

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND STRESS LEVELS: A CASE STUDY OF INDABA
AGRICULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IAPRI) EMPLOYEES**

**BY
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for the award a degree of Master of Business Administration – General

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LUSAKA

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DECLARATION

I, Chinyama K. Lukama do declare that this dissertation represents my original work. This work has never been previously submitted to the University of Zambia or any other university. To the best of my knowledge, all sources used and literature on related works previously done by others, used in the production of this dissertation have been dully acknowledged. If any omissions have been made, it is not by choice but by error.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation by Chinyama K. Lukama has been approved as a fulfillment of the requirements of the award of the degree of Master of Business Administration - General

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ABSTRACT

The Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI) is a premier agricultural research and outreach think tank in Zambia. The performance of IAPRI as measured through its outputs in the period 2014 to 2017 was exemplary as on average, output performance exceeded 78 percent of the planned annual targets. Despite this impressive performance, the Institute had observed reported incidences of stress among its employees which is a possible threat to its recorded good performance. It is against this background that this study investigated the work-life balance and stress levels among employees of (IAPRI).

The specific objectives of the study included assessing the level of stress among IAPRI employees, determining whether or not the employees were stressed, evaluating the factors influencing stress and exploring employee perceptions on how the level of work life balance affected their performance. In assessing the levels of stress, the study first used the self-assessment of stress. Furthermore, the study used the following stressors to analyze the level of stress: excessive workloads, insufficient workloads, lack of control over work activities, bullying or harassment, ineffective management, job insecurity and poor physical environment. These standards were adopted from Murphy (2007) and applied for this study. In determining whether or not IAPRI employees had adequate work-life balance, this study adopted the standards set by the Workplace Health Toolkit to Assist Small Businesses (Health and Safety Authority, 2018) which include employees working between 5 to 9 hours in a day, employees do not have to travel more than 1 hour to and from work, employees having and taking advantage of proper rest and eating periods within their working day/night, employees having interests/pursuits outside the workplace and employees having time left to engage in other activities that have no connection to work. The study considered the respondents who answered “Yes” to all these five (5) parameters to have a work-life balance while those who answered “No” to at least one (1) of the standards were considered to have a work-life imbalance. In looking at the factors influencing stress, this study asked the respondents to list in order of priority the top causes of stress among staff. Based on the information which was collected, the responses were ranked in order of priority and the factors influencing stress were identified based on that ranking. In terms of perceptions, thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative responses by grouping the responses. Other quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

This study which was informed by the Herzberg’s Two Factor Theory of Motivation targeted to collect data from all the 29 permanent employees of IAPRI and the response rate was 93

percent (27 out of the targeted 29 respondents). In terms of the levels of stress, the results from a self-assessment of stress revealed that 46.7 percent of the employees were stressed and there were no significant differences in stress between males and females as well as marital status (married and not married). Using stressors, most of the respondents revealed that they strongly agreed or agreed that they experienced the stressors. The main factors influencing stress were too much workload coupled with short deadlines, ad hoc responsibilities, role ambiguity and low job satisfaction. In addition, the study revealed that 22.2 percent of staff experienced work-life balance. In this regard, the study identified stress and work-life imbalance to be as key challenges the employees were facing. Some key recommendations from this study include implementation of policies that minimise workloads while achieving the desired results, implementation of a system of flex time and specific role related capacity building. The study further recommends that the Human Resources and Administration manual of 2012 be revised in order to align it with the Employment Act No. 9 of 2019. This in reality means that the provision of paternity leave which is only limited to married members of staff as contained in the manual will align with the Act which does not discriminate paternity leave by marital status. The central message that the results of this study is that IAPRI employees underwent stress and the most common factor influencing stress is huge workloads. These huge workloads may cause work life imbalance because of the reduced time they have to perform personal and family roles.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my family and all the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute's employees.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1: Introduction

Work life balance and stress have become a common challenge faced by employees in many organisations. Cox (2004) as cited by Razik *et al.*, (2014) in a study entitled the Impact of work stress towards work life balance in Malaysia argued that organisations are recognising the importance of gaining greater understanding of the etiology and implications of stress and also working with professionals in developing strategies to mitigate the impact of stress on employees and companies. Work life balance and stress management in employees matter because of the potential negative effects on employee and eventually organisations. Work place related stress has detrimental effects on job satisfaction, work performance and absenteeism which results from the decline in individual health (Hayes and Weathington, 2007). Crompton (2006) as cited by Razik *et al.*, (2014) further argued that the increasing interests in in work-life balance are as a result of increasing female employment, de-industrialisation and high unemployment among men.

Ensuring work life balance has been a critical part of maintaining a healthy work force as this helps reduce stress and prevent burnout in workplaces. Stress can lead to negative health consequences such as hypertension, digestive disorders and heart problems and this has further been linked to higher risks of depression, anxiety and insomnia. By creating a work environment that prioritises work life balance, organisations can save money and maintain a healthier and more productive work force (Alan, 2018). The Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI) in 2017 identified incidences of stress among its employees and this was eventually categorised as a risk (IAPRI, 2017). It is against this background that having established the link between work life balance and stress and the identification of stress as a risk in IAPRI, this study sought to the level of work life balance and stress levels among the employees of this institution. In addition, the study evaluated factors influencing stress and explored employee perceptions on how the level of work life balance affected their productivity. This study is important as it helps to provide more insights regarding the challenges employees may be facing as well as how employers may respond to employee needs and enhance the chances of better performance.

1.2: General Overview of Work-life balance and Stress

Work-life balance is a concept that includes an appropriate equilibrium between a person's career and aspiration on one hand and balancing with pleasure, vacation and family life on the other hand (Abdulrahman and Ali, 2016). This term is commonly used to describe policies that have previously been family friendly and are now extended beyond the scope of work. It further is referred to as the flexible working arrangements that provide a balance between work responsibilities and personal responsibilities (Redmond *et al.*, 2006). Pillinger (2001) cited by Redmond *et al.*, (2006) argues that the term 'work-life balance' is preferred due to the fact that it encompasses the experiences and needs of both parents and non-parents, and is a more progressive theoretical framework in which to think about new ways of living and working that are satisfactory to all. In practice, it involves adjusting work patterns so that everyone can find a balance that enables them more easily to combine work and their other responsibilities and aspirations. Stress according to Hanes (2002) is a condition of physical or mental strain or physical or emotional wear and tear that can be the result of a real threat.

Literature reveals that there have been changes in the labour market and demographic characteristics of employees. For instance, Olah *et al.*, (2018) argued that families have shifted from the traditional male "breadwinner" role to dual earner couples and single parent families. They further argued that the changes in family structures, declining fertility rates and increased complex family compositions have been paralleled by changes in gender roles, especially an expansion of an economic role of females to a family and lately the transformation of the role of men with more extensive involvement in family responsibilities including care for children. In addition, a study entitled "Nonstandard work and the shift away from male breadwinner families in Japan" evaluated the role of women's non-standard work in the transition from male-breadwinner to dual-earner families using 18 waves of nationally representative data on Japanese women. This study revealed evidence of the emergence of multiple types of dual-earner families. Results further revealed that marriages moved away from a scenario of specialisation towards a scenario in which high-earning men are increasingly sharing economic roles in the household with their wives (So-jung and Rayma, 2015). Furthermore, in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in selected countries, it had been observed that the increase in female and maternal employment had led to an increase in the share of couple families where both adults were in paid employment. In most households, the male breadwinner household had

been replaced by the dual-earner couples: on average, nearly 60 percent of the couples were dual earner families (OECD, 2011).

Organisations are now increasingly demanding for employee flexibility and productivity and workers' perspectives have also changed towards work. In addition, "new orientations towards life-long learning, personal and career development, and an increased awareness and the need for a balance between work and life have affected organisations through incentivising the introduction of policies such as flexible working" (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006). As a result of these changes in demographics, employment and organisational trends, men and women have experienced an increase in demands from the family, household and work domains (Allen *et al.*, 2000). This increase in demands can have an effect on the performance of employees at work places if not handled properly.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2006) categorised Work-life balance as consisting three different components: These components should be considered in order to achieve work-life balance. They are:

- i. Time balance: this refers to the equal time given to both work and family roles;
- ii. Involvement balance: this refers to equal levels of psychological involvement in both work and family roles; and
- iii. Satisfaction balance: refers to equal levels of satisfaction in both work and family roles.

The author argues that when individuals struggle to maintain and satisfy the demands placed on them by both the work and family spheres, an imbalance may occur. This imbalance is what is referred to as work-family conflict. Work-family conflict is defined as a source of stress that results from irreconcilable pressure from work and family spheres (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006).

Literature reveals that this conflict can take two forms. These are work to family conflict and family to work conflict. Several studies have established and documented that the conflict between work and family domains has a number of significant negative consequences for individuals including poor mental and physical health, less life satisfaction and high levels of stress among others. For instance, a study which attempted to identify factors that result in Work Family Conflict (WFC) in Bangladeshi among female employees working at different universities, commercial

banks and government organizations established that distress and depression was one of the negative consequences of WFC. This study whose sample was 50 female employees from different organisations revealed that WFC produces dysfunctional consequences both in the family and workplace, such as family and job distress and depression (Akkas *et al.*, 2015). Long hours of work and highly stressful jobs not only hamper employees' ability to harmonise work and family life but are also associated with health risks such as increased smoking and alcohol consumption, weight gain and depression (Dhas, 2015). Another study examined whether the associations between working hours, job satisfaction and work life balance were mediated by occupational stress. Questionnaires were administered to 369 respondents working in high-tech and banking industries in Taiwan. The results revealed significant correlations between long working hours and both occupational stress and work-life balance, as well as between occupational stress and both work-life balance and job satisfaction (Hsu *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, organisations can face many effects as a result of employees experiencing work-family conflict. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2006) argues that work-family conflict has been found to be associated with decreased employee job satisfaction, increased staff turnover and absenteeism, lower performance and increased job stress levels and increased intention to leave organisations. An employee is considered the greatest asset of any organisation. This is because all results are only achieved through the efforts of employees. It is therefore important that in order to achieve desired results from employees including better performance, the workers' needs which among them is to balance between work and family roles are given the attention they need. The growth of any organisation is dependent on the ability of workers to perform to higher standards in order to achieve the vision and strategic results of that particular organisation.

The importance of the wider contextual understanding of work life balance and stress directly relates to this study because it provided a basis for alignment of the identified problem to the global view of what the issues with regards work life balance and stress were. In addition, it aided the definition and standardization of key parameters with the globally acceptable standards which in turn would make the results more applicable not only to IAPRI but other institutions as well.

1.3: Background of the study

The Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI) is a non-profit Zambian which works with the public and private stakeholders in Agricultural policy Research and Outreach in order to influence policies that alleviate rural poverty. The Institute is led by a Board of Directors that are drawn from various state and private stakeholders. The Institute's mandate is to carry out agricultural policy research and outreach activities, serving the agricultural sector in Zambia in order to achieve sustainable and broad-based pro-poor agricultural development. This mandate is envisaged to be achieved through the vision of the Institute which is “*A Zambia free of hunger, malnutrition and poverty through sustainable agricultural transformation*” and the mission which is “*To provide evidence-based policy solutions through high quality research and outreach services for the transformation of Zambia's agricultural sector to achieve sustainable broad-based pro-poor growth*”. In order to achieve its core mandate, the Institute's agricultural policy research and outreach work is centered on four (4) key pillars namely Research and Policy Development (*Agricultural Markets and Trade, Agricultural Diversification, Agriculture, Food and Nutrition, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management and Gender and Youth in Agriculture*), Outreach and Alliances, Financial Sustainability and Governance (IAPRI, 2018).

IAPRI was selected for this case study and this is because this Institution has been very instrumental in influencing policy changes within the agricultural sector. In addition, it has provides technical capacity to may private and public institutions. In policy influence for instance, IAPRI has played a huge role in advocating for increased private sector participation in input and output marketing. This is being achieved through the Farmer Input Support Program – Electronic Voucher (FISP E-Voucher) on the side of input marketing and enhanced Open Border Policy on output marketing (IAPRI, 2019).

1.4: Statement of the Problem

Adequacy of work-life balance among employees is key in the management of employees as these are the most valuable asset of any organisation. It is argued that satisfied, highly motivated and loyal employees represent the basis of a competitive company and satisfaction is reflected in the increase of productivity, improvement in quality of services and higher number of innovations (Gabcanova, 2011). The performance¹ of the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute in line

¹ Performance in line with outputs means the percentage of the planned annual outputs that are completed by a certain time (e.g percentage of planned research outputs that are completed by the end of the financial year)

with expected results (outputs) in the 2014 to 2017 period was exemplary with output performance against annual targets exceeding above 78 percent on average as presented in Figure 1. This performance was described in all the Annual Reports as impressive and that the Institute was in line with achieving its Corporate Strategy as enshrined in the strategic vision and mission.



Figure 1: IAPRI output performance (2014-2017)

Source: (IAPRI, 2018)

Despite this impressive consecutive performance, the Institute had observed incidences of stress among its employees which is a possible threat to the recorded good performance. Reports of stress from some members of staff who claimed that the stress they experienced was as a result of increased demand to execute work were recorded. In this regard, Management catalogued the reported stress as a risk (see Figure 2) that needed to be monitored and mitigated as it had the potential to impact negatively on the ability of employees to have enough time to look concentrate on other personal things including their families.

8	Work-life balance Risk – Cross cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Risk of increased stress among employees due to an increase in the demand to execute emerging work. This may have an effect on the work-life balance of these employees. (New Risk). 	a) Encouraging staff to take leave. b) 2018 work plan to address the issue.	2	2	4	M
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Figure 2: Snapshot of the risk of stress as defined in the 3rd Quarter, 2017 Risk Assessment Report.

This risk was therefore defined in the 3rd Quarter, 2017 Risk Management Report as the “*Risk of increased stress among employees due to an increase in the demand to execute emerging work*” and was categorized as medium based on two parameters namely: (i) probability of occurrence; and (ii) the impact score (Indaba Adricultural Policy Research Institute , 2017). This risk of stress which could be as a result of the lack of balancing work and family/personal life was identified by the Institute’s Management and Board as a problem which might have a negative effect on employee performance and increased levels of attrition among employees, just to mention a few possible negative outcomes. In addition, there was an information gap as to what were the real causes of this observed stress among IAPRI employees. This study therefore sought to investigate the level of work-life balance and stress among IAPRI employees, determine if IAPRI employees had adequate work-life balance, identify factors that influenced stress and explore employee perceptions on how work-life balance affects employee productivity.

1.5: Study Objectives

1.5.1: General Objective

To investigate the level of work-life balance and stress among IAPRI employees.

1.5.2: Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the levels of stress among IAPRI employees;
- ii. To determine whether or not IAPRI employees have adequate work-life balance;
- iii. To evaluate the factors influencing stress levels among IAPRI employees; and
- iv. To explore employee perceptions on how the level of work-life balance affects their productivity.

1.6: Research Questions

1. What is the level of stress among IAPRI employees?
2. What level of Work Life balance do IAPRI employees have?
3. What are the factors influencing stress among IAPRI employees?
4. What are the perceptions of employees on how work life balance affects their productivity?

1.7: Significance of the Study

As stated in the statement of the problem that the identified problem was stress, this study was important in order to provide empirical evidence through research of the real causes of stress among employees in IAPRI. The results generated in this research was important in that it

generated key information that would be very useful to IAPRI management to manage stress levels among its employees. This would be done through making structural changes or improvements to policies that manage human resources within the organisation in order to have sustainable work life balance among the employees. The study results are also potentially useful to other organisations as they can draw lessons on what factors may stress their employees and how to work towards aiding employees to achieve work-life balance and its associated productivity improvements. This is one way the study fills in the identified research gap on stress and work life balance issues in Zambia. Secondly, the study is important in filling in the research gap that relates to linking theory to practical challenges of stress and work life balance.

1.8: The Conceptual Framework

This study re-aligned the framework used by Madaleine (2011) in which she investigated the employee perceptions of Work-Life Balance (See Figure 3). The author argued that there were a number of characteristics and/or variables that contributed to work-life balance outcomes. These included personal characteristics, task variables, and efficacy facilitation variables, action variables which all lead to certain professional and personal outcomes. This study adopted this framework because of its inclusion of a wide range of factors that could influence the outcomes of interest. In addition, the framework identified these factors in a logical manner from personal characteristics through to outcomes. For instance, educational level which is a personal characteristic may influence the level of responsibility which is a task variable.

One key weakness of this framework is that it does not include the family factors like family related responsibilities/pressures (e.g family headship status) that may influence stress and ultimately affect the level of productivity at work. For the purposes of this study however, this framework was used as it adequately identified the key variables that largely may influence levels of stress among staff which were observed among IAPRI members of staff. For instance, the levels of responsibility, work hours and role conflict may influence the level of flexibility of someone's job. This in turn may trigger stress and ultimately have a negative effect on productivity. For future research considerations however, also mentioned in Chapter 6, item 6.3, external factors including family variables which may influence stress which is observed at work may be considered for further investigation.

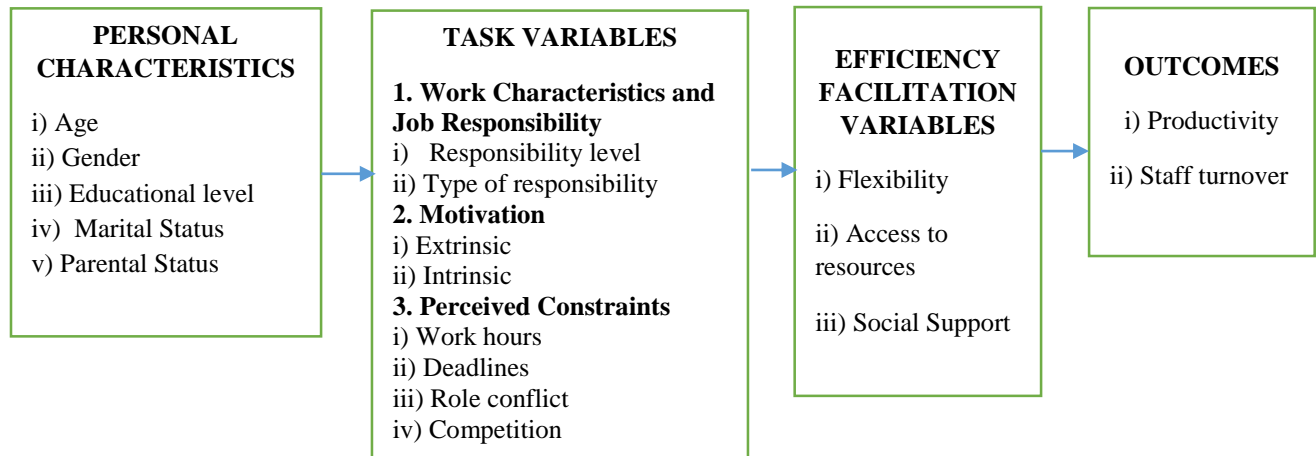


Figure 3: Framework to study factors influencing Work-life balance Outcomes

Source: Adapted from Madeleine Simard, 2011: page 5.

1.9: Identification of Variables

This study identified two types of variables to be used. Adapting the framework in Figure 2, this study replaced the outcome variable with stress and work-life balance while the independent variables as personal characteristics, task variables and efficiency facilitation variables (See Table 1).

Table 1: Research Variables

Dependent Variable		Independent Variables	
i.	Work-Life Balance and Stress levels	i.	Personal factors
		ii.	Task factors
		iii.	Efficiency Facilitation factors

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Theoretical Review: Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation

This study was anchored on a key theoretical foundation namely the Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of motivation. This is because the theory can largely be used to explain employee motivation. For instance, Wan *et al.*, (2013) argued that this theory has been widely used on a variety of motivational researches across different industries and generations. They state that this theory provides an integration of individuals' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors that are able to ideally cover other motivation theories.

Fredrick Herzberg, 1959 proposed a two factor theory or otherwise called motivator hygiene theory which suggests that there are some job factors that result in satisfaction while other job factors prevent satisfaction. Herzberg classified these factors into two broad categories namely hygiene and motivational factors. He stated that hygiene factors are those factors that essential for the existence of motivation at work places. These however do not lead to long term positive satisfaction but their non-existence could lead to dissatisfaction. This is because long term positive satisfaction may also be influenced by other external factors that may be emanating from family and personal life. Hygiene factors in other words symbolise the physiological needs which the individuals want and expect to be fulfilled and include factors like appropriate and reasonable pay structure, company policies, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, interpersonal relations, job security and many others. On the other side, motivational factors are those that bring positive satisfaction and they motivate the employees for excellent performance. These motivators are the psychological needs that are perceived as additional benefits and include recognition, growth and promotional opportunities and responsibilities among others (Juneja, 2018). The theory in summary implies that organisations that provide non-monetary benefits may experience positive staff outcomes and offers a rationale as to why employees may be productive and more committed to an employer with an environment that provides job satisfaction.

The two-factor theory however has limitations. One of the key limitations is it assumes a correlation between satisfaction and productivity, but other research stresses satisfaction and ignore productivity. In addition, the theory's reliability is uncertain because ratings of the same responses may be done differently, thereby bringing a possibility of having different results. Furthermore, the theory does not use a comprehensive measure of satisfaction. For instance, an employee may find his or her job acceptable even though he or she may hate or object part of his

or her job. Not only this, the theory is not free from bias as it is based on the natural reaction of employees when they are asked about the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work. They may blame dissatisfaction on factors such as salary structure, company policies and peer relationship while giving credit to themselves for the satisfaction factor at work (Juneja, 2018). This theory was key to this study because it helps identify the factors that are demotivates and could contribute to high levels of stress among IAPRI employees.

2.2: Empirical Review: Case studies on Work-Life Balance

There have been a number of studies on Work-life balance which have highlighted among other things negative consequences of work-life imbalance. A study which was conducted from August to September in 2016 attempted to explore the impact of occupational stress on the work-life balance of employees in Information Technology (IT) organizations in Chennai city. This study followed a descriptive approach with a sample of 600 employees from various Information Technology companies at the DFL IT Park in Chennai. Using independent sample t-tests and structural equation modeling approach, the study revealed that there was an impact of occupational stress on the work-life balance of the employees. The study recommended that minimising occupational stress may lead to better work-life balance (Kala *et al.*, 2017). In addition, a study in the Nigerian University system examined the influence of work-life balance practices on the productivity of employees. Using stratified sampling, a sample of 341 respondents from a working population of 2,324 employees was selected. The analyses using descriptive and inferential statistics revealed that there was a significant effect of work life balance on employees' productivity. The study revealed a moderate positive relationship between flextime and telework on employee productivity. In this regard, the study recommended that management should consider making flextime, job sharing and telework in their priorities to ensure work friendly policies (Abjoro *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, a study to ascertain the extent to which work life balance initiative predicts employee behavioral outcomes in some selected commercial banks in Nigeria recruited 339 respondents across the top 5 commercial banks in Lagos State of Nigeria using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Using Structural Equation Modeling to find the resultant effects and the degree of relationship between the exogamous and endogamous variables, the study revealed that work leave arrangement, flexible work arrangement, employee time out, employee social support and dependent care initiative were predictors of employee behavioral outcomes such as job satisfaction, employees' intention and employees' engagement.

The study emphasised the need to review the appropriateness and relevance of work-life balance programs, policies and activities that support and encourage employees as regards their personal and family life issues that are aimed towards inspiring acceptable workplace behavior (Oludayo *et al.*, 2018).

Duxubury and Higgins (2001) in their work on “Work-Life Balance in the New Millennium” looked at the effects of three types of work-life conflict in Canada by using data from a set of work and family studies that were conducted in 1991 and 2001. The studies focused on the effects of the following types of conflict: (1) work overload; (2) work-to-family interference (where work gets in the way of family); and (3) family-to-work interference (where family gets in the way of work). The following were among the key findings that emerged from an analyses of both datasets: (1) work-life conflict increased markedly during the 1990s; (2) parenthood remained more difficult for women than for men; (3) work-life conflict had a negative impact on organizational performance and on employees; (4) employees with high work-life conflict made more use of Canada's health care system; (5) role overload increased when role demands accumulated; and (6) work-to-family interference increased when role demands conflicted.

Barai and Bhargava (2010) on “work-family enrichment as a mediator between organisational interventions for work-life balance and job outcomes” aimed at examining the role of work-family enrichment in the relationships between organizational interventions for work-life balance (job characteristics, work-life benefits and policies, supervisor support and work-family culture) and job outcomes (job satisfaction, affective commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour). The results showed that supervisor support and work-family culture were positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment. However, no significant association was found between work-life benefits and policies (WLBP) and any of the job outcome measures. Job characteristics and supervisor support were positively related to work-to-family enrichment. Work-to-family enrichment mediated the relationships between job characteristics and all job outcomes and between supervisor support and affective commitment. The research acknowledged that the correlational design prevented conclusions about causality.

According to Bell *et al.* (2012) in their study hypothesised that high levels of perceived job pressure stress and job threat stress would predict increased levels of work-life conflict, and decreased levels of work-life balance. Due to the well-documented relationship between stress and

health, the influence of job stress on wellbeing was also investigated in this sample of academics (N =139). Perceived job stress (threat and pressure-type stressors) was associated with poorer work-life balance, and increased conflict between academics' work and personal lives. Perceived job threat-type stress made a stronger contribution and was a significant predictor of work-life balance and work-life conflict scores, than perceived job pressure-type stress. Perceived job threat type stress among academics was also a significant predictor and associated with poorer wellbeing and increased ill-being, but perceived job pressure-type stress was not related to academics' wellbeing or ill-being.

Babatunde (2013) also conducted a study on “employees’ perspectives of coping with the role conflicts” and the purpose of this study was to examine the prevalence of work-life conflicts (WLC) in Nigeria. A total of 51 in-depth interviews were conducted with employees working in the Nigerian service industry (i.e. banks, call center, hotel services and insurance firms) about their cultural perceptions and knowledge of work-life balance. The study findings manifested views alleging the prominence of role conflict situations rather than desired expectations of available social incentives for appropriate management of employees’ work and family affairs. These were attributed to the adverse macro environmental conditions entrenched in so many social-economic upheavals found to be plaguing Nigeria as a whole. Thus, the antecedents of these national issues had necessitated personal coping strategies utilised by participants of current study as moderating buffers against role imbalances encountered.

Another study by Uddin and Chowdhury (2015) titled “Issues of Work-Life Balance of Women Entrepreneurs in Bangladesh” indicated that women were increasingly recognizing the difficulties and constraints to maintain balance between their work and family life. Taking this importance into consideration, the study examined the issues towards Work Life Balance (WLB) using a quantitative research technique. A total of 185 women entrepreneurs were randomly selected from Chittagong. The results of this study indicated that there were five factors of WLB namely role overloads, health related issues, dependent care, time management, and family and social support which were accountable for around 65 percent variance. Out of these five factors, work overload and dependent care issues were negatively related with WLB, whereas, health related issues, managing time, and family and social support had a positive relationship with WLB of women entrepreneurs. The findings implied that women entrepreneurs can focus to reduce their workloads

and managing dependent care issues, and improvement of their health, managing time properly and ensuring family and social support to maintain a balance between work and family life to survive, compete and make their business successful.

In another similar study by Poggesi *et al.*, (2015) titled “Family and Work-Life Balance Mechanisms” aimed at analyzing the characteristics of female firms in countries that were different from the USA and UK with the consideration of the embeddedness of entrepreneurship in family contexts. Contrary to the authors' hypotheses, the results showed that family did not influence these firms' performance, and data from work–life balance mechanisms confirmed these results.

A research by Zaheer *et al.*, (2016) entitled “Occupational Stress and Work-Life Balance” investigated the degree of and the relationship between occupational stress and work-life balance amid female faculties in central universities of Delhi, India. The study was based on primary data collected from 120 female faculties from two central universities in Delhi, India. The findings of the study revealed that there existed a moderate-level of occupational stress and moderate-level of work-life balance amid female faculties in central universities of Delhi, India. The results of the study reveal that there was a strong negative relationship between occupational stress and work-life balance. This study recommended that to the management of educational institutions should increase the level of work-life balance and decrease the level of occupational stress among their faculty members; so as to create a work environment that everyone felt proud to be part of.

Abarghouei *et al.*, (2016) in a study on “job stress and burnout and related factors in the hospital personnel of Iran” highlighted that job stress had become one of the main factors in reducing efficiency and the loss of human resources that may cause physical and psychological adverse effects in employees. The aim of this research was to study the rate of job stress and burnout in hospital personnel and compare some of the related factors in hospitals personnel of Yazd, Iran. This cross-sectional study was conducted on 306 hospital personnel (Male: 114, Female: 192) in Yazd in 2015–16. The study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between job stress, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization, there was a negative relationship between job stress and personal accomplishment ($p < 0.01$). Independent-samples t-test results showed that the rate of job stress, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization in males was higher than females, married people had more emotional exhaustion than single ones, and, finally, health staff had more

job stress than administrative staff. At the same time, the administrative staff and females had better personal accomplishment than other groups ($p < 0.05$).

Chaitra *et al.*, (2016) in their study on “Work Life Balance of the Employees at Bosch Ltd” acknowledged that work life balance was one of the key factors for the employees to achieve success. The aim of this research was to study the managerial level employees work life balance in Bosch Ltd, Bangalore. The study collected the data from 60 respondents. The study found that work responsibilities negatively impacted the personal life of employees. The factors like overtime, travelling to work, meetings and training after the working hours’ impacted the work life balance of the employees.

Ugwu *et al.*, (2016) also undertook a similar study with an aim to explore the everyday living of business women who traded on petty goods and earned very little in a low-to-middle income country. It explored their conceptions of balance, how they managed intersecting roles, and how they coped with daily hassles and stress to maintain wellbeing. Conceptions of balance for the women incorporated the notions of satisfactory progress across roles, proper time apportionment to roles, conditional balance as well as harmony and/or synchrony across roles - a slight difference from the popular understandings. Their conception of business life roles was deemed much more integral. Negative physical and psychological experiences impacting health and wellbeing, identified as culminating as a result of both roles, were commonplace but were typically considered a normal part of living. Engagements in extra-social roles appeared to have a double-edged effect. Placing the family first, time management, and prioritizing were some of the important measures of ensuring balance and wellbeing. Financial gains and personal satisfaction were top motivational reasons that kept the women committed to pursuing simultaneous roles.

Hussain and Endut (2018) also explored the contributions of decent work situation to work life balance of small entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. The study which was conducted to uncover the degree and magnitude of essential decent work indicators that can aid the work life balance situation for small ventures used 800 samples with a maximum iteration of 3,000 samples for bootstrapping analysis for the model. Using a survey method, information was gathered from respondents who were running small enterprises and were credit beneficiaries of the BRAC Progoti program, which is a credit ladder whose main objective is to finance small enterprises in Bangladesh. The information of the study was gathered from a number of regions in the Sylhet

district of Bangladesh and the regions were isolated using proportionate stratified sampling method. The study further utilised a five-point likert type questionnaire to investigate the research questions. Each construct of the scale had its corresponding items, which were specifically measured. In order to analyse latent variables, structural equation modelling with Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares) was used. Findings of this study revealed that social dialogue and stability and security of enterprise have the most significant effects in ensuring work–life balance of an enterprise. Additionally, social dialogue among entrepreneurs has influence in maintaining decent working hours and fair treatment at workplace.

Another study examined whether marital status had an impact on work-life balance so that organisations can conceive and implement proper motivational policies. In this study, 132 participants were selected and these participants formed four groups, each group being made of employees with distinct marital status: unmarried (N=33), married without children (N=32), married with children under 18 (N=35) and married with children over 18 (N=32). The inclusion criteria in the study was that subjects had to have a job and pertain to one of these four categories. A non-random convenience sampling was used. The study revealed that the four categories of employees included in the study (unmarried, married without children, married with children under 18, married with children over 18) did not have a significantly different level of work-life balance (Panisoara and Serban, 2012). Dinh (2020) also investigated the effects of different factors on employment engagement in Vietnam industries in a study entitled “Determinants of employee engagement mediated by work life balance and work stress”. The results revealed that work-life balance and work stress positively impacted on employee engagement. However, the results did not confirm that working conditions could positively impact on employee engagement nor did the study find any evidence to believe that relationship with the supervisor could positively impact on employee engagement. In terms of mediation, this study established that work life balance mediated the relationship between working conditions and employee engagement. In addition, the study revealed that work-life balance mediated the relationship between the relationship with supervisor and employee engagement. Furthermore, work stress mediated the relationship between working conditions and employee engagement. Lastly, the study revealed that work stress mediated the relationship between supervisor and employee engagement.

Alinghaus *et al.*, (2019) also argued that working time arrangements that require shift work or other non-standard working hours have significant potential to encroach on time that is highly valued for family, social and leisure activities and this can often result in workers experiencing poorer work family or work life balance. This study which was based on extensive literature search and expert knowledge revealed that the primary risk factors which were identified included shift work, long, irregular and unpredictable working hours and work on evenings and weekends. On the other hand, flexibility in the form of adequate worker control over work schedules may be a protective factor. In addition, the study revealed that workers experiencing excessive work life conflict are likely to reduce their working hours, reflecting a reciprocal relationship between working hours and work life balance. Tausig and Fenwick (2001) examined the possibility that alternate work schedules affect the perceived work life imbalance. They argued that perceived control of work schedules increases work-life balance net of family and work characteristics and that the most consistent family characteristic predicting work life imbalance was being a parent. In addition, the most consistent work characteristic predicting work life imbalance was work hours. After controlling for hours worked, women and part-time workers were seen to perceive more imbalance. Younger and better educated persons also perceive more work-life imbalance. However, they also report higher levels of schedule control and since schedule control improves work-life balance, it may be key to unbind time than schedule alternatives.

Cavanaugh *et al.*, (2000) in a study entitled “An empirical examination of self-reported work stress among U.S. managers” proposed that self-reported work stress among U.S managers differently related to work outcomes depending on the stressors that were being evaluated. Using a sample of 1,886 U.S managers and longitudinal data, regression analysis results indicated that challenge –related self-reported stress was positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to job search. In contrast, hindrance-related self-reported stress was negatively related to job satisfaction and positively related to job search and turnover. Crank (1991) also examined the impact of and external sources of resistance to the concept of public safety on work stress and job dissatisfaction experienced by 41 directors of public safety departments. The study found that problems associated with managerial ambiguity and uncertainty over public perceptions of long-term organizational viability affected both work stress and job description. Organizational size affected work stress, while consolidation status of the department influenced job description. Findings suggested that work stress and job description were not tightly linked but were responsive

to different organizational stimuli. Furthermore, Hill *et al.*, (2004) examined the influence of perceived flexibility in the timing and location of work-family balance using data from a 1996 International Business Machines (IBM) work and life issues survey in the United States (n = 6,451). The results indicated that perceived job flexibility was related to improved work-family balance after controlling for paid work hours, unpaid domestic labor hours, gender, marital status, and occupational level. Perceived job flexibility appeared to be beneficial both to individuals and to businesses. Given the same workload, individuals with perceived job flexibility had more favorable work-family balance. In addition, employees with perceived job flexibility were able to work longer hours before workload negatively impacted their work-family balance.

Lockwood (2003) argued that scientists agree that moderate amounts of stress can be benign, even beneficial and most people are equipped to deal with it. However, increasing levels of stress can rapidly lead to low employee morale, poor productivity, and decreasing job satisfaction. Furthermore, some of the specific symptoms that relate directly to productivity in the work environment include abuse of sick time, cheating, chronic absenteeism, distrust, embezzlement, organisational sabotage, tardiness, task avoidance, and violence in the workplace. In addition, other serious consequences are depression, alcohol and drug abuse, marital and financial problems, compulsive eating disorders, and employee burnout. This is evidence of the many effects of stress on employees. Furthermore, Sturges and Guest (2006) in a study entitled “Working to live or living to work? Work life balance in the early career” explored the relationship between work life balance, work and non-work conflict, hours worked and organisational commitment among a sample of graduates in the early years of their career. This study concluded that although graduates seek work life balance, their concern for career success draws them into a situation where they work increasingly long hours and experience an increasingly unsatisfactory relationship between home and work.

Anitha *et al.*, (2007) in a study entitled “Stress in Doctors: a pilot study of the University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka, Zambia” explored the stressful aspects of a doctor’s job at the University Teaching Hospital (UTH). Using a perceived stress scale and a stress check list, data was collected from 41 doctors. The study revealed that of the 14 possible stressors, the doctors identified the lack of resources to carry out their job, workload, low level of reward and long working hours as the most frequent stressors.

Hughes and Bozioneles (2007) explored the views of male workers in a male dominated occupation on issues pertaining to work life balance. This study which was qualitative in nature used semi-structured interviews to collect data from 20 bus drivers employed by a single company in order to identify their perceptions on whether issues related to work life balance were sources of concern and dissatisfaction. In addition, data on concerns over issues related to work life balance was compared to other sources of concern and dissatisfaction and whether issues related to work life balance were linked with withdrawal attitudes and behaviour was collected. The results of this study clearly demonstrated that work life imbalance was not only a source of concern, but also that it was the major source of dissatisfaction for participants. In addition, participants made a clear connection between problems with work- life balance and withdrawal behaviours, including turnover and non- genuine sick absence. This demonstrates the value that organisations should attach to sorting out issues related to work life balance.

From the literature review, there are some observed gaps. Firstly, there are limited studies that have been done in Zambia focusing on work life balance and stress among the employees. By focusing on IAPRI, a Zambian institution, this study contributed to the much needed information that may be key in employee management. Secondly, the available literature makes little emphasis on the linkages between the theories of motivation as they relate to the actual reality of stress and work life balance. This study contributed to filling that gap between theory and actual reality.

In summary, the literature review clearly demonstrates that work related stress and work life balance are related and that there are several factors that can cause stress and work life imbalance. The literature further brings out a common argument that stress needs to be managed in order to enhance the level of work life balance among employees in any organisation.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1: Description of the Study Area and the Population

The study was carried out at the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute (IAPRI) in Lusaka. IAPRI's core mandate is to use evidence to advise and guide the Government and other stakeholders on issues affecting the agricultural sector. The Institution is located in Lusaka, Kabulonga and has staff who fall under four (4) key portfolios namely the Research Directorate, Outreach Directorate, Finance and Administration Directorate and the Business Development Unit (BDU). IAPRI's staff comprise of highly skilled individuals whose duties are directly related to at least one of the Strategic Pillars (Research and Policy Development, Outreach and Alliances, Financial Sustainability, Governance). Technical staff in IAPRI had a minimum qualification of a Masters' degree or its equivalent as at the time of data collection. The total workforce for the Institute was 30 fulltime staff and 5 Interns who are on a 6 months Internship Program as highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of members of Staff in IAPRI

Unit	Population
Research	14
Outreach	3
Finance and Administration	8
Business Development Unit	3
Executive Director's Office	2
Interns	5 ²
Total population	35

IAPRI was selected purposively for this case study and this is because this Institution has been very instrumental in influencing policy changes within the agricultural sector. In addition, it has provided technical capacity to may private and public institutions. In policy influence for instance, IAPRI has played a huge role in advocating for increased private sector participation in input and output marketing. This is being achieved through the Farmer Input Support Program – Electronic Voucher (FISP E-Voucher) on the side of input marketing and enhanced Open Border Policy on

² These were not included in data collection because they were in the Institution for less than 6 months.

output marketing (IAPRI, 2019). Therefore, the focus of this study on IAPRI was largely because of the influence this institution has in terms of influencing progressive policies. The challenge of stress identified in Problem Statement could potentially have a negative effect on the institution which may indirectly affect the advocacy of progressive policies.

3.2: Study Design and Data collection

Study Design: The study used a mixed method approach. This firstly involved the use of a questionnaire to collect data. In addition to collecting data using a questionnaire, key informant interviews were conducted in order to have more insights about the findings collected through the questionnaire. This design was used because the weaknesses on one method can be corrected by the strengths of the other. For instance, certain things that could not be explained by the data collected through a questionnaire were answered through the key informant interviews.

Data Collection: Data was collected from IAPRI's employees using a questionnaire. This questionnaire was piloted to ensure that it was perfected before the actual data collection was done. This pilot was conducted prior to the actual survey on 3 employees in order to test the instrument. For the actual study data collection, the questionnaire was loaded onto Monkey Survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com>) and sent to the sampled respondents for the responses. This data collection platform (Monkey Survey) ensured total anonymity of the respondents. The Monkey Survey data collection tool was used in order to make sure that the respondents were kept anonymous. The data collection tool in Monkey Survey was designed in such a way that none of the respondents' identities (e.g email, phone number etc) were revealed. In addition, key informant interviews were conducted in order to get more insights about the findings that were revealed through the questionnaire.

Inclusion criteria: The study targeted employees who had been with the Institution for at least six (6) months because these were assumed to be acquainted with the Institute and to have substantial knowledge about their work-life in respect to IAPRI.

3.3: The sample

The study targeted to collect data from 29 members of staff. Of the total 35 members of staff, data was not collected from the 5 staff who were on the Internship Program because it was assumed that these 5 Interns were not in the Institute long enough to have acquainted themselves with substantial knowledge about the Institution. In short, the interns did not meet the inclusion criteria

specified in 3.2. Of the 30 remaining, 1 member of staff was also the Researcher thereby remaining with 29 members of staff eligible for this study. Out of the 29 members of staff who were eligible and the questionnaires were sent to them, a total of 27 completed and returned the questionnaire, thereby giving a response rate of about 93 percent.

3. 4: Justification for a Case Study research approach

Yin (2014) argued that doing a case study approach would be preferred to other approaches in situations where the main research questions is how or why, a research researcher has little or no control over behavioral events and the focus of the study is a contemporary phenomenon. The how could be “how many, how far etc” that requires a researcher which requires a research demonstrate the extent of the problem. In this study, the first objective which assessed the levels of stress looked at the extent of the problem of stress by establishing how many or the percentages of the members of staff who were stressed. In terms of the why requirement, this study evaluated the factors that influenced stress and this explained “why” the members of staff were stressed. Yin (2014) further argued that a case study can include single or multiple cases, can be limited to quantitative evidence and be a useful method of evaluation. Therefore, this study used IAPRI as a single case to investigate the problem. A total of 27 people were interviewed out of the eligible population of 29, which translates into 93 percent response rate. This response rate adequately represented the situation in IAPRI which was the focus of this study.

3.5: Ethical considerations

In order to ensure that this study met the highest level of ethical standards, the following were done:

- i. Written clearance and approval was sought from the University of Zambia Ethics Committee;
- ii. The Researcher sought clearance from the IAPRI Management before any data collection was obtained; and
- iii. Informed consent: a written informed consent was obtained before administering the questionnaire. At this point, the respondents were assured of the highest levels of confidentiality and anonymity. The respondents however had a choice of continuing with the interview or not and the study treated those who opted out as non-responses.

3.6: Data analysis and report writing

Descriptive analysis on the data collected through Monkey Survey was analyzed using SPSS version 20 (IBM , 2019) and Microsoft Excel 2010 (Microsoft, 2019). For analyzing qualitative responses however, thematic analysis was applied. The information collected was grouped into themes and analyzed according to the themes. According to Jack (2019), thematic analysis is a method that is used to analyse qualitative data such as a set of text and interview transcripts. This is done by closely examining the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. For this study, the grouping of data into themes was done by firstly identifying similar patterns and reoccurring responses and later categorized them into major themes bases on similar and reoccurring responses. This was important in order to among other reasons avoid repetitions and/or duplication of findings.

In order to answer the specific objectives, the following methods were used:

3.6.1: Objective 1: To assess the levels of stress among IAPRI employees.

In order to answer this objective, this study used a self-assessment of stress. This self-assessment was done through a single question. It further used the following stressors to analyze the level of stress: (i) Excessive workloads – task design stressor, (ii) insufficient workloads – task design stressor, (iii) lack of control over work activities – organizational structure/climate/ management style stressor, (iv) bullying or harassment – interpersonal relationships stressor, (v) ineffective management, (vi) job insecurity – career development stressor and (vii) poor physical environment – environment stressor. These standards were adopted from Murphy (2007) and applied for this study.

3.6.2: Objective 2: To determine whether or not IAPRI employees have adequate work-life balance

In determining whether or not IAPRI employees had adequate work-life balance, this study adopted the standards set by the Workplace Health Toolkit to Assist Small Businesses (Health and Safety Authority, 2018) which included the following 5 standards as making a complete work-life balance for employees; (i) employees work between 5 to 9 hours in a day, (ii) employees do not have to travel more than 1 hour to and from work, (iii) employees have and take advantage of proper rest and eating periods within their working day/night, (iv) employees have interests/pursuits outside the workplace and (v) employees have time left to engage in other

activities that have no connection to work. This study considered the respondents who answered “Yes” to all these five (5) parameters to have a work-life balance but any respondent who answered “No” to at least one (1) of the parameters above was considered to have a work-life imbalance.

3.6.3: Objective 3: To evaluate the factors influencing stress among IAPRI employees

In identifying the factors influencing stress, the study asked the respondents to list in order of priority the top causes of stress among staff. Based on the information which was collected, the responses were ranked in order of priority and the factors influencing stress were identified based on the ranking. The responses that appeared most and ranked first by most respondents were considered as the top causes of stress among employees.

3.6.4: Objective 4: To explore employee perceptions on how they feel work-life balance affects their productivity

Under this objective, the questionnaire included qualitative questions regarding how work-life balance affected their productivity and how their perception was with regards work-life balance among staff. Thematic Analysis was used to analyze the qualitative responses by grouping the responses into themes (groups with common responses).

3.7: Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was conducted at IAPRI, an organisation which was purposively selected. It used a mixed methods design and data collection using a structured questionnaire was done using an online data platform namely Survey Monkey. In addition, key informant interviews were conducted with purposively selected individuals in order to supplement the data that was collected using a structured questionnaire through Survey Monkey. In order to analyse the levels of stress among IAPRI employees, this study first applied a self-assessment of stress. Furthermore, a number of stressors as adopted from Murphy (2007) were applied to assess the level of stress. In order to determine whether or not IAPRI employees had adequate work-life balance, this study adopted the standards set by the Workplace Health Toolkit to Assist Small Businesses (Health and Safety Authority, 2018). For the factors influencing stress among IAPRI employees, the study asked the respondents to list in order of priority the top causes of stress among staff. The responses were ranked in order of priority. Lastly, thematic analysis was used to analyse the objective of exploring employee perceptions on how they felt work life balance affected their productivity.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1: Introduction

This section contains details of the analyses of the data according to each specific objective. In this section, results are presented starting with the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of respondents and thereafter results for the specific objectives of the study.

4.2: Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

Table 3 shows the distribution of the respondents by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. In terms of sex distribution, most of the respondents (59.3 percent) were male while 40.7 percent were female.

Table 3: Demographic and Socioeconomic characteristics

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Sex		
Male	16	59.3
Female	11	40.7
Marital Status		
Single	7	25.9
Married	20	74.1
Highest level of Education		
Grade 12 or equivalent	4	14.8
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	2	7.4
Master's degree or equivalent	19	70.4
PhD or equivalent	2	7.4
Household size		
1-2	8	29.6
3-4	8	29.6
5-6	7	26.0
7-8	4	14.8
Work Category		
Senior Management	2	7.4
Middle Management	13	48.1
Non-Management	12	44.4

In addition, the majority of the respondents were married (74.1 percent) while the rest were single and in terms of the highest level of education attained, the majority of the respondents which was 70.4 percent had acquired a Master's degree or equivalent as their highest level of education while the least were those who had acquired a Bachelor's degree or equivalent or PhD or equivalent at

7.4 percent each. In terms of household size, most of the respondents had 1-2 and 3-4 people in their households while the least were those whose household size was 7-8 people at 14.8 percent. In terms of the distribution of respondents by work category, the majority of the respondents were in the middle management (48.1 percent) followed by non-management at 44.4 percent each while the least (7.4 percent) were in the senior management category.

4.3: Specific Objective number 1: To assess the levels of stress among IAPRI employees

In order to assess the levels of stress among IAPRI employees, the analysis was done in 2 parts. Firstly, a self-assessment by the respondents as to whether they were stressed or not. This was done using a single question i.e Are you stressed or not?. Furthermore, the following stressors were used to assess the level of stress (i) excessive workloads, (ii) insufficient workloads, (iii) lack of control over work activities, (iv) bullying or harassment, (v) ineffective management, (vi) job insecurity and (vii) poor physical environment. These standard stressors were adopted from Murphy (2007) in a paper entitled “Occupational Stress Management: Current Status and Future Direction in Organizational Behaviour”. In this study, these standards were measured and quantified on a likert scale i.e strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree (See Table 9).

Self-Assessment of stress levels: Figure 4 shows the percentage of respondents who reported being stressed or not. The majority (53.3 percent) of the respondents reported that they were not stressed while the rest reported that they were stressed.

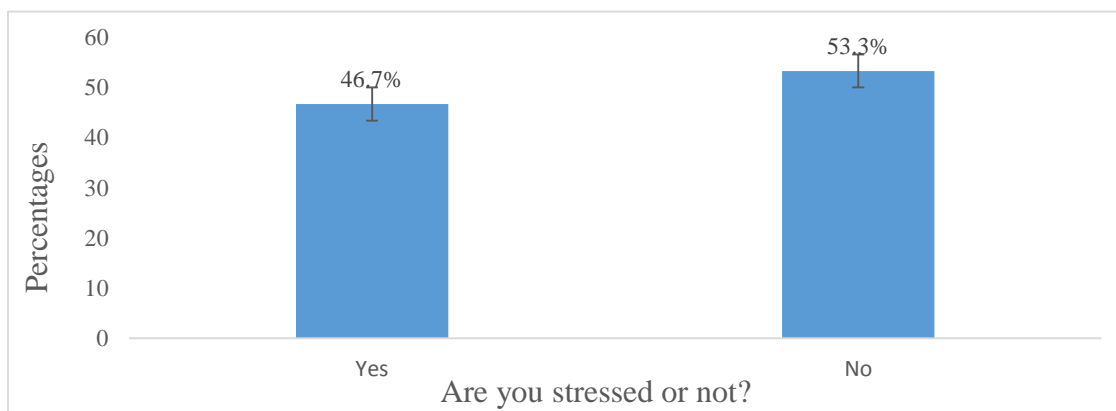


Figure 4: Self-assessment of stress

Furthermore as highlighted in Table 4, the study revealed that of those who reported to be stressed, 57.1 percent were female while 42.9 percent were male. An analyses using the independent sample t-test however revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females as to

whether they felt they were stressed or not ($p = 0.598$). See outputs of these analyses are contained in Tables 5 and 6 for details.

Table 4: Stress by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics

Characteristic	Are you stressed or not?	
	Yes	No
Sex		
Male	42.9	25.0
Female	57.1	75.0
Marital Status		
Single	28.6	25.0
Married	71.4	75.0
Highest level of Education		
Grade 12 or equivalent	0.0	28.6
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	14.3	0.0
Master's degree or equivalent	85.7	57.1
PhD or equivalent	0.0	14.3
Household size		
1-2	28.6	33.3
3-4	28.6	33.3
5-6	14.3	33.3
7-8	28.6	0.0
Work Category		
Senior Management	0.0	12.5
Middle Management	71.4	25.0
Non-Management	28.6	62.5

Table 5: Group Statistics: Stress and Sex (male, female)

Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
In your view, do you think you are stressed at work? Male	16	1.56	.512	.128
Female	11	1.45	.522	.157

Table 6: Independent Samples Test: Stress and Sex (male, female)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% C. I. of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
In your view, do you think you are stressed at work?	Equal variances assumed	.026	.873	.534	25	.598	.108	.202	-.309	.524
	Equal variances not assumed			.532	21.374	.600	.108	.203	-.314	.530

In addition, 71.4 percent of the respondents who reported to be stressed were married while 28.6 percent of the respondents who reported to be stressed were single. Analyses revealed that there was no significant difference between those who were married and those who were not married with regards to whether they felt they were stressed or not ($p > 0.05$). These results are summarised in Tables 7 and 8. Furthermore, there was no statistical difference in reported stress with regards to the level of management ($p = 0.220$).

Table 7: Group Statistics: Stress and Marital Status

Marital status		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
In your view, do you think you are stressed at work?	Single	7	1.43	.535	.202
	Married	20	1.55	.510	.114

Table 8: Independent Samples Test: Stress and Marital Status

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% C. I. of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
In your view, do you think you are stressed at work?	Equal variances assumed	.042	.840	-.536	25	.597	-.121	.227	-.588	.346
	Equal variances not assumed			-.523	10.115	.612	-.121	.232	-.638	.395

In addition, 27.3 percent of the married respondents were female while 72.7 percent were male. Furthermore, of all the respondents who reported to be stressed, 85.7 percent had a Master's degree or equivalent as their highest level of education, followed by those with a Bachelor's degree or equivalent (14.3 percent) while none of those with a Grade 12 or equivalent or PhD or equivalent reported being stressed. In terms of household size, the respondents who reported to be stressed were mostly from households with household sizes of 1-2, 3-4 and 7-8 people. The low stress level among respondents with the household size of 5-6 people could be as a result of their ability to balance between work and family. The ones with household sizes in the lower brackets (1-2 and 3-4) could be more stressed because they were most likely just starting their families while those with the household sizes of 7-8 people could have been having challenges balancing between their work and large household size. However, this may need more investigations to provide further insights. In terms of management portfolio, the majority of the stressed workers were in middle

management (71.4 percent) followed by those in non-management position (28.6 percent) while none of those from senior management reported being stressed.

The majority (92.3 percent) of the respondents who revealed that they were stressed reported that the stress was as a result of a lot of work which was not initially planned for and thus not part of the annual work plan. These respondents cited heavy workloads coupled with tight deadlines which required them to work even during weekends and after normal working hours as another major cause of stress. For instance, one respondent reported the following:

“The workload is a lot. I usually have a backlog of work to complete over the weekends or after work hours. Sometimes the supervisor wants us to work during weekend”

For those who reported that they were not stressed, they avoided work-related stress by among other things doing enough non-work related activities during non-working hours which helped them to refresh (73.3 percent), taking enough leave and do sports during weekends and planning work activities and leaving time to relax afterwards (13.35 percent). Furthermore, other respondents (13.35 percent) revealed that they only do work related activities during work hours. One respondent reported the following:

“I only do office work during office hours and not outside”

In addition, only 13.3 percent of the respondents revealed that stress from personal life negatively affected their work while 86.7 percent reported that stress from personal life did not negatively affect their work. The reasons given here were that anything that affects someone from family was more likely going to affect performance and that when stress is emotionally induced, it affects the thinking process and devotion to work. Furthermore, the study revealed that the roles the employees had outside work had the potential to influence their work stress levels in the following ways:

- i. Affects the delivery and quality of outputs: this can affect overall performance at work hence induce some stress;
- ii. Can reduce concentration on work, thereby increasing the chances of non-performance;
- iii. Can contribute towards lack of time for resting; and
- iv. Personal roles that are not related to work, but are done during work hours increase the level of stress;

Not only this, 60 percent (16 respondents) reported that working too much causes stress that affects personal life. However among these, one respondent revealed that IAPRI employees at middle and lower levels tended to do more work compared to those at higher levels and hence they were the most stressed employees. In the same line, another respondent revealed that there was need for management to stop using employees as mere tools for doing work. This respondent reported the following:

“Management needs to stop looking at employees as mere tools of achieving their goals and objectives, but as partners in attaining it's mandate and ensure that their welfare is well looked into. Perhaps members of staff should have a representative who sits in the Executive Committee and Management meetings to represent all non-management staff members”

Key informant interviews to discuss the alleged revelations by two respondents that middle and lower level members of staff did more work compared to those who were in higher positions were conducted. The discussions revealed that the load and type of work each member of staff was given was in line with their terms of references which were specified in individual contracts and that it was just a perception that the staff in higher positions did not have more work compared to the other members of staff. Furthermore, key informant discussions was revealed the work description in individual which was specified in individual contracts largely determined the work load and that management ensured that this work load was balanced. In addition, compensation of the members of staff was largely based on the position and qualification and each position had its own terms of references, which the holder was expected to fulfill. At the end of each financial year, each member was evaluated based on their performance against the assigned work. The source revealed that nothing much could be done because that is how the system was designed. Perhaps, the best that could happen was to enhance communication among members of staff and educate them on how the system worked. This system was designed to ensure that the highest level of productivity was attained while making sure that individuals were adequately compensated for their skills, experience and level of responsibility.

In addition, while the majority respondents (23 respondents) attributed stress to high workloads, some respondents (4) revealed that what caused stress was that there was an imbalance in pay; people who were paid less worked more and vice versa. They stressed the need for equal pay for equal work and that any additional roles needed to be compensated with an additional pay in order

to reduce stress. However, further key informant interviews revealed that the compensation structure was largely based on the position and qualification, and only the workers who were in the lowest category were eligible for compensation for extra time worked (e.g overtime). Each position had specified work requirements and the members of staff who were in middle management and higher were not eligible for overtime allowance.

Assessment of stress using Stressors: In order to assess the levels of stress among IAPRI employees, this study further looked at the six stressors outlined in Table 9.

Table 9: Percent distribution of Work Stressors

Stressor	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have excessive workloads	7.1	35.7	14.3	35.7	7.1
Sufficient workloads	21.4	35.7	0.0	21.4	21.4
I do not have control over my work activities	7.1	21.4	13.3	57.1	0.0
I am bullied or harassed at work	0.0	7.1	14.3	21.4	57.1
There is job insecurity at work	0.0	14.3	42.9	21.4	21.4
I work in a poor physical environment	0.0	7.1	14.3	57.1	21.4

In terms of excessive workloads, the 7.1 percent and 35.7 percent of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they had excessive workloads. For the workloads, 21.4 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively as to having sufficient workloads.

In terms of control over work activities, 7.1 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that they had no control over their work activities and 21.4 percent of the respondents that they had not control over their work activities. In addition, significant percentages of the respondents agreed that they were bullied or harassed at work, felt that there was job insecurity and that they worked in a poor physical environment. Physical environment in this study was the general environment in which members of staff spent their time working at the offices. From the analysis, it is clear that a significant percentage of IAPRI staff go through some of the stressors as highlighted in Table 9. This is a confirmation of the results highlighted in Figure 3 which shows that close to half (46.7 percent) of the staff viewed themselves as being stressed. In addition to the information presented in Table 9, 6.7 percent of the respondents agreed that there was ineffective management and they did not get full support from their supervisors and 33.5 percent agreed that they were not well remunerated. Further key informant interviews revealed that the challenge of workers being

stressed as a result of huge workloads was being addressed. One way through which this challenge was being addressed was by limiting the number of outputs each employee was expected to produce, and encouraging all members of staff to take their leave days.

4.4: Specific Objective number 2: To determine whether or not IAPRI employees have adequate work life balance

In assessing whether IAPRI employees had adequate work-life balance, this study adopted the standards set by the Workplace Health Toolkit to Assist Small Businesses (Health and Safety Authority, 2018) which includes the following 5 standards as making a complete work-life balance for employees;

- i. Employees work between 5 to 9 hours in a day;
- ii. Employees do not have to travel more than 1 hour to and from work;
- iii. Employees have and take advantage of proper rest and eating periods within their working day/night;
- iv. Employees have interests/pursuits outside the workplace; and
- v. Employees have time left to engage in other activities that have no connection to work.

This study considered the respondents who answered “Yes” to all these five (5) parameters to have a work-life balance but any respondent who answered “No” to at least one (1) of the parameters above was be considered to have a work-life imbalance. The results revealed that in IAPRI, only 22.2 percent of the employees had work life balance while the others (77.8 percent) did not have work life balance.

In terms of the work-life balance standards as shown in Table 10, the study revealed that significant percentages of employees did not experience the work-life balance standards.

Table 10: Respondents views on Work-Life Balance standards

Work-life balance standard	Yes	No
I work between 5 to 9 hours a day	85.7	14.3
I do not have to travel for more than 1 hour to and from work	46.7	53.3
I have and take advantage of proper rest and eating periods within my working day	92.9	7.1
I have interest/pursuits outside the workplace	57.1	42.9
I have time left to engage in other activities that are not related to work	64.3	35.7

For instance, majority of the respondents (53.3 percent) had to travel for more than 1 hour to and from work and a significant percentage reported not to have interests/pursuits outside their workplace. In terms of the travel time to and from work, it did not consider traffic or distance but merely on average how long an individual took to travel to and from work. In addition, a significant percentage (35.7 percent) of the employees did not have time left to engage in non-work related activities. However, the survey revealed that the majority of employees had and took advantage of proper rest and eating periods within working days, but significant percentages did not agree that they were experiencing other work life balance standards.

In addition, 37.5 percent of the employees who had interests/pursuits outside the workplace had work-life balance³ while none of the respondents who had no pursuits/interests outside work had work-life balance. Furthermore, those who reported to have pursuits/interests outside their workplace spent from 0.14 to 2.1 days per week on these other pursuits/interests. Not only this, 53.3 percent of all the respondents revealed that better pay conditions did not exist as a mechanism of ensuring effective work-life balance in IAPRI. Table 11 shows the responses with regards to the benefits of balancing work and personal life. The results as seen from table 11 clearly revealed that all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that having a balance between work and personal life allows acceptable time for family and work life, reduces stressful work routines, facilitates time for self-development and allows for a chance to raise children.

Table 11: Benefits of balancing work and personal life (Percentages)

Benefits	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Allows acceptable time for family life and work life	80.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Reduces stressful work routines	57.1	42.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Facilitates time for self-development	60.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	6.7
Allows chance to raise children	71.4	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

This clearly shows that staff in IAPRI understood the importance of balancing work and personal life. For the 6.7 percent respondents who strongly disagreed that balancing work and personal life

³ 37.5 % of the employees who had pursuits/interests outside the workplace also answered “Yes” to the other four (4) Work-life balance standards.

facilitates time for self-development, the key characteristics were that they were female, single and had a master’s degree or equivalent. The marital status could mean that they may not be faced with challenges of having to manage a family, which in this case could have influenced their response. This is because the married workers who are raising families are most likely to be faced with challenges of balancing work and family life responsibilities.

4.5: Specific Objective number 3: To evaluate the factors influencing levels of stress among IAPRI employees

In establishing the factors influencing stress among employees, respondents were asked to list the top 3 factors that influences stress among IAPRI employees in order of priority and the results are highlighted in Table 12.

Table 12: Factors influencing stress among IAPRI employees

Factor	Order of priority		
	1st	2 nd	3 rd
Too much workload	35.7%	7.14%	
Short deadlines	7.14%	7.14%	
Ad hoc responsibilities	7.14%		
Role ambiguity and conflict	7.14%		
Low job satisfaction		7.14%	
No distinction between personal and professional relationships			7.14%
Less time for equally important things		7.14%	
Working throughout leave most times		7.14%	

From Table 12, it is clear that the biggest challenge that was influencing stress levels among IAPRI staff was “too much workloads”. This was identified by 35.7 percent of the respondents as the top most challenge that contributed to stress levels among staff. Furthermore, some respondents (7.14 percent) revealed that short deadlines for work, ad hoc responsibilities that came as a result of demands by external partners to do some work and role ambiguity were the top most challenges regarding high levels of stress among members of staff. Some respondents revealed that low job satisfaction was one of the major causes of stress among members of staff. Other challenges regarding stress included lack of professionalism especially with regards to personal and professional relationships, less time for staff to engage in other personal things and working throughout leave in most times. For instance, on workloads one respondent stated that:

“One of the challenges was having too many outputs to deliver coupled with strict deadlines”

Another respondent stated that huge workloads was a top challenge with regards work-life balance. This was coupled by the expectations from the supervisor to always be available to do work even outside normal working hours and leave times. In the same line, another respondent stated that:

“During the year, we have a number of emerging work⁴ to attend to. Also there is no time to rest especially after work-related travels”

From this analysis, it is clear that the biggest challenge influencing stress was too much workloads. Other factors as seen from Table 9 also contributed to stress levels.

4.6: Specific Objective number 4: To explore employee perceptions on how the level of work life balance affects their productivity

In terms of perceptions, the analysis looked at how the work life balance affected their productivity. This was achieved through thematic analysis. In addition, this analysis further looked at policies and practices that supported work life balance among the members of staff. Furthermore, suggestions from the respondents on what needed to be done in order to enhance work-life balance among employees were analysed.

The major challenge with regards work-life balance identified in this study was the heavy workload on employees. In order to resolve this challenge, the study respondents observed that there was need to stick to the approved work plan and reduce on the number of ad hoc activities⁵. This should be enhanced by encouraging members of staff to take their leave days and during their leave time, supervisors should avoid giving such employees work as had been the trend. Employees that are unable to take up their leave due to work overload should be paid for the lost leave days. In the same line, the study revealed that the employees who get extra work due to ad hoc activities should be compensated as a motivation for the extra work done.

Some respondents felt that salary compensations were not based on work done as some employees who were allegedly highly paid were not performing better than others who were lowly paid. For instance, the respondents revealed that salaries were largely based on qualifications and position rather than outputs and this made the people with high qualifications and ranks to be highly paid,

⁴ Emerging work: This is work that is not originally planned on the annual work plan: it comes as adhoc work.

⁵ Ad hoc activities: IAPRI gets requests from stakeholders to carry out certain activities and once the Institute agrees to do these activities, they are allocated to employees to execute. These activities were not on the approved work plan; therefore, it entails that the employees would have to do more than what they planned for.

even if some were performing below expectations. Some study respondents felt that in as much as people with higher qualifications and positions needed to generally be compensated more, there was need to also place more emphasis on the work done because ultimately, the performance of any employee is what matters most. In addition, the study revealed that even among employees with same or similar qualifications, the remuneration gap was evident, but this was largely due to the positions these people held as well and/or the salary compensation history especially for those who joined IAPRI from other institutions as they negotiated their conditions of service at the time of entry in IAPRI. However, this situation was cited to be among some of the causes of low job satisfaction. Key informant interviews revealed that the compensation system is largely based on the position and qualifications which an employee held. Perhaps the solution to handle this was to better inform the members of staff on how the system works in order to make them understand this perceived challenge. In addition, the study revealed that there was need to clearly define roles for each employee because some employees ended up performing duties which they were not employed to do and as a result contributing to the chances of being stressed. Each employees' contract clearly specified the terms of reference, but some respondents felt that some employees ended up doing what they were not employed to do. Supervisors pushing their work onto their supervisees was one of the examples which was cited here as it was alleged that these supervisees ended up doing work which their supervisors were supposed to do and were paid for. Despite having challenges with regards work-life balance as identified under 4.5, the study revealed that there existed some policies which were key to ensuring work-life balance among employees. One of the identified policy was the Leave Policy which among other things encompassed maternity, paternity, annual, sick and compassionate leave. The number of male respondents that had taken paternity leave could not be established. However, this paternity leave was for a period of 7 days and it was in line with the period provided for by the Zambian law. The Employment Code Bill Number 7 of 2019 states that *“Subject to an agreement between an employer and an employee which is more favourable to the employee than the provisions of this section, a male employee who remains in continuous employment with the same employer for a period of twelve months immediately preceding the beginning of leave under this section is entitled to at least five continuous working days paternity leave, if – (a) the employee is the father of the child; (b) the employee has submitted to the employer a birth record of the child; and (c) the leave is taken within seven days of the birth of a child”* (The Zambian Parliament, 2019). The IAPRI

Human Resources (HR) and Administration manual states that *“married male employees shall be granted Seven (7) days as paternity leave upon birth of their biological child/children. The leave shall be taken at intervals of two years beginning from the last day of previous paternity leave or twelve months from the date of engagement”* (Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute, 2012). This shows clear consistency with the provisions of the law. The only difference is that while the Employment Bill of 2019 does not specify that a male employee should be married or not, the IAPRI HR and Administration manual limits paternity leave only to married employees. For the annual leave, employees are encouraged to take their leave days as any remaining or untaken days cannot be moved to the next financial year.

In addition, this study revealed that the upcoming Gender Policy for the Institution seemed to be addressing some of the challenges relating to work-life balance including inadequacy of time to spend with families which is as a result of too much work loads. For instance, in order to further promote and enhance work-life balance, the Gender Policy had committed to promote family friendly provisions in the IAPRI policies including facilitating child care support for parents such as onsite day care facilities and providing child care support of up to six (6) months to parents with newborn children whilst travelling on official trips (Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute, 2017). The study revealed that management had come up with an initiative to make the last Friday of each month as a half day in order to allow staff do activities like sports and other social games in the afternoons as a way of trying to address the challenge of stress. This initiative though existed on paper, was not actualized as at the time of this study.

In order to reduce the levels of stress and ensure work-life balance, most study respondents suggested that a number of things needed to be done. The first thing that needed to be done to ensure work-life balance was to declare Friday afternoons off for all staff. This can be achieved by starting work at 07:30hrs or knocking off at 17:30hrs from Monday to Thursday in order to compensate for the time lost in the free Friday afternoons. The 40 work hours needed for members of staff to work in a week would still be covered with this proposed schedule because starting work early and leaving work late by 30 minutes would still compensate the lost 4 hours of the Friday afternoons. One possible disadvantage for this proposal is that it might not work perfectly for some especially the working parents who may have other family duties like taking children to and from school. The study respondents suggested that IAPRI should look at the possibility of introducing

'flex time' for employees in order to make them have more control over the time they work, but ensuring that at the end of it all they complete the total number of work hours they are supposed to commit to IAPRI's work. The "flex time" idea entails either coming early for work and leaving early or coming late and leaving late, so long the employee meets the total number of working hours he/she is supposed to complete. This would make the employees have more control over their time. However, one key disadvantage of flex time is the lack of supervision of employees who decide to be working during non-traditional hours (e.g those who decide to work before 8hrs or after 17hrs).

In line with capacity building, the study respondents felt that it was important to introduce an educational policy for members of staff in order to help them progress in education. They revealed that any member who opted to go and further their studies had to resign, meaning that their position remained vacant as it was the policy of IAPRI that anyone who resigned to take up further studies had to vacate his or her position. However, key informant discussions revealed that management was offering positions to people who returned back from their studies provided that there was a position within the institution which would fit their qualifications and skills. Furthermore, the respondents suggested the introduction of role-related capacity building activities in order to strengthen the ability of each staff to perform better in their respective roles. This was echoed through the key informant interviews and that the solution lied in restructuring the capacity building program in order for it to directly respond to the specific skills needs of employees in their respective positions. The respondents further urged better communication and good planning among members of staff in order to increase the chances of good performance. In the same line, some study respondents revealed that they felt that there was need to introduce a system for objective performance appraisal and representation of non-management staff in the management and executive committee meetings in order to ensure that the interests of the non-management staff were well represented. In terms of performance appraisal, the study revealed that these were done on an annual basis though some respondents asserted that these were not objectively done and the results of these appraisals were largely dependent on patronage. The reason given here was that instead of the member of staff having an input during the appraisal process, the decision for performance appraisal scores was largely the preserve of the supervisor. They alleged that this system may not be perfect because it was largely one sided. Despite this assertion of lack of objectivity during performance appraisals, IAPRI has a laid down performance management

system whose objectives include giving staff a clear idea of what they need to achieve and how their performance would be assessed, making staff work objectives be part of their daily lives and help them build their skills through ongoing coaching and support. Performance appraisals were done annually. Every year, each member of staff typically has one formal performance management meeting with their supervising officer(s). This normally takes place at the end of the year, when the final performance review is done. Before transitioning into a new year, each member of staff develops a work plan in consultation with their supervising officer(s) including targets and expected standards of delivery. He or she agrees with the supervising officer(s) how to go about meeting these targets and standards, identifying areas for development and the support that is required to achieve the targets. The performance assessments then are based on the achieved targets that were agreed in the work plan (Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute, 2012). Initially, a salary increment of up to 5 percent (maximum 5 percent) based on the results of the performance appraisal was implemented, but as at the time of this study, this system of annual salary increments no longer existed.

In summary, the descriptive statistics revealed that 74.1 percent of the respondents were married while the rest were single. Furthermore, 70.4 percent had attained a master's degree or equivalent as the highest level of education. The majority (48.1 percent) of the respondents were in middle management, 44.4 percent in non-management and 7.4 percent in senior management. In terms of assessment of stress levels, 46.7 percent of the respondents were stressed and there were no significant differences in stress between males and females as well as between those who were married and single. Using stressor, the study revealed that most of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to have experienced some form of stressors. Furthermore, this study revealed that 22.2 percent of the respondents had adequate work life balance while the rest did not have. The findings further revealed that the biggest factor that was influencing stress was huge workloads. Other factors including short deadlines, ad hoc responsibilities and role ambiguity and conflict were highlighted to be influencing the high levels of stress. In addition, in order to address the challenges, there should be deliberate efforts to manage the workload by sticking to the approved work plan, continue encouraging members of staff to take leave days and consider giving incentives to members of staff doing extra work among other mitigation measures.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter firstly focuses on discussing the findings of the study contained in chapter 4 as well as how these findings relate to the available literature. Further, a detailed discussion of how the findings relate to the theory used in this study. Lastly, a conclusion of the discussion is given.

One key finding of this study was that a considerable percentage (46.7 percent) of the respondents reported being stressed and of those who reported being stressed, 57.1 percent were females and these findings are in line with available literature. For instance, the American Psychological Association (2020) records that historically women report higher levels of stress than men. However, despite this study having more women reporting stress than men, there were no significant differences in reported stress between males and females. In addition, there were no significant differences in reporting stress between those who were married and those who were not married. Furthermore, the assessment of stress using stressors revealed that most respondents revealed to have experienced most of the stressors which among others included excessive workloads. This finding further solidifies the earlier finding that most of the respondents reported having reported being stressed.

In determining whether or not IAPRI employees had adequate work life balance, the findings of this study revealed that only 22.2 percent of the employees had work life balance while the others did not. This high level of work life imbalance could be highly influenced by the reported level of stress which largely emanates from the reported excessive workloads and other stressors. Some studies have established the link between stress and work life balance. For instance, Meenu *et al.*, (2016) in a study entitled “A review on the impact of work stress on work life balance” using secondary data like journals, websites, newspapers, books, working papers etc established that the major factor that was affecting work life balance was work stress. This study further revealed that the other causes of stress apart from the excessive workloads were short deadlines, ad hoc responsibilities and role ambiguity. This finding confirm other findings from other research studies which had linked short deadlines, ad hoc responsibilities and role ambiguity to stress. Chang and Hancock, 2013 for instance in the study entitled “Role stress and role ambiguity in new nursing graduates in Australia” examined sources of, and changes in, role stress 2-3 months after employment, and 11-12 months later in new graduate nurses. This study which further investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and role stress demonstrated that role ambiguity was the most salient feature in role stress in the first few month of employment, while 10 months later, role overload was the most important factor explaining variances in role stress scores.

This study further revealed that the employees with PhD or equivalent qualifications did not report being stressed. One possible reason could be that there could be a correlation between level of education and stress levels; that is, highly educated people are less likely to be stressed compared to lowly educated people and this hypothesis is supported by some evidence. A study which used data collected in 2010/11 in two comparative studies ('Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe' and the 'English Longitudinal Study of Ageing'; N = 13695) with samples of men and women aged 50 to 60 years from 16 European countries attempted to analyze associations between education and work stress. This study revealed that people with lower educational level experience a higher amount of stressful work (Lunau *et al.*, 2015). Secondly, these employees did not report stress possibly because of the positive effect of the high financial rewards associated with their positions and such effect overshadowed the stress levels that may come with huge workloads. Some studies have attributed huge incentive structures to high levels of job satisfaction, which in turn may reduce stress levels. In this case, it most likely that an employee who is satisfied on the job is less likely to report stress. For instance, one study whose objective was to identify the factors that contribute to job satisfaction of teachers in various colleges of Sialkot, Pakistan revealed that financial rewards was significantly correlated with overall job satisfaction of teachers (Usman *et al.*, 2013). These could be some of the possible reasons these employees did not report being stressed.

The Employment Code Number 7 of 2019 recognizes the need for some factors that were identified in this study. These include, among others, paternity and maternity leave, mother's day and the need for compensation of employees who work beyond the 8 hours of work per day. For instance, the Employment Code specifies that a female employee is entitled to one day's absence from work each month without producing a medical certificate or giving a reason to the employer (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2019). This study revealed that IAPRI recognises and implements some of these provisions stipulated in the Employment Act of 2019 like giving a day off to women as mother's day. In addition, the study revealed that there were attempts to enhance work-life balance among employees by providing the last friday of each month as a half day in order for employees to engage into activities which included sports and other leisure activities. Though this initiative was yet to be actualised as at the time of the study, it is an indication that management was concerned with the state of work-life balance among its members of staff. However, more effort needs to be done in order to address the bottlenecks to work-life balance identified in this study. These include the perceived remuneration gap which largely could be as a

result of information asymmetry between management and members of staff, too much work which mostly is done outside work hours and role ambiguity among others.

Herzberg (1959) in his Two Factor Theory of motivation argues that hygiene factors were essential for the existence of motivation at workplaces and their non-existence could lead to job dissatisfaction. The theory argues that there are physiological needs which the individuals want and expect to be fulfilled and include factors like appropriate and reasonable pay structure, company policies, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, interpersonal relations, job security and many others. This study revealed that there is need to look at the salary compensation structure as some employees felt that salary compensation structure was largely not proportional or in tandem with the work that employees did and was cited as one of the causes of low job satisfaction. Other findings including role ambiguity conflict and lack of compensation for extra work that is usually performed as a result of emerging work could largely be explained within the context of the Herzberg's Two Factor Theory of Motivation. Literature supports these findings and for example, historically low pay or perceived low pay is one of the top reasons workers feel dissatisfied at work. This is largely due to feelings of inequity; meaning that workers are not happy because they feel that their salary compensation is not fair for their skills, effort as well as dedication to their jobs (Riggio, 2014).

In addition, the findings closely fit the conceptual framework (figure 3) which looks at factors influencing Work-Life balance outcomes. For instance, the reported high workloads in this study is a constraint under task variables in the conceptual framework in figure 3. If there is a motivation structure put in place to compensate for the huge workloads, the members of staff may be more flexible to work even when the workloads are too high which falls under the efficiency facilitation variables thereby leading to improved productivity and possibly low staff turnover which in this case is the ultimate outcome as illustrated in figure 5. In reality, figure 5 means that it is possible that if there are huge workloads and there is a compensation structure that is put in place for the members of staff that are given extra work, there can be some flexibility for these members of staff to continue working with no or minimal complaints even with the huge workloads. This is because the incentive (extra pay for extra work) can work as a motivation and in the long run, productivity may be enhanced. This however is a hypothesis which may need to be tested in another study.

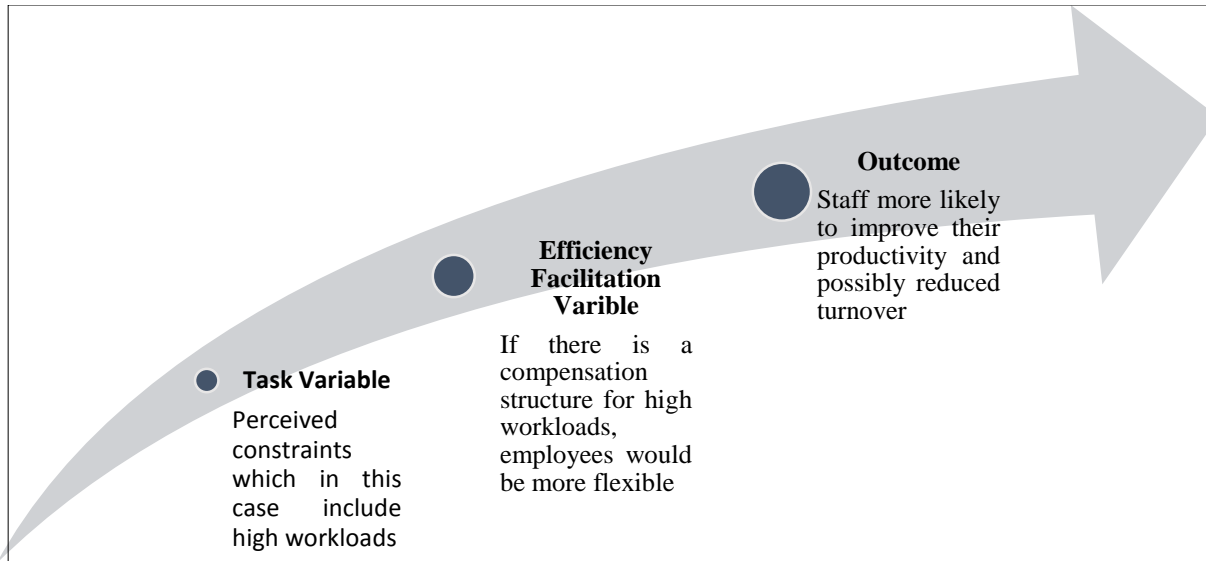


Figure 5: Results Chain for improved productivity and reduced turnover
Source: Authors' Construct

Other theoretical foundations including the transactional theory of work-related stress suggest that stress is a direct product of a transaction between an individual and their environment and this may tax their resources thereby threatening their wellbeing (Lazarus and Folkman, 1987; Lazarus, 1986). Richard Lazarus argued that stress is a product of a transaction between a person including multiple systems, which include cognitive, physiological, affective, psychological and neurological and his or her complex environment.

The theory argues that depending on the amount of demands that a person is confronted with and the amount of resources that an individual has to deal with, stress may either occur or completely be avoided. In this line, this study revealed that some environmental factors within the workplace contributed to the high levels of stress among members of staff. These among others included too much workloads coupled with short deadlines and other ad hoc responsibilities as well as role ambiguity. These challenges coupled with the reduced ability by some members of staff to rest during their leave days and have enough time to concentrate on personal and family interests are a clear indication that the challenge of stress is real in the Institution. This again fits in the Results Chain model adapted from the Conceptual Framework (figure 3) such as role ambiguity can fit under task variables may lead to inability to be flexible to plan well for work and thereby lead to increased stress which ultimately is a negative outcome.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1: Conclusions

This study, though based on one institution, provides a clue as to what the possible challenges with regards to work-life balance may be in institutions with similar or complementary mandates. It could provide a basis for another study targeting many institutions of such nature so as to provide more information about the challenges workers may be having dealing issues of stress and work life balance. It is important therefore to note that even if the contents of this study are limited to IAPRI, the findings and recommendations can provide a basis for a much bigger study that can be inferred to the population.

The first specific objective of this study was focused on investigating the levels of stress among IAPRI employees. This objective had been answered as the results revealed a significant percentage (46.7 percent) of employees reported being stressed and these stress levels varied with sex, marital status, the level of education, household size and the levels of portfolio (whether non-management, middle management or senior management). By implication, this result calls for enhanced efforts to tackle the challenge of stress among employees as this may have negative effects including low productivity and possibly high employee turnover. This study sought to investigate whether IAPRI employees have adequate work-life balance. The results which showed that only 22.2 percent of employees had work-life balance is an indication of the need for management to enhance efforts that are aimed at promoting work-life balance among its employees.

The study sought to evaluate the factors influencing stress among IAPRI employees. Some of the factors that were identified to be influencing high levels of stress included huge workloads, short deadlines, ad hoc responsibilities and role ambiguity and conflict. If not addressed, such factors have the potential to lower job satisfaction and increase levels of stress. These findings have a policy implication on management practices that focus on human resources and administration. For instance, it is important that IAPRI works out a way that allows for employees to be having manageable outputs while contributing effectively to the strategic vision of the Institution. One way to achieve this is to outsource external consultants for any extra work which members of staff may not manage to do at a time due to other competing work deadlines. Other innovations like providing a good incentive structure for ad hoc activities given to employees would be appropriate. Lastly, in terms of perceptions, the study revealed that certain perceptions like lack of objectivity in performance assessments have the potential to negatively affect employee morale which would

ultimately have an effect on productivity. This is another challenge that if not well handled might have negative effects on the performance of the Institution.

6.2: Recommendations

In order to enhance work-life balance, firstly this study this study proposes a deliberate policy to minimise the work load given to staff, while maintaining the highest level of Institutional performance in line with the aspirations of the Institution. Other key considerations under this recommendation is to restructure the way the implementation of the ad hoc activities is done in order to provide for more time for employees to attend to family and personal matters. Other highlighted challenges including role ambiguity need to be rectified in order to allow for employees plan well and execute duties in line with their annual work plans. These matters could be well handled by management as they may call for key policy changes within the Institution. Secondly, the study proposes the revision of the current Human Resources and Administration manual of 2012 to allow single fathers to have paternity leave. This is because the HR and Administration manual only specifies that married men are entitled to paternity leave, a situation which is contrarily to the provisions of the Employment Code of 2019 which does not restrict paternity leave to only married men. This action would be well attended to by the Finance and Administration Directorate as issues relating to employment are under this Directorate.

Thirdly, the study recommends that when an employee goes to pursue further studies (e.g PhD studies), he/she takes up unpaid leave instead of resigning completely, as a way of enhancing staff development efforts and ensuring that the employees with the required level of skills are retained in the Institution. During the time this employee is away for studies, a temporal replacement who is employed for the period the employee is away could be engaged so that there is no gap with regards to work. This recommendation could be taken into consideration by Institute's management. In addition, in order to reduce assertions of non-objectivity in performance assessments, this study recommends that the other employees who may have been working with a particular employee e.g co-authors on certain assignments could be given a chance by particular supervisors to have an input in the evaluation process. This would improve he transparency around the evaluation processes. Furthermore, the study recommends a thorough reveal of the capacity building program in order to adequately respond to the need to design role specific capacity building programs. Lastly, the study recommends the introduction of flex time where members of

staff have the flexibility to alter the time they report for work and leave work, while maintaining the mandatory 8 work hours per day.

6.3: Considerations for future research

The study recommends two key considerations for future research. Firstly, this study can be replicated and expanded on a large scale involving many organizations in order to establish the extent of the problem beyond IAPRI. Finally, further studies may consider investigating the role of family factors and personal life activities in influencing observed or reported stress at work.

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ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL**

PROGRAM: MBA - GENERAL

**TOPIC: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND STRESS LEVELS: A CASE STUDY OF
INDABA AGRICULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IAPRI) EMPLOYEES**

Dear respondent,

My name is Chinyama Lukama, a postgraduate student of Business Administration at the University of Zambia, Graduate School of Business carrying out a research on the above mentioned topic.

This study is purely for academic purposes.

As an employee of IAPRI, you have been randomly selected to take part in this research. Kindly fill in this questionnaire as truthfully as possible as your responses will be of great value to this study. Be assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity.

Thank you for your cooperation

Date:

Questionnaire ID:

Instructions: Please tick in the brackets (✓) provided next to the answer which best expresses your opinion and where no options are given, express your view in the spaces provided.

PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT THIS RESEARCH IS PURELY FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES AND THE DATA COLLECTED HERE SHALL NOT BE USED IN ANY OTHER WAY APART FROM THE COMPILATION OF AN ACADEMIC REPORT.

Tick on the appropriate box or answer and respond to the other questions appropriately

Date: _____ **Gender: Male** **Female**

1. Marital Status

- a) Single
- b) Married
- c) Divorced
- d) Separated
- e) Cohabiting

2. Highest level of education attained

- a) Grade Twelve or equivalent
- b) Certificate or equivalent
- c) Diploma or equivalent
- d) Bachelor's degree or equivalent
- e) Master's degree or equivalent
- f) PhD or equivalent

3. What is your household size? _____

4. How many people in your household are in the following age ranges?

- a) Below 5 completed years
- b) 5-9 completed years
- c) 10-14 completed years
- d) 15-19 completed years
- e) 20+ completed years

5. Which one is your work category?

- a) Senior Management
- b) Middle Management
- c) Non-Management

6. Briefly describe your work in the Organization.

7. How long have you been with the Company (completed years)? _____

8. Kindly give responses to the following statements

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
i. I have excessive workloads					
ii. I have insufficient workloads					
iii. I have manageable workloads					
iv. I do not have control over my work activities					
v. I am bullied or harassed at work					
vi. There is ineffective management at work					
vii. There is job insecurity at work					
viii. I work in a poor physical environment					
ix. I am not worried about losing my job					
x. I am well remunerated for the work which I do					
xi. I take full control of my work activities					
xii. I get full support from my supervisor in the execution of my duties					

9. Kindly respond to the following statements with regards to your work?

Statement	Response	
	Yes	No
i. I work between 5 to 9 hours in a day		
ii. I do not have to travel more than 1 hour to and from work		
iii. I have and take advantage of proper rest and eating periods within my working day		
iv. I have interests/pursuits outside the workplace		
v. I have time left to engage in other activities that have no connection to work		

10. If the answer to Question 10 (iv) is “Yes”, what proportion of your time is dedicated to these pursuits outside your workplace? _____

11. In your own view, do you think you are stressed at work?

- a) Yes
- b) No

12. Please explain your answer in Question 11

13. If your answer in Question 11 is “Yes”, what in your own view do you think are the 3 top causes of stress (in order of priority)?

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

14. If your answer in Question 11 is “No”, what do you do to avoid work-related stress?

15. How does balancing personal life with work-life (work-life balance⁶) benefit an employee? (Tick where appropriate).

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Allows acceptable time for family life and work life					
Reduces stressful work routines					
Facilitates time for self-development					
Allows me a chance to raise children					
Other (explain): _____					

16. Better pay conditions exist as a mechanism for ensuring effective work-life balance

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not sure

17. Does working too much too much cause stress that affects your personal life?

- a) Yes
- b) No

18. If 'Yes' to Question 18, explain your answer.

19. Does stress from personal life affect your work?

- c) Yes
- d) No

20. If 'Yes' to Question 20, explain your answer.

⁶ Work-life balance is the ability to manage balance between work and personal life and to stay productive and competitive at work while maintaining a happy, healthy home life with sufficient leisure, despite having work pressure and endless activities which require your time and attention (Pallavi Mehta, 2015)

21. How do the roles that employees have outside work influence their work stress levels?

22. How do the roles that employees have at work influence their work stress levels?

23. What are the top 3 challenges of work life balance at IAPRI?

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

24. What is your general perception of work-life balance in IAPRI?

25. What would ensure effective work-life balance of Staff in IAPRI?

26. To what extent do you agree that the following work life balance elements have an effect on employee performance?

Elements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Paid leave policies					
Parenting and Pregnancy Policies (e.g Paternity and Maternity leave policies)					
Family supportive work Policies (e.g Employer sponsored child support)					

27. What work-life balance policies exist in IAPRI?

28. Any comments?

Thank you for the responses