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### Influence of Work-Life Balance and Work Engagement on Successful Aging at Work in Uganda Health Sector

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#### Keywords:

Work-Life Balance,  
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The workplace is going through a paradigm shift marked by the presence of employees from four different generations. Yet globally, governments, organizations, and individual health workers have limited guidance on how to facilitate successful ageing at work. The present study adopts the innovative theory to test the influence of work-life balance and work engagement on successful ageing at work in Uganda's health sector. It employed a quantitative approach and specifically a correlational design. The sample consisted of 220 participants from a Municipality health sector, determined using the census sampling design. The study utilized a statistical package for social scientists (SPSS), specifically Pearson's correlation and regression tests to assess the hypotheses. Significant findings indicated that work-life balance and work absorption were significantly associated. Work-life balance and work engagement had 1.5% predictive power over variations in successful ageing at work. However, work-life balance was a highly significant predictor of variance in successful ageing. Human resource policies and practices aimed at sustaining an optimum balance between work and family life including acceptable work schedules, working from home, maternity and paternal leaves; and semi-retirement adjustment counselling and guidance are indicated.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The workplace is going through a paradigm shift marked by the presence of employees from four different generations (Onu & Gabriel, 2020). Because of this generational difference, the shift has led to contemporary changes in work attitudes, work-life policies, work engagement, community norms, and work networks and relationships (Kooij et al., 2020). This trend has prompted international bodies such as the World Health Organization to initiate calls for research into the antecedents and correlates of successful ageing at work. According to Kooij et al. (2020), this is aimed at guiding proactive policy advocacy, policymaking and work climate hybrid interventions. Kooij (2015) also looks at successful ageing at work as the continuous preservation of an individual's ability, health and drive to work until, and even beyond, stipulated retirement. Therefore, organizations can promote successful ageing at work by instituting processes, mechanisms, and conditions that encourage positive subjective and objective work outcomes for employees at various life stages (Kooij, 2015; Zacher, 2015b). These considerations are especially vital for "older employees," defined as those aged 40 or above (Bal et al., 2015), who are typically nearing the end of their career trajectories (Zacher et al., 2018).

To Zacher (2015a) successful ageing preserves existing levels of functioning and includes employee development. Consequently, successful ageing at work should be perceived as an individual's age-related advancement towards a work outcome that shows a positive deviation from the average age-related progression. From this viewpoint, an employee whose work outcome has decreased over time can still be seen as ageing successfully if their progression is more favourable than the average age-related trajectory (Zacher, 2015b). However, an ageing workforce may result in many practical challenges for

institutions yet limited empirical research has focused on employee successful ageing at work.

There are three main pillars on which work engagement thrives: the physical vitality of vigour, the emotional commitment of dedication, and the mental state of absorption. All of these end in an individual's fervour for their job (Bakker et al., 2014). Generally, work engagement is a positive and fulfilling affective state of well-being (Bakker & Leiter, 2017, Garg & Singh, 2020) characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Hines 2022; Schaufeli et al., 2013). Vigour refers to a willingness to engage in high mental energy and persistence despite difficulty (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Dedication emphasizes a strong sense of involvement. This results in feelings of significance, inspiration, and pride in one's work (Bakker et al., 2008). Finally, a sense of being heavily engrossed in one's work such that an individual has difficulties detaching themselves from the job characterizes absorption (Andrianto, & Alsada, 2019). Employees with high levels of work engagement are involved with, committed to, and passionate about their jobs (Attridge, 2009) and are likely to successfully age at work.

Lukmiati (2020), refers to work-life balance as an individual's ability to maintain a balance between work responsibilities and personal needs outside the scope of work. In this study, the indicators used, as explained by Ardiansyah and Surjanti (2020), include balancing responsibilities toward family or the company, allocating work time and other needs, maintaining a healthy social life outside the company, and setting aside time for hobbies. In a nutshell, work-life balance is a concept with three related components, "Time balance," "Engagement balance," and "Satisfaction balance." (Mercado, 2019). It provides an indication of support for employees' efforts to manage their time and energy among family, work, and other essential aspects of their lives. It indicates that employees endeavour to

achieve a balanced quality of life between work and personal life (Anugrah & Priyambodo, 2021).

### Contextual perspective

The 20th century witnessed a surge in global life expectancy by nearly 30 years (Cao et al., 2020). This shift, in conjunction with elements such as enhanced health care and declining birth rates, has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of older adults in the workforce globally (Ann & Blum, 2020). Averagely, the population of the elderly at the workplace is increasing in the labour force and they are expected to continue being steeper in Asia and the Pacific from 40.3% to 42.3%. In Europe and Central Asia, it increased to 42.6% from 41.4% in 2017 (ILO, 2018). However, in Africa and the Arab States where there are many youths who with time will definitely age (ILO, 2019) the increment of the elderly is still negligible.

Although Africa still has a youthful workforce, it is faced with the challenge of ageing but competent experienced employees in medium and large-scale service and manufacturing industries. The African Union in consultation with Age International came up with a “Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing” in 2002. There are about 58 million employees aged 60 years and above in Sub-Saharan Africa. This number is likely to be overwhelming by 2050 and spike to 215 million contributing to a 6% to 10% increment in the population (UNDESA, 2012). However, most countries have done less to come up with policies and practices that can support successful ageing in the workplace. This also calls for national policies to guide organizations on the establishment of better health measures, especially for the elderly to keep them physically and psychologically alive and vibrant in workplaces (Douglass, 2016).

Recent estimates in Uganda (Uganda, 2016; Tassew, 2023) show that the elderly workforce is 1,304,500 and may reach 5,420,000 by 2050. The elderly labour force is employed in both public and private sectors. The retirement age in public service is at 60 years ((Pension Act, 1948, 2006;

Munyambonera et al., 2018). During their tenure, workers spend almost 40 years working with organizations through which they experience a lot of challenges in balancing work roles and family obligations during work engagement. Maintaining high levels of work engagement within a supportive work-life balance environment can enable staff to work until the later stages of their careers (Yadav et al., 2022). Employee engagement is a connection that involves emotions and psychological relationships between employees and their organization, which can manifest in both negative and positive behaviour (Budrienė & Diskienė, 2020). People with a good balance between their work and family life tend to feel happier overall and are more dedicated to their jobs, more efficient and productive.

However, the “National Development Plan II 2015/16–2019/20” reveals that the majority of the elderly experience unsuccessful ageing at the workplace and face hard times after retirement, creating a need for practical solutions. A review by Wood et al. (2020) showed that most research has concentrated on the relationship between work-life balance and work engagement and not on their relationship with successful ageing. This implies that governments, organizations, and individual health workers have little guidance on how to facilitate successful ageing at work. Failure to address the conflict between work and family life roles among health workers may lead to stress spillover, poor semi-retirement adjustment and consequently unsuccessful ageing at work.

### Work-life balance and work engagement

Mache et al. (2013) (cited in Anaya et al., 2023), affirmed that family-friendly practices adopted by an organization enhance work engagement. This implies that, with institutional support, the workers’ impetus to achieve work-life balance may result in enhanced work engagement, heightened commitment, and improved job performance (Anaya et al., 2023). Augmenting this finding, Jaharuddin and Zainol (2019), contend that work engagement enables employees to become effective self-motivated subordinates

who perform their allocated key result areas. This confirms that an organization with the right work engagement conditions possesses a competitive advantage that is challenging and difficult for other firms in the market segment to replicate or imitate.

Arief, et al. (2021) stated that an enhanced work-life balance also affects employee engagement at work. In fact, a company with supportive work-life balance practices is connected to how valued and respected an individual feels, leading to higher levels of individual engagement (Žnidaršič et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies (Žnidaršič & Marič 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2023; Kaewthaworn et al. (2021)) show that implementing family-friendly policies in an organization leads to higher levels of employee engagement. Moreover, employees who are supported by their employer in achieving work-life balance tend to be happier at work and feel more connected to their organization (Waworuntu et al., 2022). However, there has been little focus on work-life balance and work engagement in the human resources of the health sector in Uganda.

### **Work engagement and successful ageing at work**

Research indicates that engaged workers are unlikely to leave their organizations (Tshukudu, 2020; Xiong & Wen, 2020). Consistent with this contention is the finding that work engagement is positively associated with organizational support and positive work climate - factors that negatively predict turnover intention (Petrovic et al., 2017). Past research demonstrates that such engaged cross-generational employees interpret work more as an invigorating challenge than as a mere stressor (Bakker et al., 2014). This distinct viewpoint dampens the impact of workplace stressors on them compared to their less-engaged counterparts.

Studies have further underscored that employees exhibiting high levels of engagement consistently manifest greater positive emotions than those less engaged (Schaufeli, 2012). Moreover, engaged employees radiate a vibrant connection to their

tasks, demonstrate low inclinations to leave their jobs, and often express willingness to continue working past conventional retirement years (Zacher, 2015a; Jongile, 2023). Consequently, these individuals often display a proactive approach, embracing creativity and a keenness to uncover opportunities that amplify their capabilities (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Considering that these traits are paramount for successful ageing (Kooij et al., 2018), it can be surmised that employees with high work engagement are likely to showcase thriving ageing patterns. Moreover, the findings that older employees are more engaged with their work than their younger counterparts (Zacher, 2015a) suggest that age may play an influential role in the display of work engagement.

### **Predictors of successful ageing at work**

Scholars reveal that supportive human resource policies and practices positively relate to successful ageing at work (Cheung & Wu 2012). Indeed as research on successful ageing unfolds, there has been a growing interest in identifying the determinants, correlates, processes, and outcomes of successful ageing at work in the service sector (Kooij, 2015a, 2015b; Zacher, 2015a, 2015b) as they relate to promoting longevity and delaying retirement (Truxillo et al., 2015). Other researchers suggest increasing career opportunities is crucial for fostering successful ageing among older workers (Zacher, 2015b). Moreover, Kooij et al. (2015) argue that older workers strategically make self-initiated changes to align with the intrapersonal changes, thereby allowing for better successful ageing through job crafting. Other researchers (Cosco et al., 2006) focused on developing psychometrically reliable tools to assess the dimensions of successful ageing at work such as adaptability and health, positive relationships, occupational growth, personal security, and continued focus and achievement of personal goals.

In a separate but related stream of research, scholars emphasize the importance of leadership style on older employees' career development and behaviour (e.g., Cheung et al., 2018; Kollmann et



al., 2020). In this, scholars demonstrate that leaders who are more sensitive to the needs of older employees, including work-life balance and engagement, are critical in determining the extent to which these workers age successfully (Koziel et al 2021). For instance, a recent study revealed that the perceived transformational leadership style is related to all the successful ageing at work dimensions (Cheung et al., 2018). However, while these studies have been instrumental in understanding the link between leadership and successful ageing, they do not adequately address how old workers may respond to changes in work-life balance and work engagement parameters. To address this gap an innovative theory was adopted to test the influence of work-life balance and work engagement on successful ageing at work among health sector staff. According to Kar and Misra (2013), employees who are given support by their employer in achieving work-life balance tend to be more satisfied and engaged at their job, feel a greater sense of belonging and are more likely to age successfully in the workplace.

### Theoretical perspective

The present research was influenced by the groundbreaking innovative theory proposed by

Nimrod and Kleiber (2007). These authors integrate continuity theory and the importance of change in the ageing innovation theory to tackle issues related to adjusting to semi-retirement contracts. Innovation theory categorizes two kinds of changes made in old age: self-reinvention innovation (SRI) and self-preservation innovation (SPI). According to the continuity theory, making small adjustments or finding comparable replacements for old activities is known as SPI, while participating in new activities is called SRI. Individuals may turn to SRI when they find it challenging to adapt to post-career life or when they are dissatisfied with the way they have lived, such as not being able to juggle work responsibilities and familial duties. Studies indicate that self-reinvention and self-preservation innovation can coexist and be beneficial if they enhance a feeling of purpose and significance. Having a work-life balance affects how engaged employees are at work (Wood et al., 2020). Employees who are assisted by their employers in achieving work-life balance tend to have more sense of belonging and satisfaction at work (Chaudhuri et al., 2020) and, it is contended, are likely to age successfully at work.

**Fig 1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between work-life balance, work engagement and successful ageing at work (Source: Literature review)**

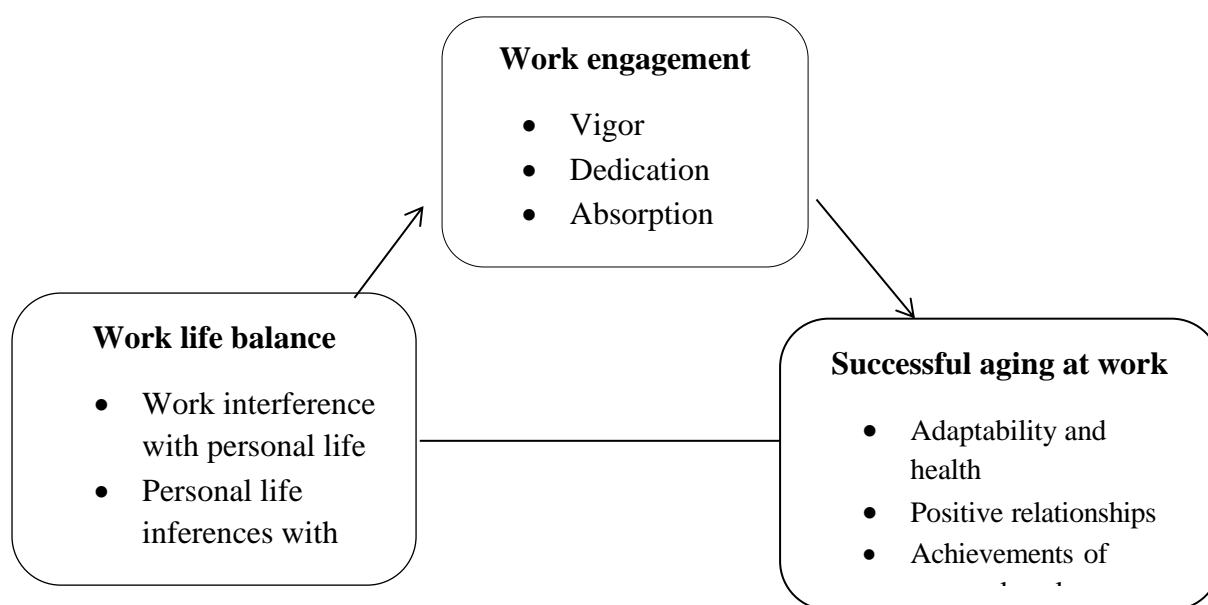


Figure 1 illustrates that employees exhibit work-life balance (independent variable) when they reconcile work roles with personal life obligations despite adversity and setbacks. Work-life balance was postulated to have an indirect influence on successful ageing at work (dependent variable) through work engagement manifested as employee vigour, dedication and absorption. Additionally, work-life balance may directly influence successful ageing at work. This implies that even in the absence of work engagement and other factors, employees with high levels of work-life balance can directly influence successful ageing at work.

### Goal of the study

The purpose of this study was four-fold:

- Assess whether work-life balance is related to work engagement in the health sector
- Establish whether work engagement is related to successful ageing at work.
- Assess the relationship between work-life balance and successful ageing at work
- Assess the predictive power of work-life balance and work engagement on successful ageing at work in the health sector.

### Hypotheses

Further, the study was guided by the following hypotheses:

- Work-life balance is significantly related to work engagement in the health sector
- Work engagement is significantly related to successful ageing at work.
- Work-life balance and successful ageing at work are significantly related.
- Work-life balance and work engagement will significantly predict successful ageing at work.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants and Procedure

The study employed a quantitative approach and specifically a correlational design. The target population involved 220 participants in public and private health centres of Kira municipality, Wakiso district. The participants were determined using the census design where all the 220 health workers were studied. However, only those employees (214 participants) who were physically present at their workstations during the data collection period were included. This exclusion was necessary to maintain the consistency and reliability of the data. The final sample results are shown in the table.

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics**

Variable	Category	%
Age	21-30 years	14.0
	31-40 years	32.6
	41-50 years	30.0
	51-60 years	23.4
Marital status	Single	44.9
	Married	37.9
	Divorced	17.3
Healthy facility foundation	Private	83.6
	Public	16.4
Gender	Males	43.9
	Females	56.1

The study sample consisted of 56.1% females and 43.9% males. A considerable number were aged between 31 and 50 years (62.6%). In terms of

marital status, 44.9% were single, 37.9% married and 17.3% divorced. The majority of participants

(83.6%) were from private health facilities and 16.4% from public health units.

## Measures

### Work engagement

Work engagement was measured using Schaufeli et al.'s. (2006) short form of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) consisting of 9 items, measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ("never") to 5 ("always"). Higher scores were indicative of higher levels of work engagement. Sample items included "At my work, I feel like I am bursting with energy" and "I am enthusiastic about my job." The scale had an internal consistency of  $\alpha = .82$ .

### Successful ageing at work

The successful ageing at work scale consisted of 33 items adopted from Robson et al. (2006). The scale consists of five dimensions: adaptability and health, positive relationships, occupational growth, personal security, and continued focus and achievement of personal goals. They were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Examples of the items include: "I accept suggestions for improving my performance," "I am satisfied with my co-workers," and "My career is still growing." The scale had an internal consistency of  $\alpha = .84$ .

### Work-life balance

This scale comprised 15 items categorized into work interference with personal life (WIPL),

Personal life inferences with work (PLIW), Time-based work to family conflict (TWFC), Time-based family-to-work conflict (TFWC), Strain based work-to-family conflict (SWFC), Strain-based family-to-work conflict (SFWC) as adopted from the work-life balance scale developed by Fisher-McAuley (2003) as by Hayman (2005). Items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and had a high internal consistency of  $\alpha = .77$  which made it valid for the current study on health workers.

## Data analysis

In order to analyze (Hypothesis 1) the levels of work-life balance, work engagement and successful ageing at work across participants' organization tenure, frequencies and percentages were run and means and standard deviations were established. Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were analyzed using Pearson's correlation test. To assess hypothesis 4, Linear and multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive power of work-life balance and work engagement on successful ageing at work.

## RESULTS

### Levels of key study variables across organisation tenure

Participants' organisational tenure was cross-tabulated with key study variables as shown below

**Table 2: Showing mean scores of successful ageing, work-life balance and work engagement across participants' organization tenure**

Variable	Years of service				F	P
	1-3 M(SD)	4-6 M(SD)	7-9 M(SD)	>10 M(SD)		
Successful ageing at work	3.91 (.54)	3.81 (.36)	4.07 (.50)	3.90 (.39)	2.04	.11
Work-life balance	2.79 (.65)	2.73 (.74)	2.80 (.54)	3.82 (.51)	11.14	<.01
Work engagement	3.52 (.51)	4.10 (.34)	3.82 (.51)	3.65 (.16)	27.68	<.01

Source: Field data.  $P < .01$

Regarding successful ageing at work, results indicate that participants with an organisation tenure of 7-9 years had the highest mean score of 4.07(.50) followed by those of 1-3 years mean of

3.91(.54), and those with >10 years of service with a mean of 3.90(.39). However, there was no significant difference in successful ageing across the organisational tenure of health workers.

In terms of work-life balance, participants with organisational tenure of > 10 years had the highest mean score of 3.82(.51) compared to the lowest tenure of 4-6 years with a mean of 2.73(.65). This result indicates that there is a significant difference in work-life balance across years of service (organisation tenure). Those employees with longer tenure and who receive the support of the employer in work-life balance are more satisfied at work and have more sense of belonging (Kar and Misra, 2013).

Lastly, in regard to work engagement, health workers with organisational tenure of 4-6 years registered the highest mean value of 4.10 (.34) compared to tenure of 1-3 years with the lowest mean of 3.52(.51). These findings show that there is a significant difference in work engagement across organisational tenure. Various researchers, yielding mixed findings, have studied the

connection between tenure and employee engagement. Topchyan and Woehler (2021) suggested that years of employee employment could be related to levels of engagement, indicating that longer tenure may lead to higher levels of engagement due to increased experience and familiarity with the organization. Therefore, the findings are inconsistent with earlier studies that found that older employees with long organisational tenure were more engaged with their work than their younger counterparts (Burke et al., 2013; Rigg et al., 2014; Zacher, 2015b).

### Selected Correlates of Successful ageing at work

Pearson's correlation test was run to determine the relationships between variables under study. The correlation coefficients and p values are shown below

**Table 3: Showing correlations between study variables in the health sector:**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Successful Aging at Work	1					
2 Work-Life Balance	.143*					
	.037					
3 Work Engagement	.072	.078				
	.295	.258				
4 Work Engagement Vitality	.069	.008	.825*			
	.314	.904	.000			
5 Work Engagement	.209*	.049	.730*	.596*		
Dedication	.002	.474	.000	.000		
6 Work Engagement	.089	.153*	.718*	.406*	.748*	1
Absorption	.195	.025	.000	.000	.000	

**Source:** Field data. Dependent variable: Successful aging at work. Significant at  $P < .05$

Hypothesis 1: States that work-life balance and work engagement are significantly correlated. Findings show that there is no significant correlation between work-life balance and work engagement ( $r = .078$ ;  $p > .05$ ). However, on segregating work engagement into its constituency subscales (work dedication, work absorption and work vigour/vitality), the results became interesting. The findings indicated that work-life balance was significantly related to work absorption ( $r = .153$ ;  $p < .05$ ); whereas work dedication ( $r = .049$ ;  $p > .05$ ) and vitality ( $r = .008$ ;  $p > .05$ ) were insignificantly related to work-life balance.

Hypothesis 2: states that work engagement and successful aging at work are significantly related. The results also indicate that work engagement is not correlated to successful ageing at work ( $F = .072$ ;  $P > .05$ ). This means that enhancement of work engagement does not directly lead to successful ageing at work. However, results also indicated that work engagement with dedication (subscale) was/is significantly related to successful ageing at work. This finding affirms that health workers who are highly engaged and dedicated to their work placement are likely to exhibit successful ageing at work.



Hypothesis 3: The third hypothesis stated that work-life balance and successful ageing at work are significantly related. Results indicate a low but significant correlation between work-life balance and successful ageing at work ( $r = .143$ ;  $p < .05$ ). This shows that as the levels of work-life balance improve there is likely to be a concurrent improvement in successful ageing at work in the health sector.

### Variables that contribute to successful ageing at work

Hypothesis 4: states that work-life balance (WLB) and work engagement (WE) significantly predict successful ageing at work in the health sector. The results are shown below:

**Table 4 shows a linear regression analysis of variables that contribute to successful ageing**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.444	.259		13.299	.000
1 WLB	.086	.042	.138	2.025	.044
WE	.057	.063	.061	.896	.371

a. Dependent Variable: Successful aging  $F = 2.069$ ; adjusted  $R^2 = .015$ ;  $P < .05$

The results show that work-life balance and work engagement have 1.5% predictive power over successful ageing at work. However, work-life balance ( $\beta = .138$ ;  $t = 2.025$ ;  $p < .05$ ) is a highly significant predictor of variance in successful ageing at work. Given that only one variable in the model is significantly linked to variations in

successful ageing at work, the hypothesis is accepted for only work-life balance. Therefore, successful ageing at work varies as a function of improved ratings on work-life balance.

### Multiple regression of selected predictors of successful aging at work

**Table 5: Multiple regression of selected predictors of successful ageing at work in the health sector**

	Model 1	Model 2
	B	$\beta$
Constant (B)	3.651	3.444
Work-life balance	.089	.086
Work engagement	—	.057
$R^2$	.020	.024
Adjusted $R^2$	.016	.015
$\Delta R^2$	.020	.004
F	4.420	2.609
Significance	.037	.076

Model 1: Work-life balance accounted for 2% variance in successful ageing at work ( $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ;  $F = 4.420$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and the model was statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

Model 2: Work engagement accounted for 0.4% variation in successful ageing at work ( $\Delta R^2 = .004$ ;  $F = 2.609$ ;  $p > .05$ ). The model was not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

### Relationship between work-life balance and work engagement

Findings demonstrated a significant relationship between work-life balance and work absorption; however, no significant associations were found between work dedication and work vigour with work-life balance. The positive correlation between work-life balance and work absorption

aligns partially with the findings of Arief et al. (2021), which suggested that improved work-life balance enhances employees' absorptive engagement in the workplace (Anaya et al., 2023). These results corroborate previous studies (Žnidaršič & Marič 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2023), which established that family-friendly policies implemented by organizations contribute to increased work engagement.

Additionally, Mache et al. (2013) (as cited in Anaya et al., 2023) emphasized that family-friendly practices positively influence work engagement. Support from the organization for work-life balance is connected to how individuals feel valued and respected within the organization (Cvenkel, 2021), ultimately leading to increased individual engagement. Moreover, studies by Žnidaršič, and Bernik (2021) and Kaewthaworn et al. (2021) have shown that implementing family-friendly initiatives in a company leads to higher levels of employee engagement.

### **Relationship between work engagement and successful ageing at work.**

Results revealed a significant relationship between dedicated work engagement (dedication subscale) and successful ageing at work. This suggests that health workers who demonstrate high levels of engagement and dedication in their roles are more likely to experience successful ageing in the workplace. Dedicated work engagement fosters a profound sense of involvement, leading to feelings of significance, inspiration, and pride in one's work (Bakker et al., 2014). This finding aligns partially with the assertions of Cheung and Wu (2013); Zacher, (2015a) and Jongile, (2023), who indicated that engaged employees exhibit a vibrant connection to their tasks, low intentions to leave their positions, and often express a desire to continue working beyond traditional retirement age.

It can be inferred that employees with high levels of dedicated work engagement are likely to display positive ageing trajectories, as these characteristics are essential for successful ageing (Kooij et al., 2018). Additionally, the results

indicated that global work engagement does not correlate with successful ageing at work, suggesting that enhancing global work engagement does not directly facilitate successful ageing in the workplace. This finding contradicts earlier research documented in the literature.

### **Relationship between work-life balance and successful ageing at work**

Results indicated a low but significant correlation between work-life balance and successful ageing at work. This shows that as the levels of work-life balance improve there is likely to be a concurrent improvement in successful ageing at work in the health sector in terms of adaptability and health, positive relationships, occupational growth, personal security, and continued focus and achievement of personal goals (Mercado et al., 2019). A recent study revealed that the perceived transformational leadership style is related to all the successful ageing at work dimensions (Cheung, Yeung & Wu, 2018). According to Kar and Misra (2013), employees who are given support by their employer in achieving work-life balance tend to be more satisfied and engaged at their job, feel a greater sense of belonging and are more likely to age successfully in the workplace.

### **The predictive power of work-life balance and work engagement on successful ageing at work**

Findings indicated that work-life balance and work engagement account for 1.5% of the predictive variance in successful ageing at work. Notably, work-life balance emerged as a significant predictor of variations in successful ageing at work. Only work-life balance has shown a significant correlation with successful ageing, leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis for this variable alone. Consequently, improved ratings of work-life balance influence successful ageing at work. Research suggests that supportive human resource policies and practices aimed at enhancing work-life balance are positively associated with successful ageing at work (Cheung & Wu, 2012). Other studies indicate that expanding career opportunities is vital for promoting successful ageing among older

employees (Zacher et al., 2018). Additionally, Kooij et al. (2015b) contend that older workers proactively implement self-initiated changes to adapt to intrapersonal developments, facilitating more effective and successful ageing through job crafting.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications.**

The present study adopted the innovative theory to test the influence of work-life balance and work engagement on successful ageing at work in Uganda's health sector. Work-life balance was a highly significant predictor of variance in successful ageing at work. Therefore, the Ministry of Health must put in place family-friendly policies and practices aimed at improving the balance between work and family life, which can in turn improve levels of successful ageing at work. Some of the most common managerial-employee relationship practices include flexible working schedules, shift work schedules, working from home and rights to maternity and paternal leaves, to reconcile work and family life. The Ministry can achieve this by fostering a supportive culture, providing mental health resources, and enhancing a healthy work climate that aligns with viable organisational policies. A conducive work-life climate and favourable terms of employment help employees recover from setbacks, adapt to changes, and manage time appropriately to meet work task deadlines and provide quality time to their family and personal lifestyle.

Health workers should attend regular workshops and in-service training courses to promote work-life balance competence and work engagement. In-service training programs should focus on occupational stress management strategies, team-building drives, semi-retirement adjustment counselling, and guidance. Based on detailed training needs assessment, such innovations and initiatives could assist health workers in acquiring adaptive competencies, enabling them to manage their work and personal life obligations appropriately in order to age successfully at work.

The directorates of human resources at the ministry and municipality levels should also

implement structures and human resource practices that promote work engagement and successful ageing at work. This must encompass recognizing and rewarding employee contributions; offering opportunities for career development; and ensuring that employees have the resources they need to succeed and age gracefully at work. Engaged health workers are more likely to exhibit commitment, dedication, absorption, and productivity in their work.

### **Limitations and future recommendations.**

The current study used a correlation design, which limits causal inferences being made. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs with a mixed approach to verify the causality of variables. Moreover, research is required to delve deeper into the moderating and mediating effects of other explanatory factors. Qualitative research on how work-life balance affects both work engagement and successful ageing at work could provide deeper insights into human resources for the health sector. Longitudinal research can also examine the long-term effects of work engagement on successful ageing in manufacturing sectors.

### **CONCLUSION**

The first hypothesis suggested a significant association between work-life balance and work engagement within the health sector. Results indicated no significant association between work-life balance and global work engagement. However, related findings indicated that work-life balance was significantly linked to work absorption. Therefore, improved work-life balance enhances health staff absorptive engagement, a sense of health workers being heavily engrossed in hospital work. Most health workers are absorbed and on-call 24/7 to the extent that they meet difficulties detaching themselves from hospital responsibilities.

The second hypothesis asserted a significant correlation between work engagement and successful ageing in the workplace. Results revealed a significant relationship between dedicated work engagement (dedication subscale) and successful ageing at work. This suggests that

health workers who demonstrate high levels of work dedication in their roles are more likely to experience successful ageing in the workplace. Engaging in work with dedication fosters a strong sense of involvement, leading to feelings of significance, inspiration, and pride in one's key outcome areas.

The third hypothesis proposed a significant connection between work-life balance and successful ageing at the workplace. The results indicated a modest yet statistically significant correlation between work-life balance and successful ageing in the health sector, leading to the acceptance of the alternate hypothesis. This suggests that as work-life balance improves, there is likely to be a corresponding enhancement in successful ageing at work, particularly with regard to adaptability, health, positive relationships, occupational growth, personal security, and the ongoing pursuit and achievement of individual goals for employees. Work-life balance is crucial for the workforce, as it signifies employees' ability to achieve a harmonious quality of life that encompasses both professional and personal spheres, thereby positively affecting successful ageing at work. It also reflects the support employees need to effectively manage their time and energy across family commitments, work responsibilities, and other vital areas of life.

The fourth hypothesis stated that work-life balance and work engagement are key predictors of successful ageing in the workplace. The study's findings indicated that work-life balance and work engagement contribute 1.5% to the predictive variance in successful ageing at work. Thus, endorsing the hypothesis concerning work-life balance, as it is the only variable in the model that exhibits a significant predictive power over successful ageing at work. This suggests that enhancements in work-life balance correlate with improved outcomes in successful ageing among health workers.

#### Authors notes

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