redundancies and budget cuts (Hesketh et al, 2014,p.206). Stoner, Robin and Russell-Chapin (2005,p.338) highlight that competitive pressures and downsizing can contribute to overload of work and end up making people who remain, work longer and harder to reduce their vulnerability.

**2.3.1.4 1st aspect of leaveism**

This aspect of Leaveism is clearly linked to illness related behaviour (Gerich, 2015,p.1). Hesketh and Cooper (2014,p.146) point out that exceeding the quota for sickness somehow indicates poor performance in some organisations. They claim that sickness quota along with other measurement controls for absence, prompt employees to take other allocated leave when they fall sick. Other factors include the desire to have clear personnel records to help career advancement and redundancy exemptions (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.146; Hesketh et al, 2014,p.210), or a conservative outlook to absence (Hansen an Anderson, 2008,p.956). However, concern for the organisation and the desire not to overburden it with sick leave can also drive this behaviour (Hesketh et al, 2014 cited in Gerich, 2015, p.2). Adding to Caverley et al’s (2007,p.306,309) study, and based on the literature on Leaveism, a full measure of workplace sickness can be developed as follows:

**Figure 2-7: A Proposed Measure for Total Sickness at the Workplace**



From the two empirical studies which focus on this aspect of Leaveism Hesketh et al’s (2014, p.206,210) study indicates predominance in higher-grade employees and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of 155 respondents having practiced Leaveism. In a different study, Gerich (2015,p.4) found that this aspect of Leaveism is less in comparison to presenteeism and sickness absence. Though job enjoyment is a reason highlighted by Hesketh et al (2014,p.210), Gerich (2015,p.6) contradicts this by saying this is associated with lower job enjoyment and is more an outcome of pressure and/or feeling of insecurity rather than loyalty and commitment to the organisation. This aligns with Hansen and Anderson’s (2008,p.963) research which indicated time pressure and job insecurity as some of the reasons for presenteeism.

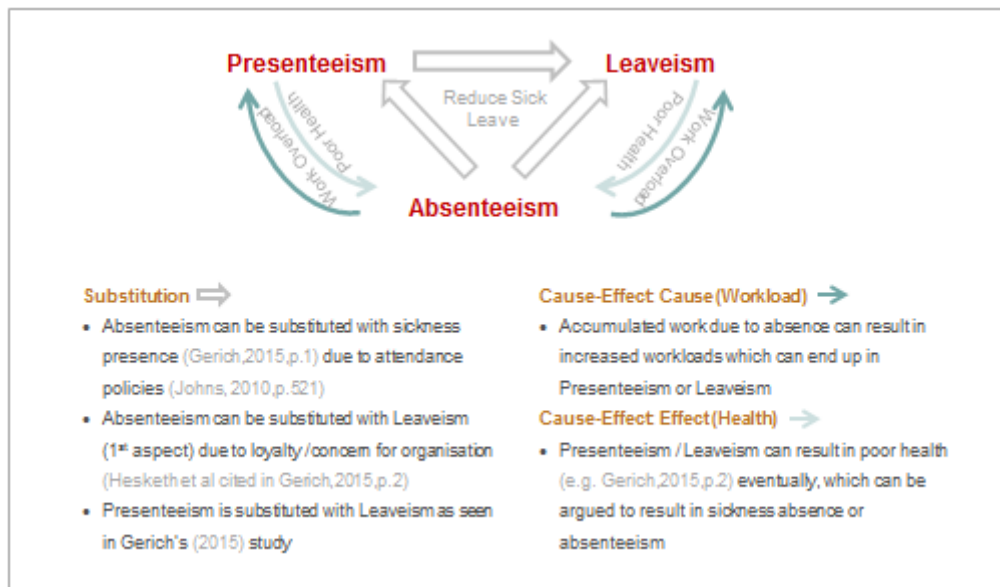
Gerich’s (2015) study also uncovered some interesting correlations between presenteeism, absenteeism and this aspect of Leaveism. He suggests that while presenteeism is a substitute for

sickness absence; Leaveism is a substitute for presenteeism (Figure-2.8). His study revealed similarities in Leaveism and presenteeism, with both seemingly focusing on avoiding taking sick leave. However, the difference arises from the fact that Leaveism is derived predominantly out of fear of job loss while the latter is mainly connected with workload (Gerich, 2015 cited in Hesketh et al, 2016,p.4).

### 2.3.1.5 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> aspects of Leaveism

Another outcome of trying to have a perfect HR record is employees taking home work which they are unable to complete during regular work hours (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.146). These are mainly triggered by increased workloads, resource constraints (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.147) or employees' focus on financial growth (Lewis et al,2003,p.14; Boswell and Olson-Buchanan,2007,p.597) through promotions/development opportunities (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.146). Hesketh et al (2015,p.184) point out that the overload can be an aftermath of redundancies, downsizing and changes in employment terms. Gerich (2015,p.15) points out that these aspects of Leaveism are not related to sickness-related behaviour, but it can very well impact well-being and health of employees. In other words, Leaveism, due to the effect of ill-health on productivity (Matcke, Balakrishnan, Bergamo and Newberry, 2007,p.213) can be argued lead to absenteeism. To capture this, the below model is proposed:

**Figure 2-8: A Correlation Model proposed for Absenteeism, Presenteeism and Leaveism**



With regards to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> aspects of Leaveism, Hesketh et al (2015,p.184) argue that it is a direct outcome of work overload. However if job is interesting and is suited to employees' personalities (Hesketh et al, 2014,p.206); employees may indulge in these behaviours on their own accord. As in the case of the 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of Leaveism, this can also be due to their sense of loyalty and realisation that work needs to get done; or as a means to avoid unfavourable performance reviews (Hesketh et al, 2015,p.184-185). Work environment also play a key role whereby practices such as hot desking (Hirst, 2011,p.783) and open plan offices may not provide a conducive work environment and may tempt employees to take their work home (Hesketh et al., 2015,p.185).

Hesketh et al (2015,p.186) say that work can either stop or be slow due to easing of behaviours associated with these aspects of Leaveism. This could be attributed to a break in employee's psychological contract with work, which may be driven by waning personal resilience (Hesketh et al, 2015,p.186). Resilience can be strengthened by good leaders and work environments that give importance to employee's psychological needs (Hesketh,2012, cited in Hesketh et al, 2015, p.186).

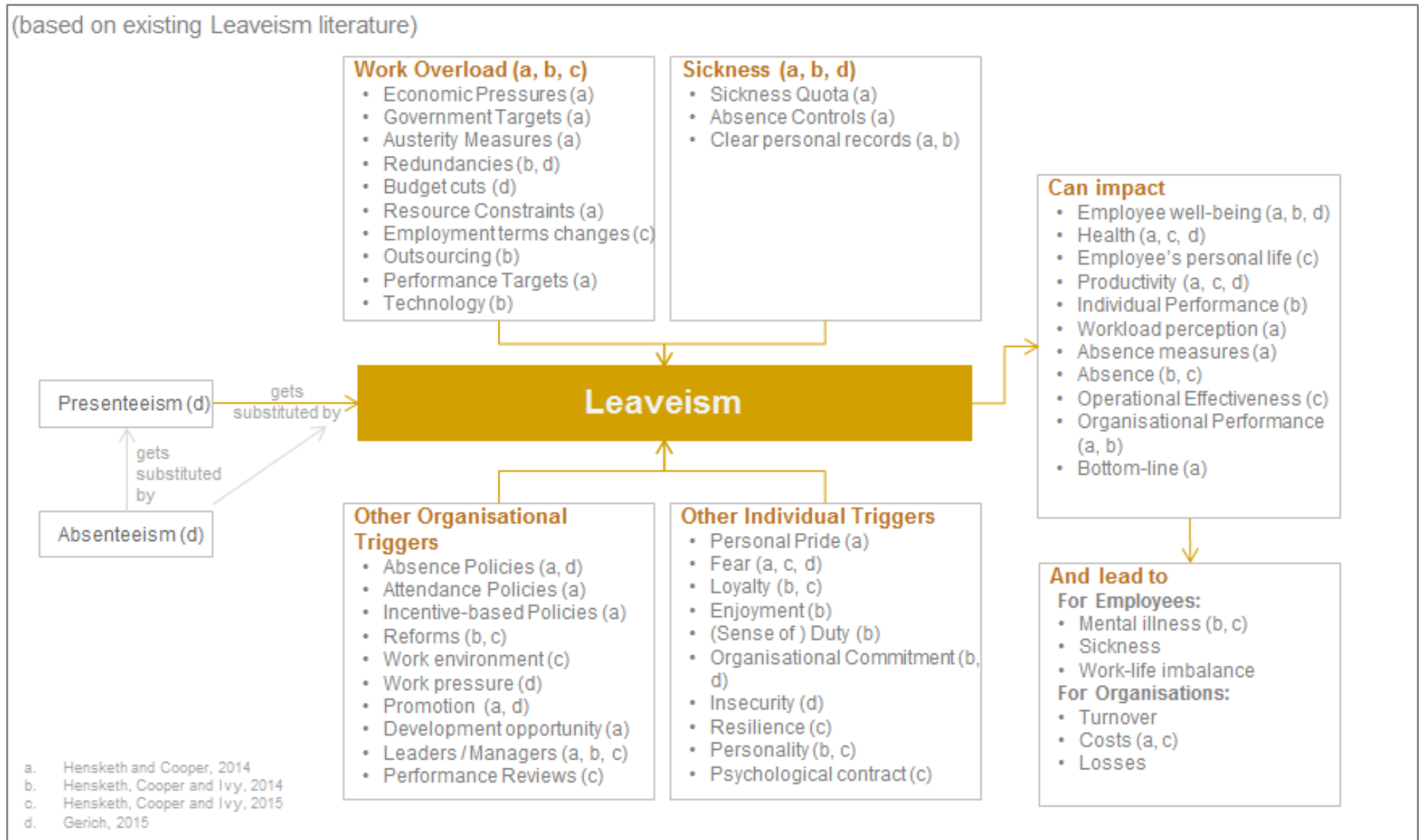
Hesketh et al's(2015a,p.190) study on these aspects of Leaveism, found that employees who practiced it felt a lack of control over aspects of their work and they work longer than they choose to. The study reiterates the argument that Leaveism may cease as individuals approach limits of their personal resilience and may adversely impact absence management (Figure-2.8). The study also found that people practicing Leaveism felt work was interfering in their personal life.

### **2.3.1.6 Impact of Leaveism**

The above discussion clearly point towards an adverse effect on employee well-being and productivity (Hesketh et al, 2014, 2015a,2015b; Gerich,2015,p.7) due to Leaveism. Lack of productivity can further impact operational effectiveness (Hesketh et al, 2015a,p.185) and organisational performance (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014, p.146). This makes it imperative to focus on strategies that can help in successfully integrating work and life and subsequently reduce practices that lead to Leaveism (Hesketh et al., 2015,p.183). Some interventions suggested in literature to address Leaveism include harbouring a supportive organisational environment, managing workload issues and having open conversations between employee-manager (Hesketh et al, 2014, p.210).

In the subsequent sections on **literature review**, Leaveism would refer only to its last two components.

Figure 2-9: A Summary of Leaveism Triggers and Consequences



### **2.3.2 Work-Personal Life Integration**

A number of theories have evolved over the years in the work and personal life/family domains such as boundary, segmentation, spillover, compensation, resource drain, to name a few (Golden,2009,p.388; Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton and Baltes, 2009,p.200, Morris and Madsen, 2007,p.441-442). These have focused on various constructs such as balance, conflict (Greenhaus et al, 2003 cited in Sanséau and Smith, 2012,p.472), with emphasis now shifting from “conflict” through “balance” to “integration” (Burke,2004,p.299;Anderson, Vinnicombe and Singh, 2010,p.171). Another construct “harmonising” has also now emerged and looks at domain interactions that are positive (Anderson et al., 2010,p.172).

This study focuses on the construct of “integration” between work and personal domains, as it can be considered an ideal relationship (Golden,2009,p.386) and a holistic strategy to fulfil and transit between work and other obligations (Morris and Madsen, 2007,p.442). In contrast to the traditional work-life framework(s) which compartmentalise work and non-work facets of life and bias work over personal life, integration enables focus and prioritisation of all life aspects (Morris and Madsen, 2007,p.443) so as to achieve satisfaction in both domains (Anderson et al., 2010,p.172). Integration can in fact help in capitalising the positive aspects of job as it magnifies benefits from work (Ilies, Wilson and Wagner, 2009,p.100). However, achieving an optimum level of work-life integration is a challenge faced by both men and women in today’s workplace (Rayman, Bailyn, Dickert, Carré, Harvey, Krim and Read, 1999,p.164).

In the Integrated work-life model proposed by Morris and Madsen (2007,p.443-444), the employee is able to focus on any one of the life domains for a particular period while temporarily providing the remaining domains secondary foci. Integration can have negative consequences as well. Lewis et al (2003,p.1,21), for example calls work-life integration a pressing issue of current societies and highlights the need for it to facilitate satisfactory and equitable lives. There are also concerns over integration making work constantly accessible (Desrochers and Sargent,2004,p.40), thereby leading to work interference with family(WIF) (Williams, Berdahl and Vandello, 2016,p.520) and work-family conflict (Kinman and Jones, 2008a,p.239). The key hence is to ensure that individuals do not permanently focus on one domain or lose sight of any of the domains as this is not expected of true integration (Morris and Madsen, 2007,p.444).

This review draws on some of the work-life theories to develop arguments on the impact of Leaveism behaviours.

#### **2.3.2.1 Work-life Segmentation**

Work-life separation (Goodman, Mazerolle and Pitney, 2015,p.93) or segmentation happens when individuals separate their work and personal life in such a way that time, place and content does not overlap (Li, Miao, Zhao and Lehto,2013,p.146). This is achieved by not taking on additional work and setting clear time for availability at work (Goodman et al, 2015,p.93). Studies have found that employees who have the segmentation they prefer have better work-life balance (Li et

al.,2013,p.146), overall well-being and lower stress (Kreiners,2002 cited in Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.44). The theory of segmentation (Clark,2000 cited in Morris and Madsen, 2007,p.442) however is often contested, with researchers pointing out that work and personal life are highly interdependent and has permeable boundaries that facilitate equal attention and prioritisation in all domains (Ashforth et al,2000 cited in Morris and Madsen, 2007,p.442; Kanter, 1977 cited in Desrochers and Sargent, 2004, p.40). Transitioning between roles also becomes challenging with work-life segmentation (Halbesleben, Zellars, Carlson, Perrewé and Rotondo,2010,p.374).

While Desrochers and Sargent (2004,p.44), Ilies et al (2009,p.90) and Ashforth et al.(2000 cited in Kinman and Jones, 2008a,p.239), say that Integration and segmentation are two ends of a continuum; Morris and Madsen (2007,p.442) point out that integration can be considered a healthy midpoint between segmentation and enmeshment.

### **2.3.2.2 Work-family Boundary**

When integrating work and life, boundaries are required to avoid unwanted disruptions and negative spill-over (Ilies, Keeney and Goh,2015,p.594). According to theory, the role boundaries can be measured in terms of its permeability and flexibility (Kinman and Jones, 2008a,p.239), which are two mechanisms that lead to the occurrence of integration (Desrochers and Sargent,2004,p.41;Desrochers, Hilton and Larwood, 2005,p.446). Flexibility is enacting one role while in another and permeability, physically located in one domain but psychologically/behaviourally involved in another (Halbesleben et al.,2010,p.373). Inflexible and Impermeable boundaries hence indicate work and life are segmented (Kinman and Jones, 2008a,p.239). Employees can minimise chances of distraction from either life domain to interfere with one another through these mechanisms, as low permeability and high flexibility is the most suitable for minimal levels of work-family conflict (Clark, 2002a cited in Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.42,43).

Boundary theory studies have focused on people's preferences for work-life segmentation versus integration (Halbesleben et al.,2010,p.383). The theories on work-life border and work-life boundary propose that keeping the two domains separate, or integrating them, can both improve employee well-being depending on various aspects including workplace policies, supervisor/family support, people's characteristics, and preference for segmentation/integration (Desrochers and Sargent, 2004, p.40). Certain mental and behavioural aspects also dictate how people manage boundary, either through "placement"; i.e. drawing the line between domains, or through "transcendence"; i.e. jumping back and forth over the boundaries or "boundary crossing" (Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.42). According to Desrochers and Sargent (2004,p.42), placement allows for maintaining a clear boundary even in highly integrated arrangements.

Boundaries however are increasingly blurring due to work intensification and the way employees coordinate their roles in various domains (Parris, Vickers and Wilkes, 2008,p.406); and can have harmful impact on individual wellbeing and family functioning (Kinman and Jones, 2008b,p.45). Blurring is also seen as an "extreme form of integration" (Ahrentzen,1990 cited in Halbesleben et

al.,2010,p.384) but literature does not clarify at what point blurred and integrated boundaries would meaningfully differ (Halbesleben et al.,2010,p.384).

### **2.3.2.3 Work-family spillover**

Work-life spillover theories link the state of mood at work and family to the general mood of an individual and his/her role performance (Michel and Clark, 2009,p.167). Integrating work and other aspects of life allows for bidirectional (positive and negative) influences operating between the various life domains, or spillovers (Grady and McCarthy, 2008,p.601;Morris and Madsen, 2007,p.444). Spillover theory asserts that work and life are not separate spheres (Polk,2015,p.42). Mood and attitude at work has been found to have a positive correlation to mood/attitude at home (**mood/attitudinal spillover**) (Ilies et al, 2009, p.87). Positive spillover can help in achieving meaningfulness and is linked to better health (Grady and McCarthy, 2008,p.601). Negative spillover, on the other hand can be triggered by work demands and can affect employee's social and familial life (Vujanović, Williams and Boyd, 2013,p.76). Studies indicate that higher the integration, higher the spillover (Ilies et al, 2009,p.98).

The term "spillover" is also discussed in literature to indicate job/work responsibilities spilling over time boundaries. Permeability between time allows work to spill over into the evenings (Barnett and Hall, 2007,p.407). Warren (2010,p.368) points out that short-hour jobs and lower-level jobs with lesser responsibilities have lesser job-spillover effects.

### **2.3.2.4 Resource Drain and Role Overlap**

Desrochers and Sargent (2004,p.41) claim that roles, when integrated or blended make transition between domains easier; however for integration to be successful, enough resources (Valcour, Ollier-Malaterre, Matz-Costa, Pitt-Catsouphe and Brown, 2011,p.589) such as time and energy (Morris and Madsen,2007,p.41) are required to focus on all domains. Organisations that provide sufficient resources promote the perception of organisational support whereas those whose work demands drain these resources undermine such perceptions (Valcour et al., 2011,p.589) as it can lead to role conflict (Thomas and Ganster,1995 cited in Valcour et al.,2011,p.592) or "role overlap" (Ahrentzen,1990 cited in Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.44). In same career couples, such resource drain is expected to be minimal (Halbesleben and Rotondo, 2007,p.546).

Role overlap measures blurring in time, space and mind domains, leading to difficulty in distinguishing work and personal life demands (Desrochers and Sargent,2004,p.41,44). This overlap can also be termed imbalance where time and effort are allocated disproportionately to one life domain (work) (Stoner et al, 2005,p.340).



### **2.3.3 Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA)**

The changing relationship between work and personal life (Kossek et al, 2010 cited in Sanséau and Smith, 2012,p.471) makes FWA significant as it provides more control in managing demands from both domains (Valcour et al., 2011,p.593) and address domain overlap (Secret, 2005,p.331). Auster (2001,cited in Grady and McCarthy,2008,p.604) says that FWA allow for formally structuring work-life balance into careers, allow high decision-making (Moriones, Cerio, Leon, and Selvam, 2011,p.33), increase productivity and commitment (Grady and McCarthy,2008,p.609; Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.43), and lead to less strain (Brough et al,2005 cited in Kinman and Jones, 2008a,p.240). Having FWA such as workplace-parenting and reduced hours might be the decisive factor that retain highly-sought employees (e.g. Lundgren and Barnett, 2000,p.76; Secret, 2005,p.330-331) in organisations. However, with FWA such as part-time work, employees may stand to lose core benefits such as leave or health insurance (Gault and Lovell, 2006,p.1154).

Some organisations have formal policies for FWA (Grady and McCarthy, 2008,p.604) but people utilising these are at times seen not to be serious about their careers (Valcour et al., 2011,p.591). In some cases, gendered privileges exist with men contesting for equal eligibility for FWA (Gatrell and Cooper, 2016,p.141). In cases where it is discretionary, manager grants permission by assessing employee's need for FWA (Bailyn, 2011,p.103). Such unofficial practices lead to an expectation of employee being available outside the "spatiotemporal boundaries" of organisation (Golden,2009,p.397). In most cases, formal tracking/measuring is not in place as they are often negotiated and approved on an individual basis (Harrington and Ladge, 2009,p.153). Most organisations that have implemented formal FWA have done so by adhoc decisions citing individual cases, rather than by careful design (Bailyn and Harrington, 2004,p.202).

#### **2.3.3.1 Work-at-home**

FWA and increased potential for self-management enables spatial and temporal dispersion of work (Standen et al.,1999 cited in Sullivan and Smithson, 2007,p.448). Work-at-home allow employees to spend more time with family, save additional time by not commuting (Bailyn, 2011,p.102; Desrochers and Sargent,2004,p.42; Desrochers et al,2005,p.443) and improve productivity (Bailyn, Rayman, Bengsten, Carre and Tierney, 2001,p.49; Sullivan and Smithson, 2007,p.449). There are however concerns over this arrangement as it can disrupt work and personal life; interfere with aspects of home life (Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.42; Desrochers et al,2005,p.443) and increase dominance of work (Kompast and Wagner,1998 cited in Sullivan and Smithson, 2007,p.449). Employees who work from home are hence normally advised to structure their activities around time and space to avoid making home a workplace (Desrochers et al, 2005,p.443). Work-at-home is believed to increase work-life boundary's permeability and flexibility (Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.42).

#### **2.3.3.2 Flexible Schedules**

Greater flexibility in work routines is one of the initiatives taken up by businesses to address imbalance (Stoner et al, 2005,p.338) and work-home conflict (Bailyn, 2011,p.98); and promote work-family integration (Lee and Kim, 2010,p.459) through timings that mesh with personal life (Sanséau

and Smith, 2012,p.471). Flexitime has been seen to be the most desired flexibility by employees (Polach, 2003,p.63). Studies indicate that flexitime help employees manage heavy workload better (Bailyn et al,2001,p.59) and result in positive employee attitudes (Lee and Kim, 2010,p.464). However, utilising them might disadvantage employees in getting higher incomes and better jobs (Raabe, 1998,p.58). Though some organisations have formal policies for flexitime, majority take a discretionary approach. The drawback of being dependent on managers' discretion is that it can end up in changes in schedule whenever the manager changes (Rayman et al., 1999,p.167). In some cases, it is adopted by management to suit business fluctuations rather than help address work-family conflict, leading to lower labour productivity (Lee and Kim, 2010,p.469). Desrochers and Sargent (2004, p.45) say that employees with flexible schedules should maintain consistency in schedule and allocate blocks for family time to minimise blurring.

### **2.3.3.3 Role of Technology**

Technology has redefined not only the workplace by changing work's structural and temporal aspects (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007,p.593); but also reshaped the boundaries between the life-domains (Harrington and Ladge, 2009,p.152; Parris et al,2008,p.406). It enables telecommuting (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007,p.592;Harrington and Ladge, 2009,p.152) and has made FWA easier to implement. Though communication technologies facilitate constant connection to families (Ilies et al, 2009,p.87); they can allow the line between domains to blur (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007,p.593).There are instances where technology has changed work relationships, with people not even having met their bosses personally (Harrington and Ladge, 2009,p.152). Though technology is seen to positively impact retention, productivity (Williams, Williams and LaBrie, 2015,p.81) and employee's career aspirations, it can also lead to heightened work-life conflict (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007,p.608). As in the case of high levels of work-life integration, salience and constant accessibility of work enabled by FWA (Polach, 2003,p.64) and technology (Williams et al, 2015,p.81), can lead to invasive work pressures and unintended overtime (Stoner et al, 2005,p.338).

### **2.3.4 Excellence and Work-life initiatives**

Work innovations such as TQM, which is known to increase productivity and performance of organisations (Ichniowski and Shaw, 1995 cited in Marler, 1998, p.245) consider human resource (HR) management a key area in its management systems (Moriones et al., 2011, p.36). This is because the effective deployment of TQM models as well as achievement of its core target of quality performance, are highly dependent on employees and HR practices (Marler, 1998, p.245; Moriones et al., 2011, p.36). TQM recognises that employee needs are as important as customer needs (Parker and Slaughter, 1993, p.54). Both TQM and Strategic HR Management stress on the importance of having company-wide improvement strategies and have complementary approaches in organisation of work, training and recruitment (Simmons, Shadur, Preston and Arthur, 1995, p.84).

TQM's ability to produce competitive advantage comes more from its behavioural elements such as empowerment, commitment and open culture (Powell, 1995 cited in Joseph, Rajendran, Kamalanabhan, and Aman, 1999, p.1340). In comparison to ISO9000, EFQM allows more importance for employee empowerment, a key element in excellence models (Moriones et al., 2011, p.39). Literature indicates that organisations with successful quality management implementation have a higher number of work practices that facilitate employee empowerment and involvement (Moriones et al., 2011, p.40).

One reason for TQM's success in Japan is attributed to its HR policies and clear flexible work practices which facilitates impact at employee level (Marler, 1998, p.245). Presence of quality models such as EFQM/ISO900 are seen to have significant positive impact on the adoption of FWA, with EFQM firms showing more inclination to implement them (Moriones et al., 2011, p.40). Additionally, flexible practices can also be considered to have a mediating role in analysing the QM's impact on employees (Moriones et al., 2011, p.41).

The impact of TQM models does not limit to flexible practices and empowerment. Quality of working-life through improvement of work conditions and employee self-esteem, is an essential pre-requisite and is seen to facilitate in successful implementation of TQM (Joseph et al., 1999, p.1340).

## 2.3.5 Manager and Employee Attitudes

### 2.3.5.1 Employee Attitudes

Overload and other stressors also impact employee attitudes and can lead to intense sense of pressure, increased work-family conflict, lower commitment, higher attrition, employer resentment and perception of lack of organisational support (Valcour et al., 2011, p.590). However individual coping mechanisms such as behavioural and attitude changes can lower job stressors and work-family conflict (Peeters et al. cited in Burke, 2004, p.302). People who successfully operate in the different domains have a strong sense of satisfaction and achievement (Grady and McCarthy, 2008, p.604). Job satisfaction is heightened by work-life balance practices (Perumal, 2016, p.343; Madipelli, Muralidhara, Yedla and Tattari, 2014, p.16). It is seen to be negatively impacted by work distractions at home (Cardenas et al. cited in Burke, 2004, p.303), low professional worth and job insecurity (Styhrea, 2011 cited in Perumal, 2016, p.344); and positively impacted by organisations supportive of work-life integration (Burke, Oberklaid and Burgess, 2005), ethical climate and organisational justice (Pololi, Krupat, Civian, Ash and Brennan, 2012, p.860).

With regards to organisational commitment, employers tend to at times equate commitment, with time spent on the job, readiness to prioritise work (Bailyn and Harrington, 2004, p.203) and face-time (Anderson et al., 2010, p.173). Job commitment can hence be driven by the desire to fast-track career and this can lead to a domination of work which in turn can cause imbalance between the various domains (Stoner et al, 2005, p.338). However, if the commitment is coming from an anticipation of reward, employees would most likely be inflexible to situations that offer low reward and can be exposed to strain when they put in high effort (Siegrist, 2001 cited in Kinman and Jones, 2008a, p.238). Job is a source of identity for knowledge workers, and over-commitment to job is seen to arise from this as well (Bailyn and Harrington, 2004, p.201). Commitment to the organisation can be strengthened when organisations/supervisors exhibit family supportive behaviour (Straub, 2012, p.22) and implement work arrangements that are suited to employee needs (Bailyn and Harrington, 2004, p.205).

### 2.3.5.2 Role of Managers

Managers, being the critical facilitators of change in the work-life interface (Harrington and Ladge, 2009, p.153); can help reduce the blurring of boundaries by respecting employees' flexi-time schedules and supporting them to accommodate family (Desrochers and Sargent, 2004, p.45). In environments where there is high emphasis on control, managers feel the need to oversee employees, leading to limited flexibility in schedule and location (Rayman et al., 1999, p.171). However, Joseph et al (1999, p.1340) contradicts this by saying that the modern-day manager is less about controlling subordinates and more about developing personal relations with them and working in unstructured environments.

Though an individual's attitudes on managing work-family are developed and influenced by early years of socialisation (Heraty, Morley and Cleveland, 2008, p.480), Hesketh and Cooper (2014, p.147) believe that managers can bring about a change by identifying behaviours (such as Leaveism) and

creating an atmosphere to help employee find the purpose in their working life. One way of achieving this, is through role modelling where managers themselves demonstrate personal commitment (Madipelli et al.,2014,p.17) and acceptable organisational behaviours that can help integrate work and personal-life (Straub, 2012,p.16); and can provide positive outcomes for even the employers (Grady and McCarthy, 2008,p.600). However, studies reveal that managers themselves are at times so consumed by demands on supervisor time (Halbesleben and Rotondo, 2007,p.551) and aspects of their job that it makes it difficult for them to focus on regular activities (Stoner et al, 2005, p.342). It is hence necessary to provide them with adequate resources and invest in developing transformational leaders (Straub, 2012,p.23) who would prioritise work-life initiatives in theirs' and their organisation's own interests (Harrington and Ladge, 2009,p.153) and not foster a work culture that is round-the-clock (Madipelli et al.,2014,p.17).

## 2.3.6 Decoding Leaveism

### 2.3.6.1 Integration or Enmeshment?

From the context of the features of **border/boundary** discussed thus far, Leaveism can be assumed to be enabled by permeability and flexibility of boundary (Section-2.3.2.2). For example, permeable boundary can be argued to allow employees to take work home after office hours, as it allows behavioural/psychological aspects of work to enter home. Likewise, flexibility to accommodate demands of work domain enables employees to respond to emails or take official calls during weekend. Since Leaveism indicates very high permeability, it can be believed to lead to work-life conflict.

As employees can clearly have different preferences for segmentation and integration, it can also be argued that practicing Leaveism in the absence of a preference for integration, can negatively impact employee's well-being or break his psychological contract with his/her organisation. For example, the commitment of a person preferring integration may not have a huge negative impact due to Leaveism, as compared to that of an individual who prefers segmentation (Section-2.3.2.1). One facilitator of segmentation is temporal border (Li et al.,2013,p.140), which is not present for people practicing Leaveism.

Hesketh et al. (2015,p.184) point out that people practicing Leaveism may not even know where to draw the line between their work-life domains; which implies that "placement" (Section-2.3.2.2) could be altogether absent. However, if people indulging in Leaveism are highly driven by work or prefer integration, this assumption may not be correct. In these cases, Leaveism can be argued to take place perhaps because of myopic focus (Stoner et al.,2005,p.342) where individuals focus on particular tasks / experience and excludes other areas. "Transcendence" (Section-2.3.2.2) on the other hand, does happen with Leaveism and people practicing it can be called boundary-crossers (Section-2.3.2.2).

Based on the theory that work attitudes and/or moods can get carried over to personal life (Section-2.3.2.3) it can be argued that Leaveism can accentuate any positive or negative emotions felt by employees as the work itself is done at home using personal time. As pointed out by Stoner et al.(2005, p.340), expending resources such as time and energy predominantly in one area, can overpower other areas as is evident for people practicing Leaveism. Leaveism can hence be believed to lead to resource drain (Section-2.3.2.3) as finite or limited resources from the personal domain are utilised for the work domain. Long hours not only drain time but also energy, which are both vital resources required in personal roles (Valcour et al., 2011,p.590). This can increase the potential for stress and burnout (Frone, 2003 cited in Morris and Madsen, 2007, p.441), thereby impacting the employee's well-being. Burnout can lead to lower performance at work, and a loss of meaningfulness (Grady and McCarthy, 2008, p.601). However, Hesketh et al (2016, p.4) point out that burnout does not necessarily mean it is the exact opposite of engagement and could mostly impact 'workaholics' more who may not be authentically engaged in their work.

From the review of literature and the discussions so far, it can be inferred that extreme indulgence in Leaveism actually goes beyond work-life integration and enters the zone of work-life enmeshment as clearly, employee’s focus is predominantly on work domain and has the risk of losing sight of personal domain, which does not fit Morris and Madsen’s definition of integration.

**2.3.6.2 Should both domains be equally addressed?**

Leaveism can be argued to be self-initiated, other-initiated or initiated by both (Stoner et al, 2005,p.340). By integrating, individuals can find happiness in both domains irrespective of the time they spend in each (Burke et al, 2005,p.55). However, there is another dimension that needs to be considered – work-life is not always about satisfaction in both domains (Anderson et al., 2010,p.173). The compensation theory postulates that employees pursue the domain that offers greater chances of fulfilment and reward (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000 cited in Morris and Madsen, 2007,p.440). Some people seek more work as work environments are more supportive than what they experience at home (Hochchild, 1997 cited in Stoner et al, 2005,p.338) and work, in this sense may alleviate boredom or tension. People can also get enticed to intensify their work to secure more spending power (Stoner et al, 2005,p.338) as studies have shown positive correlation between amount earned and number of hours worked (Reich, 2000 cited in Stoner et al, 2005, p.338). Likewise, people who find their work meaningful have been seen to be deeply immersed in it or continuously learning and honing their skills (Gayle, 1997 cited in Chalofsky and Cavallaro, 2013,p.336).

It can hence be argued that there would be individuals who genuinely want to work, either because they are highly driven or because they want to compensate; and Leaveism can take place as a result of this. Work is not all negative (Eikhaf et al,2007 cited in Anderson et al.,2010,p.173) and Leaveism, or high levels of integration cannot be assumed to be inherently bad (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999 cited in Kinman and Jones, 2008b,p.45). So assuming that all instances of indulging in Leaveism are problematic can be argued to be flawed. Based on this, three types of employee characteristics can be defined for individuals indulging in Leaveism.

**Figure 2-1: Profiles of Employees indulging in Leaveism**

Profile-A	Profile-B	Profile-C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indulges in Leaveism to comply with organisational and job requirements</li> <li>• May prefer segmentation over integration</li> <li>• May anticipate reward</li> <li>• Personal obligations are very important</li> <li>• Unable to draw a line</li> <li>• Aware of lack of well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indulges in Leaveism to keep up with peers / competitive environment / comply with organisational or job requirements</li> <li>• May not mind integration</li> <li>• Anticipates reward</li> <li>• Personal obligations are important</li> <li>• Can, but does not draw a line</li> <li>• May be aware of lack of well-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indulges in Leaveism as work is meaningful and is the main priority in life. Can also indulge to keep up with competition and comply with organisational / job requirements</li> <li>• Prefers integration over segmentation</li> <li>• Reward not important</li> <li>• Tends to compensate for personal life</li> <li>• Does not want to draw a line</li> <li>• Perception of well-being</li> </ul>

Profile-A employees can indulge in Leaveism due to overload or other organisational obligations but turnover intention would be high in such employees. Along with overload being a reason, Profile-B

and C employees may indulge in Leaveism on their own accord. Profile-B might do so due to job-related compulsion/competitiveness and Profile-A due to pure engagement. The psychological contract with the organisation can be assumed to be very strong for Profile-C employees.

### **2.3.6.3 Role of FWA and Excellence**

It is critical to examine underlying assumptions (Rayman et al, 1999,p.164) for FWA to reap its' benefits. Desrochers et al (2002, cited in Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.44) found that employees who work at home (Section-2.3.3.1) and spend greater time doing paid work at home experienced work-family boundary ambiguity; which can be related to Leaveism. Leaveism can be argued to make work salient due to the focus on work-related activities during time allocated for personal life. Though the 3<sup>rd</sup> aspect of Leaveism can provide the additional time-saving which work-at-home professionals enjoy by not commuting to work (Desrochers et al, 2005,p.443), this would not be applicable for the 2<sup>nd</sup> aspect as work is mostly brought home after the regular hours at office. Even transitional rituals (Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.42) (for example changing from formal work clothes to casuals/home-wear) do not happen in work-at-home scenario. However this is possible with flexitime arrangements and a role-transitioning once employees reach home can help in boundaries not getting totally blurred. Since flexitime results in positive employee attitudes (Section-2.3.3.2), it can be argued that the intensity of lack of well-being associated with Leaveism will be reduced for people with the option of FWA.

Excellence models also can be considered an enabler not only for work-life integration but also for implementing FWA. Considering flexible working has high significance in TQM and in facilitating continuous improvement, it can be argued that such work practices would be an essential part of excellence organisations. TQM models' focus on work-life quality and employee empowerment (Section-2.3.4) will help diminish tendencies to enforce practices which does not give employees control over their work. So if Leaveism exist in excellence organisations, it could be argued to be practiced predominantly by Profile-B and C employees which aligns with TQM's requirement for highly-driven, empowered and involved employees who can contribute in producing competitive advantage (Section-2.3.4).

Based on these discussions, a model for Leaveism positioning it in the Work-Life segmentation-integration-enmeshment continuum has been developed and provided below.



Figure 1-2: A Leaveism Work-Life Integration Model

(Please see next page for explanations)

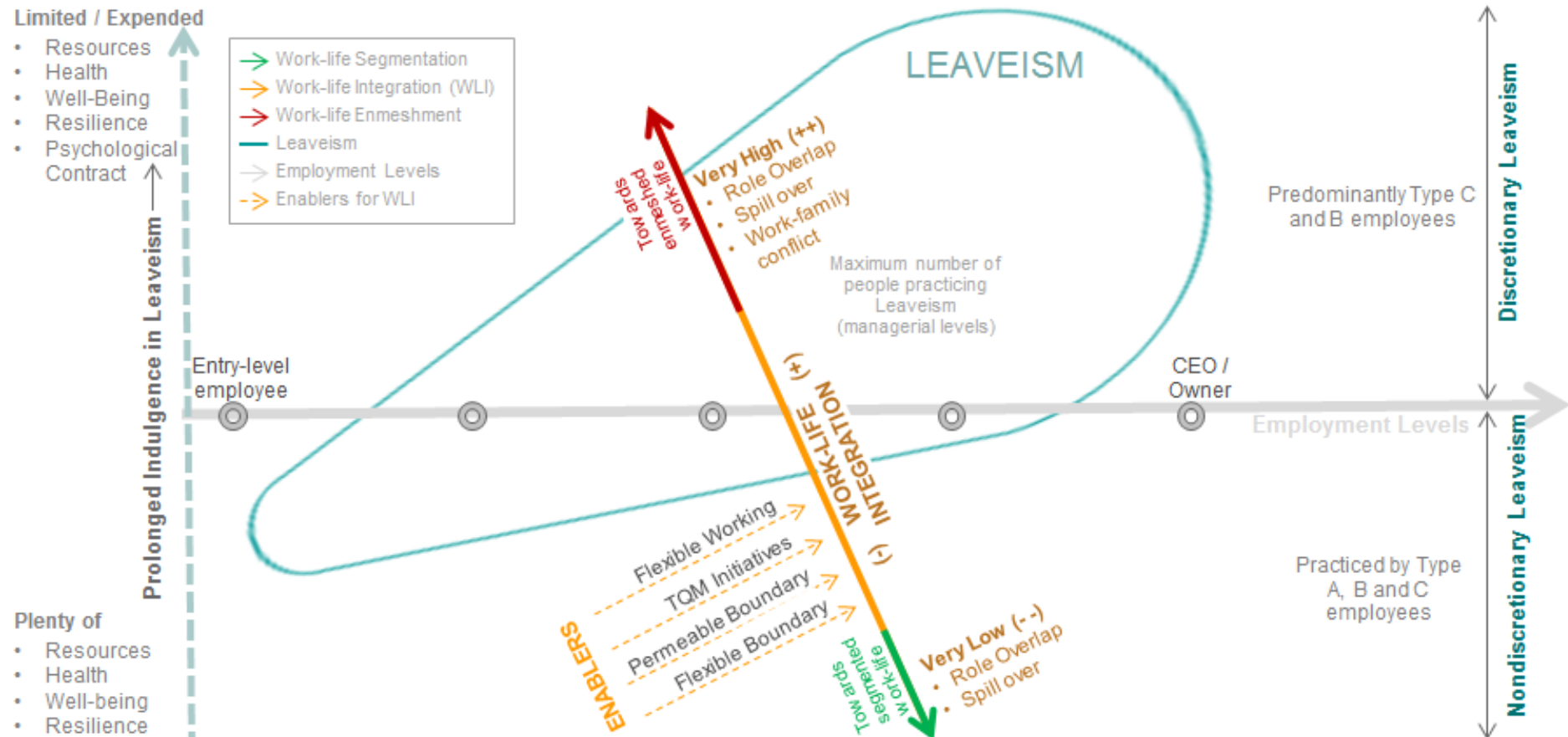
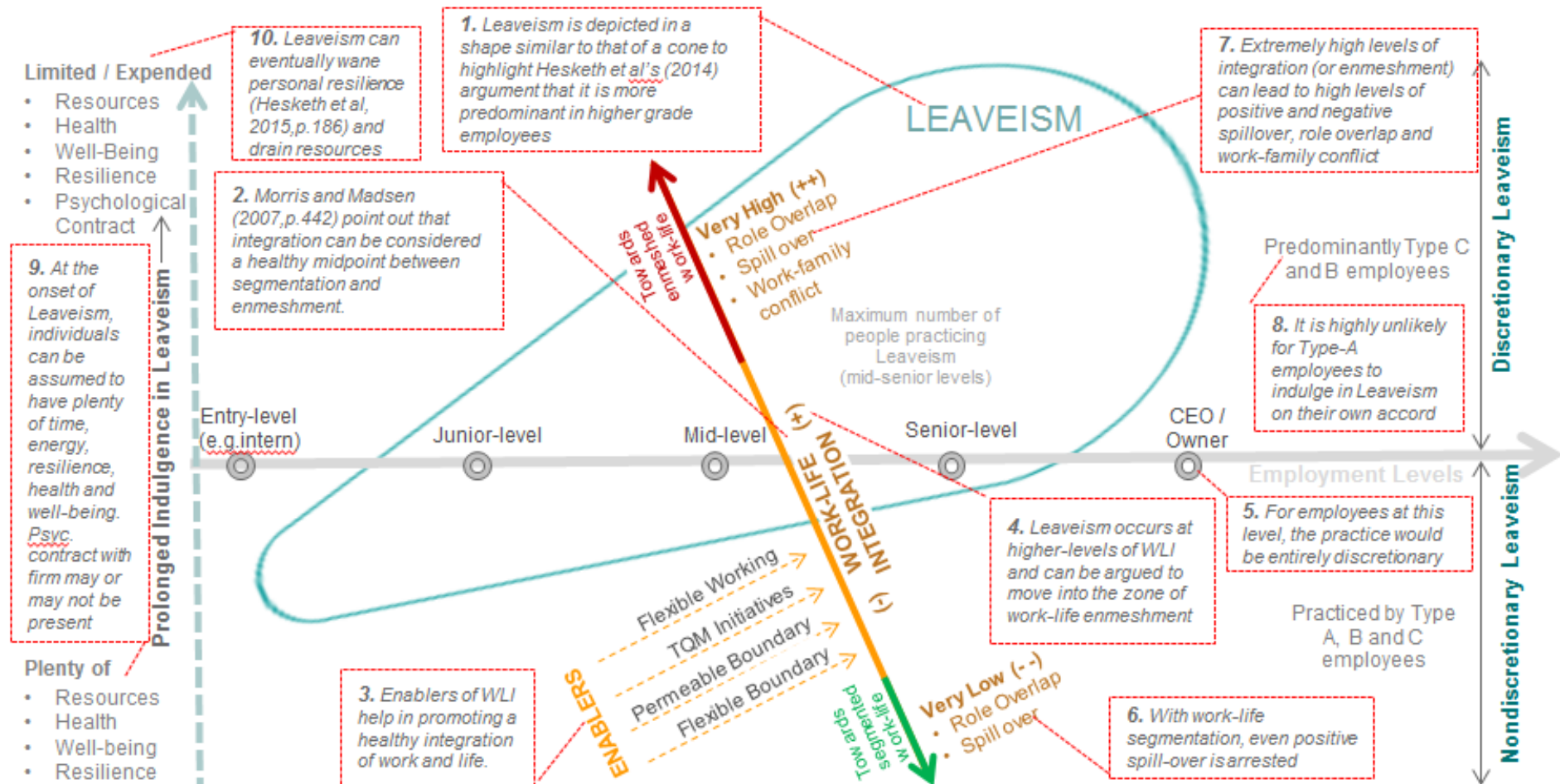


Figure 1-3: The Model with Explanations



## 2.4 Conclusion

The above review confirms the research direction and has helped in identifying gaps in existing literature. Hesketh et al (2014,p.205) rightfully describes Leaveism as an “under researched phenomenon”. Existing Leaveism studies focus heavily on policing sector and have not explored the prevalence of this phenomenon in other public and private sector organisations in different geographical settings. Following these researches, this study also intends to understand whether Leaveism is associated with commitment; fear or simply work overload and will examine its prevalence in UAE and in organisations with excellence framework.

It is proven that flexible practices can curb absenteeism; however no study illustrates this for behaviours related to Leaveism. This study will hence attempt to investigate whether any link can be found between FWA and Leaveism. The study also will examine for the first time, whether work-life compensation can be a trigger and whether preferences for segmentation may have a higher impact on well-being.

It has to be borne in mind that the directives on European working time which allows to maximise legal working hours in UK can be considered an enabler for Leaveism (Hesketh et al, 2015,p.185; Sanséau and Smith, 2012,p.471). In UAE, its prevalence has to be tested against applicable labour laws and other federal regulations.

## Chapter 3 Research Methodology

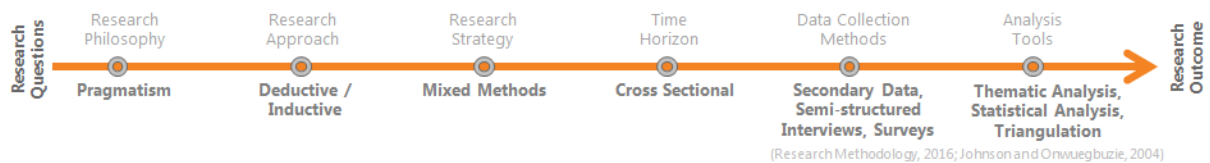
### 3.1 Introduction

This section describes the methodology for data collection providing rationale for choice and explains the methods employed to collect and analyse data.

### 3.2 Strategy

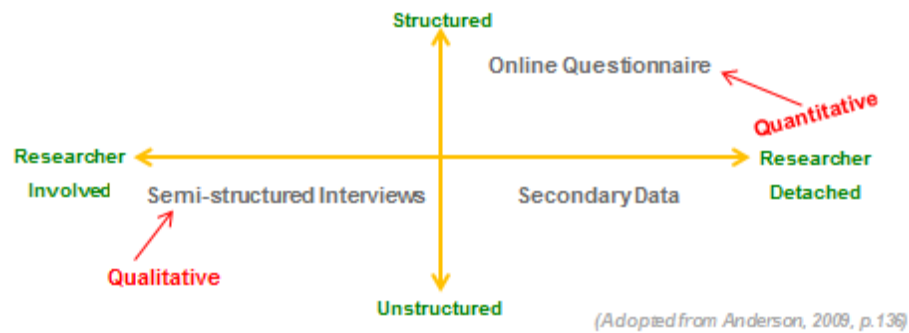
This study employs a mixed methods or a multi-strategy research (Bryman and Bell, 2007,p.642) utilising the **pragmatic** system of philosophy, which helps in bringing together insights from both qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004,p.16). The logic of inquiry has been deduction, as well as induction (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004,p.17). Though quantitative data can help describe trends, explore potential relationships between variables and identify the extent to which things are happening in an organisation; it is usually the qualitative data that help in understanding **why** those things happen (Anderson, 2009,p.180,244) and find sequence and character in some phenomenon (Silverman, 2006,p.44). Mixed methods research, which is a combination of these two strategies is often considered to deliver superior results in comparison to mono-method research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004,p.16).

Figure 3-1: Research Methodology



Data collection methods for this research consisted of secondary data analysis followed by a qualitative study which formed the exploratory-descriptive (1<sup>st</sup>) phase of this part of the project. This was to gain better understanding of objectives and also to map the terrain of key variables (Harvard.edu, 2016,p.1). The explanatory phase (2<sup>nd</sup>) which helps in explaining nature of relationships (Harvard.edu, 2016,p.2) between Leaveism, work-life integration and flexible working; consisted of a detailed quantitative research.

Figure 3-2: Methods Utilised for Data Collection



### 3.3 Participating Organisations

The Department of Economic Development's (DED) business excellence awards such as the Dubai Quality Award (DQA), Dubai Human Development Award (DHDA) and Dubai Service Excellence Scheme (DSES) are considered a prestigious recognition and are intended to add to Dubai's growth by way of encouraging best practices in organisations in UAE (Dubaided.gov.ae, 2016; Zawya.com, 2016). The EFQM model is used as a benchmark for these awards to ensure uniformity in its standards for pursuing excellence (Zawya.com, 2016).

The project was introduced to 103 award winning organisations through the Business Excellence Center at DED. A project brief was sent detailing the background, along with a form to confirm participation. After meticulous follow-up, **10 award-winning organisations** confirmed their participation by emailing back the completed form and have participated in both qualitative and quantitative methods of primary data collection.

## 3.4 Data Collection (Phase-1)

### 3.4.1 Secondary data: Industry/Country Information

#### 3.4.1.1 Rationale

Data that has been generated elsewhere is called secondary data (Anderson, 2009,p.13). When gathered from reputable sources, it provides access to good-quality data without carrying out a data collection exercise, thereby saving time and cost (Bryman and Bell, 2007,p.328). It also provides an opportunity to understand relevant trends and practices in other cultural/geographical areas (Bryman and Bell, 2007,p.331).

As part of secondary data, along with the review of academic literature detailed in Chapter-2, this research relies on data from various industry and government sources which was used to finalise research objectives; determine strategy for primary data collection; and to draw further conclusions during analysis stage.

#### 3.4.1.2 Method of collection

The main sources of secondary data for this research have been the following:

- Academic journals used in Chapter-2
- Academic books/journals specific to various chapters in the report
- Industry trends/outlook from CIPD, SHRM, XpertHR
- UAE Country statistics from United Nations, World Bank and WHO
- Other trade reports and surveys from reliable sources

#### 3.4.1.3 Analysis Technique

The statistics pertaining to UAE was used to determine sample sizes for quantitative research. The secondary data has also been used compare, contrast and triangulate findings from primary data analysis.

### 3.4.2 Qualitative Data: Management Interviews

#### 3.4.2.1 Rationale

Interviews are among the most widely used method in qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2007,p.472) and are particularly useful in understanding aspects which cannot be observed through a questionnaire; such as individuals' attitudes/values (Silverman, 2006,p.114). Along with it, interviews allow for non-verbal cues (Anderson, 2009,p.188) and reconstruction of events (Bryman and Bell, 2007,p.504), which provide additional information on how participants actually feel about things that are discussed. With unstructured or semi-structured interviews, the focus is more on the interviewee's point of view; with off-tangent responses at times providing additional insight into what is important for

the interviewee (Bryman and Bell, 2007,p.474). This research employs semi-structured interviews where high-level themes/questions are drafted in advance but the order and questions themselves vary with each interview's flow (Anderson, 2009,p.187).

### **3.4.2.2 Sampling**

A non-random method of sampling was adopted to ensure the participants would have an important or unique perspective on the topic and would also add to the theoretical understanding (Bryman and Bell, 2007,p.500; Robinson, 2014,p.32). The strategy used for this research was hence **purposive sampling** whereby senior managers in HR/Quality/higher level in the organisation were selected as they would have an insight in terms of workplace policies/excellence initiatives and be generally capable of articulating their organisation's/team's pulse.

### **3.4.2.3 Method of collection**

Face-to-face interviews provide an opportunity to develop a sense of trust with the interviewee and allow them to be more acceptable of probing questions (Anderson, 2009,p.188). Once the name of interviewees and schedules were confirmed by the organisations' points of contact, the researcher visited each organisation to conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Broad interview themes were provided to the participants in advance and each interview lasted an average of approximately 35 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded after taking consent from the participants.

**Figure 3-3: Profiles of Managers Interviewed**

No.	Position	Company
01	Director of Rooms Division	A medium sized organisation in hospitality industry
02	Assistant HR Manager	A medium sized organisation in hospitality industry
03	Manager - HR (Operations)	A large organisation in healthcare industry
04	Manager - HR (Recruitment)	A large organisation in healthcare industry
05	Deputy Director - Quality	A large organisation in healthcare industry
06	Managing Director	A large organisation in food retail industry
07	Chief Human Capital & Administration Officer	A large organisation in telecommunications industry
08	Sr Director Employee Wellness and Happiness	A large organisation in telecommunications industry
09	Managing Director	A medium sized organisation in retail industry
10	HR Manager	A medium sized organisation in retail industry
11	Assistant Manager - Business Excellence	A large organisaiton in financial industry
12	Director - Employee Relations	A large organisaiton in financial industry
13	Director of Operational Excellence	A large organisation in hospitality industry
14	Associate Director of Human Capital	A large organisation in hospitality industry
15	VP - HR BP and Du University	A large organisation in telecommunications industry
16	SVP - Org Development & Business Excellence	A large organisation in telecommunications industry
17	Director - Resources and Development	A large organisation in automobile industry
18	Group QA/ QC Manager	A large organisaiton in fire safety industry
19	Business Unit Manager	A large organisaiton in fire safety industry
20	General Manager	A large organisation in food retail industry
21	QMS Manager	A large organisation in construction industry

#### 3.4.2.4 Analysis technique

**Thematic analysis** was used, which is a method for “identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data” as it provides flexibility in producing complex and detailed account of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006,p.78-79). Following the step-by-step guide provided by Braun and Clarke (2006,p.86-93), the data once collected, was analysed using the below process:

- 1) Data familiarisation: Transcription of data and reading the transcripts
- 2) Code generation: Systematic labelling and categorising data into broad themes
- 3) Themes search: Coding potential themes
- 4) Themes review: Thematic ‘map’ generation
- 5) Themes definition: Refining specifics for each theme
- 6) Report production: Linking back to research questions and producing the report



## 3.5 Data Collection (Phase-2)

### 3.5.1 Quantitative Data: Organisational Surveys

#### 3.5.1.1 Rationale

Surveys are a useful means to measure critical issues pertaining to employee behaviour, beliefs, attitudes and expectations; and can contribute in meeting a range of research objectives (Anderson, 2009,p.249). It also helps in testing or understanding the relationships between various variables; i.e. utilising a deduction approach (Anderson, 2009,p.249). Questionnaires are also convenient and easier to administer in comparison to other quantitative approaches such as structured interviews (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.241-242). This research utilises **online questionnaire** which complements the semi-structured interviews well, and together they highlight “complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses” in the topic under research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004,p.18).

#### 3.5.1.2 Sampling

The target population for the survey was employees working in excellence award winning organisations in UAE. Being an online survey, individuals with computer access were provided the link as the focus is predominantly on knowledge (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014,p.146) workers. The sampling method employed here is hence a combination of purposive and volunteer sampling as the choice of participation is entirely the employee's (Fricker, 2008,p.206).

#### 3.5.1.3 Questionnaire development and roll out

The questionnaire was developed predominantly from the following academic models in order to get a clear understanding of the various constructs related to work-life interface, Leaveism and flexible work practices:

#### Figure 3-4: Survey Models Used

- A Shortened Stress Evaluation Tool (ASSET) (Faragher, Cooper & Cartwright, 2004)
- Brayfield Rothe Index (Ilies et al, 2009)
- Family Supportive Organisation Perceptions (Allen, 2001)
- Research Work Environment Questionnaire (Lansdale et al, 2011)
- Work Attitudes and Behaviours Questionnaire (Jung and Yoon, 2016)
- Work-Family Integration-Blurring Scale (WFIBS) (Desrochers et al, 2005)
- Work Family Linkages Questionnaire (Sumer and Knight, 2001)

The survey was uploaded and copies were created through the website “SurveyGizmo”. After an initial round of testing by the mentor and few chosen individuals, separate links were rolled out to each company in order to distinguish responses from the 10 participating organisations.

### **3.5.1.4 Measures of Analysis**

The following measures have been used to analysis data collected from the survey:

- 1) Central Tendency (CT): Based on Jamieson(2004) and Karnik (2016), mode and median have been used for Likert-scale ordinal variables. (However, parametric tests can also be used to yield unbiased answers for Likert-scale responses (Sullivan and Artino, 2013))
- 2) Cronbach's alpha: Reliability test to assess internal consistency of composite scores (how2stats, 2015a;2015b)
- 3) Correlation of Coefficients: To understand correlation and linear relation between sets of variables (StatisticsHowTo, 2013)

### **3.5.2 Mixed Methods Triangulation**

The inferences from the bottom-up thematic analysis and the top-down quantitative analysis have been integrated by a method of triangulation. Triangulation can operate across various research strategies and can be used to (Bryman and Bell, 2007,p.413):

- cross-check and validate findings from quantitative and qualitative researches
- access different levels of reality
- find convergences in data if any

## **3.6 Concerns and Difficulties**

### **3.6.1 Difficulties faced**

Few difficulties were encountered during the data collection as follows:

- The initial response from award-winning organisations was lukewarm and hence required very systematic and repeated follow-up with 103 organisations through emails/phone calls.
- Being summer, most managers/decision-makers were away on holidays which led to delays in commencement of project as well as in winding up Phase-1 of data collection.
- It was surprisingly a major challenge in getting the organisations to roll-out the survey after the links were shared with them – this also required repeated follow-ups.
- Due to the sensitive nature of some of the questions in the survey, some of the organisations were initially hesitant in rolling them out “as is”.

### **3.6.2 Issues on data quality**

With regards to the interview, there are chances of individual biases and interpretation issues which would be difficult to detect. For the survey, since the respondents have been voluntary, it is difficult to determine if it is a fair representation of all relevant employee categories in participating organisations.

### **3.6.3 Assumptions about data**

It is assumed that the opinions of managers reflect the current status of their organisations in terms of workload, market impact and the extent to which employees work beyond contracted hours. With regards to the questionnaire, since it consists of some reverse-coded questions, it is assumed that respondents took the time to understand them before choosing their answers.

## Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Results of Secondary Data Analysis

Along with the international/regional trends introduced in Chapter-1 based on market research/articles from professional bodies, some relevant information about UAE is discussed here. As the demographic data of the country is not disclosed publically on a real time basis (De Bel-Air, 2015); all numbers mentioned here are estimates from credible sources.

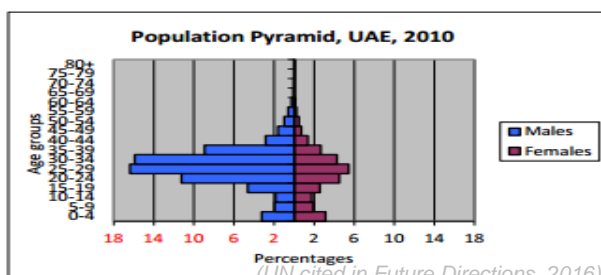
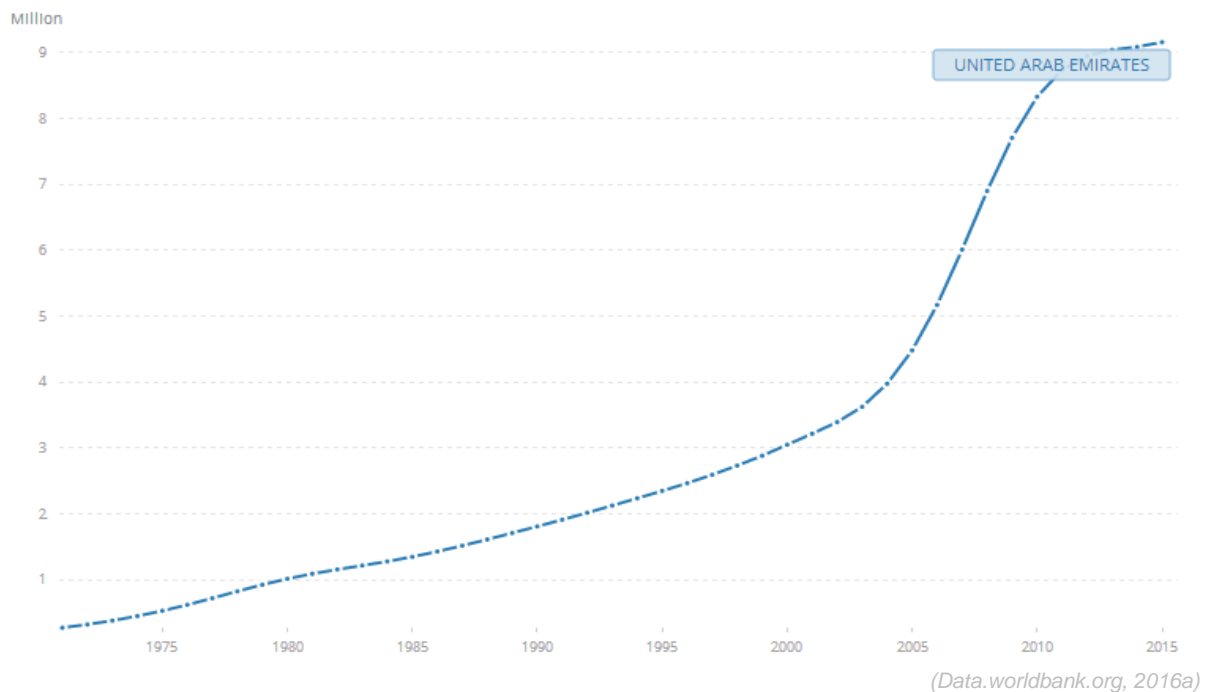
#### 4.1.1 Findings

##### 4.1.1.1 UAE Demographics

###### 4.1.1.1.1 Population

UAE population is estimated at over 9.1million with growth rate of 1.9% as of 2015 (Data.worldbank.org,2016a; Data.un.org,2016) out of which 7.2million are migrants who make 90% of private workforce(Migrationpolicy.org, 2013). 70% are male and 78.7% between the age group of 15-64 (Countrymeters.info,2016).

Figure 4-1: UAE Population



World Bank considers 78% to be employed population of the country (Data.worldbank.org, 2016b). Literacy is 93.8% and unemployment,

3.8% of labour force (Countrymeters.info,2016; Data.un.org,2016).

4.1.1.1.2 Dependents of residents

A decree passed by the government allows expatriates with a certain amount of income to bring their families to UAE. In Dubai for example, 16% of people were not part of the workforce in 2012 (De Bel-Air, 2015). Though this number is considered sizable in comparison to other countries in the region, majority of people who may be below the specified income do not bring their families over (De Bel-Air, 2015). Another source reveals that the number of people who are not in the workforce is 27.1% (Countrymeters.info, 2016).

4.1.1.2 Well-being and Happiness in UAE

UAE, being the 28<sup>th</sup> happiest country in the world, is one among 4 countries globally to have appointed a Minister for happiness (World Happiness Report, 2016). A health index study conducted in 2014 indicates that UAE had an average well-being score of 65 on a 0-100 scale (Healthindex.ae, 2014).

**UAE Health Index 2014**

**OVERALL LOW EMOTIONAL WELLBEING SCORES DEPICT HIGH AMOUNT OF STRESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

64% of UAE residents feel very or fairly stressed in daily life while 76% have felt anxious, worried or upset at least sometime in the past month, half have less than 5 hours a week for leisure activities and only 50% sleep for 7-8 hours per night



(Healthindex.ae, 2014)

However, the average score for emotional well-being in this study

was 58. The study indicated stress, anxiety and lack of sleep in varying degrees among the respondents (Healthindex.ae, 2014). The following table indicates the available details on number of mental health consultations/treatments in the country:

Figure 4-2: Mental health

	Rates per 100,000 population)	Females (%)	Under age 18 (%)
Persons treated in mental health outpatient facilities	220.1	46%	UN
Persons treated in mental health day treatment facilities	NA	NA	NA
Admissions to psychiatric beds in general hospitals	UN	UN	UN
Persons staying in community residential facilities at the end of the year	NA	NA	NA
Admissions to mental hospitals	7.01	UN	UN

(WHO, 2016)

It is also seen the average sick leave was only 2.8 days during the previous year of this study (Healthindex.ae, 2014).

### **4.1.2 Discussion**

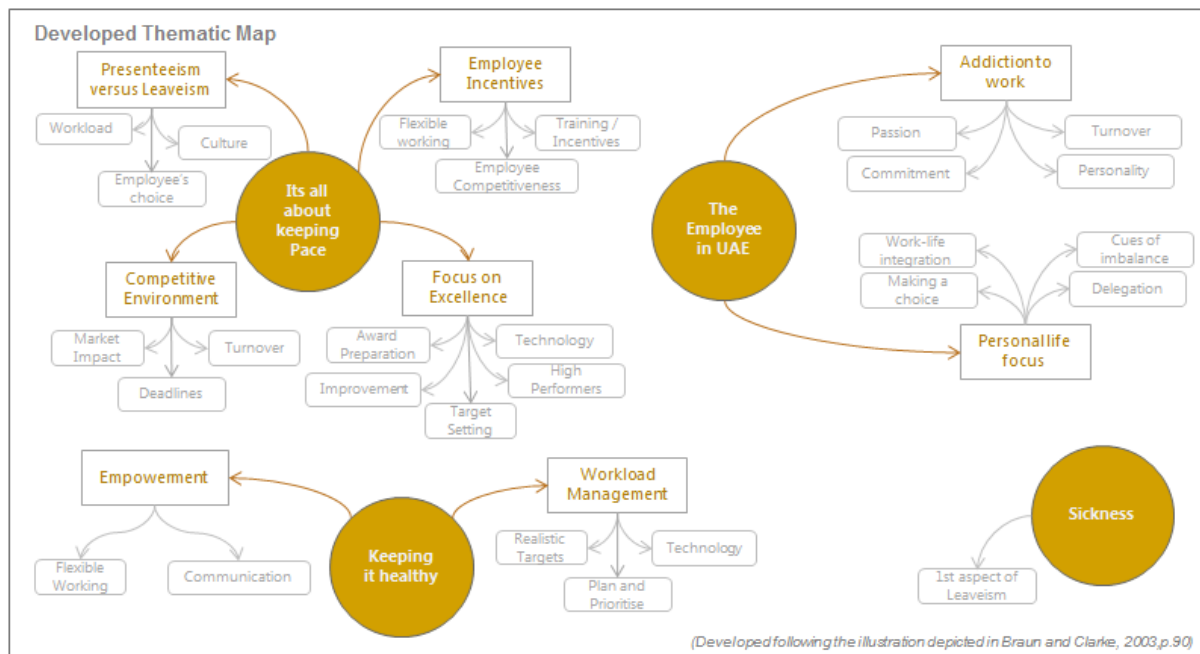
The demography of the country can be considered imbalanced (De Bel-Air, 2015) as can be seen in the male-female and national-expat numbers. The data reveals that the ratio of people who are dependents is relatively low. This indicates that a good number of the population are either single, or are staying away from their families to work in UAE, or have spouses who are also employed. Their pressure to support dependents (by making themselves available) can hence be considered low in comparison to many other countries.

As discussed in Chapter-1, the limited data on mental health could be because of the social stigma surrounding it in UAE. Though studies indicate employees struggling with work-related stress, the country is seen to proactively take measures to provide assistance and ensure wellness in the workplace.

## 4.2 Results of Thematic Analysis

Some of the primary themes that have emerged from a bottom-up analysis of 21 management interviews have been categorised into three primary themes in relation to the research topic and an additional one for the 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of Leaveism. Two contradictory constructs that emerged from the interviews include dedication to the job or organisation and a feeling of compulsion to prioritise work in order to sustain personal life.

Figure 4-3: Thematic Map



### 4.2.1 Findings

#### 4.2.1.1 It's all About Keeping Pace

##### 4.2.1.1.1 Competitive Environment

Due to the **market and competitive demands**, a lot of managers claimed that their organisations are going through either intended transformation or changes that are organic. Managers in a leading financial institution said that the key means by which their organisation has survived is through diversification, differentiation of products/services and also by embracing innovation and new

A participant from hospitality industry about measures to meet market pressure:

“ The industry at the current moment is looking more and more into cost savings and cost reductions... at least in our industry, first look (would be) into other efficiencies and other places to save before we go into the payroll. ”

technologies. Participants in hospitality industry supported this and stressed the need to focus on efficiencies and earning long-term revenues. The impact of low oil prices has been mixed for participating organisations with statements varying from “it’s business as usual” to “we are constantly fighting”. However none of them spoke about having taken drastic steps such as redundancies.

Couple of managers who did touch upon the topic said that they have consciously stayed away from reducing people as it would adversely impact the organisation’s long-term stand.

Competition has had other challenges and managers in service organisations spoke about **turnover** among frontline employees caused by better opportunities. Despite the pressures, none of the organisations resort to termination due to poor performance. There is however high focus on meeting **deadlines**. For majority of participants, work is indeed their priority and many managers highlighted that one of their main expectation from their employees is the ability to deliver – either by working within hours or outside of it.

A top executive about achieving deliverables:

“ For me, I'm looking at the individual to deliver, whether he responds in the middle of the night whatever... I don't look at it as something that's wow. ”

An MD about achieving deliverables:

“ We are not requiring people to work more in terms of hours... but we are looking only into the results. So we are really looking for smart work. ”

#### 4.2.1.1.2 Focus on excellence

Most companies attribute their working model, policies and processes to the implementation of EFQM and **preparation for award**. According to one manager, the entire submission process “became a mass movement” and helped them streamline processes, formulate strategies and generally gauge their own position in terms of excellence and implement **improvements**. In a lot of these

A top executive on employee wellness:

“ You have to keep people happy because it is up to the employer to get the best out of the people. Then again if they are tired and as you said if they are taking the work home, I think it is not a good thing. Because some of them live in Sharjah, 2 hours of travel every day, then you sit at home and spend time with family and kids but you still have to work - it's not possible. ”

organisations, this focus on excellence is either inherent or has seeped into other processes. For example, a manager said “regardless of

the DSES, I am confident that the team is doing a good job” indicating the store employees’ commitment to work. Another manager while explaining the attributes of a **high-performer** said: “For me, a high-performer will always be looking for improvements in whatever areas they work - not just looking for (it), they should be able to implement it.” The interviews revealed that majority of participants themselves are self-motivated individuals who frequently used words like passion, enjoyment and joy to describe their work. Some participants also indicated focus on employee wellness due to the organisations’ realisation that it has a business impact.

A manager also discussed how **technology** has been a key objective in excellence initiatives such as balance scorecard. Majority of managers feel that technology simplifies work and help adhere to strict deadlines. Some managers felt that to ensure it does not become a burden, the right kind of planning is essential

A manager about technology:

“ Definitely, it makes work faster, lets say. The good side of it is to get things (done) fast. Maybe the bad part of it is that it goes with you - you cannot get rid of it. Sometimes, it does not leave a space to you. ”

before it’s’ implementation. Few managers also highlighted that it unfortunately does not allow one to easily switch off, whether through remote access, phone calls or WhatsApp groups. However, everyone agreed that the positives outweigh the negatives in terms of getting work done.



These excellent organisations also have performance frameworks and **objective setting** in place.

A manager on target setting

“ This is not a target oriented job – we don’t have a target but we have timelines, and to manage it we either start off early or stay back late ”

Another manager on target setting

“ The department does not have targets per say, as in numerical targets. We rely more on what we are giving them and how soon they are finishing it. ”

However, some managers indicated that targets were not set for all employees and these employees’ appraisals were generally based on quality and timeliness of deliverables.

#### 4.2.1.1.3 Presenteeism versus Leaveism

In response to whether there is **work overload**, a manager explained that the nature of her job itself is continuous. She also attributed it to the organisation’s **culture**.

A managing director on workload:

“ The workload became more because we have to be more competitive. This does not mean we have to work extra hours. But we have to do more activities, to be competitive and sustain our business. ”

Other participants also spoke about operations being 24/7 which makes it necessary for them to be connected or available after workhours and over weekends.

A manager on how employees manage extra work

“ Some employees I do see that they may work half hour extra and finish it and go. Some employees will be like; we will do it the next day. I don’t normally see people taking work home. ”

Staying back a little after hours; i.e. presenteeism seems a norm and a practice which some managers do not appear to even give a rethink. Open offices are preferred and most managers indicated that they also take work home whenever required. They attribute this to day-long meetings/workshops and being unable to get the regular transactional work done during the day. Regarding their teams however, most managers said that they do not encourage them to take work home. Few managers indicated that the **choice is entirely the employee’s**.

Another manager on how employees manage extra work:

“ I would never ask expect for really exceptional cases for my colleagues to stay back. If they stay back, then it is their own decision. I will not ask them to do that. My point is, there are things which come up and they might have to stay back a little bit later. But I will give it back (the hours) immediately the same week. ”

A director on work commitment and being connected:

“ We are working here because we are interested in our business. We are interested in doing a good job; and because we are committed to what we are doing, we checking these email(s) on a regular basis (has) a little bit to do with you know, being nosey, really. ”

#### 4.2.1.1.4 Employee Incentives

Some managers justifying the occasional workload argue that the market competitiveness translates into more opportunities for the employee in terms of **training and/or incentives**.

About incentives for employees:

“ What organisation is trying to do is, equip the employees to give a better service (by means of training). As an employee, I get the benefit out of it... We have flexible working hours, additional annual leave... I see there are certain advantages coming to me, being in this competitive environment. ”

Couple of managers also linked the provision of **flexible work options** as an employee incentive.

According to one manager, the competitiveness in the environment extends to healthy **competition among employees**. Managers believe that having performance incentives actually create a positive pressure for them to perform better. People who work extra are also noticed more easily, according to a senior manager. He explained that employees who went that extra mile tend to **grow** in career as well as in financial compensation by leaps rather than by small steps.

A senior executive on how additional responsibilities can be advantageous:

“ These are learning(s) for them and exploration for them... Plus we have something called Project-based Incentive. These are incentives given to people who are working in these projects. So it's both ways - there is money linked to it based on meeting certain KPIS ; and there is a learning curve. ”

#### 4.2.1.2 The Employee in UAE

##### 4.2.1.2.1 Addiction to Work

As already indicated, most managers said that work is their **passion**. Even a question whether work has overwhelmed them, is brushed aside by many. For some managers, **commitment** translates into the number of years an employee has served in that organisation. However, managers also point out that when work becomes monotonous and transactional, the chances of turnover increase. One manager reminded that exploring new avenues is in people's nature here, as this is a transitional market and people have once already taken a decision to leave home (their native country) and be adventurous. Couple of managers also highlighted the benefits of turnover as it brings in fresh eyes and new ideas to the team.

A manager on whether work can get overwhelming:

“ When we are committed, and are responsible for something, definitely we will not feel like that. ”

Some managers attribute their affinity to work on their **personality**. One manager stated: “I would (attribute it to) my character wherein I don't like to say no to something. If something comes my way, I will take it, not a problem.” Some others said that work is like a hobby which until done, they don't have interest in anything else.

A director on why turnover can be good:

“ Sometimes you want turnover as well. Because we are in a very fluid industry; for innovation, for ideas, you need people constantly coming in with fresh eyes. If not you start stagnating. ”

##### 4.2.1.2.2 Personal life focus

When asked how they manage both domains, one manager promptly responded that he would keep aside personal interests or hobbies, if required to **make a choice**. Many others appeared to do the same. Some participants seemed compelled to make this choice as their life in the region itself is dependent on their jobs. Says a manager: “To live with family here, I have to work. Without working, I cannot live with my family.” There were however a few who seemed to be successfully dedicating time for both through planning and prioritisation.

A manager on work and life:

“ Yes there were certain instances wherein which I had to relook at my personal requirements to see whether it is actually important to attend to it or should I finish my work and go for it. ”

Majority of managers felt that if a person is employed and if his/her family is in the same place there is bound to be **integration**. Most managers who are integrated, i.e. who respond to calls or access office emails after work do not feel that their personal time is compromised by doing this. Some managers even dedicate a slice of their time to work while they are on vacation. A handful of managers also admitted to having contacted their team or peers while they were on vacation. However majority of these managers do not expect their teams to carry work home as there is proper mechanism for handover and **delegation** through either leave or succession planning processes.

A manager on handing over work during vacation:

“ It is necessary to have successor – that gives a big confidence to people below you ”

A director on working during vacation:

“ I will keep my laptop because I want to know what is happening there and if any help is required. But that doesn't affect my vacation days as I do have lot of time available there. Some days I check when free. It's not compulsory. ”

A director on work and personal life:

“ If you don't have any personal goals, then work as much as you want to - and you still going to be happy with it. If your goal is to raise a family with two kids and spend as much time as possible with them and you can be happy with not being promoted quickly - then that's fine as well. ”

Cues of overwork for managers range from not getting time to switch off to children complaining about not getting their attention. For most managers, work-life integration is healthy when they can take care of family; their social time and still do a good job at work. One manager however

pointed out that ultimately, it's all about the individual's perception and what his priorities are in his life.

### 4.2.1.3 Keeping it Healthy

#### 4.2.1.3.1 Workload management

Managers say that the organisations have to be conscious of the workload and assign resources in a way that can be handled. One manager said that if work is coming in the way of employees' work-life balance, it would be because of **unrealistic targets**.

As already highlighted, **technology** plays a major role in all organisations to get their work done. One participant indicated that it assists employees to be flexible in their timing as the manager can see he's delivering even outside office. Though many felt they couldn't make it without constant connectivity, some indicated that not taking/having an office laptop at home helps them be detached. Some participating companies also have extensive security policies which make it difficult for employees to work remotely.

A senior executive on advantages of technology:

“ Honestly speaking, you don't need to go very aggressive with the people about their attendance. If he comes late by half an hour it is not a big deal as he is actually working from his phone. And he is delivering. ”

Some managers seemed to have a system in place to manage and **prioritise** their workload. One manager spoke about dedicating 3 hours every Saturday morning to work and another mentioned coming to work every Friday morning. This is in-built into their schedule to manage any work-related

commitments that they would need to cover. And since this is a regular schedule, there are normally no surprises, and they are able to **plan** their personal commitments well in advance, around this.

#### 4.2.1.3.2 Empowerment

A lot of managers spoke about employees being empowered and given a free hand in decision making. A participant stated: “We say this is your destiny, ensure you do it the proper way. If we see any flaws, we intervene.” Managers in two organisations which have formal policies on flexi-schedule, also considered it a means of empowering employees. They noticed that **flexibility** makes people more punctual and enable them to enjoy their work. The remaining participants commented that flexitime is possible to some extent through manager’s discretion. One manager however felt that “it is more of a European concept” and is not yet popular in the region and does not support the organisation’s work flow. On the other hand, another organisation has taken this empowerment to the next level where they have recently introduced a work-at-home policy.

A manager on empowerment:

“ You want to bring in an improvement; you don’t have to wait for your manager to say, yes please go ahead. You have been given the freedom. And the flexible working hours is something we have introduced recently so that the employees can feel free.”

Managers stressed the importance of having proper **communication** channels to build trust/confidence and to empower people. A common term that was used by majority of managers to

A senior executive on importance on communication:

“ Its important to give employees a perspective – where do I go and what can I do in this company...”

A senior executive on importance on communication:

“ I think everything can be solved by talking. Communication is key. (And) how far management is approachable.”

articulate management’s accessibility is “open-door policy”, which helps employees to approach management with questions /concerns. Likewise, the management tries to keep employees in the loop, through monthly newsletters and town hall meetings. A director explained that it is very important to share what is happening with employees to make them a part of it. Some managers consider town hall meetings extremely beneficial in gauging employee pulse.

#### 4.2.1.4 A Brief Look at Sickness

The interviewees were also asked their opinion and experiences of the first aspect of Leaveism. Majority of managers found it difficult to even understand this phenomenon leading to the question/phenomenon being re-explained. Almost all managers were unanimous in their opinion that this is not prevalent in the UAE. One manager pointed out that Government was taking necessary steps to ensure employers provide health insurance to all employees, which infact can deter such practice, if any.

A senior manager on 1st aspect of Leaveism:

“ People (might) do that out of fear of losing their job or they are workaholics. Otherwise why would a sound person do that?”

For the managers, much more concerning was the practice of employees availing sick leave when they are not really sick or them coming in to work while being unwell. They said that because of the 15

days full paid sick leave provision in the law, in the former case, employees tend to consider that a must-have entitlement.

There were however couple of managers who could provide actual examples of this aspect of Leaveism in UAE. One manager shared the instance of drivers in another organisation hiding certain

**A manager on 1st aspect of Leaveism**

“ It's purely related to the financial aspect of it. the moment you cross 15 days the 16th day is half paid. It's related to the sickness quota.

illnesses as they would become ineligible for license renewal. In such cases, they take annual leave and go to their home country to get such illness treated. The other manager who is also a

physician, stated that employees do resort to availing annual leave either due to exceeding the paid sickness quota of 15 days or because they don't want to be seen taking sick leave.

## 4.2.2 Discussion

### 4.2.2.1 It's all about keeping pace

This theme brings out the highly competitive and fast-paced nature of the UAE work environment. As indicated by the studies conducted by Hesketh et al (2014, 2015), in UAE also, market and organisational climate play a role in the way people manage their job responsibilities and interface work and life. Though the low oil prices have had direct to indirect or low impact; companies are seen to be highly resilient which is further strengthened by their focus on excellence. Their long-term vision and emphasis on well-being and improvement is supported by sound processes and systems; and have allowed these organisations to explore avenues for efficiencies without resorting to austerity measures that could cost the employee his/her job.

The experiences of the participants indicate that there is constant focus on deadlines and deliverables, which often end up in overload. Along with extrinsic motivators, there appear to be a number of intrinsic factors too such as career development, interesting job and other incentives that inspire employees to keep pace with their organisations. Manager-employee relationship could also be another motivator as the managers who were interviewed seem to genuinely care for employee well-being. This can however be confirmed through the quantitative analysis. Though Hesketh et al (2015) speak about work environment and open offices being a cause for Leaveism, it doesn't seem to be the case in UAE as people seem to prefer the option for interaction and access to management. It could also be because of more visibility that is caused by such layouts which makes majority of managers/employees to manage their workload by staying back after regular hours. The managers themselves however conceded to practicing Leaveism and being highly integrated with only a few exceptions. Though presenteeism seems to be the norm in organisations, the qualitative research does indicate that the 2nd and 3rd aspects are indeed being practiced by these managers on their own accord.

#### **4.2.2.2 The employee in UAE**

The uniqueness of UAE is its young (Section-4.1.1.1) and transitional workforce and the hugely expatriate population, who along with the nationals are highly driven and engaged by what their work has to offer them. The employee's main trigger for Leaveism appears to be love for his/her job, which is driven by personality, commitment to the organisation, or work that is interesting.

On the other hand, the study does indicate that managers do feel compelled at times to prioritise their work over other personal obligations. There seem to be a consensus that being accessible and working extra not only improves career prospects, but in some cases is mandatory to even sustain current roles. Also, the regulations in UAE make it mandatory for expatriates to either work/learn/invest in the country (Bobker, K.,2014) to continue being a resident, making individuals feel it necessary to make personal sacrifices for work.

#### **4.2.2.3 Keeping it healthy**

Proper planning and prioritisation of one's schedule and activities have been seen to help managers focus on both domains. Organisations focus a lot on ensuring two-way communication with its employees as a way to empower them. Organisations consider flexible work practices (FWA) as another way of empowering people. The study indicates that FWA help employees in enjoying their job more. However UAE is at its infancy with regards to implementation of such practices. The nature of certain jobs also does not allow for such practices to be implemented. Flexible scheduling is more prevalent and accepted FWA than work-from-home option.

#### **4.2.2.4 A brief look at sickness**

There are indications that the 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of Leaveism does indeed exist in the UAE; however managers seem totally oblivious to this. This can be attributed to the fact that managers get to only know that an employee has availed his annual leave or some similar leave compensation. The sole participant who personally knew individuals who indulged in this aspect of Leaveism was a medical doctor. His awareness of this can hence be credited to the fact that employees take him in confidence when they come to get their health checked. Some of the triggers seem to be sickness quota as per the UAE labour law, listing of some illnesses as a barrier to do certain types of jobs; and as highlighted by Hesketh (2015), the need to have a perfect performance record. The study also reveals sickness presence or presenteeism (Gerich,2015) and absenteeism are concerns for some managers.

## 4.3 Results of Quantitative Analysis

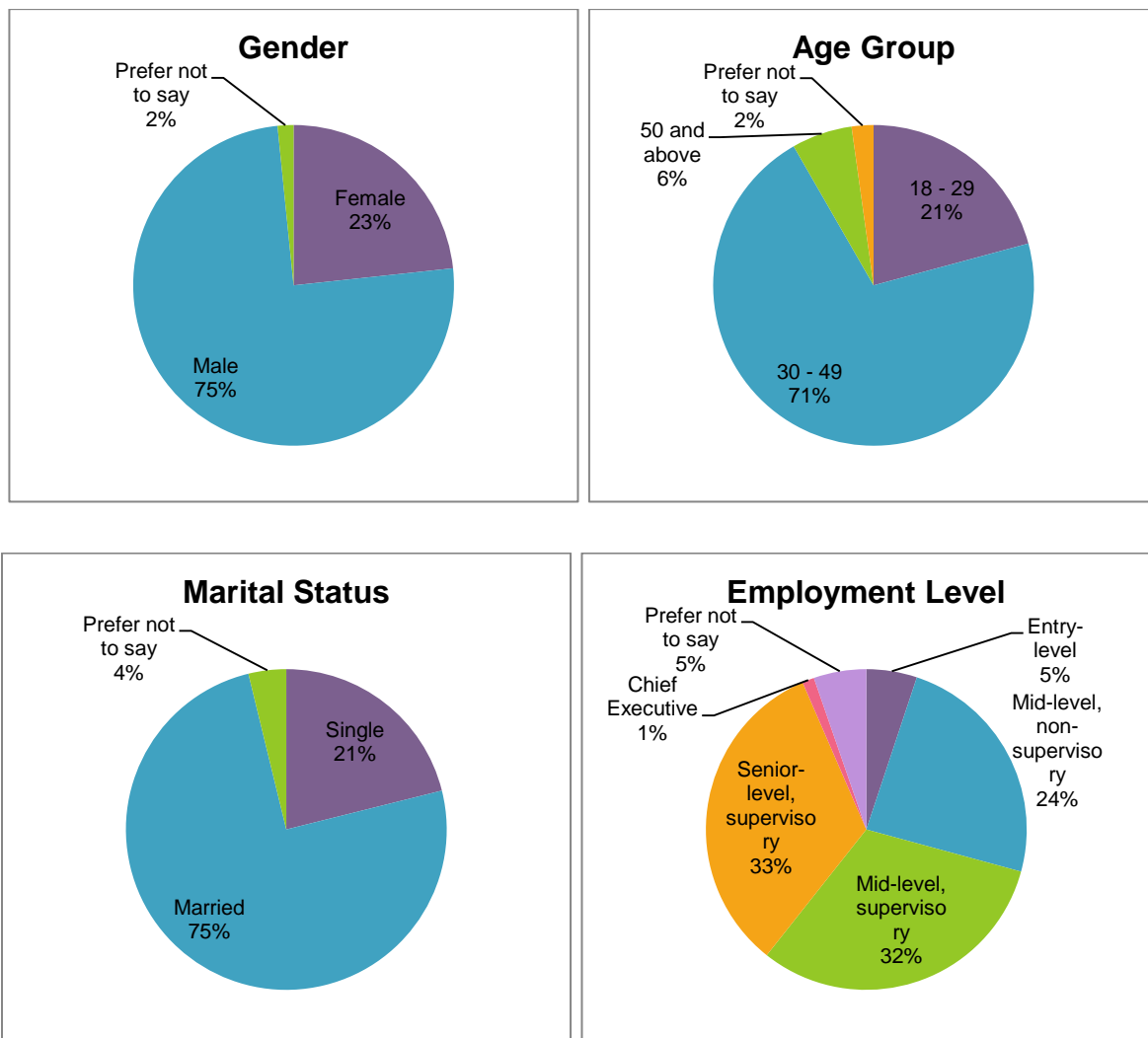
This section details some of the characteristics of data collected through the online questionnaire. The total number of responses from the 10 participating organisations is 506.

### 4.3.1 Findings

#### 4.3.1.1 Demography of respondents

In the 40-item questionnaire, 4 were control variables to determine demographic details of the 506 respondents. 75% of them were male; and the majority (around 90%) in the age groups of 18-29 and 30-49. Based on the secondary data, the gender and age profiles can be considered consistent with those of the country's population. Age-group and Employment-levels are seen to have a minor positive correlation as per Pearson's-Coefficient.

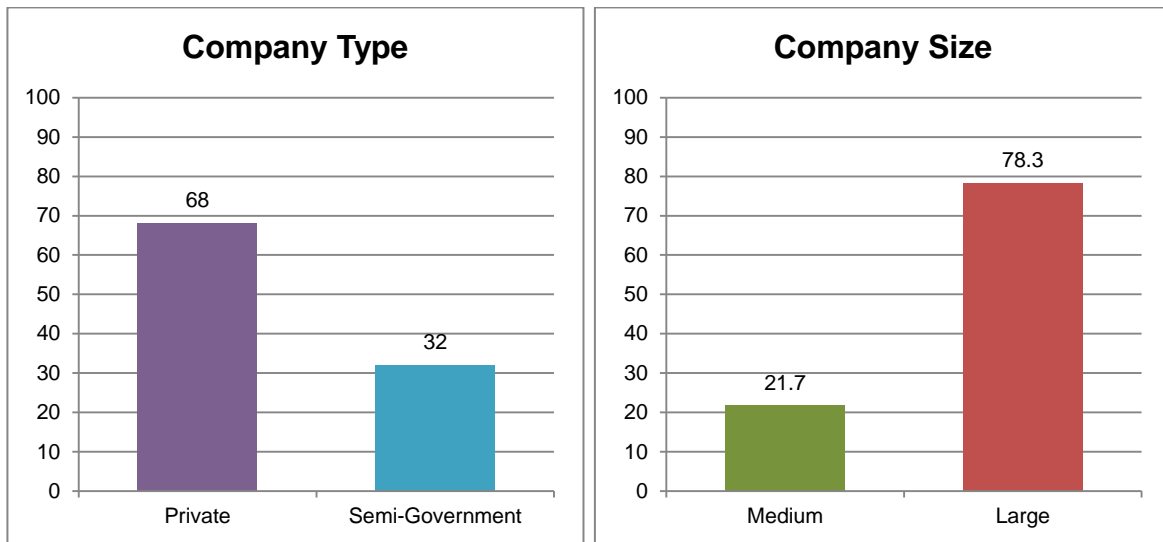
**Figure 4-4: Demography Charts**



Majority of respondents are married and in mid to senior supervisory positions. The low response from participants in entry-level positions (5%) could be attributed to a lot of them (mainly front-line) not having accessed this survey due to lack of individual workstations/laptops.

The respondents were from private (68%) and semi-government (32%) organisations; and 78% belonged to large organisations and 22%, medium-sized.

Figure 4-5: Company Type and Size



#### 4.3.1.2 Internal Consistency

5-point Likert scale used for majority of the questions were coded 1-5 in the order they appear in the survey (e.g.:1=strongly disagree). However, some negatively worded questions (Q6,Q7 Q9) were reverse-coded to ensure consistency in what the values indicate while computing reliability.

The instrument's reliability and internal consistency has been evaluated using reliability coefficient, **Cronbach's alpha**. Though the variable "fear" falls just short of the cutoff reliability value 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978 cited in Joseph et al,1999,p.1343), it has been retained as it is considered a key trigger for Leaveism..



### 4.3.1.3 Pearson's Coefficient

The following table shows the correlation coefficient values for the variables under discussion.

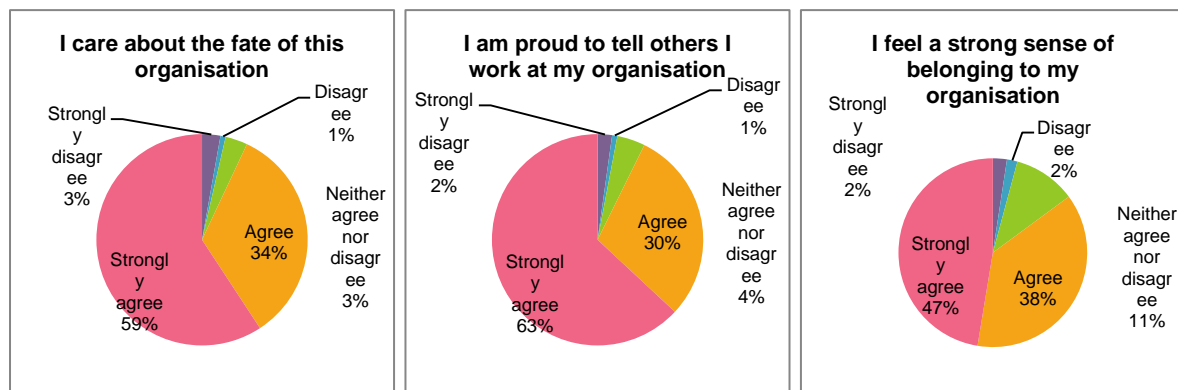
Figure 4-6: Coefficient of Correlations

Variable	Age Group	Gender	Marital Status	Employment Level	Commitment	Work Relationship	Fear / Insecurity	Blurring	Overload Causes	Overload Impact	Leaveism (WLI)	Leaveism 1st Aspect (Sickness)	Flexible Schedule	Work-from-home	Segmentation Preference
Age Group															
Gender	.133**														
Marital Status	-.198**	-.112*													
Employment Level	.276**	.181**	.029												
Commitment	.076	.012	-.139**	.046											
Work Relationship	.081	.001	-.093*	.082	.350**										
Fear / Insecurity	.057	-.017	-.089*	.025	.273**	.407**									
Blurring	-.055	.001	.130**	.072	-.204**	-.367**	-.336**								
Overload Causes	-.121**	-.014	.081	-.047	-.325**	-.635**	-.573**	.571**							
Overload Impact	-.063	-.002	.116**	-.026	-.177**	-.404**	-.397**	.655**	.623**						
Leaveism (WLI)	.053	.061	-.008	.216**	-.008	-.110*	-.120**	.330**	.278**	.322**					
Leaveism 1st Aspect	-.057	-.131**	-.108*	.045	-.133**	-.292**	-.162**	.214**	.303**	.179**	.144**				
Flexible Schedule	0	0.08	-.127**	0.05	.361**	.237**	.203**	-.265**	-.239**	-.237**	-.017	-.089*			
Work-from-home	0	0.054	-0	0.021	.148**	.166**	.132**	-.179**	-.174**	-.171**	-.033	-.103*	.344**		
Segmentation Preference	.000	.086	-.089*	-.005	-.050	.092*	.032	-.057	-.095*	-.011	.082	-.061	.002	.094*	
Work-Life Compensation	-.095*	-.027	.076	-.001	-.069	-.044	-.206**	.257**	.201**	.160**	.140**	.073	0.042	.178**	.049

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
 \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
 Variables in the same scale combined by taking average  
 Control Variables

### 4.3.1.4 Variables

#### 4.3.1.4.1 Commitment



Commitment/loyalty is seen to be extremely high (median/mode→5) among employees. It interestingly has positive correlation to insecurity and difficult work-relations (e.g. lack of colleague's

support). Commitment and flexible-schedule are also positively correlated ( $p < 0.01$ ). However, it is seen to decrease when blurring between domains or work overload increase.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.820	.821	3

		I care about the fate of this organisation	I am proud to tell others I work at my organisation	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation
N	Valid	506	506	506
	Missing	0	0	0
Median		5.00	5.00	4.00
Mode		5	5	5

**4.3.1.4.2 Work-Relationships**

Median indicate that majority disagree or strongly disagree having issues/lack of support from work relationships. Difficult work relations have negative correlation to workload (strong) , boundary blurring and Leaveism. This means that when workload increases, there could be more support and harmony among manager/colleagues. Difficult work-relations are positively correlated to fear/insecurity and FWA.

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.729	.730	2

		My boss behaves in an intimidating way towards me	I do not receive the support from others (boss/colleagues) that I would like
N	Valid	506	506
	Missing	0	0
Median		2.00	2.00
Mode		2	2

**4.3.1.4.3 Fear**

Along with positive correlation with commitment and work-relations, take-up of FWA appears to increase insecurity/fear. Insecurity however doesn't positively correlate with Leaveism or Overload. Insecurity allows employees to ensure availability of time with family/friends as blurring is negatively correlated and may restrain them from compensating personal life with work.

Reliability Statistics			Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items			My job is insecure	My role may become redundant in the near future
.648	.648	2	N	Valid	506	506
				Missing	0	0
			Median		2.00	2.00
			Mode		2	2

4.3.1.4.4 Overload

Overload has a clear positive correlation to Leaveism or higher levels of integration. There is positive correlation with work-life compensation and 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of Leaveism as well. However, overload can cause less take-up of FWA. Another way to interpret this would be to assume that FWA can help reduce overload. There is strong (+) correlation between causes and impact of overload.

This does indicate that people are indeed not able to provide enough focus to personal lives and might be working longer hours perhaps on their own discretion (since majority disagree to having worked hours more than they choose to).

Reliability Statistics (Causes)			Reliability Statistics (Impact)		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.703	.704	3	.820	.819	5

Statistics							
		I am given unmanageable workloads	I am set unrealistic deadlines	The technology in my job has overloaded me	I do not have the proper equipment or resources to do my job	My organisation is changing for changes sake	My organisation believes that work should be the primary priority
N	Valid	506	506	506	506	506	506
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Median		2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00
Mode		2	2	2	2	2	4

**Statistics**

		I work longer hours than I choose or want to	I work unsociable hours; e.g. weekends, shiftwork, etc	I do not have enough time to do my job as well as I would like
N	Valid	506	506	506
	Missing	0	0	0
Median		2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode		2	2	2

To understand how employees manage overload, respondents were asked if they take work home, stay back in office or keep work for the next day, in case of excess work. Though **mode** indicates that the majority of people prefer to stay back in office to complete work (i.e. presenteeism); **16.2% of people indicated that they do take work home** confirming the existence of Leaveism.

**To complete excess work after regular hours I mostly:**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid stay back at office	300	59.3	59.3	59.3
take work home with me	82	16.2	16.2	75.5
leave it for next working day	124	24.5	24.5	100.0
Total	506	100.0	100.0	

4.3.1.4.5 **Blurring** (Questions-27,28)

The negative correlation to FWA indicates that blurring can be low for people who have flexitime and work-from-home policies. Blurring has positive correlation to overload (strong) and Leaveism behaviours. An analysis of its central tendencies reveal that half the people agree (median=3) that their work takes up the time they would like to spend with their family and friends and struggling to differentiate the personal-work life boundary.

**Reliability Statistics**

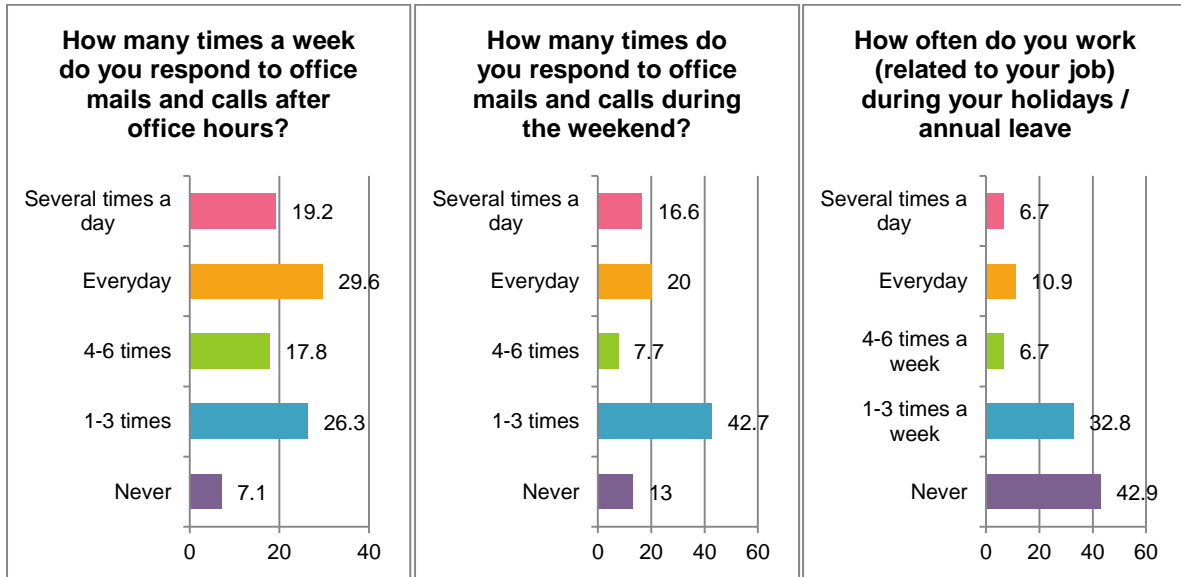
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.770	.770	2

**Statistics**

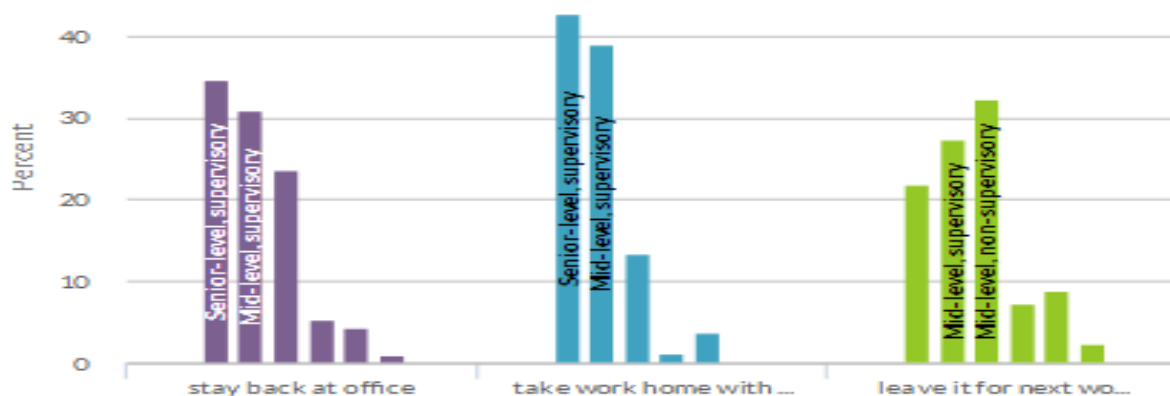
		It is often difficult to tell where my work life ends and my family life begins	My work takes up time that I'd like to spend with my family / friends
N	Valid	506	506
	Missing	0	0
Median		3.00	3.00
Mode		2	2

4.3.1.4.6 Leaveism

Along with overload, difficult work-relations and compensation for personal life can trigger Leaveism. It can lead to blurring of boundaries. There are no significant correlations with FWA. Frequencies indicate that the 2<sup>nd</sup> aspect of Leaveism is more prevalent than the third (57.1%). The practice of being connected after office hours(92.9%) is much higher than working over weekends (87%).This is the extent to which employees are willing to integrate their work and life.



There is a positive correlation to employment levels.



Response	Senior-level, supervisory	Mid-level, supervisory	Mid-level, non-supervisory	Entry-level	Prefer not to say	Chief Executive
stay back at office	34.7%					
take work home with me	42.7%	39%	13.4%	1.2%	3.7%	0%
leave it for next working day	21.8%	27.4%	32.3%	7.3%	8.9%	2.4%

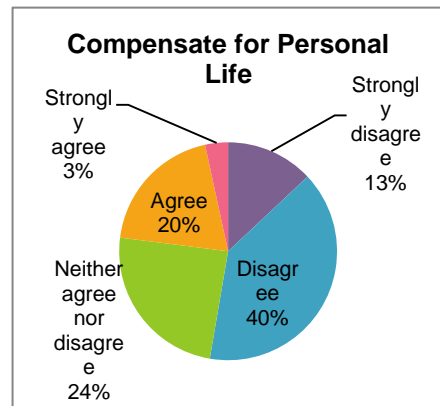
It is very clear from the charts above of the people who take work home, majority are those at senior-mid supervisory (81.7%) roles.

4.3.1.4.7 Work-Life Compensation (Question-30)

To test the theory of work-life compensation, respondents were asked if they become more involved in work while experiencing problems in personal life. The frequencies indicate that close to a quarter respondents (23%) agree or strongly agree that they do indulge in work to make up for their personal lives. The coefficient indicates

N	Valid	506
	Missing	0
Median		2.00
Mode		2

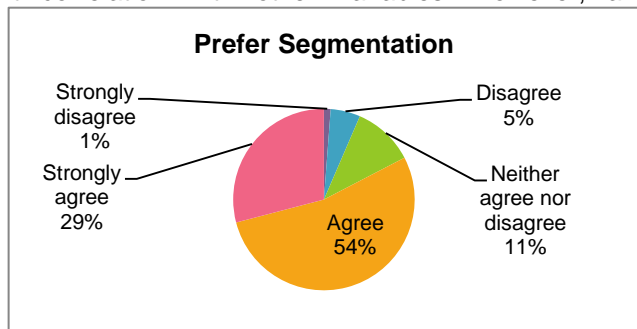
a low correlation with blurring, overload and Leaveism behaviours and negative correlation with insecurity.



The coefficient indicates a low correlation with blurring, overload and Leaveism behaviours and negative correlation with insecurity.

4.3.1.4.8 Segmentation Preference (Question-31)

This variable does not have any significant correlation with other variables. However, an overwhelming majority (83%) agrees or strongly agrees that they prefer to have a clear boundary between their work and personal life, indicating high preference for work-life segmentation.



On close examination, more than 80% respondents in both genders (M=80.3%;F=88%) and marital statuses (S=85%; M=81.6%) have chosen either agree or strongly agree. Interestingly, the highest preference for segmentation in the various employment levels is in entry-level (84.6%) and the lowest among Chief Executives (50%).

Figure 4-7: Segmentation Preference vs Gender & Marital Status

		I prefer to have clear boundary between my work and personal life				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Choose your gender</b>						
<b>Female</b>						
Frequency	3	2	8	58	47	
Row %	2.5%	1.7%	6.8%	49.2%	39.8%	
Column %	50.0%	7.4%	14.5%	21.4%	32.0%	
<b>Male</b>						
Frequency	3	25	47	210	95	
Row %	0.8%	6.6%	12.4%	55.3%	25.0%	
Column %	50.0%	92.6%	85.5%	77.5%	64.6%	
<b>Prefer not to say</b>						
Frequency	0	0	0	3	5	
Row %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	
Column %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	3.4%	
<b>Choose your marital status</b>						
<b>Single</b>						
Frequency	1	5	10	50	41	
Row %	0.9%	4.7%	9.3%	46.7%	38.3%	
Column %	16.7%	18.5%	18.2%	18.5%	27.9%	
<b>Married</b>						
Frequency	4	22	44	212	98	
Row %	1.1%	5.8%	11.6%	55.8%	25.8%	
Column %	66.7%	81.5%	80.0%	78.2%	66.7%	
<b>Prefer not to say</b>						
Frequency	1	0	1	9	8	
Row %	5.3%	0.0%	5.3%	47.4%	42.1%	
Column %	16.7%	0.0%	1.8%	3.3%	5.4%	

Figure 4-8: Segmentation Preference vs Employment Levels

I prefer to have clear boundary between my work and personal life					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Choose your employment level					
Entry-level Frequency Row % Column %	1 3.8% 16.7%	0 0.0% 0.0%	3 11.5% 5.5%	14 53.8% 5.2%	8 30.8% 5.4%
Mid-level, non-super... Frequency Row % Column %	2 1.6% 33.3%	5 4.1% 18.5%	15 12.3% 27.3%	61 50.0% 22.5%	39 32.0% 26.5%
Mid-level, supervisory Frequency Row % Column %	0 0.0% 0.0%	10 6.3% 37.0%	18 11.3% 32.7%	87 54.7% 32.1%	44 27.7% 29.9%
Senior-level, supervis... Frequency Row % Column %	2 1.2% 33.3%	11 6.6% 40.7%	14 8.4% 25.5%	96 57.8% 35.4%	43 25.9% 29.3%
Chief Executive Frequency Row % Column %	0 0.0% 0.0%	1 16.7% 3.7%	2 33.3% 3.6%	2 33.3% 0.7%	1 16.7% 0.7%
Owner / Chairperson... Frequency Row % Column %	0 0.0% 0.0%	0 0.0% 0.0%	0 0.0% 0.0%	0 0.0% 0.0%	0 0.0% 0.0%
Prefer not to say Frequency Row % Column %	1 3.7% 16.7%	0 0.0% 0.0%	3 11.1% 5.5%	11 40.7% 4.1%	12 44.4% 8.2%

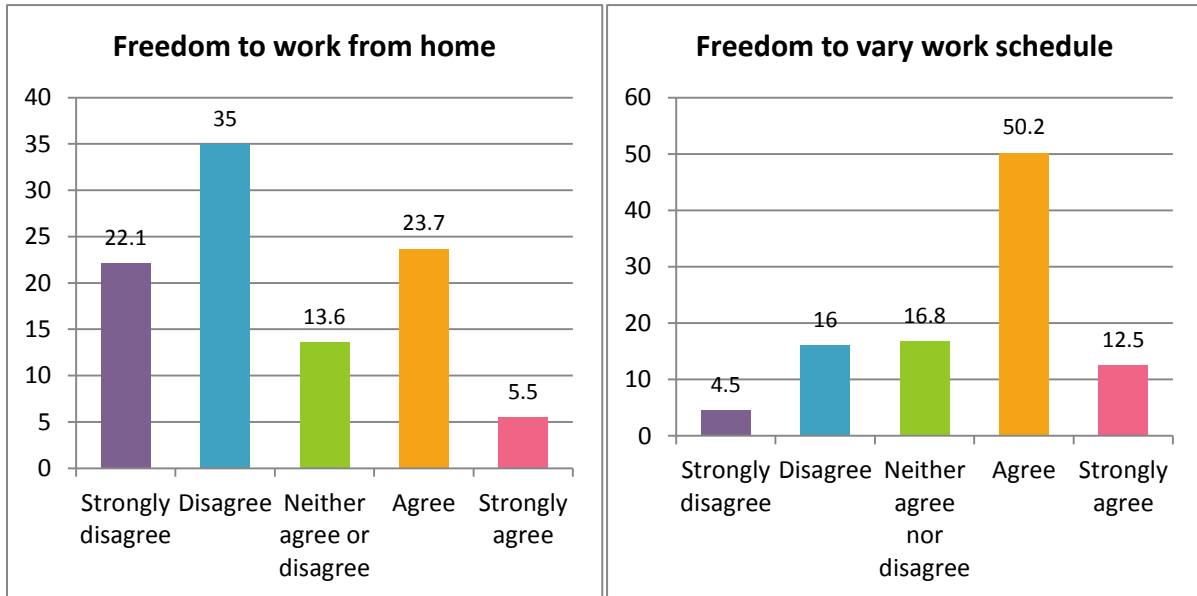
4.3.1.4.9 Flexible working

Questions were asked to understand the existence of two types of FWA: Work-at-home and Flexible Schedules. The central tendencies of 2 and 4 respectively, indicate that while majority of respondents do not have the flexibility to work wherever is best for them, they do however vary their work schedule if they so wish. In other words, 29.2% agreed/strongly agreed to having flexibility to work-from-home and 67.7% agreed/strongly agreed to having flexibility in schedule. The coefficient correlations indicate flexitime to have

		I have the freedom to vary my work schedule	I have the freedom to work wherever is best for me either at home or at work
N	Valid	506	506
	Missing	0	0
Median		4.00	2.00
Mode		4	2



positive correlations with commitment, insecurity, difficult work-relations and negative correlations with blurring and overload. Work-at-home has similar correlations but at a lower level.



**4.3.1.4.10 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of Leaveism in UAE**

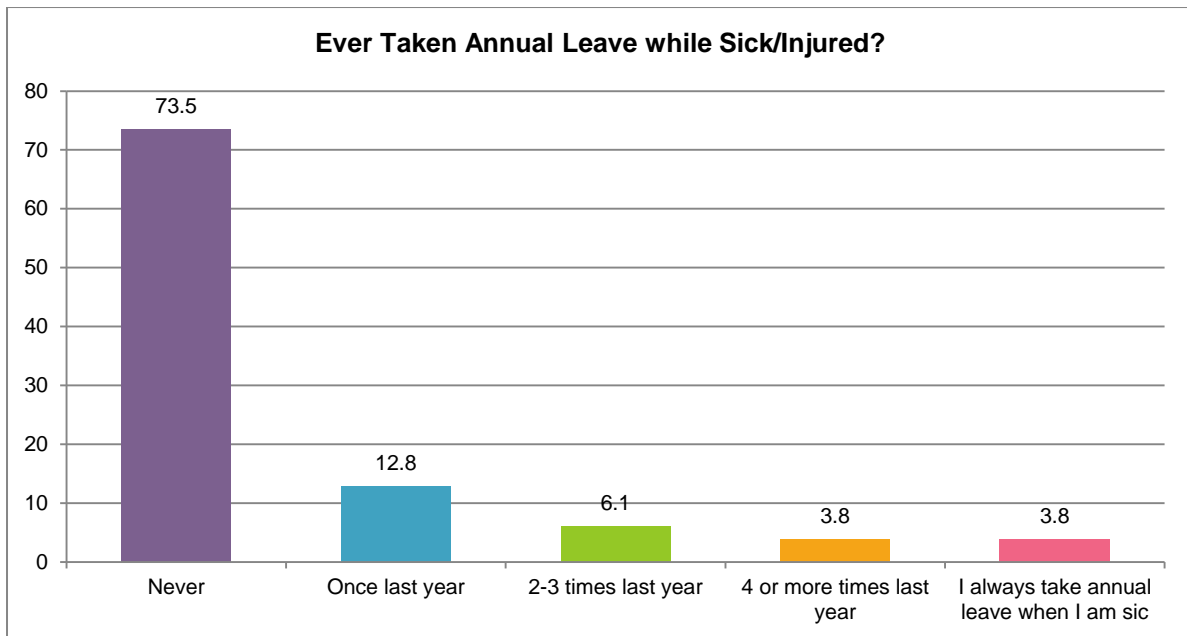
An overwhelming majority (73.5%) confirmed not having ever utilised their annual leave while being sick or unwell. However, considering the remaining 25.5% have done this at least once or at various frequencies during the last year, it can be confirmed that this aspect of Leaveism also exists in the UAE. Coefficient indicates positive correlation with overload and blurring; and negative correlation with commitment, fear and difficult work relations.

**Have you ever taken your annual leave to have time off while being sick or injured?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1	372	73.5	73.5	73.5
2	65	12.8	12.8	86.4
3	31	6.1	6.1	92.5
4	19	3.8	3.8	96.2
5	19	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	506	100.0	100.0	

N	Valid	506
	Missing	0
Median		1.00
Mode		1



### 4.3.2 Discussion

Commitment to the job/organisation is very high and does not get affected by insecurity. High levels of blurring can lead to low commitment. Employees appear to manage tough boss by being more dedicated to their work which indicates their sense of duty. An intimidating manager can however increase insecurity/fear. Difficult work relationships help in decreasing blurring of work-life boundaries and also decrease Leaveism behaviours – this is a good indication of discretionary nature of Leaveism.

Due to the nature of flexible arrangements, employees utilising flexitime or working-from-home may feel a lack of support from colleagues/managers. On one hand, FWA increases employee commitment and on the other, insecurity /fear and overload. This could be because, as Valcour et al (2011,p.591) says, people utilising these may not be seen not to be serious about their careers.

FWA can decrease work overload. From these findings, FWA has no visible link to Leaveism. Overload can impact employee commitment. When workload increases, there could be more support and harmony between manager/colleagues. Overload also decreases any feeling of insecurity/fear. Overload is a major trigger for all aspects of Leaveism.

As found in the interviews, though Presenteeism is more prevalent (Gerich,2015), Leaveism is also practiced. The main trigger for Leaveism in UAE appears to be overload of work. It leads to blurring of boundaries and as expected is more prevalent among higher employment levels. These findings replicate existing studies on Leaveism. In addition to this, a small percentage of employees can be believed to indulge in Leaveism to compensate for their personal life. 92.9% people have various levels of integration despite majority preferring segmentation; which might indicate Leaveism may not be entirely discretionary.

## 4.4 Corroboration

Both qualitative and quantitative analyses confirm the existence of Leaveism in UAE. One of the primary themes that emerged from thematic analysis “It’s all about keeping pace” aligns well with the positive correlations of overload found in the statistical analysis. The crazy pace invariably ends up in overload which is caused by market challenges, unrealistic deadlines, technology and lack of resources/equipment leading to blurring (Section-2.3.2.1). Though low, the positive correlation for “causes of overload” with “compensation” from survey results does indicate accuracy of interview participants’ judgement about employees taking additional work only on their own accord. However, considering the levels of integration (92.9%) don’t correlate with the high segmentation preference, it is now assumed that Leaveism may not be entirely discretionary. Though majority of respondents are married, it is not necessary that their families are with them in UAE (Section-4.1.2). Given that probability, compensation emerging as a trigger for Leaveism/overload is no surprise.

It can also be assumed that majority of employees who indulge in Leaveism would belong to Profile-A or B employee profile groups developed for this study (Section-2.3.6). This fits well with behaviours expected in excellence organisations and the highly-driven transitional workforce highlighted in the interviews. Such people can surely be called “boundary-crossers”(Section-2.3.2.2) considering the high-correlations of blurring with overload and Leaveism.

Both methods emphasise and validate the high commitment of the workforce. Along with the triggers such as fear, loyalty, resilience highlighted in literature (Section-2.3.1.6); a new pattern has emerged from the interviews where compulsion appears to be the actual reason for many to prioritise work over family. This is a contradictory theme and can perhaps be correlated with “insecurity” mentioned by Hesketh and Cooper (2014). However, organisations’ culture (Section-2.3.5.2) and the country’s specific work regulations (Section-4.2.2.2) which prohibit non-nationals from being in the county without job/investment/studies are phenomena more specific to this region.

The benefits of FWA highlighted in literature (Section-2.3.3) are replicated in the survey analysis where FWA is seen to increase employee commitment and decrease blurring. Though a direct correlation is not seen with Leaveism, FWA can help as it is seen to decrease the main trigger of Leaveism, work overload. The challenge however is to help managers understand its benefits as its adaptation and implementation is still in its infancy and mostly discretionary as was seen in the thematic analysis (Section-4.2.2.3). Despite this, the employee take-up was surprisingly high with 67.7% confirming flexi-time and 29.2% work-at-home.

The prevalence of 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of Leaveism, though extremely low is confirmed once again by the quantitative study despite managers being totally unaware of it. The triggers highlighted - sickness quota and clean personal record from qualitative analysis; and overload from quantitative are limited but in line with literature (Section-2.3.1.4). The UAE laws which ensure employer provided insurance and 15 days fully paid sick leaves might however help contain this tendency.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendations**

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### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter responds to the research questions with the help of findings from this research. Recommendations are made for future research as well as to address the issues of Leaveism and looks at limitations and the specific contributions made by this study.

### **5.2 Study Conclusion**

#### **5.2.1 Leaveism and its triggers**

Based on the corroboration of findings from the empirical study with the systematic literature review, it can be concluded that Leaveism is prevalent in the UAE. Though Presenteeism is more common, employees, especially at a higher employment level indulge in Leaveism. Work overload emerged as a primary reason for Leaveism in both qualitative and quantitative research. The practice has been found to be predominantly discretionary in qualitative analysis. However, quantitative data do provide indications of it being otherwise as well. Indulging in Leaveism may help reduce employee insecurities. Also, employees may practice Leaveism to compensate for their personal lives.

The 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of Leaveism was not part of the research focus but was also investigated and is found to be practiced by 26.5% respondents at various frequencies during the last year. Employees seem to be highly focused on their careers and prioritising work, which makes them lose focus on their personal lives very often. Both methods indicate Leaveism leads to blurring of boundaries.

#### **5.2.2 Take-up of Flexible Working**

Flexible working is a relatively new phenomenon in UAE. However employees are seen to practice it mostly through manager's discretion. The study indicates 29.2% having option to work-at-home and more than 60% having freedom to schedule flexibly. The qualitative study identified a lack of enthusiasm for flexible work practices among managers. Quantitative study confirms that FWA can increase employee commitment.

#### **5.2.3 FWA and Leaveism**

The research has not identified FWA to have a direct link with Leaveism. However, FWA can impact Leaveism behaviours as it is seen to decrease its main trigger, work overload. It also helps decrease boundary blurring. The actual benefits can be had when it is a formal policy and proper measures are established to monitor its influence.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following are recommended:

1. **Measure Leaveism costs:** To understand issues arising from Leaveism behaviours, methods should be identified to **measure costs** related to presenteeism, leaveism, productivity loss (Hesketh et al, 2015,p.185) and mental health. These costs provide a persuasive argument that aspects of working life that could be detrimental to employee's well-being need to be focused on (Hesketh and Cooper, 2014, p.146). Currently, such costs are mostly overlooked and not monitored by organisations (Cooper and Dewe, 2008,p.523)
2. **Focus on setting boundaries:** Organisations should ideally help set boundaries (Barnett and Hall, 2007,p.413), such as encouraging managers to avoid meetings that are not required and setting up policies that discourage temporal spillover. It is imperative to focus on strategies that can help in successfully integrating work and life and subsequently reduce practices that lead to Leaveism (Hesketh et al., 2015,p.183). Empowering managers to role-model expected behaviours and implementing employee well-being strategies (Hesketh et al, 2015,p.185) are some measures that an organisation that pro-actively take.
3. **Manage workload:** Internal efficiencies and process improvements can go a long way in coping with workload. An issue highlighted by some managers is the lack of adequate skills to manage the work efficiently. Having proper training needs analysis to identify skill gap to help employees improve themselves. As was indicated in the interviews, training is considered a method of empowerment which in turn can help increase organisational commitment. A look at TQM model and ensuring its effective deployment (Marler,1998,p.245; Moriones et al., 2011,p.36) can help move from a culture of "working longer" to that of "working smarter".
4. **Implement Flexible Working:** FWA help reduce absenteeism and recruit better (Desrochers and Sargent, 2004,p.43) leading to its increasing prevalence (Ilies et al, 2009,p.87). The research findings itself demonstrate how it helps in increasing employee commitment and reducing blurring. A recommendation would be to test and experiment with various flexible options to identify the most suitable practices that might be ideal for a particular organisation's work culture. Going in for a phased implementation while tracking employee and manager feedback can help in identifying its benefits and take learned decisions on how to further plan and implement them.

## **5.4 Study's Contributions**

### **5.4.1 Value of Study**

This is an original research and proposes models correlating Leaveism with other aspects such as absenteeism, presenteeism and work-life integration based on the Systematic Literature Review. Enabled by the findings from the empirical study, it confirms the existence of Leaveism in the country by replicating results in existing studies and discovering new tendencies which could be specific to this region. The predominantly discretionary nature of Leaveism confirmed by the study also authenticates the relevance and value of TQM frameworks

### **5.4.2 Limitations and Future Research**

The following limitations have been identified in this study and can be considered as a scope for future research:

1. Gender and cultural influences have not been explored in this study
2. Since the major focus of this study has been on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> aspects of Leaveism, a detailed study on the 1<sup>st</sup> aspect of Leaveism would help in understanding its triggers and potential implications in this region.
3. To have better understanding on the extent of impact of TQM on work-life initiatives, a comparative study with TQM and non-TQM organisations are recommended

## Chapter 6      References

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