

## **WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN BANKS, PORT HARCOURT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in the banking sector in Port Harcourt, Rivers state. The population of the study consisted of 769 employees in 5 commercial banks in Port Harcourt City, which were randomly selected and the sample size was 400, derived from using Taro Yamen formula. 301 copies of the instrument were retrieved and useful for analyses, given return rate of 75%. The spearman rank order correlation coefficient was utilized as the appropriate statistical technique to analyze the data. The findings revealed a strong correlation between the measures of work life balance and the measures of employee performance. Subsequently, the study recommends that organizations in the banking sector should promote policies and structures which foster a balance between the personal commitments and responsibilities of an employee and his organizational roles and duties in order to effectively enhance employee performance.

**Keywords:** Work-life balance, employee performance, job stress and productivity.

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

Today, work-life balance has become an increasingly pervasive concern to both employers and employees of most organisations. In recent time, there has been an upsurge in the consideration of the pressures that work has on family as well as 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 (Uzoечи and Babatunde, 2012). Work is generally considered as a part of life. Though separated by certain physical, psychological and temporal boundaries, the two concepts are operationalized within the same context of time and space. The nature of work itself has changed from the 9-to-5 affair to a 24-hour, 7-day society, where customers expect services at times that suit them (CIPD, 2007 as cited in Adetayo, Olaoye and Awolaja, 2011).

Most research studies have shown that when there are happy homes, work places automatically become conflict free and enjoyable places to be. Increasing attrition rates and increasing demand for work-life balance have forced organisations to look beyond run of the mill Human Resources interventions. As a result, initiatives such as flexible working hours, alternative work arrangements, leave policies and benefits in lieu of family care responsibilities and employee assistance programmes have become a significant part of most of the company benefit programmes and compensation packages.

The importance of work-family balance, whether implicit or explicit, to the organisations and employees cannot be ignored. This is because when employees struggle to balance their work and family lives, their families and work will be negatively affected (Gryzwacz and Carlson, 2007). A review of the literature, however, questions this purported link between work-life balance practices and organizational effectiveness. The mechanisms by which the provision of work-life practices affects both employee behaviour and employee productivity remain unclear and under-researched (Allen, 2001; Schutte & Eaton, 2004). This study is therefore aimed at investigating the work-life practices in the Nigerian banking industry. It attempts to gain a better understanding of the experiences and expectations of employees in an attempt to identify the source of the work-life balance and its effect on Employee performance as well suggest ways in which organizations can assist employees to achieve better work-life balance and improve their performance and wellbeing.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

According to Epie (2011), the Nigerian banking sector is known for its long hour culture, and high work load of employees. This Lack of work flexibility, high work pressure and longer working hours are stressing out many Nigerian workers, reducing their job performance and productivity as well as causing broken homes. Also, personal issues that employees of selected commercial banks face outside work, may demoralize them and in turn discourage them to be zealous in their service delivery to customers. All these may result in customers threatening to withdraw their patronage from the banks.

Due to the nature of the work environment, commercial banks now go into strategic alliance with other banks, by merger and acquisition which entails expansion, increasing capital base and customer base. These have led to managers having higher expectation of employees' performance and thus, a misplacement of priority of interest by the employees trying to meet up with the target of the banks, which may affect their personal life. Hence, the study of work-life balance and employee performance is imperative.

The multi-faced demand between work and home responsibilities have assumed increased relevance for employees in commercial banks in recent years. This is due to demographic and workplace changes, such as; transformation in family structures, growing reluctance for 'long number of hours' acceptance culture, greater number of women in the workforce and technological advancement. All these have resulted in the employees having difficulty in prioritizing between their work roles and their personal lives.

### **1.3 Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses have been formulated for analysis in this study:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between job stress and productivity.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between job stress and customer's satisfaction.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between work-life conflict and productivity.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant relationship between work-life conflict and customer's satisfaction.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The following theories will serve as the theoretical basis for this study and they are: the spillover theory by Guest, the compensation theory by Lambert and the work-family border theory by Clark.

The spillover theory by Guest (2002), postulates the conditions under which spillover between the work microsystem and the family microsystem occurs. It can either be positive or negative. If work-family interactions are rigidly structured in time and space, then spillover in terms of time, energy and behaviour is negative. When flexibility occurs which enables individuals to integrate and overlap work and family responsibilities in time and space leads to positive spillover which is instrumental in achieving healthy work-life balance.

The Compensation theory proposed that workers try to compensate for the lack of satisfaction in one domain (work or home) by trying to find more satisfaction in the other (Lambert, 1990). Two forms of compensation have been distinguished here; first, a person may decrease involvement in the dissatisfying domain and increase involvement in a potentially satisfying domain (Lambert, 1990). Second, the person may respond to dissatisfaction in one

domain by pursuing rewards in the other domain (experiences that may fulfil the person's desires) (Champoux, 1978).

Work-family border theory is devoted only to work and family domains. The outcome of interest in this theory is the work-family balance, which refers to "contentment and good operation at work and home, with a depth of role clash" (Clark, 2000). Central to this theory is the idea that 'work' and 'family' constitute different domains or spheres which influence each other. Given their opposite purposes and cultures, work and home can be likened to two different countries where are differences in language or word use, differences in what constitutes acceptable behaviour, and differences in how to achieve tasks. For the working theory of this study, we will situate this research on the work-family border theory.

## **2.2 The Concept of Work Life Balance**

The origin of work-life balance practices spans from work-life conflict experienced by an employee. Work-Life Conflict is the inter-role conflict that results when one's roles as an employee are incompatible with one other area such as being a spouse, parent or with other religious and leisure activities. The concept of Work-Life Conflict recognizes that most individuals have multiple roles. Work-life balance practices help minimize the amount of Work-Life Conflict and also target the antecedents; some of which include massive job requests and job burdens.

Work-life balance is concerned with people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work.

Thus, Kalliath and Brough (2008) defined work-life balance as the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities. Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) defined it as the accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role partners in the work and family domains. Furthermore, Voydanoff (2008) posits that work-life balance is the global assessment that works and family resources are sufficient to meet work and family demands such that participation is effective in both domains. To understand work-life balance, it is important to be aware of the different demands upon us and our personal methods- our time and our energy- that we can locate to address them. Research has indicated that those workers who have some form of control over their working environment tend to suffer less stress-related ill-health.

## **2.3 Job Stress**

According to Robbins and sanghi (2006) job stress is "a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraints, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important". Stress is an increasing problem in organizations and often causes adverse effects on performance. According to Kahn and Quinn (1970), "stress is the outcome of facet of the assigned work role that caused harmful effect for individual. Occupational stress is considered as harmful factor of the work environment." It also has unpleasant effects on health of an individual as

David (1998) contributed “it can also be labelled as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the workers. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury.” According to ILO (1986), “It is recognized world-wide as a major challenge to individual mental and physical health, and organizational health.”

According to Jamshed (2011),

‘The workplace is potentially an important source of stress for bankers because of the amount of time they spent in their respective banks...therefore; the occupation of individuals could be a major source of stress in the given circumstances. When individuals face stress due to various conditions of their occupation and fail to cope with stress, it results into burnout.’

Basically in banking sector, the lack of administrative support from boss (manager), work overload & time pressure, riskiness of job, poor relationship with customers & co-workers, and work family balance cause stress which in turns decrease employee performance.

McCubbin & Figley (1983) suggested that “Job related stress can be mostly immobilizing because of its possible threats to family functioning and individual performance. Job related stress can create a difference between demands on families and the ability of families to provide material security for them.” And that inability to maintain a reasonable balance between family life and work life results in work to family conflict which in turn causes stresses and ultimately decreases the employee performance. According to Anderson (2002), “work to family conflicts is also a predecessor which creates stress in employees of an organization.” In banks the poor relationship among employees often cause stress and have adverse effects on the performance of employees. Lack of social support from colleagues and poor interpersonal relationships can cause stress especially among employees with a high social need. Margot Shields (2006) suggested. “Different sources of work stress do not occur in isolation but indeed interact with one another.” Stress caused by degree of involvement in decision making is a big source of decrease in performance of individual as Meneze (2005) described “Misfit with organization, no part in decision making, were reported main causes of stress as well no control over work environment, personality traits, lack of relaxation along with ambiguous rules affect employees performance.”

## **2.4 Work-Family Conflict**

Kahn et al. suggested that work-family conflict occurs when demands from work and family are mutually incompatible to some degree. Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) later concluded that work-family conflict occurs when demands from one role affects one’s ability to meet the demands associated with another role in another domain. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), Work-family conflict occurs when participation in the work role and the family role is incompatible in some respect. As a result, participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the other role. Work-family conflict can arise from:

- The time demands of one role that interferes with participation in the other role.
- The stress originating in one role that spills over into the other role detracting from the quality of life in that role.
- Behaviour that is effective and appropriate in one role but is ineffective and inappropriate when transferred to the other role.

Although work-life balance is multifaceted construct, it may be concluded that work and family are interdependent domains and therefore, problems occurring in the work domain could affect family domain and vice versa. Similarly, enhancement in one domain may enrich the other also.

## **2.5 The Concept of Employee Performance**

‘Performance is associated with the quantity of output, quality of output, timeliness of output, presence/ attendance on the job, and efficiency of the work completed [and] effectiveness of work accomplished’ (Mathis & Jackson 2009). Performance is defined as the record of outcomes produced by a specified job function or activity during a specified time period. (Bernadrin & Russel, 1998). According to this definition, performance is set of achievements produced during a certain time period. Hence, the investigations have developed the working definition of employee performance for study purpose is that “achievement of targets of the tasks assigned to employees within the particular period of time”. Performance is not only related to the action but also involves judgment and evaluation process (Ilgen and Schneider, 1991).

Employee Performance in an organization is a very important area in the workplace. It can help the organization increase and utilize the capacity of the human resources it has. It translates into good service delivery and interaction in which affects every area of the firm. To achieve this, firms need to make policies that will encourage employee performance. The demand of an organization’s service is based in part on the level of service received by the customer. For the service industry which is our focus in this study, the business is based almost entirely on their employee’s performance. That is why management must look for different ways of improving employee performance.

## **2.6 Productivity**

According to Bernolak (1997), productivity means “how much and how good we produce from the resources used,” whereas The European Association of National Productivity Centres (EANPC, 2005) defines productivity as “how efficiently and effectively products and services are being produced.” Measuring productivity can help firms to follow the missions, vision, policies, objectives and targets (Dixon J. R., Nanni A. J., Vollmann T. E, 1990; Kaplan R. S. ,Norton D. P, 1996; Rantanen H., Kulmala H. I., Lönnqvist A. ,Kujansivu .P, 2007). Likewise, enabling firms identify their weakness and strengths along with opportunities and threats which evolving from market. In view of this, some researchers believe that the profit report of the company is not enough and it is only the last result, while the productivity report determines either efficiency or effectiveness of process and policies.

When the factors affecting the productivity are managed properly the situation becomes favorable. The resulting effects productivity may include improved working conditions, introduction of needed technology, training of employees, motivation, better leadership, favorable rules, regulations, policies and career development opportunities which will in turn influence performance standards positively thereby resulting in higher customer satisfaction levels, which is good for business.

## **2.7 Customer Satisfaction**

Bank is a customer oriented services industry. Efficacy of customer service is related with progressive operation. In the competitive banking industry, customer satisfaction is considered as the essence of success. Organizations operating in service industries should consider service quality a key strategic issue for the business success (Spathis, 2004). Those service providers who establish a high level of service quality retain a high level of customer satisfaction; they also obtained a sustainable competitive advantage. Research indicates that companies with an excellent customer service record reported a 72% increase in profit per employee, compared to similar organizations that have demonstrated poor customer service; it is also five times costlier to attract new customers than to retain existing customers (Duncan, 2004).

In some earlier studies, service quality has been referred as the extent to which a service meets customer's needs or expectations (Lewis & Mitchell, 1990).

Razak (2007) also reported that overall satisfaction is the outcome of customer's evaluation of a set of experiences that are linked with the specific service provider. It is observed that organization's concentration on customer expectations resulted into greater satisfaction. If the customers of an organization are satisfied by their services the result is that, they will be loyal to them and consequently be retained by the organization, which is positive for the organization because it could also mean higher profits, higher market share, and increasing customer base (Karatepe, 2005). Customer satisfaction has become important due to increased competition as it is considered very important factor in the determination of bank's competitiveness (Berry, 2002). Continuous measurement of satisfaction level is necessary in a systematic manner (Chakravarty, 1996) because satisfied customers are the real assets for an organization as it ensures long-term profitability even in the era of great competition.

## **2.8 Relationship between Work-life Balance and Employee Performance**

The outcome of good work-life balance is very viable by creating a culture of honesty and trust where staff can admit to home problems and get support (Maxwell and McDougall, 2004). Hall and Ritcher (1998) argued that the employee needs to have clear boundaries between the two domains and some degree of separation (too much overlap between work and home can cause employee burnout and dissatisfaction).

Supportive work-family culture enhances the psychological resources base for employees by increasing a perception of self-approval and flexibility which can aid individuals develops positive affection towards work (Baral and Bhargava, 2010). It also leads to self-efficacy,

which is a person's belief about whether they can successfully perform a task (Jex and Gudanowski, 1992). This may suggest that when people are happier with their work role and family life, they will be more likely to help others and be more enjoyable to work with. It is possible for positive spillover to occur where an employee could utilize skills used in the workplace, such as setting agendas, collecting feedback, directing and counselling, with a few modifications, in the home (DeLong, 1992).

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

In this work, the quasi-experimental design was used considering that the respondents are not under the control of the researcher. The cross-sectional survey method was employed here.

The accessible population of this study is made up of seven hundred and sixty-nine (769) employees of the main branches or head offices of five (5) selected commercial banks in Nigeria with branches in Port Harcourt; Eco-Bank, First Bank, Fidelity Bank, UBA, and Zenith Bank which were randomly selected.

A sample size of 400 respondents was determined through the use of Taro Yamen's formula and individual proportion of sample size of each bank was determined using Bowley's (1964) formula which facilitated the distribution of our primary research instrument - the structured questionnaire. Out of 400 copies of the questionnaire distributed to respondents, 301 copies (75% return rate) were successfully retrieved and found useful for our analysis.

The Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used, with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), to run the analysis.



## 4.0 Results and Discussion

**Table 4.1 Testing of Hypotheses 1-4**

### Correlations

		JOB_STRESS	WORK-FAMILY_CONFLICT	PRODUCTIVITY	CUSTOMER_SATISFACTION
Spearman' rho	J_B	1.000	.534**	.374**	.345**
	Correlation Coefficient	.	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	301	301	301	301
WF_C	Correlation Coefficient	.534**	1.000	.642**	.374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	301	301	301	301
P	Correlation Coefficient	.374**	.642**	1.000	.456**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	301	301	301	301
C_S	Correlation Coefficient	.345**	.374**	.456**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	301	301	301	301

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H<sub>01-4</sub>

**Source:** Research data, (2017)

(Where JB= JOB STRESS; WFC= WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT; P= PRODUCTIVITY; CS= CUSTOMER SATISFACTION)

**H01:** Result shows there is a significant relationship existing between job stress and productivity with a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05 and a correlation coefficient of 0.374 which is also significant. Therefore our hypothesis which was stated in the null form was rejected.

**H02:** Result shows there is a significant relationship existing between job stress and customer satisfaction with a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05 and a correlation coefficient of 0.345 which is also good. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**H03:** Result shows that work-family conflicts have a strong relationship with productivity with a correlation coefficient of 0.642 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha 0.05. Based on this output, we reject the null hypothesis and accept its alternative.

**H04:** Result shows an existing relationship between work-family conflict and customer satisfaction with a correlation coefficient of 0.374 and a corresponding p-value which is also less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

## **5.1 Conclusion**

The study therefore concludes based on the findings from the analysis of the data collected that; having flexible working hours in an organization significantly influenced employee job performance by enabling a balance between personal commitments and responsibilities and organizational roles and duties of an employee. Flexibility in working hours enhanced employee motivation and commitment to the organization. Employee assistance programmes in the organization created a good avenue for an organization extending a helping hand to individuals in the organization. This contributed highly in creating a healthy, motivated workforce; enhance cooperation and individual productivity in the organization.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

In line with the above findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. Organizations must develop strategies and initiatives to reduce employees' dissatisfaction and possible burnout. This is because employees are under-performing and possibly suffering adverse behavioural or health effects due to the extreme level of stress occasioned by long work hours and work-family conflict.
- ii. Organizations should continually design interventions to reduce work-family conflict.
- iii. Managers should promote two-way communication in the workplace. Clear and consistent communication of expectations from managers and their subordinates as well as participative decision making paves the way for an engaged and more productive workforce.
- iv. Organizations should set up work-life policies and programs that would support their employees in fulfilling both their official duties at the workplace and their individual responsibilities outside the workplace as well.

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