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**THE EFFECT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS
VARIABLES ON WORK-RELATED ATTITUDES
OF SOFTWARE ENGINEERS IN SRI LANKA**

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to identify the impact of employer flexibility and work-to-non-work life spillover on the work related attitudes of software employees. Software employees present an interesting case for work-life boundary issues. Ackroyd (2000) designated them as the key occupation to examine the future studies of “knowledge workers”, and Barrett (2001) states that they are the ‘vanguard’ of new working practices, with the separation of work and life being substantially more important than for more traditional occupations. Despite this general perception of the work-life balance, the results in this report shows that interference of work into private life for this group of workers has a substantial impact on their work-related attitudes. Work-life balance variables affect trust in the organization which plays a meditational role in these variables’ relationship to work related attitudes. Further, the results suggest that within this industry employees are highly marketable and unlikely to show attachment to a single organization. Mutual gains for employee and employer can be attained by an accommodating approach to work-life flexibility and non-work commitments which may lead to a greater organizational attachment.

Although there are many previous studies done on factors affecting work related attitudes of employees in other industries, no such researches were found to be conducted in the information technology sector in Sri Lanka.

In this study, two independent variables that affect work related attitudes and mediating effect of trust in the organization were tested for its applicability in the information technology industry in Sri Lanka. The two independent variables used in the research were work-life flexibility and negative work-to-non-work spillover. The dependent variable, work-related attitudes was measured by using two main dimensions; affective organizational commitment, and employee extrinsic job satisfaction. The sample comprised of 210 respondents from twenty five information technology sector organizations. The data was collected through an electronic based questionnaire.

According to the results obtained, it was revealed that the work-life balance has significant positive relationship with work-related attitudes of software engineers. Further, the trust in the organization partially mediates the relationship between the work-life balance variables and work-related attitudes.

The implications of this study are that the management needs to understand the factors that enhance work related attitudes and work commitment in a knowledge worker intensive workforce context. Based on the findings of this study, the above positively related factors are recommended to the management of the respective organizations to improve the work related attitudes of employees in order to increase their commitment and job satisfaction level by implementing work-life balance approaches and policies.

Further, the limitations of this study were also identified and the researcher has given directions for future research in this area.