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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Ilorin Journal of Human Resource Management (IJHRM) is an interdisciplinary journal of Social and Management Sciences that publishes high quality theoretical, empirical, and review papers, covering the broad spectrum of social and management sciences research. Ilorin Journal of Human Resource Management is dedicated to increase the depth of knowledge about Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management and other range of disciplines from scholars across the world.

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WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ACADEMIC STAFF PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Work life balance is considered as a new development to manage work life conflict experienced by employees in the workplace. The quest for work life balance became necessary to reduce stress being faced by employees in work environment both in educational institutions and other sectors in the country. The objective of the study is to examine the impact of work life balance on academic staff performance in Nigeria universities. The target population for the study consisted of academic staff in the University of Ilorin, Kwara State University and Al-hikmah University who have been purposefully selected. The three universities are in Ilorin, Kwara State of Nigeria. Hypothetical sampling technique was adopted to select a sample size of 165 academic staff from the three selected universities. 137 (83%) usable questionnaires were retrieved and found fit for the study. The study adopted simple random sampling technique to administer the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using the statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The research hypotheses formulated were tested using Chi-square analysis to study the impact of a work-life balance on academic staff performance in Nigerian Universities. The finding shows that work life balance and flexible working arrangement have a great impact on academic staff performance in Nigerian Universities. The study concluded that work life balance has a positive significant impact on academic performance in Nigerian Universities. The study recommends that management of universities in Nigeria should give academic staff room for flexible work schedules so that the employees could enjoy work life balance which invariably has the tendency to increase academic staff performance.

Keywords: Work life balance; Flexible working arrangement; Academic staff performance,

Introduction

In today's fast changing business environment, the performance of employees in the organization cannot be overemphasized. One of the industries that has been facing crises in Nigeria is the education sector, and in particular the university system where observers have had reasons to complain about the quality of services. The academic staff being the major and single most important workers in the Universities are required to perform at optimal levels to ensure that knowledge production, knowledge dissemination and community service are delivered effectively to the consumers. The lecturers in Nigerian Universities, since 1992, through their umbrella trade union, the Academic Staff of Universities (ASUU) have always been complaining of poor working conditions, poor pay, poor funding of educational system and lack of autonomy.

All of these point to the fact that the academic staff are not adequately motivated to deliver on their duties, thereby affecting job performance. It is the responsibility of organizations to look for different ways of motivating their employees, in order for them to give their best to the system. Policies and procedures ought to be put in place to motivate employees in order to achieve optimization of performance. Ability of a worker to maintain balance between his job and his life is one way by which he can increase performance at work. Every organization aiming at optimizing the job performance of its workers will do itself a lot good by ensuring that staff enjoy work life balance.

Today, work-life balance has become an increasing concern to both employers and employees of most organizations. In recent time, there has been an upsurge in the consideration of the pressures that work has on family as well as on the life of employees. This has triggered research bordering on work-life. In an environment where there is high level of competitive pressures stemming largely from efforts to deliver quality service, the weight of this on employees are enormous (Uzoechi & Babatunde, 2012).

Business environment and the changing lifestyle of employees are creating a lot of stress and pressure on them. Individuals, generally, are finding it difficult to manage and cope with the demands of both work as well as personal issues. This leads to higher level of job dissatisfaction and also affecting their personal life leading to burnout, depression among the people and as a result leading to reduced performance at the work place (UKessay, 2015). Furthermore, the growing recognition in the desire of all working people, irrespective of their matrimonial or parental status to achieve a healthier and more convenient balance of their roles and responsibilities as posited by Sturges and Guest (2004) has directed certain search light towards the concept of WLB and the need to look into the creation of a better work policy that would entertain flexibility in work arrangements and task accomplishment within the work context. This might be the import of the assertion made by Kodz, Harper and Dench (2002) that there should always exist a healthy balance between an employee's work and life outside the work context an argument corroborated by Pocock (2003),

WLB reduces stress and other health related issues which are normally induced by work styles, and thereby enables a greater life satisfaction and ability to meet work while attending to family commitments and other non-work responsibilities. Another major issue that may hinder employee performance is when work life balance incentives are not adhered to by the management of these institutions. These may lead some staff to work round the clock with little attention to themselves and their families, which may result to broken home and poor parental upbringing. The personal issues that Nigerian academic staff face outside work, may demoralize them and in turn discourage them to be zealous in carrying out their duties. In that case, organization introduce work life balance practices such as (flexi-time, job sharing, part time, telecommuting etc.) in order to improve staff's commitment and bring about job satisfaction. Work life balance programs especially flexi work allows academic staff to determine the start and the end times of their working day, provided a certain number of hours is worked. This gives them greater latitude in choosing his or her particular hours of work, or freedom to change work or lecture hours depending on the employee's personal needs. Failure to adopt work life balance engendering programmes may lead to higher job stress, job dissatisfaction and unbalanced work life among staff.

These are the issues that prompted this research investigation. The broad objective of the study is to determine the extent to which work-life balance affects academic staff performance in Nigerian universities with particular focus on some selected universities in Kwara state, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Work-Life Balance

Worklife balance is a process of managing work and family life towards achieving individual and organizational goals. Kirchmeyer (2000) defined Work life balance as achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains. Kirchmeyer went on to be more prescriptive, stating that to achieve satisfying experiences in all life domains requires personal resources like energy, time and commitment to be well distributed across domains.

It is viewed by Bailyn *et al.* (2001) as harmonious and holistic integration of work and non-work, so that men and women can achieve their potential across the domains in which they play out their life roles. This definition emphasizes the integration of various work in an holistic manner in order for workers to fully achieve their potential in building their career opportunities. According to Jim Bird (2006), work-life balance can be referred to as meaningful achievement and enjoyment in everyday life. He emphasizes the importance to make a point to seek achievement and joy in both your work and personal life each day. Enjoyment in this particular case means, pride, satisfaction, happiness, celebration and a sense of well-being in whatever you do. Study has shown that, around the world, employees invest much of their time and energy at work to be able to make ends meet. Duxbury and Higgins (2003) see the quality of work-life as a person's control over the conditions in their work place, accomplished when an individual feels satisfied about their personal life and their paid occupation. It is also ensuring that organizations have family friendly policies that ensure staff have control over their lives, through flexible work schedules that enable them balance between the two (Aghion, Bloom, Bluncell & Howit 2005).

Concept of Academic Staff Performance

Academic staff (International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) includes personnel whose primary assignment is instruction, research, or public service. This includes staff personnel who hold an academic rank with titles such as professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, lecturer, or the equivalent of any of these academic ranks. The category includes personnel with other titles, (e.g. dean, director, associate dean, assistant dean, chair or head of department). Academic staff includes highly qualified teachers and researchers holding Ph.D degree or equivalent who are hired by any academic institution on a permanent basis, with a defined academic position (e.g. lecturer, professor). Academic staff performance leads to several favourable institutional outcomes. It reflects the extent to which academic staff identifies with an institution and is committed to its goals. Performance means the outcomes of an activity of a person or an organization. Further, academic performance can be described as the accumulated end result of all the institution's work process and activities. Like all ratios, it can be improved by increasing the output, decreasing input or both (Mendis1 and Weerakkody 2015). Academic staff performance can be linked to both the institutional bottom line performance which may include some of the following indicators such as proliferation of impact based research reports (Duxbury & Higgins, 2003), graduating employable graduates (Aghion *et al.* 2005), and bringing up recommendations that will improve practice outside the organization (Bird, 2006).

The job of university academics is extremely exacting, consequently necessitating an efficient performance evaluation scheme that will give impetus to greater motivation leading to improved job performances (Fapohunda, 2015).

The job description of university academics is characterized by three major elements: teaching, research and community service. Unfortunately, practice indicates that in performance evaluation of academics in Nigerian Universities, attainment in research, (as acknowledged by the volume of scholarly publications, within a specified assessment period) is the job element mostly underlined while accomplishments on the two other job elements of teaching and community service are frequently consigned to the non-significant level to the extent that irrespective of any achievements in these areas, the input to performance appraisal result is inconsequential. (Fapohunda, 2015)

Work Life Balance and Academic Staff Performance

Kinman's (1998) study showed that the strongest predictor of psychological distress and job dissatisfaction was the demands relating to the work-home interface. Furthermore, more than half of the academics surveyed in past studies indicated that they regularly worked at home during evenings and weekends. This practice could compound the risk of work-home conflict by preventing the development of firm physical and psychological boundaries between the two domains and preventing academics from participating fully in home life (family outings, get-together, and family time out among others) and leisure activities. There is some evidence that merging of boundaries between work and home life can have a deleterious impact on family functioning, individual wellbeing and self-concept confusion (Frone, 2003). It cannot be assumed, however, that a high degree of integration between work and home is inherently damaging (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). Professionals who are deeply involved in their work might desire little separation between their work and home lives (Lewis, 2003). Whether it is desirable (or possible) to compartmentalize "work" and "non-work" into distinct, non-overlapping domains is questionable (Nipper-Eng, 1996).

Schedule flexibility (or the ability to adapt working hours to meet personal and/or family needs) may also provide employees with latitude in coping with the competing demands of the work and non-work domains (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991). Organizations are more frequently providing facilities designed to help their employees achieve a fair balance between their work and family responsibilities. Such support might be expected to result in lower levels of work-life conflict (Thomas & Ganster, 1995) and increase in job satisfaction and performance.

Majority of the knowledge referred to today about the work stress experienced by academic staff can be linked to the popular studies conducted in North America (i.e., Gmelch, Lovrich, & Wilkie, 1984; Blix, Cruise, Mitchell, & Blix, 1994; Leung, Sui and Spector, 2000) and Australia and New Zealand (i.e., Boyd & Wylie, 1994; Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Hapuarachchi, & Boyd, 2003) which concluded that occupational or work stress has heightened in the academics systems. The main causes of these stress highlighted include time and resource constraints, too much workload, poor compensation and pay, poor communication, prolong working hours, role conflicts/ ambiguity and overload, lack of recognition, struggling for publication, rendering academic and moral support for students staying in tune with technological advances and leadership/membership exchange. Interestingly, despite showing high levels of increased demands and stress, evidence have also shown that academics do claim to achieve a considerable amount of satisfaction from their work (e.g., Winefield *et al.*,

2003). Furthermore, these stress encountered by academic staff leads to dissatisfaction which is disastrous to their performance.

Therefore, It is based on these effects the following hypotheses are formulated:

H0: Work-life-balance does not have significant impact on academic staff performance .

Ho2: Flexible working arrangement does not have significant impact on academic staff performance

Theoretical Review

Spill Over Theory: Spill-over is explained by Edwards and Rothbard (2000) as a process whereby experiences in one role affect experiences in the other, rendering the roles more alike. Research has examined the spill-over of mood, values, skills and behaviours from one role to another. According to this theory, workers carry the emotions, attitudes, skills and behaviours from their work role into their family life and vice versa (Belsky et al.,1985; Crouter, 1984). When staff feels dissatisfied at work as result of role overload or demanding boss or discriminating colleagues, this negatively affect the family domain. The nature of work-life balancing was discussed in the perspective of being objective and subjective. The objective analysis comprises of the hours of work and hours of idleness or time outside work. The subjective analysis talks about to the states of balance and imbalance. He also acknowledged that balance exists when the time spent at work is equal to the duration of time spent at home. When one of the two supersedes the other, imbalance is said to have occurred . Spill over occurs when there is interference of one sphere of life with other. More so, work life balance has aid in reducing the stress and enhances toward achieving personal satisfaction and wellbeing at work.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) according to Fox and Fallon (2003) clearly explains the relationship between work-life balance and citizenship behaviour. This theory supports the possibility that work-life balance policies promote employee participation in the organisation to the extent that the employees feel obligated to exert "extra effort" in return for these "extra benefits". These are extra role activities that employees perform and are not mandated to do, but are beneficial towards the organisation, is a further indication of their organisational citizenship. The norm of reciprocity is the social expectation that individuals will respond to each other in kind, i.e. returning benefits for benefits, and responding with either indifference or hostility to harm. The social norm of reciprocity further holds that people will respond to a positive action with another positive action, and will also respond to a negative action with another negative one. An underlying norm of reciprocity can therefore be a powerful engine for motivating, creating, sustaining and regulating the cooperative behaviour required for self-sustaining social organisations.

The study adopted the spill-over theory due to its relevance to work-life balance between individual work and family life balance. The intervention of this theory has broad knowledge on a better way of managing work and family life to achieve improvement in employee's performance and organizational objectives.

Empirical Framework

Simonetta and Manfred (2010) looked at work-life balance audit investigation of staff experience at Oxford Brookes University, London. The study examined the significance of work life practice for the university. They looked at the various work life balances practices in the University and how they were utilised by staff of the university. The sample included 492 staff of the Oxford Brookes University. The finding shows that it is important to achieve a balance

between paid work and personal life and that this enables them to work better. The staff agreed that for this to be achieved, it is a joint responsibility between the employers and the employees. Dissanaya and Hussain (2013) investigated the impact of work life balance on employee performance of 96 workers in Sri Lanka. The aim of the study was to analyze the relationship between work life balance and employee performance. The finding of the study was that there is a positive relationship between work life balance and employee performance. Also, there is a need for systematic effort to enhance work life balance of the employee to achieve better employee performance.

Azeem and Akhtar (2014) investigated the influence of work life balance and job satisfaction on organization commitment of health care employees. This was aimed at exploring the influence of work life balance and job satisfaction has on organization commitment among healthcare employee. Questionnaire was distributed to 275 respondents in the healthcare sector. The finding of the empirical test shows that employee in the health care sector have a moderate level of perceived work life balance, job satisfaction and commitment. There is a positive relationship between work life balance, job satisfaction and organization commitment.

Orogbu, Onyeizugbe, and Chukwuemeke (2015) investigated on work-life balance and employee performance in selected commercial banks in Lagos State. The research adopts a descriptive survey research design, the population of the study is 759 and the sample size is 262 using Taro Yamane's formula. It was discovered that there is a significant positive relationship between leave policy and service delivery. The findings revealed that leave policy motivate employee ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively, in conclusion work life balance practice is an important factor in increasing employee performance.

There are limited researches on the impact of work-life balance on academic staff performance especially in Nigerian Universities. It is this gap in knowledge that research seeks to fill.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive research design. This is because the object of a descriptive study is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations (Robson, 2002 in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009). The target population for the study consisted of academic staff in the University of Ilorin, Ilorin; Kwara State University, Molete and Al-hikmah University, Ilorin who have been purposefully selected. The total population was unknown due to inconsistency and unreliable data obtained. Hypothetical sampling technique was adopted to select a sample size of 165; this was in line with the view of Bradford and Cullin (2000) which opined that a hypothetical sample may be used for an unknown population. Determination of sample size for this study is made by referring to the work of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). In their generalized scientific guideline for sample size decisions, Krejcie and Morgan state that the sample size of 100 is appropriate for study population of up to 2,000 elements. The determined sample of this study is also appropriate going by Dillman (2000) and Hill, Brierley and McDougall (2003) who reported that a sample size of 100 and above is sufficient to represent good research findings. 165 copies of questionnaire were administered to the academic staff of the three selected universities. 137 (83%) usable questionnaires were retrieved and considered fit for the study.

The study adopted simple random sampling technique to pick respondents. The random technique was employed so as to allow all the academic staff of the University of Ilorin, Kwara

State University and Al-hikmah University had an equal chance of being selected. A self-structured questionnaire on work-life-balance with elements drawn from the reviewed literature was compiled by the researchers to accommodate work-life-balance and academic staff performance within the Nigeria academic parlance. The questionnaire was structured using the Likert scale format (i.e. strongly agreed carrying the highest figure (5) and strongly disagree carried the lowest figure (1). The validity of the questionnaire used was done via consultation with some human resource professionals who were drawn from both the practitioners and academic context. Their resolves were then adjusted appropriately to ensure content validity.

Method of Data Analysis

The data from the gathered questionnaires was analyzed using the statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The data analysis was divided into two parts the first part which is the demographic data of the respondents while the second part which consist of the generated research hypotheses which was also tested using Chi-square analysis to study the impact of a work-life balance on academic staff performance in Nigerian Universities. The hypotheses formulated were analysed below:

H01: Work-life-balance does not have significant impact on academic staff performance

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	69.358 ^a	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	78.886	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	51.357	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

A. 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05

The test statistics of chi-square from the table above is 69.358 with a degree of freedom of 6 and p-value of .000 which is considerably lesser than 0.005. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis at 5% level of significance and accept the alternative hypothesis. It is therefore concluded that Work-life-balance has a significant impact on academic staff performance and thus attention should be given to the issue for effectiveness to be achieved within the Nigeria academic contexts.

H02: Flexible working arrangement does not have significant impact on academic staff performance

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	57.373 ^a	5	.000
Likelihood Ratio	72.675	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	53.517	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	137		

a. 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05

The test statistics of chi-square from the table above is 57.373 with a degree of freedom of 5 and p-value of .000 which is considerably lesser than 0.005. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance and the alternative hypothesis accepted. It is therefore concluded that flexible working arrangement has a significant impact on academic staff performance. This implies that it has positive effect on academic staff performance and thus it should be encouraged as a means of juggling work and life for effectiveness to be achieved within the Nigeria academic contexts.

Discussion of Findings

Majority of the respondents were male with a frequency count of 52 (i.e. 62%) while the female have the frequency count of 52 (i.e. 38%). The brackets range from 18-30 with 40 (i.e. 29.2%) respondents falling within this category, 31- 40 years bracket has 65 (i.e. 47.4%) of the respondents falling within this limit and 32 (i.e. 23.4%) of the respondents fall within the 41-above category of the age distribution. The Cadre distribution has 6 (4.4%) of the respondents in the Graduate Assistant (G.A.) level, 40 (29.2%) on Assistant Lecturer (A.L) level, 26 (19%) as Lecturer I (L.I), 35 (25.5%) as Lecturer II (L. II), 15 (10.9%) as Senior Lecturer (S.L), 10 (7.3%) as Associate Professor (Reader) and 5 (3.6%) on Professorial (Prof.) level. 65 (47.4%) of the respondents claimed to have 1-4 dependants, 30 (21.9%) answered having 5 or more dependants while 42 (30.7%) have no dependants at all. On the hours each of the respondents usually work per day, 42 (30.7%) answered that they worked less than 20 hours per day while 95 (69.3%) claimed they worked 21 hours or more per day on their given tasks or assignments.

From all the demographic data generated and analyzed above, it is evidenced that majority of the academic staff that took part in the study were male and by indication, respondents on Assistant Lecturer level take a larger part of the respondents (i.e. 29.2%) showing that their grade level required that they take more responsibilities and do more research to develop themselves and this may require them spending more time at work than home or having less attention to their personal life but given more significance to their job-life.

The result of hypothesis 1 shows that work life balance is a very important indicator of academic staff performance in Nigerian Universities. Majority of the respondents agreed that if academic

duty is well structured with flexible work conditions, academic staff performance will improve. This finding is aligned with outcome of Simonetta and Manfred (2010) which shows that it is important to achieve a balance between paid work and personal life and that this enables staff to work better in the University. Also, the finding of hypothesis 2 shows that flexible working arrangement has significant relationship with job performance of academic staff of Nigeria Universities. Therefore, management of academic institutions should ensure that academic staff are well motivated with adequate pay to enhance job commitment, job satisfaction and good performance. The study conducted by Azeem and Akhtar (2014) also supported that there is positive relationship between work life balance, job satisfaction and organization commitment. The findings of Ojom (2012); Dissanayaka and Ali (2013); Orogbu., Onyeizugbe , and Chukwuemeke (2015) corroborated the result of this study that there is strong relationship between work life balance and employee performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined critically the impact of work life balance on academic staff performance in Nigerian Universities. Academic performance has been found to be essential to sustainable growth and development of the country. In recent time, attention has been drawn towards situation inwork environment where many people face the problem of balancing work and family life. Despite the worldwide quest for work-life balance (WLB), the university system has been found to be more challenging where academic staff work round the clock. The multi-faced demand between work and home responsibilities have assumed increased relevance for academic staff of Nigerian Universities. It is no longer news that most academic staff not only work in their offices and lecture rooms, they also engaged at home in reading, research, grading of assignment /examination among others at the detriment of family care. The consequence of work family imbalance is the negative impact on work and life satisfaction, mental health, physical health and on individual performance. Obviously, a well-balanced work life situation and flexible working arrangement bring about employee high performance and organizational productivity. The study concludes that work life balance has a significant impact on academic staff performance of Nigerian Universities.

In line with the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made.

- i. Management of Universities should ensure that they give room for flexible work patterns which would encourage work life balance. This practice can reduce the tiredness and absenteeism, increase staff morale and staff job satisfaction and ultimately staff performance
- ii. Adequate compensation should be awarded to extra workload. This will encourage staff commitment and job satisfaction.
- iii. Management of Universities should introduce Tele-work (telecommuting or virtual learning process) arrangement whereby an academic employee, through internet facilities can perform his or her job responsibilities at a remote place. (Own residence) Tele-work allows academic staff to organize their workday around their personal and family needs.

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