

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND CAREER SUCCESS OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

Budding concerns have been raised by scholars on the perceived failure of academic's career and the dire financial, social, and psychological consequences they are faced with. The paper focused on investigating the link between work-life balance and career success of academic staff of Nigerian Public Universities. Work-life balance was operationalized with Job-sharing, and telecommuting, while, career success was measured with meaningfulness and promotion. The population of the study consist of 6,836 academic staff. A sample size of 256 representing (68%) success rate were retrieved. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. four hypotheses were raised and analyzed using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient for the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Findings showed that Job sharing showed a negative but significant relationship with meaningfulness but showed a positive and significant relationship with promotion, Nevertheless, telecommuting showed no significant relationship with meaningfulness and promotion. Based on the result, the study conclude that work-life balance is significantly related to academic's career success. The study recommends amongst others that to reduce stress load and create balance in academics work and life domains, university management should resort to alternative work arrangements like job-sharing which has proven to add meaning to academic work- life. Also, that telecommuting practices should be discouraged in public universities that have not embraced e-learning since academic's peculiar work nature would require contact with students, as is evident in the current study.

Keyword: work-life balance, career success, Job-sharing, telecommuting, meaningfulness

INTRODUCTION

Career success of academics have attracted research interest lately amongst researchers and employers of contemporary organizations. This is due to the increase in knowledge on the grave consequence individuals and organizations suffer as a result of perceived career failures in the organizations.

Researching career success of academic staff is eminent, especially in this part of the world, and considering the peculiar work nature of the academic staff, where they have only start time but no close

time for work, but expected to work throughout all hours of the day either to be in the classroom to lecture, supervise student's project and long essays, attend to students performing advisory roles, perform administrative responsibilities /headship roles, examine students and turn in the result within a very limited time frame, demand to respond to community services and to carry out research which is a major criterion for their promotion on their career ladder. Despite the effort, the academics are underpaid and what

they earn is barely enough to fend for the family and meet the necessities of life, bearing in mind also, that the academics are required as a matter of compulsion to publish and attend conferences from the meager take-home pay, which is the reason why most academic staff accepts contract and adjunct appointments in more than one university increasing their stress load.

Premise on the above the current research seek to introduce work-life balance as possible solution for academics career success.

Problem Statement

Considerable enquiry had examined difficulties faced by academics, the reality of coalescing domestic and career obligations, couple with the unfriendly organizational climate they face (Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011).

Adam (2019), Johnson (2015), Ofoegbu, and Nwadiani (2006) assert that the death toll amongst academic staff of recent times is connected to the job-related physical, emotional, and Psychological stress inflicted on them by the undue work condition. Dias and Teixeira (2017) equally observed that academics perceive career failure as a momentous psychological toll on them. Further, they said failure causes emotional strain, creating negative emotions evidenced in withdrawal due to shame and embarrassment which is capable of leading one to depression.

Singh, Corner, and Pavlovich, (2015) identified stigma as a psychological impact career failure labels on the individual. Noting further they said stigma has a post-failure impact that affects the academic future endeavors. Failure punctures individual self-esteem thereby having low self-efficacy to undertake tasks in the future successfully (Dias & Teixeira, 2017). Ucbasaran, Shepherd, Lockett, and Lyon, (2013) asserted that failure in a career is fraught with psychological, social, and financial chaos that often draws many to suicidal attempts and eventual death resulting from depression. Therefore, the current investigation surveyed the empirical link sandwiched between work-life balance and career success of academic staff in Public Universities in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

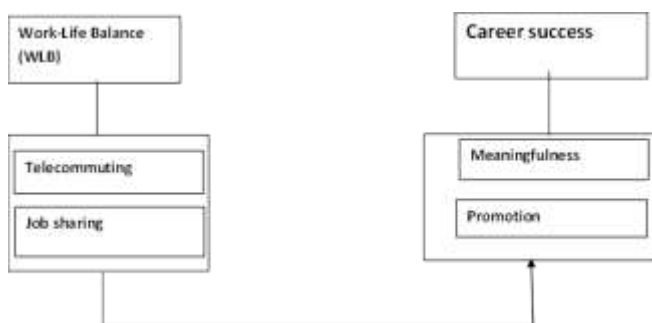


Figure. 1.3. Conceptual Framework adapted by the researcher

Objectives of the Study

The focus of this survey is to establish the link between work-life balance and career success of academics in Public Universities in Nigeria. Specifically, the study will;

1. Ascertain the extent of relationship between telecommuting and meaningfulness.
2. Examine if there is a relationship between telecommuting and promotion.
3. Establish the extent of relationship between job sharing and meaningfulness.
4. Establish if there is a relationship between job sharing and promotion.

Research Questions

The following research questions from the study objective guided the investigation.

1. What is the relationship between telecommuting and meaningfulness?
2. What is the connection between telecommuting and promotion?
3. What is the correlation between job sharing and meaningfulness?
4. What is the relationship between job sharing and promotion?

Research Hypotheses

Hypothetical statements derived from the operationalized relationship between dimensions of work-life balance and career success are stated as follows:

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between telecommuting and meaningfulness.

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between telecommuting and promotion.

H₀₃ There is no significant relationship between job sharing and meaningfulness.

H₀₄ There is no significant relationship between job sharing and promotion.

Scope of the Study

Content-wise the study is restricted to work-life balance with variables; telecommuting and job sharing and career success with measures; meaningfulness and promotion. The study was carried out on federal universities in South-South geopolitical region of Nigeria with academic staff as the micro-level unit of analysis.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Review

Role theory as baseline theory was informed by the relevance and peculiarities in providing a foundation for an argument on the present research focus. Specific implications are that the theory formed clearer representation of work-life balance and career success conceptualization on how; attitudes, feelings, emotions, skills, and behaviors are carried from the home front to workplace and from workplace to the home front creating conflict in various domains which may eventually affect the career outcome of the academic staff of universities.

Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) are notable contributors of Role-theory premised on the reality that a person's itinerary is made up of several roles, roles at workplace on one end and roles outside work such as roles to a spouse, family, and friends on the other end, and that role conflict occur when multiple

demand and pressures arise almost at the same period so that conformity with demand in one aspect makes it grim to fulfill with the other. In such a case there is an imbalance on the various domain and result in career failure

Conceptual Review

WorkLife Balance Conceptualization

Naithani, (2010) states that work-life balance is an effective managing of manifold responsibilities in the workplace, homebase, and other facets of life. Khairunneezam, et al., (2017) posit that successfully balancing profession with personal and domestic life is daunting, it generally has bearing on one's job gratification and gratification with personal life's roles. Extensive overlying matters about worklife balance practice were identified (Guest, 2002), they cover those issues regarding developments in the workplace that may be perceived as causes of work-life imbalance, secondly, matters on the life domain outside work perceived as consequences of work imbalance, thirdly, regarding people outside work who call on the need to resolve the problems associated with work-life balance contemporary practices.

Nevertheless, work-life balance has been a serious issue among academics. Karatepe and Tekinkus (2006) assert that single parents and persons who are leaving alone may have some problem in attempting to balance professional domain and personal life domain. Multiple roles of academics alongside work-related and pressures out of work are perceived by academics as important prompts that impact their seeming work-life balance gratification.

Telecommuting

Telecommuting is an alternative work arrangement that allows employees to work from home some days in the week (Baines & Gelder, 2003). It adopts digital communication devices that enables employees to carry out their works without physical presence at the office. Frequently, they work in satellite workplaces and telecenters near them. It permits staffs to attend to domestic issues which will not hinder productivity and excellence (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Malik and Ahmad (2011) state that digital technologies have made it more practicable for workers to keep contact with supervisors using several devices, like smartphones, electronic-mails, and computer systems, which aid them to finish their tasks elsewhere than confinement of the office. Staffs return email and voice mail after hours of work and weekends (Hawkins & Weitzman, 2001).

Telecommuting is helpful to workers as it assists in organizing their workday around their private and family life demands, cut down work-related overheads, reduce commuting, and stress-free environment. Also, it obliges staff who are incapacitated to leave home. Notwithstanding these benefits, there seems to be less attention to telecommuting practices in many organizations due to the sentiment and prejudice policymakers in organization have on its practices.

Job-sharing

Job sharing is a flexible working plan that consents to two or more workforces jointly filling one full-time job to share everyday jobs, and working time. (Dreher, 2003). Gholipour et al., (2010)

described job sharing as a ground-breaking work arrangement allowing multiple persons to share permanent work hour in the week. For example, one of them is scheduled between 8 a.m. - 11.30 a.m. while other partners can swap between 11.30 a.m. - 4 p.m. in another way, each person works on arranged days full-time in the week.

Job-sharing is more fitting where there are limited part-time jobs opportunities. Apart from the apparent benefit of consenting to employees having more time for other commitments, where colleagues can provide mutual support and learn from each other (Batt & Valcour, 2003). It is also beneficial to employers in enhancing staff engagement, efficiency, and coalescing a broader range of talents and expertise in single job (Varghese & Jayan, 2013).

Career Success

Career success is the constructive cumulative outcome or perceived achievement of an employee over years of work experience (Corinne 2012). Career success can be viewed in two main perspectives; Subjective also called intrinsic career success, is a self-assessment measured by indicators such as, career satisfaction, happiness, job satisfaction, work engagement, emotional well-being, career well-being, and physical health (Dries, 2011; Field et al. 2017; Olson & Shultz, 2013; Smith, 2012). Subjective career success outcomes identified are pride of accomplishment, self-worth, job gratification, gratifying relationships, organization commitment, and moral gratification (Nicholson & Waal-Andrews, 2005). Objective vis-avis extrinsic career success is judged by other people and is measured by tangible, observable, quantifiable pointers are salary, frequency of promotions, hierarchical status, and span of control (Dries, 2011).

Corinne, (2012) noted that subjective career success otherwise known as intrinsic career success focuses on the inner fulfillment that comes from the work, thus is not unswervingly observable by outsiders. Nevertheless, these types of career success measures have attracted a lot of attention among career success scholars, who focused particularly on the features controlling the achievement these types of career success; demographic variables, individual traits or behavioral variables, and organizational variables (Corinne, 2012).

Meaningfulness

Meaningfulness or meaningful work has become an area of attention among researchers lately due to discontent with organizational short-range provisions, worries over job quality, and budding emphasis of career as ground for persons to find importance and purpose (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017). Lips-Wiersma and Wright (2012) defined work meaning as worth of work purpose in relation with one's morals. Conversely, worthless career is most times linked with exhaustion, indifference, and lack of interest in one's work (Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012). Therefore, when someone perceives their work to be meaningful it describes their personal subjective feeling of the existential importance of that work.

Meaningfulness is linked with career importance and constructive in worth (Steger et al., 2012). The scholars offered a succinct prototype in conceptualizing meaningful work as a blend of three realms. Firstly, "personal meaningfulness", which explain the level perception of meaningfulness about one's work roles. Secondly, "Meaning-making" relays the degree to which an individual's work meaningfulness is linked to meaningfulness of the individual's life. Thirdly, "greater good motivations" clarify how work meaning is perceived to the measure work impacts others.

Promotion

Promotion as a notable measure of employee's career success in management literature has now become a competitive technique and tool amongst firms, employees within an organization for optimum performance. Khan and Mishra (2013) argued that in a competitive corporate world such as today, promotion is firm's competitive strategy to identify most productive staff who is used as firm's ambassadors or image painter in the external environment with maximum utilization of her worth internally.

Similarly, Asvir et al., (2011) posit that promotion is an incentive and reward tool, used in rewarding employees for optimum performance in meeting set targets in the organization. This position, however, has a sharp contrast with Khan and Mishra's (2013) perspective which holds that promotion should not be considered as an incentive mechanism, in consequence, the desired ideal performance results cannot be engendered by promoting the worker.

METHODOLOGY

The current research is a cross-sectional study and adopted descriptive survey design. 6,836 academic staff generated from six federal universities in the six states that constituted South-south geopolitical region of Nigeria formed the population size. Taro Yamane's (1967) sample size determination technique was used to draw 378 sample sizes with 256-sample size success rate representing (68%), this is above the 52.7 % acceptable limit espoused by Jason (2016). The researcher used Stratified Random Sampling Technique. 5-point Likert scale adapted questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection and was validated content and construct-wise. Cronbach's Alpha variable investigation technique with a benchmark of 0.76 was used for the reliability test of the instrument and attain the list score of 0.83. Spearman Ranking Order Correlation Coefficient (Rho) was used to measure the direction of the relationship between work-life balance and career success.

RESULT

Table 1 Summary of Questionnaire Distribution and Collection

Cases	Number Distributed	Number Retrieved	Percentage (%)
FP	10	8	80
UO	14	14	100
UB	104	48	46
UC	96	71	73

UP	83	67	81
UU	71	48	68
Total	378	256	

Source: Survey Data, 2021.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient

Variables	Items Num.	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Sharing	4	.83
Telecommuting	5	.97
Meaningfulness	7	.87
Promotion	6	.86

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021.

Table 3: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Demo. Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	175	68.4
	Female	81	31.6
	Total	256	100
Career Designation	Prof./Asst. Prof	40	15.6
	Senior Lecturer	46	18.0
	Lect. I & II	126	49.2
	Asst. Lect. & Grad asst.	44	17.2
	Total	256	100
Work Experience	1-5 years	70	27.0
	6-10 years	82	32.0
	11 + years	104	41.0
	Total	256	100
Highest Qualification	B.Sc.	6	2.0
	M.Sc.	95	37.0
	Ph.D./Post-Doctoral	155	61.0
	Total	256	100

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021.

Bivariate Analysis

In testing the research hypotheses, the decision rule was to either reject the null hypotheses if the calculated value at 5% (0.05) significance level is equal to or greater than the p-value, otherwise accept the null hypothesis.

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between telecommuting and meaningfulness.

Table 4. SPSS output of telecommuting and meaningfulness

			Telecommuting	Meaningfulness
Spearman's rho	Telecommuting	Corr. Coefficient	1.000	.055
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.383
		N	256	256
	Meaningfulness	Corr. Coefficient	.055	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.383	.
		N	256	256

** . Correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021

Hypothesis one in the above table revealed that the correlation between telecommuting and meaningfulness is $r = .055$ indicating a very low positive correlation which is not significant $p = .383 > .05$. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. This result implies that there is no significant relationship between telecommuting and meaningfulness.

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between telecommuting and promotion.

Table 5 SPSS output of telecommuting and promotion

			Telecommuting	Promotion
Spearman's rho	Telecommuting	Corr. Coefficient	1.000	.042
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.505
		N	256	256
	Promotion	Corr. Coefficient	.042	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.505	.
		N	256	256

** . Correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021

For hypothesis two, the result revealed that the correlation between telecommuting and promotion is $r = .042$ indicating a low positive correlation which is not significant $p = .505 > .05$. This result implies that there is no significant correlation between telecommuting and promotion. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted.

H₀₃ There is no significant relationship between job sharing and Meaningfulness.

Table 6 SPSS output of Job Sharing and Meaningfulness

			Job Sharing	Meaningfulness
Spearman's rho	Job Sharing	Corr. Coefficient	1.000	-.176**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.005
		N	256	256
	Meaningfulness	Corr. Coefficient	-.176**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.
		N	256	256

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021

Table 6 above presents the correlation results for hypothesis three, the result revealed that the correlation between job sharing and meaningfulness is $r = -.176$ indicating a very low inverse correlation which is significant $p = .005 < .05$. This result implies that there is a significant negative correlation between job sharing and meaningfulness. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and restated that there is a significant correlation between job sharing and meaningfulness.

H₀₄ There is no significant relationship between job sharing and promotion.

Table 7 SPSS output of Job Sharing and Promotion

			Job Sharing	Promotion
Spearman's rho	Job Sharing	Corr. Coefficient	1.000	.451**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	256	256
	Promotion	Corr. Coefficient	.451**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	256	256

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021

For hypothesis four, the result revealed that the correlation between job sharing and promotion is $r = .451$ indicating a moderate positive correlation which is significant $p = .000 < .05$. This result implies that there is significant correlation between job sharing and promotion. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and restated that there is a significant correlation between job sharing and promotion. Invariably it means that job sharing promotes academics chances of getting a promotion.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Result of the current investigation are summarized below:

1. There is no momentous correlation between telecommuting and meaningfulness
2. There is no significant correlation between telecommuting and promotion
3. There is low and inversely significant association between job-sharing and meaningfulness.
4. There is low and positive significant correlation between job sharing and promotion.

Contribution to Knowledge/Practical & Theoretical Implication

The major focus of the empirical exercise was to establish significant link between work-life balance and career success. Results from fieldwork showed a significant and positive association between dimensions of work life balance and measures of career success. although, as indicated above, telecommuting was seen not to be significantly associate with career success measures.

Theoretical implication of the current findings affirm the position of the role theory as baseline theory that the academics life is characterized with gamut of roles at various domains, but striking a balance via proper prioritization and employing work life balance enablers revealed in the study would assist in achieving a balanced work life and eventually have career success.

Accordingly, the practical implication is that as academics experience work-life balance via proper implementation of work-life balance enablers like job sharing and telecommuting there is a tendency that they impeccably achieve career success.

Recommendations

1. Telecommuting, in chosen alternative work arrangements to promote work meaningfulness, should not be considered as evidence in the current study.
2. Telecommuting practices should be discouraged in public universities that have not embraced e-learning since academic's peculiar work nature would require contact with students.
3. To reduce stress load and create balance in academics work and life domains, university management should resort to alternative work arrangements like job-sharing which has proven to add meaning to academic work-life.
4. Public universities should employ more academic staff for effective job-sharing practice this would give academics apple time to plan, attend conferences, perform community service which is strategic to their promotion and career success.

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