An Exploration of the Effects of Work Life Balance on Productivity

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Abstract

Work-life balance is now an important determinant for more workers in attaining a thriving career. With swelling obligations in the work place, the divide between work life and private life has taken on superior significance and entails more consciousness. The stipulations of work or personal life can cause stress. Such circumstances impact on workers physiologically and psychologically. Hence, it is crucial for employees to maintain a sturdy stability between work and their private lives. For the employers, work-life balance of employees is a central means in formulating appropriate strategies to tackle work-life imbalance concerns. This paper studies the result of work life balance (WLB) on employee productivity and how Nigerian workers handle the inauspicious working situations and coordinate their work and family lives. It explores the connection between work life balance (WLB) practices and organizational productivity and whether WLB practices possibly decreases employee turnover and absenteeism. It also scrutinizes work-life balance challenges faced by workers and methods of enhancing work-life balance practices amongst employees. The paper posits that work-life balance options should be fashioned to facilitate employees balancing their work and personal lives. Work-life balance it is not a quandary to be determined once but a constant concern to be managed. For organization goals to be achieved through the people employed, work-life balance concerns must become a crucial feature of human resource policy and strategy. Management must build a profound endorsement of people and their roles, to fashion a satisfying, extraordinary and self-motivated work environment.

Keywords: Exploration, Effects, Work, Life, Balance, Productivity

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1. Introduction

Work-life balance has become an increasingly pervasive concern to both employers and employees of most organizations the world over.Work-life balance primarily deals with employees' ability to properly prioritize between their work and everyday life, social life, health, family etc. Work life balance (WLB) is largely associated with matters of workers' productivity, performance and job satisfaction. Where there is appropriate balance between work and life, workers become predisposed to putting in their best shots at work, because their families are contented. Finding a suitable balance between work and life is a challenge for all workers. Studies indicate that when there are happy homes, work places tend to be conflict free and enjoyable places to be. Rising attrition rates and escalating demand for work-life balance have made it compulsory for organizations to look outside human resource interventions. Consequently, schemes such as flexible working hours, alternative work plans, leave plans, benefits rather than family care responsibilities and employee assistance programmes have become an important part of organization benefit programmes and reward packages especially in developed economies.

A central characteristic of work-life balance is the amount of time a person spends at work. There are indications that long work hours may harm personal health, endanger safety and increase stress. Developing economies like Nigeria are faced with serious economic challenges and labour market pressures added to poor social infrastructures, poverty, high unemployment and corruption. These conditions further exacerbate the work and life of the average Nigerian worker whose aim is to make a living and who may have to arduously build up accommodating arrangements and cognitive psychological coping behaviours that stimulate desirable satisfaction and effectual functioning both at work and at home. Most workers in Nigeria are affected by lack of work flexibility, elevated work pressures and long working hours; a situation that decreases their job performance and productivity.

There is growing concern that the quality of home and workers' life is declining thereby causing poor worker contributions and performances at work. Where employees are unable to suitably balance work and family life, they tend to find it difficult to manage tasks at the workplace and this subsequently shrinks productivity. This paper examines the effect of work life balance (WLB) on employee productivity and how Nigerians workers cope with the adverse working conditions and harmonise their work and family.

It investigates the relationship between work life balance (WLB) practices and productivity and whether WLB practices have the potential to reduce worker turnover and absenteeism. The study also examines work-life balance challenges and ways of enhancing proper work-life balance practices amongst employees.

2. Literature

2.1 Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance has to do with proper prioritizing between work (career and ambition) and lifestyle (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development). The concept of work-life balance is based on the idea that paid work and private life should be seen less as opposite priorities and more as corresponding essentials of a full life. Lewis (2008) observes that the way to achieve this is to adopt a system that is conceptualized as a two way process which considers the needs of the workers as well as those of employers. In order to take on employers in this procedure it is imperative to show the benefits that can be obtained from employment policies and practices that sustain work-life balance, and the scope that subsists for extenuating their negative effects on the management of the business. Clark (2009) defines work-life balance as contentment and good functioning at work and at home with negligible role conflicts. Work-life balance is about finding the right balance between one's work and one's life (outside work) and about feeling comfortable with both work and non-work commitments. Many people find it difficult to manage their time in a way that is healthy for work and for personal life not because they are poor at time management, but basically because a good part of the time is not theirs. However, work-life balance is tricky to individually accomplish without organizational encouragement. Bird (2010) asserts that, work-life balance does not mean an equal balance adding that one's best individual work-life balance would vary over time. The right balance for one person today will without reservations be different for the same person tomorrow. The right balances for a single person will be different at marriage, during child bearing; at the start of a new career versus close to retirement. There is no perfect, one-size fit all, balance that should be struggled for. The best work-life balance is different for everyone because we all have different priorities and diverse lives. However, at the centre of an effective work-life balance definition are two significant everyday concepts that are pertinent to everyone namely Achievement and Enjoyment.

Greenhaus et al., (2009) indicates that while work-life balance has conventionally been presumed to involve giving equal amounts of time to paid work and non-work roles, more recently the notion has been accepted as more difficult and has been expanded to integrate extra components. Work- life balance reflects a person's orientation across career and non-career life roles as a mismatched inter-role phenomenon.

Studies like Bond (2009), Hochschild (2007) and Okeke (2011) affirm that when people spend too many hours at work, and spend less with their families, their health and work performances begin to deteriorate. There are a variety of rationalizations for this related to wealth, the increase in single parent families, the privatization of family life and the lack of local resources and amenities. In addition, the pressures and demands of work,(reflected in longer hours) more tiredness and the growth of evening and weekend work leave less scope for "quality" personal time. The costs include rises in juvenile crime, more drug abuse, a decrease and disinclination to take responsibility for care of elderly relatives and for the disadvantaged. While steps to remedy these concerns go further than work and employment, the requirements of work add to a diminished involvement in non-work activities producing in an imbalance. Moreover, workers are less enthusiastic of exhibiting infinite loyalty to the organization. One reason offered for this is the changing nature of the psychological contract at work; instability in organizations has made it less realistic to offer safe progressive careers and therefore to substantiate why workers should be committed. Allen and Russell (2009) reports that the allocation of fewer organizational rewards, together with development opportunities and salary raises are consequences of observations of dwindled organizational devotion by workers who used family-friendly policies. Working long hours however, dissuades the ability of workers to fulfil incongruous tasks, and then obliges a number of workers to choose between accomplishing balanced roles and advancing in their careers.

2.2 Components of Work-Life Balance

There are copious vital machineries of work-life balance including self-management; time management; stress management; change management; technology management and leisure management. Self-management is the acknowledgment that competently using the gaps in our lives is critical, and that handy resources, time, and life are limited. It implies becoming commanders of our own lives which no one is coming to do for us.

However, adequate self management can be taxing, mostly in getting proper sleep, exercise, and nutrition. Time Management involves making the best possible use of one's day and the sustaining assets that can be called up. Time management is augmented through suitable goals and perceiving not only what is crucial but what is urgent, as opposition to important or fundamental. It requires knowledge of what one does best and when, and accumulating the fitting mechanisms to bring about particular responsibilities.

Stress Management has to do with muddling through raised complications. By nature, societies tend to become more intricate over time. In the face of swelling intricacy, stress on the individual is unavoidable. More people, distractions, and noise require adept safeguarding of calm and working out of pressure-filled situations. Most forms of multi-tasking (against focusing on one thing at a time) eventually increase stress. Change Management involves making intermittent and determined efforts to guarantee that the quantity and speed of change at work and at home is not overpowering or crushing. Unremitting championship of novel modus operandi and modification of others is crucial to a burgeoning career and life. Technology Management is ensuring that technology serves rather than exploits. There is increase in the rate of technological change and often there is no choice but to keep up with the technological advances but we must rule technology, not vice versa. Leisure Management is the most ignored of the work-life balance sustaining disciplines. It concedes the significance of rest and relaxation. Effective leisure management calls for varying one's activities. To realize a little better balance in life workers need to: plan down time; cut out the things that do not add value to their lives; avoid negative people that suck energy; outsource tasks where possible; and take some time like five minutes for themselves (irrespective of what one decides to do with the five minutes, it needs to be time that is just for one alone).

2.3 Work -Life Balance Options

Organizations are realizing that workers with well balanced work and lives are actually valuable to firms. The quality of a worker's personal life impacts work quality and there are tangible business reasons to encourage work and non-work incorporation. There are numerous organization policies that can assuage the burden of work-life balance.

Options include providing leave with pay or options for reduced hours, workplace supports such as personal time off, paid leave, on-site or nearby childcare, financial assistance for childcare, and other family-friendly policies all of which are workplace policies that could resolve the work-life balance problem. In deciding to facilitate employees' work-life balance, organizations can choose from a wide array of options.

One option is **job-sharing** which is a system where two people share a job. They both have the same job, but split the hours; the payments, holidays and benefits (each employee has a part-time position). This gives them ample time to attend to non-work activities to achieve a good degree of work-life balance. Next is **Breaks from work** once in a while, which results in the right balance between work and life. These breaks should not only be about maternity, paternity and parental leave, but also time off for career breaks and sabbaticals. Another option is **compressed working hours**; a system where an employee can work his total number of agreed hours over a shorter period such as working the hours over four days in a week instead of five consequently gaining a day.

Moreover there is the option of **self-roastering** where employees roaster their hours how they want. The organization daily checks the number of staff and skills required and lets the employees decide which hours they would like to work. Employees are thus able to schedule their time conveniently between work and non-work activities. Furthermore there is **Tele-working**, a flexible schedule option that employees value tremendously and its popularity is increasing. Using modern communication technology, employees carry out their jobs without necessarily having to be at the office. Often, they can work from home or in satellite offices or tele-centres close to them. It allows employees to attend to family or non-work issues once production or excellence is not affected. Gradually more sophisticated and realistically priced technologies have made it more feasible for employees to keep contact with work employing several methods, such as e-mails, computers, and cell phones, which enable them to complete their work beyond the physical restrictions of their offices. Employees may respond to an email or a voice mail after-hours or during the weekend, typically while not officially "on the job". Researchers have found that employees who consider their work roles to be an imperative component of their personalities will be more apt to use these communication technologies to work while in their non-work domains.

Tele- working is nevertheless not suitable or achievable for every job but it saves inestimable time, money, and commuting stress for employees. It also enables office collaboration time when the employees come in and employee work - life balance is ensured.

Again, there is **Child Care**. Child care assistance can boost output and drive among employees. It also reduces turnover, accidents and absenteeism. Childcare options for working parents can be significant in work life balance and job satisfaction. The leaning is towards dual-earning families because life is now excessively costly for a prospective money-maker to stay at home. People with families no longer possess the extravagance to stay at home for child care. Therefore as Vlems (2008) observes the demand for child care options as a means of helping employees achieve work-life balance is becoming more and more imperative. Child care options include crèche, day-nursery, after school child care, teen care, host parent care, and leader-at-home.

There is also the **Flexi-time** option which is a scheduling policy that allows full-time employees to choose starting and ending times within guidelines specified by the organization. It permits employees to focus on non-work requirements without taking time off work. Employees who have this flexibility boost productivity and have less work-family spill over and they are less likely to miss work due to family related issues. A flexible schedule gives employees more options and is especially appropriate in jobs where specific work hours really do not matter. Other options of work-life balance policies that lead to happier and more productive workers include educational classes, such as classes on the wellbeing of a newborn or family, put on by the organization, that has been shown to be associated with less reported work-life conflict.

2.4 Prospects of Work-Life Balance (WLB)

De Bruin and Dupuis (2009) observes that Work-life Balance Programmes (WLBPs) are those established and routine arrangements, as well as formal and informal practices that make it easier for employees to manage the often conflicting worlds of work and non-work. The aim is to try to increase the flexibility with which employees can enact both their work and non-work roles without threat.

The adoption of work-life balance programmes and policies are considered a part of high commitment work systems required for ensuring high levels of employee commitment and innovation.

Organization outcomes and success is significantly affected by positive work-life outcomes for employees. Work-life balance has double-thronged benefits. Where the right balance is found and sustained there is mutual gain for both employees and the employer. The prospects are many for the employee. There is improved employee happiness. Employees are happier when they are able to balance their work and life demands. There are also improved relations with management. Observed management support for employees work-life balance fosters a good relationship between the workforce and management which itself improves effective organization communication.

In addition, there is improved employee self-esteem, health, concentration, and confidence. The Mental Health Foundation reports in a 2012 study that more than forty percent of employees are neglecting other aspects of their life because of work, a situation which may increase their vulnerability to mental health problems. Also there is the benefit of employee loyalty and commitment which increases with opportunities for work-life balance. Employees are more likely to stay with an organization when there are opportunities for achieving work-life balance. Moreover, tasks are better dealt with, there is a boost to stimulus, and there is decline in stress levels among employees. For the organization the prospects emanate from happy employees. Employee happiness results in maximized available human resources. The workforce will be very motivated and so the employer can benefit from maximized available human resources and employees will give their very best during the working hours. Implementing work-life balance programmes gives an impression that the organization cares about the employees. Thus, workers feel more valuable and work harder as a result. Again the work environment is less stressful; there are less stress related illnesses and decreased health care costs. In addition, work-life balance programmes in an organization make it attractive to a wider range of candidates when it comes to recruitment. Furthermore, the workforce will be more loyal and motivated, absenteeism will be reduced, and productivity will increase because of the maximized available human resources.

2.5 Challenges to Work-Life Balance Policies (WLB)

In spite of the foregoing, and the seemingly extensive devotion to the philosophy of work-life balance, studies such as Bond (2009) Hochschild (2007) and Okeke (2011) show that the mere availability of far-reaching and liberal work-life balance policies does not necessarily result in prevalent employment by workers or subsequent advances in work-life balance and reductions in work-life conflict. According to De Bruin & Dupuis (2010) creating work-life balance programmes is one thing, getting employees to make use of them is a totally different matter. There is considerable contention about the effectiveness of organizational work-life balance policies in delivering flexibility and reducing stress and job dissatisfaction in the modern workplace.

An important aspect of all these policies is the management support and work environment that go along with it. Organization management must show support for the achievement of effective work-life balance if there is to be an up-take of work-life balance opportunities by employees. Because managers make unspoken and open choices about the adoption of workplace practices they can actively encourage or discourage employees' effort to balance their work and non-work lives even where the policies exist. Where workers feels that using a policy will affect their chances of advancement they are more likely to refuse its use. Managers can either encourage or discourage employees' efforts to balance their work and family lives. Where supervisors enthusiastically support the integration of paid work and other responsibilities, employees are more likely to take up available work-life programmes. Again, work culture determines whether workers take advantage of work-life policies. Work culture not individual needs or values are superior forecasters of use of policies. Organizational work-life cultures affect the extent to which flexible work options can be utilized and work-life balance achieved. Reynolds (2009) observes that an overriding thread linking the reasons work-life benefits go unused is organizational culture. Work-life balance initiatives must be based on an appraisal of organization culture to ascertain its openness and readiness to support work-life balance programmes.

Another factor that has been strongly associated with the underutilization of work-life policies is the perception of negative career consequences. For instance in the part-time work option career drawbacks tend to be inherent.

Part-time workers often receive less training, are paid less and advance more slowly because employers attach a higher risk to investing in them. Again, they are sometimes worse off, in terms of promotion prospects and entitlement to fringe benefits, than those who worked more hours a week. The success of WLBPs depends among others, on the existence of a family-supportive culture in the organization, and the role that managers play in that context. Employers would for instance have to allow parents to leave work to take care of children and they would have to pay them for it as well.

Furthermore, studies like Spinks (2004), Kiger (2005), Mordi and Ojo (2011) indicate that a very low percentage of employees actually make use of available WLBPs in organizations. Several factors are believed to be responsible for this. For instance Mordi and Ojo (2011) suggest factors like the lack of information and training on work-life balance for the low usage. Their study found that most employees were unaware of the WLB policies in place in their organizations and were surprised to learn that their organizations had flexible work deals.

Another factor recognized relates to equity. Dex and Smith (2007) affirms that many workers do not fancy becoming visible as special cases or requiring special treatment to their colleagues. Again Allen (2009) suggests that co-workers tend to perceive employees who utilise WLBPs to be less committed and that this perception significantly implicates subsequent reward allocation, advancement opportunities, and salary increases.

Moreover, time-demands or norms concerning the number of hours which employees are supposed to devote to work or work-related activities influences the effective utilization of WLBPs in organizations. Working long is usually taken to mean working hard and this creates strong organizational norms for face-time and workaholic hours. Another challenge is that many of the policies are designed without ample appreciation of the needs of employees. Where employees do not see any value in the WLBPs in their organizations, they are wary of using them irrespective of how impressive the policies are or how well informed the employees are about them. Again, personal values may discourage employees from using WLBPs. Glass and Finley (2006) notes that determined employees may decide to concentrate on their careers relinquishing the gains of any WLBPs obtainable in the organization.

2.6 Consequences of Employee Work-Life Imbalance

Work-life imbalance has serious costs for employees, the organization, and society. A conflict in work-life balance significantly affects quality of life and career accomplishments for workers. Vlems (2008) affirms that personal and societal consequences of work-life imbalance include: enhanced levels of stress and stress-induced illness; lesser-life satisfaction; elevated rates of family strife, violence, and divorce; rising frequencies of substance abuse; rising challenges with parenting and control of children and adolescents and swelling rates of juvenile delinquency and violence.

Hobson, Delunas and Kesic (2007) contends that the incessant inability of workers to balance work and life tasks can bring about organizational outcomes like soaring rates of absenteeism and turnover; shrunken productivity; diminished job satisfaction; expanding healthcare costs and lesser degrees of organizational commitment and devotion. Employee exhaustion may come into play with its attendant organizational effects.

2.7 Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between WLB practices and organizational productivity.

Hypotheses 2: WLB practices do not have the potential to reduce employee turnover and absenteeism.

Hypotheses 3: WLB practices imbalances would not affect employee job satisfaction and social life.

Hypotheses 4: Perceptions of negative career consequences would not affect utilization of work-life policies.

3. Methodology

The paper reviews studies on work- life balance. In addition, questionnaires were administered in a field survey consisting of 200 participants. The questionnaire was designed and administered to obtain data on work-life balance policies and practices, productivity status and work-life balance needs of employees. The participants were randomly selected across four commercial banks in Lagos Nigeria. The response rate was 194(97%). Chi-square was adopted in testing the hypotheses.

4. Results

46% of the respondents are satisfied and 54% are dissatisfied with their working hours. 74% of the respondents feel that after work they do not have enough time for their families. This aligns with Mordi and Ojo (2011) that reports that 88% of respondents in their study recognized personal and work demands as overpowering; but described profound organizational citizenship in their devotion to upset their family lives for the sake of the development and success of their organization. 86% of the respondents in this study expressed inability to achieve reasonable work-life balance. This again affirms the findings of Mordi and Ojo (2011) that over 80% of their respondents could not balance their work and non work lives, and could not reach their individual and career goals adequately. 73% of the respondents underline the necessity for work-life balance to be prioritized and that management should employ more pluralistic techniques by way of employers and employees mutually modifying matters having to do with work-life balance.

87% of the respondents admit to often thinking or worrying about work (when not really at work or on the way to work) while only 13% of them refute this. This does not seem unexpected bearing in mind the high targets that most of the Nigerian banks set for their staff especially in terms of deposits. 68% of the respondents indicate that their organizations seldom take initiatives to manage the work-life of employees, while 32% admit that they take initiatives. The respondents' opinions are significantly different on current initiatives taken in the organization to manage work-life. Epie (2006) contends that the low level of organization understanding of the magnitude of work-life balance and the complexity of getting good jobs lead to a lack of thoughtfulness by management for employees' work-life balance and the deficiency in the bargaining power of workers who have no choices.

This study posits that because of the high rate of unemployment in the country, and the forced loyalty of workers to their organizations, many Nigerian organizations, may not bother themselves too much about workers' work-life balance. Some believe that giving workers more work-life balance options will be equal to preventable expenditures for the organization. On the work-life balance options, 78% of the respondents deny having flexible work timings in their organizations and 84% of the respondents admit to sometimes being offered leaves to manage work-life. 92% of the respondents affirm that their organizations do not have job sharing options, 72% of them attest to the availability of paid leave options but only in form of maternity leave or annual leave, only 41% of them say they had child care options.

This study found that other WLB options such as educational classes, job-sharing, breaks from work, compressed working hours, self-roastering, tele-working , child care options (like crèche, day-nursery, after school child care etc), and flexi-time were not available. In addition 31% of the respondents assert that they were under serious pressure to work while 39% suggest that work is evenly distributed and 29% said it depends on the situation. 74% agree that work-life balance policies help to increase productivity, while only 26% disagree. 75% agree that the organization policies assist in balancing work life, and 25% disagree. 76% of the respondents agree that their organization is able to retain its employees' not because of efficient work-life management policies but because the workers do not have other choices.

Poor communication has been found to be a factor affecting the low usage of work-life balance programmes in the organizations. 71% of the respondents affirm that they are unaware of some of the programmes. It is not enough for organizations to offer a rich menu of work-life balance benefits, the desired effect is not likely to happen if the workers either do not have knowledge of or comprehend the programmes. Clear means of effectively communicating available work-life balance programmes to all employees in the organization must be explored. Communication about work-life balance is essential so that employees can spot and realize how these benefits proffer ways to manage work-life imbalance.

The study also found that management support for the work-life balance programmes was not satisfactory; a situation that makes some of the employees wary of taking advantage of the presented options.

For successful work-life balance programmes there must be full management support. A supportive management is required to play down the work versus family conflict. Top management should realize the import of work life balance and the undesirable effects imbalance has on productivity. Familiar affiliations, associations and understanding with workers must be built. There must be commitment from top management to make work-life balance initiatives work. A commitment technique must be driven to employees' work-life balance reliefs. Where leaders in the organization work very long hours, take little or no time off, and require their subordinates to follow suit, employees will be very cautious of utilizing work-life balance programmes so they are not perceived as unserious or lazy. Thus, when management is supportive and lead by example, employees are likely to utilize available WLBPs.

Again this study found that different age groups have different insights of WLB. Work distribution should therefore be age sensitive where possible to improve employee commitment and satisfaction level in addition to productivity, performance and profitability.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 1: Relationship between WLB Practices and Organizational Productivity

Resp	SA	A	D	SD	Total	x^2 cal	x^2 crit	df	P	Rem
	72 (11.39)	81(21.78)	37(2.73)	4 (40.83)	**194**	76.73	**7.48**	**3**	**0.05**	**S**

X^2 (cal.) = 76.73, df = 3. X^2 tab at 0.05 level of significance = 7.48. Since the calculated X^2 is greater than X^2 table value, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho). This implies a significant relationship between work life balance (WLB) practices and organizational productivity.

Table2: Relationship between Work-life balance and Employee Turnover and Absenteeism

Resp	SA	A	D	SD	Total	x^2 cal	x^2 crit	df	P	Rem
	89(33.82)	73(12.38)	20(16.75)	12 (27.47)	194	90.42	7.48	3	0.05	**S**

X^2 (cal.) = 90.42, df = 3. X^2 tab at 0.05 level of significance = 7.48. Since the calculated X^2 is greater than X^2 table value, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho). This implies a significant relationship between work life balance (WLB) practices and employee turnover and absenteeism. Work-life balance (WLB) practices can trim down employee turnover and absenteeism.

Table 3 Work-Life Imbalance and Employee Job Satisfaction

Resp	SA	A	D	SD	Total	x^2 cal	x^2 crit	df	P	Rem
	103 (61.24)	58(1.86)	21(15.59)	12(27.47)	194	106.16	7.48	3	0.05	S

X^2(cal.) = 106.16, df = 3. X^2 tab at 0.05 level of significance = 7.48. Since the calculated X^2 is greater than X^2 table value, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho). This implies a significant relationship between work life imbalance and employee job satisfaction. Work-life imbalance affects employee job satisfaction and social life. High quality of work life balance will improve the job satisfaction.

Table 4 Perception of Negative Career Consequences Would not Affect Utilization of Work-Life Policies

Resp	SA	A	D	SD	Total	x^2 cal	x^2 crit	df	P	Rem
	83 (24.54)	75(14.48)	19 (17.94)	17 (20.46)	194	77.42	7.48		0.05	S

X^2 (cal.) = 77.42, df = 3. X^2 tab at 0.05 level of significance = 7.48. Since the calculated X^2 is greater than X^2 table value, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho). This implies a significant relationship between perceptions of negative consequences and employment of work life balance (WLB) practices. Part-time work has a tendency to have career weaknesses such as obtaining less training, being paid less, advancing more slowly, being sometimes worse off in terms of promotion prospects and entitlement to fringe benefits.

The study again found that while some of the organizations are devoted to work-life balance programmes, the options offered are not always attuned with employee needs. However, the employees are sensible about workable solutions; and while they have views about their ideal working arrangements; they are ready to settle for altered arrangements and are willing to make concessions and to balance their own requirements with those of the organization.

In addition balancing care and work was found to affect career progression owing to often inappropriate work-life balance options obtainable. For instance work schedules were found to be absolutely fixed without any form of flexibility. This paper supports the suggestions of the respondents that where employees are given freedom to choose their own work schedules; the quality and productivity of work increases. Managers should undertake cyclical employee surveys to appreciate the requirements and outlooks of workers related to work life balance. Discussion with workers can be instigated to be aware of their work life balance needs and desires.

The study found that often the communication on work-life balance neither sufficient nor open and that work-life balance options for which there are high levels of demand are partially provided. Again, notwithstanding the fact that WLB is an essential determinant of the fundamental aspects of job satisfaction, managers sometimes act as barriers to workers' achieving appropriate work-life balance. Only a moderate 23% of the respondents feel that they are often able to achieve work-life balance. 68% confess to being physically stressed and mentally pressurized in their jobs and suggest that if their superiors are more helpful and cooperative it will be easier to balance their private and professional lives.

5. Recommendations

The foregoing implies the need for enhanced use of work-life balance options like flexi time; job sharing and breaks from work so that employees can feel that the organization is facilitating their coordination of family and professional lives. A reassessment of active policies and upgrading of current practices on flexible working arrangements is necessary. There should be equality and uniformity in the execution of work-life balance policies especially as regards workloads and work outside conventional hours. To trim down the mental pressure in the work place this study suggests social gatherings and public contact programmes put in place by the organization.

Provisions should be made where possible for leave facilities, both with or without pay for family emergencies and child care within the organization for female employees' to create a work environment free of aggravation and inequity. Moreover the need arises to introduce job sharing options in addition to paid and unpaid career breaks. Self-roastering should be put into practice to allow staff members to propose their ideal shifts which should be assigned as far as possible to accommodate the indicated inclinations.

Also there should be specific counselling programmes on work life balance. Organizations should have formal counselling departments to appreciate employee work life balance problems and help them pick spot-on options. Again, regular exercises, mediation and other soft skill practices can be initiated to advance the emotional balance of the employees.

6. Conclusion

Work-life balance involves successfully managing the deal between paid work and other essential activities - such as spending time with family, participating in exercises and leisure, offering unpaid assistance or pursuing additional study. Enhancing balance between work and personal lives results in genuine paybacks both for employers and employees. It assists in putting up sturdy groups of people and dynamic businesses. Work-life balance has to do with apt prioritization of work and lifestyle. Work-life imbalance has organizational outcomes like elevated rates of absenteeism and turnover; decreased productivity; dwindled job satisfaction; growing healthcare costs and reduced levels of organizational commitment and loyalty. While employers are in essence not answerable for giving work balance to their employees, they can support the employees to seek and maintain their own work balance. Work-life balance has double-edged gains. Where the right balance is established and maintained, both the employee and the employer gains. For the employee there is enhanced happiness, superior dealings with management, successful communication, better sense of worth, health, attentiveness, and self-assurance, enhanced management of tasks, amplified driving force, and lower levels of stress. In the same vein, the organization is able to take full advantage of existing human resources, has superior appeal to a wider variety of applicants, has added workforce devotion and drive, lower non-attendance and greater output.

The principles, resolutions, policies, and prospects in the workplace should therefore support employees in their work-life balance choices.

8. Future Research

This study may have been limited by its geographical scope which is Lagos Nigeria it did not cover the whole six geo-political zones of the country. Again no research can be said to be completely exhaustive.

The topic of work–life balance however offers a great opportunity to researchers who might want to carry out further research in this area using different locations and samples. Of particular interest will be a study on possible gender influences on work-life balance as well as a comparative study of work-life balance challenges across different professions.

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