WORK-LIFE BALANCE, JOB PERFORMANCE, AND CAREER PROGRESSION AMONG LECTURERS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

RAFIU OLAJIDE ALABI
Department of Educational Management
University of Lagos, Akoka, Nigeria

Abstract
Lecturers are critical in university goal attainment and like other employees everywhere, lecturers operate in both work and life domains which affect their job performance and career progression. The study therefore investigated the relationship among work-life balance, job performance, and career progression among lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria. Two hypotheses guided the study while the descriptive research design was used for the research. The study population comprised 2,339 lecturers and multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 346 participants. One self-designed research instrument titled: “Work-life Balance Questionnaire” (WLBQ), was used to collect data for the study. The research instrument was validated and subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability test which yielded correlation coefficient of $r=0.82$. The analysis of data was done using Descriptive and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistical tools. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that flexible work arrangement significantly correlated with job performance and career progression. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that universities should give adequate attention to flexible work arrangement practices and policies in order to get optimum job performance from their academic staff and enhance their career progression.

Keywords: Work-life balance, job performance, career progression, flexible work arrangements

Introduction

Department of Educational Management,
In every organisation, two elements namely: the human resource and their job performance are critical to the goal attainment of the organisation. Indeed, employees are the greatest potential assets of any organisation just as they are the strongest pillars that contribute significantly to the success and prosperity of any given organization. In view of this, the creation of favourable conditions for the optimal utilization of employees’ talents and skills in order to enhance organisational goal attainment should be of utmost concern to all employers, the management and the employees themselves. This is underscored by Lubakaya (2014), Oladipo and Adebakin (2010), and Clark (as cited in Ejiogu, 2000) when they noted that since man is a social being and business (organisations) a group activity, the healthy organization must afford groups as well as individuals chances to fulfill their tendencies for equilibrium and growth.

Job performance is central in all organisations and it is imperative that management must necessarily pay attention to it in order to achieve organizational goals. It is typically conceptualized as “actions and behaviors that are under the control of the individual that contribute to the goals of the organization,” (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002, p. 66) as well as counterproductive employee behaviours that contribute to or detract from organizational goals (Hunt, 1996). On the most basic level, one can distinguish between a process aspect (i.e., behavioral) and outcome aspect of job performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Campbell, McCloy, Oppler & Sager, 1993; Roe, 1999). The behavioral aspect refers to what people do while at work, i.e. the action itself (Campbell, 1990). Job performance in this sense encompasses specific behavior (e.g., sales conversations with customers, teaching statistics to undergraduate students, programming computer software, assembling parts of a product). This conceptualization implies that only actions that can be scaled (i.e., counted) are regarded as performance (Campbell et al., 1993).

Job performance is also important to employees as high performing employees get promoted, awarded, and honoured. Career opportunities for individuals who perform
well are much better than those of moderate or low performing individuals (Van, Motowildo & Cross, 2000). Career progression or success has also been of interest not only to individuals engaged in a career, but also to career researchers and practitioners in the field. Career researchers want to analyze the determinants of more or less successful careers, practitioners want to know how to advise people in their careers; and employees want to be successful because career success is one main goal in many people’s lives and career success can be a powerful motivator for further positive outcomes like performance, well-being, or further success.

The modern day complex man (employee) plays multiple roles in his life. These roles revolve around his work-life and non-work life (which includes his family life, societal life and personal life). In playing these roles, conflicts often arise on account of the fact that available resources (time, finance, energy etc) within each role are finite and limited to meet the increasingly high and insatiable demands generated from both roles. As a result, Sieber; Roche and Haar (as cited in Akanji, 2013) noted that this competing demand encountered between work and non-work life degenerates into a tug-of-war experience where the involvement in one domain is usually at the expense of the other. Ultimately, employee performance and productivity is usually adversely affected just as no satisfaction is derived from non-work life.

In response to the conflict, organisations are increasingly pressured to design various kinds of human resource policies and practices, intended to facilitate employees' efforts to fulfill their employment / work related and their personal / non-work related commitments. This response is generally referred to as work-life balance (WLB) initiatives.

Work-life balance is the general term used to describe organizational initiatives aimed at enhancing employee experience at both work and non-work domains. While there is no one generally accepted definition of what constitutes a work-life balance practice, the term usually refers to one of the following: flexible work options, organisational
support for their employee’s dependent care, and family or personal leave (Estes & Michael, 2005). Hence, these practices include flexible work arrangement (for instance, flextime, which permits workers to vary their start and finish times provided a certain number of hours is worked; compressed work week, in which employees work a full week’s worth of hours in four days and take the fifth off), working from home (telework), sharing a full-time job between two employees (job sharing), family leave programs (for example, parental leave, adoption leave, compassionate leave), on-site childcare, and financial and/or informational assistance with childcare and eldercare services (Beauregard, Alexandra, Henry & Lesley, 2009). For the purpose of this study, flexible work arrangement (as one of the work-life balance initiatives) was investigated in relation to job performance and career progression among lecturers in public universities in Lagos State.

Given the centrality of job performance in organizations, as well as today’s competitive environment, it is imperative that all organizations create a work environment that fosters growth and development (Umer & Akram, 2011). It is obvious this can be achieved by executing work-life balance policies and practices in the place of work. This will improve organizational trustworthiness among human resources; lower employee turnover, fewer employee complaints, and result in higher levels of job satisfaction (Werther & Davis, 2015).

Like other sectors, the success of the educational sector is also dependent on the good performance of its employees as the quality of an educational process is influenced by teachers’ job performance. Therefore better job performance of teachers is essential for improvement of educational system as a whole (Yusoff, Khan, & Azam, 2013).

On the surface, the job of a university lecturer revolves around teaching, research and community service. However, the tripartite demand that the jobs place on lecturers is enormous and probably best understood as a very high pressured job. In Nigeria, part of these pressures is linked to short supply of lecturers. The available ones are therefore
usually over stretched. Same set of lecturers are engaged for full-time and part-time students at both undergraduate and post graduate levels. They are known to teach, conduct examinations, supervise projects / theses, etc. thereby spending up to 10 to 12 hours at their work place almost every working day. In some cases, they teach and conduct examinations even on weekends. Their job is further compounded by large number of students especially in public universities. Worse still, infrastructures to aid teaching and learning such as spacious classrooms, lecture halls, workshops, laboratories and laboratory equipment, public address systems, constant power supply, etc are either not available or grossly inadequate.

In spite of these inadequacies they encounter in teaching, they are still is expected to conduct research, attend conferences and workshops, and engage in publications. Furthermore, lecturers perform community service duties both outside and within the campuses (such as heading units / departments and being members of committees), attend regular and emergency meetings at departmental and faculty levels as well as membership of various committees at the university level. The irony of these work roles is that university lecturers are ordinarily expected to work 8-hours per day. But on the contrary they are actually on the job, mentally or physically for almost 24 hours a day. Their work tends to take priority over their personal, family land social lives.

Beyond his job, the lecturer also plays other non-work roles which include: commitment to himself for his personal wellbeing, his role as family man (spouse, father/mother, uncle/aunt/ child etc). Within his immediate society, he is a neighbor, community leader and/or a leader or member of a social club and or religious orgaisation among others. These multiple work and non-work roles (in unconducive environments) exert pressure on the lecturers as each role imposes demands that require time, money, energy and other commitments to fulfill. Where the cumulative demands of these work and non-work roles become incompatible, that is, when participation in one role is
made more difficult by participating in the other role, work-life conflict sets in. The conflict is even allegedly worse for the female lecturers (Kuther, 2015, Akinjobi, 2013).

In an attempt to fulfil their multiple roles in difficult and challenging environments, university lecturers tend to compromise their personal and family well being which ultimately affect their job performance and career progression. They tend to suffer from stress, burnout, loss of concentration at work, depression, mental illness, substance abuse / addiction etc. and consequently experience absenteeism, job turnover, low job commitment etc. At the home front, their inability to spend quality time and pay adequate attention to their family, have been known to result in divorces, broken homes, and drug addiction by their children, etc.

Given these challenges, the job performance and career progression of lecturers may be negatively affected and these have manifested in various forms which included poor quality of university graduates, delay in processing of examination results, absence or little international recognition of Nigerian academics, absence of research breakthrough and innovations aimed at proffering solutions to the county’s socio-economic and technological problems, etc. The consequences of this state of affairs will include wastage of resources expended on the universities by the government, students and their parents as well as other stakeholders, stagnation of high level human capital development and prolonged underdevelopment of the nation among others.

In the light of the above, the demand on university lecturers from their work and non-work domain is enormous and their ability to fulfill the obligations their-in, given the time, energy, and other resource constraints require extra ordinary capacity. It is virtually impossible to escape spill over of roles, overlap of functions and eventual conflict between the two broad domains. This conflict may be largely addressed and resolved if work-life balance policies / initiatives are put in place by the universities.

**Statement of the Problem**

Department of Educational Management,
Concerns have been expressed in recent times by stakeholders on the quality of job performance and career of lecturers. There have been complaints about the quality of university graduates. The products of the universities are largely sub-standard and unemployable as recent reports in the country have shown. They have been described as unsuitable for employment and incapable of starting a new business on their own. In addition, the research activities of lecturers have not proffered adequate solutions to most of the socio-economic and political problems of the country.

In the same vein, cutting edge research, innovations and breakthrough in technology have not being reported by Nigerian universities. Even within the academia, there are complaints that lecturers published heavily in local journals (over 80%) majority of which have no visibility in the international knowledge community. This has detrimental effect on the reputation of Nigeria’s academics. No Nigerian academic is in the league of Nobel Laureates or a nominee of Nobel Prize (Needs Assessment, 2012).

Given the above scenario, and noting that ordinarily, the job of a university lecturer in Nigeria and elsewhere revolves around teaching, research and community service, the low level of job performance of lecturers could be attributed to a number of factors. A critical look at their job shows that it is a high pressure job partly because university lecturers are in short supply in Nigeria. The available ones are therefore usually over stretched. They work round the clock as they are involved on the job, mentally or physically for almost 24 hours a day thus resulting in near or complete neglect of other non-work commitments (such as family, community, religious, social and personal life).

This neglect brings about work-life conflict in the multiple roles that the lecturers play. Studies have shown that work overload, long work hours, and neglect of other non-work domain of life usually harm job, personal health, endanger safety, increase stress, and compromise the well-being of lecturers to the extent that several cases of sudden death while on active duties even at the level of Vice Chancellors have been reported. All of these may have (negative) implications on lecturers’ job performance and career...
progression which in turn may bring about the inability of the universities to achieve their goals. This study therefore focused on investigating the relationship among work-life balance (initiatives), job performance and career progression of lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to investigate work-life balance practices, job performance and career progression among lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

i. investigate the correlation between flexible work arrangement and job performance of lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria,

ii. determine the correlation between flexible work arrangement and career progression,

**Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses relating to the study were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

i. There is no significant correlation between flexible work arrangement and job performance of university lecturers.

ii. There is no significant correlation between flexible work arrangement and career progression.

**Concept of Flexible Work Arrangements**

Flexible work arrangements are defined as employer provided benefits that permit employees some level of control over when and where they work outside of the standard workday (Hill et al., 2001). The term flexible working covers flexibility in terms of the hours that are worked and the location and includes the following: Part-time, Flexi-time, Staggered hours, Compressed working, Job sharing, Shift swapping,
Self rostering, Time off in lieu, Term-time working, Annual hours, V-time working, Zero-hours contracts, Home working/telecommuting, Sabbatical/career break, and others. Many studies have suggested that flexible work arrangements would help the employees to attain a better blend between work and non-work activities and help the organizations to recruit, retain and motivate their employees (Bachmann, 2010).

Christensen and Staines (2011) identified that flextime work arrangement reduced late comings, absenteeism, and turnover. The study concluded that flexible time strategy improved employee productivity by minimizing absenteeism, turnover and work family conflict hence influenced career development.

**Theoretical Framework**

A number of theories was propounded to explain and aid the understanding of work-life balance. However, two of them are considered most suitable to this study. These are Work Life Conflict (WLC) theory and Social Exchange (SE) theory.

**Work-life Conflict Theory**

The WLC theory suggests that people carry multiple roles, related to work (such as the role of a colleague) and non-work (such as the role of a parent) contexts. Merton (1957) argues that the overlapping of responsibilities an roles (work and non-work related) can create tension and, more specifically what he called “role conflict”. The theory is of the notion that both the work and non-work spheres are made up of multiple roles which result in great strain on the individual involved and thereby bring about conflict.

**Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory was propounded by Homans (1958) although subsequent writers have expanded the parameters of Homan’s fundamental concepts. The theory is based on the notion that a relationship between two people is created through a process of cost-benefit analysis. It is useful in identifying positive outcomes associated with
perceived organizational support, (alternative work arrangements). This implies that organizations that provide effective (work-life) support can expect positive reactions from their staff. Greater level of support should logically lead to a decrease in work-family conflict experience as well as higher perceptions of organizational support, which in turn can be expected to result in lower psychological stress, higher commitment and lower turnover intentions.

**Methodology**

The entire procedure used in carrying out this study was discussed in this section under the following sub-headings:

**Research Design**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The descriptive survey design was suitable for this study because it provided a description of the lecturers work-life balance, job performance and career progression.

**Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique**

The target population for the study consisted of academic staff in the two public universities comprising 2,339 lecturers in Lagos State, Nigeria. Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the minimum sample size at 0.05 confidence level, (yielding a minimum sample size of 342) while Bowler’s Proportionate Allocation Formula (1996) was used to determine the proportion of sample size taken from each of the universities. Finally, simple random sampling technique was used to select 346 participants for the study. Before then, the faculties in the universities were grouped into science and non-science and 30% of the faculties were randomly picked across the Department of Educational Management,
divide. A total of 385 questionnaires was administered out of which 346 (90%) was retrieved and considered adequate for the study.

**Research Instrument**

A self-developed questionnaire titled “Work-life balance questionnaire (WLBQ)” was used for this study to obtain the desired data from the participating lecturers. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A elicited information on personal data of participants, while Section B comprised items that are related to the indices of work-life balance, job performance and career progression. The modified Likert type response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) as well as Always (A), Frequently (F), Rarely (R) and Never (N) was used to obtain the needed responses from the participants. To establish the face and content validity, the instrument was submitted to two experts in Tests and Measurements for scrutiny and expert advice and necessary modification of the instrument was done in line with their expert opinions to ensure they are fit for purpose.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability of the instrument was determined through pilot test in another public university in Ogun state and the data collected was subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability test (using the SPSS) to estimate the internal consistency and obtain the strength of each item in the instrument. A correlation coefficient of r=0.82 was obtained. Furthermore, the reliability coefficient of the scales showed; job performance, r = 0.79; and career progression r=0.81 thereby establishing the reliability of the instrument.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentage was used to report the demographic variables of the participants while inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics (PPMCC) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of
significance. Data processing and analysis was carried out with the aid of IBM Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) version 23 software.

Data Analysis, Results, and Discussions
The data obtained for the study was analysed using inferential statistics as indicated below.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant correlation between flexible work arrangement and job performance of lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remark</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Arrangement</td>
<td>18.24</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Performance</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>Ho1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant p<0.05

Table 2 shows that there was a significant correlation between work arrangement and job performance of university lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria (r =0.78; df =464; p< .05). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between work arrangement and job performance of university lecturers in
South West, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that work arrangement significantly correlated with job performance of lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**Research Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant correlation between flexible work arrangement and career progression in the universities.

Table 3:  
*Work Arrangement and Career Progression*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remark</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Arrangement</td>
<td>18.24</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>Fail to</td>
<td>accept Ho₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Progression</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Significant p&lt;0.05</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 showed that there was a significant correlation between work arrangement and career progression of lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria (r =0.67, df =464; p<0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between work arrangement and career progression of lecturers in public...
universities in Lagos State, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that work arrangement significantly correlate with career progression of university lecturers in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Summary of Findings
The following are the summary of findings of this study:

- There was a significant correlation between flexible work arrangement and job performance of lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.
- There was a significant correlation between work arrangement and career progression of lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings
The result of analysis of hypothesis one shows that there was a significant correlation between work arrangement and job performance of lecturers in public universities in Lagos State, Nigeria. This significant correlation could be attributed to the fact that flexibility in working hours allowed employees to create a balance between work and their other life commitments (family, personal, social, religious etc). This finding supports earlier studies (Tamunomiebi, 2018; Mungania, et al., 2016; Okemwa, 2016; Hill, et al., 2010; Abdullah, et al., 2018) where it was found that a significant correlation exist between flexible work arrangement and employee job performance.

In a similar vein, it agrees with the findings of Wayne (as cited in Poulose & Sudarsan, 2014) who found that a significant correlation exist between flexible work arrangement and employee job performance. The findings of this study also supports the findings of other studies (Kamau, et al., 2013; Helen & Frances, 2007; Frank & Lowe, 2005) where it was found that a significant correlation exist between flexible work arrangement and employee job performance. However, the result contradicts the findings from Shumate Department of Educational Management,
and Fulk (2004). Also, Eldridge and Pabilonia, (2007) which noted that there is no significant correlation between flexible work arrangement and job performance.

The result of analysis of hypothesis two shows that there is a significant correlation between flexible work arrangement and career progression of lecturers in Lagos State, Nigeria. The flexible work arrangement is particularly essential for lecturers because of the research content of their job performance which are sometimes done in the quietness of early morning or night and without interruption usually experienced during the normal working and office hours. This finding is consistent with the earlier studies by Hall and Atkinson (2006); Dikkers, et al., (2010); et al., (2005); Gariety & Shaffer, (2001); and Weeden (2005). These studies reported a significant correlation between flexible work arrangement and career progression in various organizations. According to Leslie, Park and Mehng (2012), the positive linkage between flexible work arrangement and performance suggests that flexible work arrangement facilitate career success, given that employees with high performance are likely to move up the ranks in organizations (Ng et al., 2005). On the other hand however, other scholarly works produced contradictory narratives regarding FWA use and career success (Kelliher & Anderson (2008); Spreitzer, Cameron & Garrett (2017). Others who found negative relationship included Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009); Lewis (2001); and McDonald, Brown & Bradley (2003).

**Recommendations**

The under listed recommendations are made in the light of the findings of this study:

1. The Governing Council of Universities in South West Nigeria should give adequate attention to work-life balance practices and policies in order to get optimum performance from their academic staff and enhance their career progression.
2. The Governing Council of universities should assist female academics with special work-life balance policies and practices targeted at removing the barriers slowing them down in career advancement.

3. The National Universities Commission should incorporate work-life balance policies as part of the requirements for the approval of new universities and encourage universities to provide work-life support policies and facilities on their campuses.

References


Kamau, J.M., Muleke, V., Mukaya, S.O. & Wagoki, J. (2013). Work-life balance practices on Department of Educational Management,


Department of Educational Management,


Department of Educational Management,