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Work-life balance policy and practice: Understanding line manager attitudes and behaviors

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Abstract

Work-life balance (WLB) is receiving increasing attention in the human resource management field. Line managers are playing a more active role in HRM decision-making, including work-life balance decisions, with the devolution of human resource management responsibility. Drawing on the theory of planned behavior, this paper develops a conceptual model explaining what affects line manager WLB policy and practice behaviors and the consequent impact on employee WLB experience in their organizations. Line manager WLB policy involvement, policy awareness, perceived policy instrumentality, and personal policy utilization are variables which are proposed to impact line manager attitudes towards WLB policies. These attitudes, in turn, are proposed to affect three employee WLB policy outcomes: employee WLB policy awareness, policy uptake, and policy satisfaction. The implications for future research and practice are set

out.



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Dr Alma McCarthy is an MBA Program Director and Lecturer in Management at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Her research interests include performance management, employee training and development, work-life balance, and multi-rater (360°) feedback systems. She has published books, book chapters, peer-reviewed articles in journals such as Personnel Review, Advances in Developing Human Resources, Journal of Managerial Psychology, Journal of European Industrial Training, the International Journal of Manpower Studies, and the Journal of Vocational Educational Training as well as presented papers at reputable national and international conferences. She is on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Managerial Psychology and the Journal of European Industrial Training and currently serves on the national council of the Irish Academy of Management (IAM) as Vice-Chair.

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