

Work-life balance policy and practice in Nigeria

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Abstract

It believes that giving people the freedom to manage their own work and make decisions improves their performance. Quality of work life aims to instill a culture of work commitment within organizations and society at large in order to improve job satisfaction and employee performance. The fulfillment of seven needs health and safety needs, economic and family needs, social needs, esteem needs, actualization needs, knowledge needs, and aesthetic needs ensures the quality of work-life. Organisations in Nigeria have a reputation for ignoring decent work practices and embracing precarious working conditions to the detriment of the populace. The country's organisations appear to be primarily concerned with increasing profits at the expense of employee welfare. The purpose of this study is to investigate work-life balance policy and practice in Nigeria. To gather data, relevant information was extracted from conference papers, public records, textbooks, journals, and other sources. According to this study, a work-life balance requires planning, and the most prosperous people have found happiness in both the short- and long-term by developing a barometer to help them manage their lives. This study recommends among other things that availability and use of work-life balance practices, when provided in the context of supervisor and organisational support can reduce work-life conflict and increase positive appraisals of one's organisation. These effects are often associated with employee attitudes such as increased job satisfaction and enhanced control over their work schedule.

Keywords: work-life balance, policy, practice, Nigeria

Introduction

Organisations all over the world have adopted and continue to adopt a variety of strategies to guarantee an improvement in the quality of employees' working lives. Although the idea of quality of working life was first introduced in the 1970s (Wilson, 1973), it has recently gained popularity in part due to the focus on work-life balance. This phenomenon develops in response to changes in the population, economy, society, and culture, such as the growing participation of women in the workforce, the rise of couples who work outside the home,

or the alteration of family structures, as well as population aging, technological advancements, a declining birth rate, and the need for better human capital management. These demographic, economic, social and cultural changes led organisations to a greater involvement in work, family and personal life issues (Koubova & Buchko, 2013; Benito-Osorio, Munos Aguada & Villar, 2014). Work-life balance (WLB) is an organisational culture that aims to lessen work-family tension and help employees perform better in their jobs and other responsibilities. It is regarded as a strategic human resource management technique to enhance organisational and individual performance. Benito-Osorio et al. (2014) contend that the main issue facing 'Generation Y', who value flexibility in time and place at work, is work-life balance. According to Vloeberghs (2002), 'Generation Y' values a high quality of life over a high salary, so they place a greater emphasis on it than previous generations. Moreover, Nwagbara (2020) asserts that striking a balance between work and family obligations is essential for employees' wellbeing, commitment, productivity, sustainable work, and less stress. In contrast, a lack of work-life balance may endanger employees' health and wellbeing as well as have negative effects on productivity, job satisfaction, commitment, employee turnover, and performance.

To manage both work and non-work domains efficiently depends on the strategies employed by both employees and employers. In this regard, Chepkemoi (2021) asserts that employers have increasingly realised that, to enhance work-life balance, they must consistently improve the quality of life of employees with their families to increase the quality of work. This suggests that vibrant businesses should promote work-family integration in order to increase worker commitment. Because businesses want to cut costs and increase profits in the global market, it is critical for employers to implement policies that help employees balance paid and non-work roles. Work-life balance refers to how your work and personal responsibilities interact with one another. Employers, employees, and the government all want more people to enter the labor force. However, in our fast-paced world, many people find it difficult to balance work and the responsibilities of caring for children, elderly parents, or disabled family members. The availability of free time for study, self-care, volunteering and other activities is frequently a problem for other employees. Because everyone is different and because personal commitments and family dynamics evolve over time, there is no ideal work-life balance. Employees can work in non-traditional settings and at times that better suit their personal commitments when they have choices about how work is organised, which makes it possible to balance the demands of work and life (Mahmoudi, 2015).

According to McCarthy, Darcy and Grady (2010), work-life balance is an importance area of human resource management which is receiving increasing attention from policy makers, organisations, employees and their representatives globally. In the United States, the phenomenon of 'extreme jobs' characterised by grueling working hours, unpredictable workflows, fast pace with tight deadlines, work-related events outside business hours and 24/7 availability of clients was highlighted in relation to work-life balance was ranked as one of the top three challenges facing employees. In Kenya, Chepkemoi (2021) posits that for several years labour unions have always called for all workers to embrace enough recovery time through rest breaks, shorter working week and vacation rights. Workers unions have also put in place rules and regulations to ensure work-life balance practices are adhered to by both national and international organisations in Kenya. Also, Darko-Asumadu, Sika-Bright and Osei-Tutu (2018) noted that there are number of work-life balance policies and study leave among others implement in the banking system in Ghana to keep up with the Western World and to gain competitive advantage with similar organisations. Alianto and Anindita (2018) acknowledge that banking sector in India has been successful in the implementation of work-life balance policies such as flexible policies, employees' welfare policies and option on the work patterns.

In the United Kingdom, The quality of working life project, according to Worrall, Jones, and Copper (2003), has provided evidence that the increased job insecurity, intensification, and intensification that have occurred over the past ten years are unsustainable in terms of their effects on the working and non-working lives of UK managers. Family and work are two sides of the same coin, per FU and Shaffer, 2000, cited in Sathya-Dev and Mano-Ray (2017). Conflict between these two areas of expertise has a negative impact on both people and organisations. A healthy work-life balance is linked to employees' higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Similar to this, Okolie, Igborhiohwunu, and Omole (2017) assert that employees'

commitment to their organisations will grow as their work-life balance improves. The lack of a balance between work and personal life, according to Marseno and Muafi (2021) and Puspitasari, Darwin, and Marseno (2021), is one of the factors that can affect employees' commitment to the organisation.

In today's competitive business environment, one of the main struggles of modern firms is organisation commitment and work-life balance (Berk & Gundogmus, 2018). Overall quality of life improves and businesses also benefit from employees' higher morale and commitment. The ability of employers to negotiate flexible work arrangements offers a defense against the loss of skills and experience as well as the high cost of hiring and retaining employees in a tight labor market. Employers who offer flexible work options become "employers of choice," giving them an advantage in the labor market. Employees and organisations are becoming more and more aware of the advantages of work-life balance, which include attracting and keeping highly committed and motivated workers, increasing productivity, improving employee satisfaction and well-being, reducing turnover and absenteeism, successfully recruiting candidates, and increase return on investment (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Bellow & Tank, 2020). Despite the benefits of work-life balance and the fact that the phenomenon has attained vast research publications in developed nations, much less observations are committed in exploring the effect of work-life balance on organisational commitment in Nigeria, this is because according to Nkporbu, Asuuo and Douglas (2016), Khalid and Ibrahim (2018) and Anyim, Shadare and Adio (2019) Nigeria has been known as a place where decent work practices have been neglected by organisation and precarious work conditions have been embraced at the detriment of the people. The main focus of organisations in the country seems to be maximisation of profits without caring about the welfare of the employees. This study therefore seeks to examine work-life balance policy and practice in Nigeria.

Research Methods

The research method is the process of searching for a detailed, understandable, and complete explanation of problems in relation to facts in order to broaden current understanding. In any given research, it may be necessary to use more than one of the general types of investigation methods. One could investigate the answer to a specific difficult of meaning its past through an investigation of records, which is known as a secondary source, and defining the current position through field investigation, which is known as a primary source. This study used the secondary method of data collection, which included extracting relevant data from conference papers, public records, textbooks, journals, and other sources. The study, on the other hand, used an exploratory research design. This is because it piques the researchers' interest and desire for a thorough understanding of the subject. This enables the researchers to obtain contextual information about the findings.

Review of Related Literature

Work-Life Balance Policy

The concept of work-life balance policy was first used in United Kingdom (UK) during the 1970s. However, it was not until 1988 when the notion began to be relevant in the United States, where in the 1980s and 1990s companies began to implement work-life balance policies (Lockwood, 2003 and Prasad, 2012 cited in Benito-Osaro *et al.*, 2014) mainly in response to an increasing workers disregard towards their families due to their focus on accomplishing organisational goals and objectives. Work-life balance is the satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict. According to Ainapur, Vidyavathi, Kulkarni and Mamata (2016), work-life balance policy is a policy statement that announces the organisation's commitment for providing a flexible responsive work balance which enables employees to balance work and family/personal responsibilities supported by policy guidelines. Similarly, Ideh and Aghogban (2018) defined work-life balance policy as the initiative of the management established to help employees meet their responsibilities outside work. The policy provides a framework within which HR department can consider how best to help employees achieves an effective balance between work and life outside the workplace. In addition, Arif and Farooq (2014) view work-life balance policies as organisational practices that enable employees to be successful in both their professional

and personal lives and reduce work-family conflict. Work-life balance policies are creative and helpful tools that help an organisation retain and motivate its human resources and help a person balance their personal and professional lives. Workplace support and social support from family and friends can reduce stress at work and at home, enabling employees to work with more positivity and achieve a better work-life balance.

Therefore, the goal of the work-life balance policy is to simplify and make work flexible for employees without complicating the work process or lowering commitment or productivity. Changes to the workplace culture must be feasible and must not negatively affect the productivity of employees or any other pertinent third parties. In a similar vein, the work schedule must not negatively impact the workload, employees’ health, safety, or security (Chantai, 2014). Okolie *et al.* (2017) asserted that work-life balance practices are assisted by employers who institute policies, procedures, and employees to easily pursue more balance lives. Employee stress is decreased by the pursuit of work-life balance. Stress and unhappiness arise when employees feel as though they are neglecting other significant aspects of their lives by spending the majority of their days engaged in work-related activities.

In addition, Bloom, Kretschmer and Reenen (2011) concluded that the main goal of implementing work-life balance policies should not be financial performance, but improving employees’ commitment and satisfaction of staff members, other important factors in the success of work-life balance policies include proper communication of the policies to existing and future employees, raising awareness of the policies, educating the managers about the important of the policies and training of managers on how to implement the policies. Thus, work-life balance policies are helpful to get rid of employee’s stress, increasing productivity, increase employee loyalty by strengthening organisational commitment, reduce absenteeism and turnover rate, improve the company’s public image and create positive work environment (Beniot-Osorio *et al.*, 2014).

Moreover, Lee (2019) categorised the important consequences of work-life balance policies into work-related and non-work related outcomes. According to Abdien (2019), Talukder (2019) and Bulinska-Stangrecka, Bagienska and Iddagoda (2021) the work-related outcomes of work-life balance policies include increased job performance, job satisfaction, increased organisational engagement, reduced absenteeism and turnover intentions. While the non-work related outcomes include increased life satisfaction, decreased family conflict and improved family satisfaction. Anyim *et al* (2020) also pointed out that organisation needs to ensure that employees exhibit a high balance level of both work and outside work activities so as to achieve job quality performance and to reduce errors that would have negative impacts on the organisation. Therefore, work-life balance policies are a win-win situation for both employees and employers. This is because the policies results in a number of important employees and organisational benefits. The table below illustrated the impact of work-life balance policies as demonstrated by Benito-Osorio *et al.* (2014:220).

Table 1: Review of Literature on the Impact of work-Life Balance Policies

Author	Sample		Main Results
	Year	Country	
Konrad & Managel (2000)	2000	United	Results point to a greater positive impact on firm productivity in forms employing a higher percentage of professionals and implementing work-life balance policies.
Perry-Smith & Blum (2000)	1993-1994	United States	Findings support the hypotheses stating that firms with work-life balance policies achieve better performance than firms with less family-friendly policies.
Meyer, Mukerjee & Sestero (2001)	2001	United States	Concludes that work-life practices and policies have a positive effect on firm performance. However, some particular policies may have a negative impact, such as job sharing.

Author	Sample		Main Results
	Year	Country	
Dex & Smith (2002)	1998		Findings indicate that 9 out of 10 firms using work-life balance policies were profitable, but authors stated that they could not assure that work-life policies were causing those improvements in performance.
Gray (2002)	2002	United States	Findings showed that 97% firms with work-life balance policies had a superior financial performance than the average, while only 55% of firms with no policy at all surpassed that mark.
Manas & Garrido (2007)	2006	Spain	Results showed that 63% of managers responsible for human resources stated that work-life balance policies positively affect productivity.
Albert, Escot, Fernancex & Palomo (2009)	2010	Germany France Uk & US.	Results of a survey for HR managers, they concluded that main benefits from work-life balance policies are to improve brand image as transmitting modernity.
Bloom, Kretshemer & Van-Reenen (2011)	2010	Germany, France, Uk & US	Results showed that there is no positive relationship work-life balance policies and firm performance. However, they also noted that work-life balance policies do not entail a negative effect on performance.
Yamamoto	2010	Japan	The results revealed that there is positive correlation between work-life balance policies and productivity, while remarking that family-friendly policies do not increase firm productivity by itself.
Benito-Osorio, Munos-Ayuado & Villar (2014)			Findings showed that the introduction of work-life balance policies benefits Spanish companies with respect to talent retention and higher employers' engagement as well as a achieving a positive impact on productivity, costs and business results.

Source: Benito-Osioro *et al.* (2014:220)

In a recent study conducted by Eriyanti and Neokent (2021) in Kudus Regency in Indonesia; the main results of the study indicated that work-life balance policies support employee commitment to the organisation. Also, Khateeb (2021) highlighted the non-monetary benefits of work - life balance polices as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Non-Monetary Benefits of Work Life Balance Policies

Space/schedule Flexibility	Non-Monetary Benefits	External activities	Employer Brand

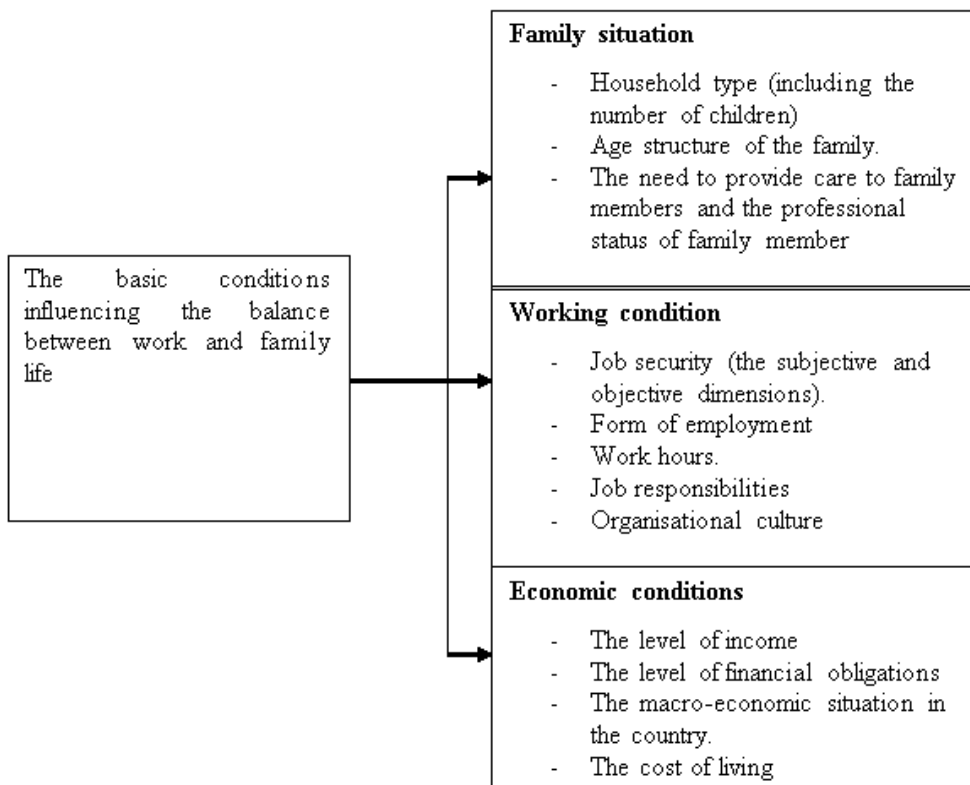
Short day work	Family assistance	Social	Work environment
Annual Hours	Meal allowance	Activities	Empowerment
Rest period	Training & Development	Sports	Social marketing
Tele-commuting	Part-time work	Community	Health
time work	Emergency leave	Service	Promotion
Job sharing	Leave of absence	Occupational	
Compressed	work	Health	
Shared work	Pay		
Flexi-time	Flexible Holidays		
Flexi-place	Maternity/Paternity leave		
Respite arrangement	Career Breaks		
Voluntary	Stress counseling		
Reduced time	Confidential help		
Term-Time work	Achievement leave		
Home working	Debt/financial		
Non-standard	Advice		
Work week	Children arrangement		
Job autonomy	Drugs/alcohol		
Organisational support	Counseling holiday banking		

Source: Khateeb (2021:22)

Despite the benefits of work-life balance policies, the policies have been criticised on distinct fronts. Huston, 2005 and Freeman, 2009 cited in Ojo *et al.* (2014) Pointed out that work balance as a concept is problematic. This is because people do not fragment work from life. In other words, work-life balance is seen as part of life. Work-life balance has traditionally been understood to entail allocating an equal amount of time to paid work and non-work roles, but in recent years, the idea has come to be understood as being more complex and has been expanded to include additional elements. To support the aforementioned point of view, Orogbu, Onyeisugbe, and Chukwuemeke (2015) contend that employees work extra hours in an effort to stay employed, even though this may harm their personal lives and the care or upkeep of their children. It may also result in a divorce, a depressed home, fewer social interactions, and other negative outcomes.

It is also difficult to maintain work-life balance in today's competitive world because work is likely to intrude on employee personal lives. This may be especially true in Nigeria, where employees may be concerned that restructuring and other factors could result in their job loss. It can be tempting to work long hours at the office when a worker is attempting to advance in their career, manage a growing workload, or simply keep their heads above water. However, if a worker spends the majority of their time at work, their entire life suffers. A work-life balance that is unbalanced is clearly bad for society, businesses, and employees (Okolie *et al.*, 2017). Conflicts between work and family, in particular, have a significant impact on both women and men's career success and family life quality. Gokhroo and Sharma (2019) contend that work-life imbalance frequently manifests as a variety of physical and psychological stressors, including depression, low self-confidence, anxiety, insomnia, burnout, mental imbalance, low productivity, low morale, hypertension, fatigue, high blood pressure, increased emotional exhaustion, lower job satisfaction, and even increased relationship fallout. They also emphasized the elements that affected the harmony between the work and non-work domains, as seen in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Conditions Influencing work and non-work Domain



Source: Gokhroo and Sharma (2019:127)

Diab and Suitan (2016) argue that work-life balance mitigates the conflict employees undergo in balancing the demands of their work and personal lives; organisational work-life balance policies enabled employees to deal with issues pertaining to their working life. Gokhroo and Sharma (2019) further argue that lack of work-life balance adversely affects the work and family domains. It results in violence, dissatisfaction at home front, child abuse, marital discord, increased divorce rates, low birth rates, neglecting of the elderly, poor productivity, lower involvement of employees' at work, poor interpersonal relations, apathetic attitude towards work and increased accident at workplace. Thus, balancing family and work responsibilities is important for employees' well-being, productivity, sustainable work, less stress and commitment (Nwagbara, 2020).

Benefits of Work-Life Balance

In recent times, the evidence for the benefits of work-life balance has been growing in strength and volume. Igbinowanhia *et al.* (2012) pointed out that work-life balance is an ongoing quest for the employees, but this should now also become a concern for the employers of labour in Nigeria because of the double-throng benefits; where the right balance is found and maintained, both the employer and employee gains.

Benefits for the Employee

Several factors improve where the employee is able to find the right balance. Some of these factors according to Vlems, 2005 cited in Igbinomwanhia *et al.* (2012) include:

1. Improved employee's happiness. Employees would be happier when they are able to balance their work and life demands. The competitive advantages of several organisation come from happy employees.
2. Improved employee's relations with management. Perceived support of management towards employee's work-life balance fosters a good relationship between the employees and management which itself improves effective communication within the organisation.
3. Employee loyalty and commitment. An employee's loyalty and commitment increases with opportunities for

work-balance. Employees are more likely to stay with an organisation when there opportunities for achieving work and non-work balance.

4. Work and home responsibilities are managed better, there is reduction in the level of stress and there is an increased motivation among the employees.
5. Work-life balance improved employee's self-esteem, confidence, health and concentration. McCarthy *et al.* (2010) argue that work-life imbalance increases mental health of employees in United Kingdom (UK).

Benefits for the Employer

Generally, the following factors, as Igbinomwanhia *et al.* (2012) noted, improved for the employers.

1. Implementing work-life balance programmes gives an impression that the organisation cares about the employees. Therefore, the employees will feel more valuable and work harder as a result.
2. When it comes to hiring, an organisation attracts a wider range of candidates if it offers work-life balance programmes.
3. Work-life policies increased the amount of labor that was available. Since the workers will be highly motivated, the employer will benefit from the most labor that is readily available. During working hours, every employee will give everything they have.
4. The work environment will be less stressful, which means less stress related illness and decreased healthcare costs for employer.
5. The employees will be more loyal and motivated, productivity will increase and absenteeism will be reduced because of the maximised available labour.

Work-Life Balance Options

Amongst the new challenges faced by employers is the need to help employees achieve a satisfactory work-life balance, allocation of time and commitment between work and personal life which reflects the personal needs of the employees (Cole & Kelly, 2011). To achieve better work-life balance, Okolie *et al.* (2017) argue that each employee needs to work smarter to get more done in less time. Thus, work-life balance options include but not limited to:

Flexi-Time

Flexi-Time is a work arrangement in which the work schedule is arranged between the employer and employee so that it is beneficial to both. The employee is afforded the autonomy to vary starting and finishing time such that it does not affect the smooth working of the organisation (Khateeb, 2021). Flexi-time schemes usually involve employees working at a set of 'core hours' in which they are obliged to attend work, with period either side by the core, within which they can choose their arrival and departure times. Similarly, Lasar, Osoian and Ratiu (2010) pointed out that flexi-time allows employees to determine or be involved in determining the start and end times of the working day within guidelines specified by the organisation. This can allow employees to meet family or personal commitments or emergencies (enable employees to respond to both predictable and unpredictable circumstances) during the day or to reduce their commuting time by starting and ending work before or after rush hour.

Chung and Lippe (2020:3) argue that "the idea behind flexi-time is that giving employees the freedom to manage their working time is more beneficial than limiting their work hours". However, Okolie *et al.* (2017) posit that flexi-time works well for full-time office staff, but not in shift patterns or in production line. This working day is not rigidly controlled and this gives employees daily choice in timing of work and non-work activities. Furthermore, Eludimi (2017) affirms that flexi-time allows an employee to attend to non-work demands without having to take time off work. Despite the potential benefits of flexi-time arrangement, Dancaster (2006) pointed out that Flexi-time implementation has been problematic because of the different ways organisations manage it, difficulties with implementing flexi-time in teams and work-groups, the possible stigma or career

penalties associated with using flexi-time and often times, organisational leaders discourage flexi-time implicitly or explicitly because of their reduction of their reluctance to relinquish control. Downess and Koekemoer (2011) argue that flexi-time reduced work-family conflict and improved performance at work at home. Moreso, Hada, Fanggidae, and Nursiani (2020) posit that flexible working arrangements are an important aspect of attracting and retaining employees.

Job-Sharing

Job-sharing is a particular form of part-time working arrangement, where all aspects of a job are shared between two or more employees. Lasar *et al.* (2010) argue that the idea of job-sharing is to afford employees ample time to attend to non-work activities so as to be able to achieve a good measure of work-life balance. Apart from the obvious advantage of allowing employees more time for other non-work activities, including family responsibilities, job-sharing also facilitates the development of partnership job shares can learn from each other while providing mutual support. It can benefit employers as well by improving staff retention, increasing productivity and combining a wider range of skills and experience in a single job. Thus, Khateeb (2021) argue that job-sharing develops employee partnership and support. In job-sharing, apart from splitting the hours, the employees also share the payments, benefits and holidays (Eludinni, 2017).

Part-Time Work

Part-time work arrangements allow employees with disabilities, health challenges and limited disposable time (e.g., students) to participate in the labour force, develop their skills and obtain work experience. Part-time work can facilitate re-entry into the workforce for those who have had career breaks, particularly mothers or fathers who have stayed at home to raise their children. From the employers' point of view, the use of part-time workers where feasible, can help maximise the use of human resources and increase operational flexibility, by providing additional coverage during peak period (Lasar *et al.*, 2010). However, Okolie *et al.* (2017) pointed out that the increased cost of requisite training and the limited applicability in most jobs make part-time work arrangement less attractive to employers, while the absence of promotion opportunities serves to discourage its preference among employees.

Compressed Working Hours

Many employees often wish for shorter working weeks. According to Okolie *et al.* (2017), a compressed working hours is an arrangement whereby workers work longer shift in exchange for a reduction in the number of working days in the work cycle. That is, it is a system of a four day working week. Compressed work arrangement or practice leads to increased leisure activities (longer weekends), avoidance of peak travel periods, and increased savings on overhead cost to the organisation. However, fatigue caused by elongating the working day, loss of business by being closed on a day when clients would expect service and premium (overtime) payment may be demanded to compensate for the longer working hours are the major disadvantages of compressed working hours. Thus, compressed work week practices may be particularly useful for employees who wish to reduce the number of days per week spent at work.

Breaks from Work

Igbinomwanbia *et al.* (2012) pointed out that by taking breaks from once in a while, the right balance work and life can be achieved. These breaks should not only be about maternity, paternity and parental leave, but also time off for career breaks and sabbaticals.

Self-Rostering

This option according to Ideh and Aghogban (2018) allows the agreement of a fixed pattern of starting and finishing times for each individual and enables members of a team to cover the work required in an office for a longer working day than might otherwise be the case if everyone followed the same working pattern. Thus, with self-rostering, employees are able to schedule their time conveniently between work and non-work activities

Child Care

Views, 2005 cited in Eludinni (2017) argue that people with families do not have the luxury to stay at home anymore and take care of the children. The trend is towards dual-earning families as life has become too expensive to let a potential money-maker stay at home. Thus, the demand for childcare options as a means of helping employees achieve work-life balance is becoming increasingly important. Some of the popular and important child care options according to Okolie *et al.* (2017) include Creche, day-nursery, after school child care, host parent care, leader-at-home care and teen care.

Tele-working

Tele-working is also called telecommuting, it is a work arrangement that allows an employee to work from home instead of in the office Lasar *et al.* (2010) noted that employees with the aid of modern communication technology can carry out their jobs at home without necessarily having to be at the office. This type of work arrangement can be advantageous for employees by allowing them to organise their work day around their personal and family needs, to decrease work-related expenses, to reduce commuting time and to work in a less stressful and disruptive environment. Also, it may help to accommodate employees who, because of particular disabilities, are unable to leave home.

Despite the potential benefits and the attention that telecommuting has attracted in the media in recent times, few collective agreements contain telecommuting provisions in developing nations. The paucity of tele-working clauses is “partly due to the fact that not all occupations are amenable to such work arrangement. Also, employers may be concerned by the initial implementation cost, potential legal liabilities and difficulties in supervising and appraising the performance of the employees. Trade unions may disapprove of work-at-home clauses if they perceive them as leading to greater isolation of employees, reduced job security and promotion opportunities, diminished health and safety protection of employees. However, tele-working allows employee to attend to non-work issues so long as it does not affect their output (Eludinni, 2017).

Shift Working

Shift working arrangement according to Ideh and Aghogban (2018) allows employees to switch from working either in the morning, afternoon or over-night. This is exemplified in the theory of ‘the Owl and the Lark’ in which case some employees are not productive in the day, while others are at their best at night.

Job -Splitting

This is a form of job-sharing in which the range of tasks within a role is split between two or more workers. Often times, the split jobs are swapped between the groups in order that all employees involved will have a feel of what the entire job role is all about (Ideh & Aghogban, 2018).

Job Autonomy

This is a work arrangement that describes the level at which employees enjoys freedom, takes decision, taking cautions, employing the best ways to execute job-related activities. However, when it is viewed in the angle of an organisational culture, autonomy is attached to a position, accountability, employee’s job ability and a better performance (Anyim *et al.*, 2020).

There are quite a handful of family-responsible practices that can be implemented by organisations apart from those already mentioned above. Some of these include stress management training, leave work at work policy, deliberate creation of time for relaxation, bolster available support system, training of combining work and family, flexibility in leave and short vacation, individual re-thinking of errands and learn to say ‘No’ respectively. The main intent of work-life balance practices and options is to help employees solve their personal problems or at least to prevent problems from turning into crises that affect their ability to work productively (Snell & Bohlander, 2010).

Work-Life Balance Practice in Nigeria

Initiatives promoting work-life balance aim to protect and promote employees' health and well-being. This goes a long way toward preserving and improving employees' health and well-being, allowing them to complete the necessary cycle of their career and family life. According to Ashibekong and Ohiani (2019), work-life balance is an important part of corporate social responsibility that every organisation should value in the face of constant high environmental demands and rapid global economic changes, and the benefit of implementing family-friendly policies in organisations is to significantly address employee retention, job satisfaction and commitment, productivity, and employee morale issues. Organisations in the Nigerian working environment that seek optimum performance and commitment from their employees must not toy with their employees' work-life balance. This is because employees must play multiple roles at work, school, and home in order to avoid burnout. According to Boamah, Hamadi, Havaei, Smith, and Webb (2022), burnout is a psychological syndrome characterised by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and feelings of ineffectiveness and lack of achievement as a result of continued exposure to work-related stressors. Burnout can be exacerbated by factors such as prolonged heavy workloads, insufficient time for personal life, or a scarcity of human or material resources.

Therefore, effective work-life balance practice in organisations has become a more essential issue in recent times as lack of it tends to exhibit negative result such as burnout, decreased job satisfaction, reduced work effort, lack of concentration and creativity, high turnover, deterioration in mental and physical health, decreased employees' commitment and career dissatisfaction (Sivin, Brower, Sen, Brownlee & Gold, 2020). Despite the fact that business environment has changed tremendously in Nigeria due to uncontrollable environment factors that are beyond the power of the organisational executives, enough emphasis is not yet placed on employees' work-life balance and the effect it has on the employees' stability and function at work and at home (Akinyele et al., 2016). Additionally, Anyim et al. (2020) claim that while the concept of work-life balance has been adopted and used in developed nations like Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, and Cameroon, it has been the exact opposite in western nations like France and Britain. According to Moreso, Ojo, Salau, and Falola (2012), the banking industry in Nigeria is infamous for its high work load and long work hours, which causes employees to neglect other facets of their lives. As a result, parents don't spend enough time with their kids, and many kids are raised by maids. Numerous couples have also separated or divorced as a result of this long hour culture.

In recent times, studies in Nigeria (Akanji, 2013, Ojo *et al.*, 2014; Abioro, Oladejo & Ashogbon, 2018; Khalid & Ibrahim, 2018; Akinyole et al., 2016; Ogar & Amanse, 2019; Anyim *et al.*, 2020; Odeloye, Osibanjo, Adeyeri, Ogbari, Imuesese and Akande, 2020; Akinlade & Nwadike, 2021) pointed out the prevalence of work-life conflict in the workplace and the lack of work-life balance policies and culture among organisations in the country. Khalid and Ibrahim (2018) affirm that the implementation of work-life balance programmes is seen as a costly venture, organisations are showing little or no concern facilitating the attainment of the right combination of work-life arrangement by their employees. The reasons that compounded the issue of work-life balance culture in Nigeria is the assumption that such a venture is costly and apparently a waste. Also, to a large number of Nigerian organisations, assisting the employees to balance competing work and non-work demands are not considered as the responsibility of the organisation, but that of the employee concerned.

Further compounding the problem of work-life conflict and the failure of business owners to imbibe the attitude of implementing work-life balance policies and programmes is the government's position on labour. According to Ojo *et al.* (2014), the provisions of the Nigerian Labour Act (1974) concerns mainly by blue-collar workers and are very basic with limited government regulations for employers. This legal provision is such that employees are left to their own devices. Additionally, the daily hours of work must be set by agreement between the employer and employee or through collective bargaining. According to Nwagbara (2020), dependent care, work flexibility, and other related policies are based on mutual agreements between an employee and employer, which promote discrimination, human rights violations, and poor work-life balance practices. Otobo (2016) also made note of Nigeria's pro-male policies and inadequate corporate governance and regulatory framework. This makes it easier to oppress, abuse, and control female workers.

A survey by Chantai (2014) at Lagos Business School gave insights into work-life balance practices in Nigerians. Out of the population surveyed, the statistics below is quite revealing.

1. 14% never or seldom work more than official hours.
2. 69% were more than 48hours per week and more than 65% said it is due to the volume of work.
3. 25% longer hours because they enjoy their work.
4. 47% commute between 3 to 6hours on a typical day and 35% claims that commuting adds greatly to the stress of the day.
5. Unfortunately, 65% of those working excessive hours (more than 48hours per week) had suffered from stress-related illness in the past 12months, some of which are fatigue, migraine, series of persistent minor ailments, irritability, sleeplessness, anxiety attacks, lack of concentration, loss of appetite and depression in that order.
6. 80% wish they has more time for their family and 43% of them already feels completely emotionally drained by the time they get back home from work.
7. More shocking is the fact that over 51% of those who feel their life is out of control seek help from outside of their organisations , mostly from Doctors, and this help is generally considered effective to continue working for the organisations .

Therefore, Okolie et al. (2017) assert that employees' duties and commitments needs to be balanced and to improve employees' performance, a well defined structures and regulation should be spelled out in order for Nigerian organisations to achieve outstanding performance and growth. Akinlade and Nwaodike (2021:117) assert that "a balanced work-life implies that there have been policies and practices that allow flexibility in the work-life of employees, which will translate to a high level of commitment and improved job performance. In light of this, Armstrong (2010) outlines three key reasons why businesses should be concerned with the work-life balance and general wellbeing of their staff. First and foremost, they have a duty of care, which entails adopting a socially conscious strategy for taking care of their employees. Second, employers have a responsibility to foster a positive work environment as part of their overall compensation strategy in addition to because it is their legal obligation to do so. Third, it is in the employers' best interests to foster a positive work environment because it will increase the likelihood that their staff members will be dedicated to the company and contribute to its reputation as the best place to work.

Challenges of Work-Life Balance Policies

The following are the challenges faced in achieving effective work-life balance policies in organisations:

The Role of Manager

Managers play a vital role in increasing levels of job engagement and commitment. They do this by exercising leadership and ensuring that their team members are clear about what they have to do, acquire the skills required and appreciate the significance of their contribution. They have considerable influence over job and work design, and are there to provide support, encouragement and coaching with the help of the performance management system (Armstrong, 2010). Parkash and Tyoti (2016) pointed out that the key to effective work-life balance programmes is a supportive manager. Thus, if the manager does not fully understand work-life policies and how to execute these policies, workers may not have access to the procedures. A manager's support in this regard refers to the extent in which a manager is supportive and sensitive to workers' needs to maintain balance between workplace demand and family responsibilities.

Job Design

Job design specifies the contents, methods and relationships of job in order to satisfy work requirements for productivity, efficiency and quality, meet the personal needs of the job holder and thus increase levels of employee engagement. Job design is the means by which job can be made intrinsically motivating job can be made intrinsically motivating to provide interest and opportunities for achievement and self-fulfillment (Armstrong,

2010). Odeleye *et al.* (2020) noted that the set-up of work affects employees' capability to adopt a flexible work option that contributes to a better work life balance. However, employees believe that the kind of work they do indicates their ability to use a work-life balance option. Those at the top management level usually believe that work-life balance policy cannot be used in some major business.

A Mismatching Between Policy and Life Stage

According to Cole Kelly (2011), the quality of working life means an employee's overall assessment of satisfaction with his/her job, working conditions, career opportunities, management style and work-life balance. Amongst the new challenges faced by management is the need to help employees achieve a satisfactory work-life balance-allocation of time and commitment between work and personal life which reflects the personal needs of the employees. However, Parkash and Iyoti (2016) argue that millennial want the liberty to leave and enter the work force without any form of damage to their career prospect. Those in their middle age also intend to embark on a side hustle that will not harm their career or job opportunity. At the same time, employees in the later stage of work want to leave the workforce to align with their financial status and individual circumstances. All these have a great deal of effects on organisational work-life balance policies.

Career Decision

Career management is concerned with the provision of opportunities for people to develop their abilities and their careers in order to ensure that the organisation has the flow of talent it needs and to satisfy their own aspirations. An important part of career management is career planning, which shapes the progression of employees within an organisation in accordance with assessments of organisational needs, defined employees success profiles, and the performance, potential and preferences of individual employees of the organisation (Armstrong, 2010). However, Odeleye *et al.* (2020) argue that employees' tend to feel that they are putting their careers at risk once accepted a work-life balance options. This is because they might be overlooked for promotion or misses the challenging work environment.

Unaccommodating Work Culture and Environment

Work culture is the pattern of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions which might not have been articulated, but which shape the ways in which employees behave and get things done in organisation. Work culture is significant because it strongly affects the way in which organisations function and employees' behave within them (Armstrong, 2010). However, Parkash and Iyoti (2016) pointed out those employees who use flexible work options often feel they are under close supervision by their managers. They are expected to give reasons for the benefit of their choices of work-life balance options.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Employees who experience issues balancing life demands identified as work, financial resources, leisure, dwelling and neighborhood, family, friendship, social participation and health, experience emotional exhaustion. A great deal has been written about the concept of work-life balance and its benefits to organisational commitment of employees. Despite the gains that such discourse seem to project, the case in Nigeria is an alarming one, as work-life balance conflict is on the increase since the implementation of effective work-life balance programmes and policies is seen as a costly venture, organisations are said to show little or no concern over any attempt in facilitating the attainment of the right combination of work-life balance arrangement by their employees across the country. This study, through analysis of variables and policy recommendations provides workable solution to the challenges hindering employees from benefiting from work-life balance policies as compared to their counterparts in developed countries. In conclusion, work-life balance is only achievable through planning and most successful people have achieved happiness in the short and long-run of their lives by creating a barometer to soothe the management of their lives. On the basis of this study conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Availability and use of work-life balance practices, when provided in the context of supervisor and organisational support can reduce work-life conflict and increase positive appraisals of one's organisation. These effects are often associated with employee attitudes such as increased job satisfaction and enhanced control over their work schedule.
2. Organisational and business professionals in Nigeria should create a supportive work environment where managers support employees in their work and growth by providing education and learning opportunities, coaching, mentoring, training, and programmes that support employees' personal development.
3. Welfare services such as a professional counselor, recreational facilities, and childcare services be made available for all employees. This would help significantly in reducing the work related stress which may prevent reduction of employees' performance.
4. Flexible work arrangements be made available to all employees provided it won't compromise on the performance.

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