

## WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEES PRODUCTIVITY IN THE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

**Abioro, Matthew Adekunle**

Department of Business Administration, College of Management Sciences,  
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria.

**Oladejo, Dauda Adewole**

Department of Entrepreneurial Studies, College of Management Sciences,  
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria.

**Ashogbon, Faderera Oluwatoyin**

Department of Business Education, College of Vocational & Technology Education,  
Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Nigeria.

e-mail [abioroma@funaab.edu.ng](mailto:abioroma@funaab.edu.ng)

### Abstract

*The notion that paid work and personal life are competing priorities rather than complementary element has called for this research. This study therefore examined the influence of work-life balance practices on employees' productivity in the Nigerian University. Stratified sampling technique was adopted in selecting a sample of three hundred and forty one (341) respondents from among the working population of two thousand three hundred and twenty four (2,324) employees. Primary data was collected through the use of structured questionnaire. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings from the study revealed that there is a significant effect of work life balance on employees productivity ( $R^2=0.171$ , Adjusted  $R^2= 0.154$ ,  $P=0.000$ ). The results also indicated a moderate positive relationship between flexitime ( $r=0.534$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), job sharing ( $r=0.623$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) and telework ( $r=0.228$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) on employees productivity. It was therefore recommended that management in the helm of affairs, while considering work friendly policies, should make flexitime, job sharing and telework their priorities. By so doing, it will afford all employees the opportunity of total concentration on their work, hence increase productivity.*

**Keywords:** Work- life- balance, Flexitime, Productivity, Job-sharing, Telecommuting.

### 1. Introduction

The evolution from perceiving work life balance practices merely as a process of accepting different personnel with various tasks to identifying their role towards administrative effectiveness is a significant paradigm swing that is still much on course. Employees play a key role in any business formation and therefore there is need to provide an enabling environment at all levels, so as to attain the stated objectives and goals of the organization. However, demand between work and home is becoming a major concern for employees in recent years. Some of this anxiety has to do with the demographic and workplace changes, especially for women in the labor force that are required to do longer working hours (Azeem & Akhtar, 2014). In reaction to these alterations alongside the dispute they produce between the numerous roles that individual hold, various establishments are gradually pressured to come up with work practices arrangement that will facilitates employee's efforts to accomplish both their work related and their private errands (Ryan & Koseek, 2008). Work life balance is a critical issue which is of paramount worry to every employee at different level be it public or private segment alike. The issue is far more than prioritizing the work role and one's personal life. It equally have a way of influencing ones psychological, social, economical and ultimately the mental well-being of an individual. Nevertheless, the above assertion will reflect in the output of the employees, which invariably affect his or her productivity at workplace in the long run if not properly managed (Ojo, Salau & Falola, 2014).

Fundamentally, work life balance practices is an essential part of human resource management which is getting collective and adequate consideration from government, employers of labour and researchers. Reason being that, it is a solid component of motivation for improved organizational responsiveness with respect to application and administration of balance of work life strategies. It is also mostly connected with stability in-between the quality of time and energy an individual dedicates to work and private undertakings in order to sustain a harmonious life. The practice of work life balance approaches are to enhance stability between the hassles of the occupation and the robust management of life outside work station and flexible work environment.

In spite of scholars and researchers efforts in the management field to look into the frequent challenges being faced by worker's job and their personal life, employees still experience conflict as regard the job and individual life as they continue to look for the kind of life they desired. Hence, harmonizing work and family life poses as a major challenge facing employees in the organizations. It is against this backdrop that this research attempt to identify the factors that assist work life balance and the extent to which these identified factors can improve or worsen the productivity and performance of the employees in Nigeria public Universities.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. investigate the nexus between work life balance and employee's productivity; and
- ii. examine the effect of work life balance on employee's productivity in Nigerian University system.

The hypotheses were stated in a null form;

- i.  $H_0$ : there is no significant relationship between work life balance and employees productivity.
- ii.  $H_0$ : there is no significant effect of work life balance on employee's productivity.

## 2. Literature Review

### Conceptual clarifications: Work life balance

The foundation for practices of work life balance spans from work-life dispute experienced by employees. The work life conflict concept identifies that most people have numerous duties and the practices of work life balance can assist in minimizing the level of such conflict (Premeaux, Adkins & Mossholder, 2007). While there are many definitions as to what creates a work life balance practice, the word ordinarily represents one of the followings: administrative provision for indigent care, personal or family leave and supple work options (Oluseyi & Ayo, 2009). Hence, these practices encompass family leave plans (adoption, compassionate and parental leave), on-site crèche and eldercare facilities, work from home identified as telework, compressed work week, which include working four days' worth of hours, while the fifth day is taken as off day, division of a full time job between employees (job sharing), flexible work hours (flexitime), which empowers employees to vary their commencement of work and when they are going to finish, provided a certain number of hours is worked.

Operationally defined, work life balance (WLB) is said to be the aggregate time an individual uses to carry out his work in comparison with the aggregate time spent with relations and other individual's engagement. It is also the process of regulating the work designs to permit staff to join work with their other duties like child care or aged family member (Upadhaya, Munir & Blount, 2014). Clarke (2000) further opined that work life balance is the level of satisfaction and the connection amongst the several roles in the life of a person.

Accordingly, various work life balance strategies which are friendly that can be adopted by different organizations are briefly discussed below;

- i. **Flexitime:** It is a process that allows an employee, to negotiate the time to commence and end their work daily, in as much appreciable period of work is achieved. Research indicated that the introduction of work that is flexible in nature will lead to reduction in absenteeism of staff and can bring about increase in the level of job satisfaction. (Pierce & Gardner, 2004).
- ii. **Telecommuting:** This is also known as 'telework'. The process permit an individual to work from home. The strategy assist employees to build their family and personal life around their work in order to reduce expenses related to work and to work in a less disruptive and stress free zone. (Yeandle, Crompton, Wigfield & Dennett, 2002).
- iii. **Compressed work weeks:** It involves providing an avenue for the employees to extend their working hour (shift work) in order to reduce the number of work days in a week.
- iv. **Part time work:** This approach tolerate individual that are interested to further their education and at the same time wishes to work (e.g. student). Also people with disabilities can as well take up this arrangement in order to obtain adequate work experience (Clarke, Koch & Hill, 2004).
- v. **Job Sharing:** This is an agreement that allows two or more individual to engage in a full time work, whereby they shared the responsibilities between themselves. (Hayman, 2010).

Work life balance practices is therefore a thoughtful organizational modifications in strategies or administrative philosophy which are planned to lessen work-life conflict and support employees to be more active both at work and in other sphere of life.

### Employees Productivity

Employee's productivity in any organization is a key area in the work environment. It assist the business to develop the capability of the human resources in the system to be competent. Productivity means the end result of an activity of a person or organization. According to Chris and Awonusi (2004), confirmed productivity as a process of measuring and scrutinizing the responsibilities of employees in the organization. Therefore, an organization required an increase level of productivity of its employee's, in order for the stated goals to be achieved (Dreher, 2003). A business dictionary explain employee productivity as the job related events projected of a staff and to what extent those activities were implemented. Different empirical research are in support to the fact that an individual will contribute to the development of their organizations when they enjoy a work life balance (Oswald, 2012). This revealed that the success of any organization largely rest on the productivity of employees within the system. It is therefore, necessary for managers at the helm of business affairs to adopt the approach that will lead to employee's retention. The essence of balancing both private and work life is to encourage healthy environment that can guarantee loyalty of the staff and secure high level of productivity. Consequently, the combination of flexibility of work schedule together with job attitude has been linked to increase in organizational commitment from employees, satisfaction from the job and most especially reduction in turnover intention (Lewis & Gambles, 2007).

### **Theoretical Review**

For this study, Boundary and Border theory and Spillover theory served as the theoretical underpinning upon which this study is anchored. A study by Saltzstein, Ting and Saltzstein, (2001) emphasizes that both family and work are not isolated domains but are symbiotic spheres or parts with penetrable boundaries. The Boarder theory has to do with domestic and work spheres. It lays emphasis on the fact that individuals are everyday boarder crosser as they progressed between work and home. Clark (2000) in his study postulated that the aim of border theory is all about aiding performance and functioning at home and at work, with a lowest of role dispute.

However, the Spillover theory which was postulated by Guest (2002) opined that the circumstances wherein spillover can occur between the family (macro system) and the work (micro system). Spillover may be negative or positive as the case may be. If work-family connections are strictly designed in space and time, at that moment, spillover in terms of energy, behaviour and time will be negative. Also, when there is flexibility that allows individual to participate and join family together with work duties, this will bring about positive spillover that is contributory to realizing a fit and healthy work life balance. Spillover therefore happens, when there is intrusion of one phase of life into another. The significance of these theories to the study is that management is expected to embrace constructive work life balance practices which will make every employee to be more committed towards attaining higher productivity level.

### **Empirical Review**

In spite of the attraction of work life balance practice as a subject of academic discussion, and the amount of popularity of schedule practices (i.e. a supportive-family-friendly-policy) in organization across the globe, study on the productivity level of employees of such strategy is not that incorporated (Leblebici, 2012; Grover & Crooker, 1995). An assessment of the previous work, however, question the supposed connection between work life balance and employee productivity. The research in respect to work life which reflects the stability between workplace and people's personal life has been evaluated over time (Lewis & Gambles, 2007). According to Clarke, (2000) work life balance reflects on fulfilment level of the worker in operating excellently both at work and home respectively. Essentially, there are different perspectives to the concept of work life balance. From the employee's standpoint, it is the protection of one's family alongside with the responsibilities at work. However, employer's viewpoint as regard the advantage, is in connection with all other fringe benefits attached to the working conditions of their employees (Grant, 2007).

While previous work life balance study centers on workers family duties, there are studies that identify the commitment to associates and communal groups, expanding the affected population to virtually all employees (Beauregard, 2006). According to Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman (2010), flexitime help workers to be in control of their family and work responsibilities which permit them to improve the level of productivity at work and also reduction in work family conflict at home. A research by Meyer and Kirsten, (2005) on nursing mothers working in the best 100 companies in the world, discovered that organization that subscribe to work life balance programs enjoyed better revenue rates. However, a survey conducted by European institute on employees condition of work, confirmed that 85% of people that work below 30 hours per week were pleased with their work life balance. Rau (2003) carried out an assessment in the health sector in Kenya of a non-governmental group which endorse the implementation of excellence WLB practices.

In a related study by Abioro (2017) it was learnt that a deficient flexible schedules, inconsistent friendly- family strategies, do have a negative impact on workers which most often reduce job performance and some leading to broken homes. Consequently, according to Blair-Loy and Wharton (2002), the study shows that one key source of stress that is significant, according to 69% of staff interviewed is workload; while the remaining 41% are of the opinion that they typically feel tense or strained out during workday (Oludayo, Gberevbie & Popoola, 2015). It is therefore imperative to say that an individual with great level of social and physical state of mind are likely to perform well in an organization compare with employees suffering from emotional security.

Moving from perception to reality, there are number of studies that has a contrary view to the concept of work life balance practice. A research by Judiesch and Lyness (1999) in a financial services establishment among 11,815 managers in America, stated that staffs that frequently apply for leave due to family related issues, most times received less promotion as well as upgrade in salary compare to those individual that hardly go on leave. Irrespective of the kind of leave or the manner in which the leave was granted, study revealed that employees that mostly apply for leaves of absence, are often time denied compensation and reward as against the staff that enjoy just one annual leave in a year. It is therefore not unexpected that work life balance practices is likely not to be used by single employees, male staff and career women. The anxiety of adverse career setback for using the practices has been connected with high rate of work life conflict (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000).

However, after studying the literature on work life balance practices on employee's productivity, it revealed that such programs do not certainly lower the levels of employees work life conflict. An employee may think that using work life programs set up by the organization may affect his/her career progression in the system as well as the perception of management of not being committed to the development of the business. Therefore, this study intend to contribute to this ongoing discussion by examining the effect of work life balance on employees' productivity in the Nigeria university system.

### 3. Research Method

For the purpose of this study, a descriptive survey was used as the primary source of data collection to investigate the influence of work life balance practices on employee's productivity in the Nigerian university system. This study targeted a total population of two thousand three hundred and twenty four (2,324) employees working at Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB Annual Report, 2017). Simple random sampling technique was used to select the employees so as to give them equal chance of being selected. A sample size of three hundred and forty one (341) respondents from the total population constitutes the sample size for questionnaire that was administered; Out of the (341) questionnaire distributed, only 250 were filled and returned appropriately. The determination of sample size for the study was achieved using the formula stated below as expressed by Ewurum (2004).

$$n = \frac{N}{\{1 + N(e)^2\}}$$

Where:

- n = Desired Sample Size
- N = Total Population
- e = error limit
- 1= A constant

$$n = \frac{2,324}{\{1 + 2324(0.05)^2\}}$$

Where:

$$= \frac{2,324}{\{1 + 2324(0.0025)\}}$$

$$= 2,324$$

$$\frac{\{1 + 5.81\}}{\{6.81\}} = \frac{2,324}{341}$$

The questions were separated into two sections; section A focus on demographic report of respondents while section B centered on questions relating to the subject matter of the research. Likert type interval rating scale which allows respondents to grade their opinion on scale of 1 to 5 was used to elicit appropriate responses; where 5=Strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Undecided, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly disagree. Data collected were analyzed with the use of descriptive and inferential statistics.

#### 4. Result and Findings

This section outlines the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected from the respondents through questionnaire. The data generated from the personal profile of the respondents were used to arrive at the descriptive analysis.

**Table 1: Participating University in the Survey**

S/n	Name of University	No of Employees	Allotted Questionnaire
1.	Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB);		
	ASUU:	556	95
	NASU:	1,768	155
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,324</b>	<b>250</b>

Source: FUNAAB Annual Report, 2017 N= 250

**Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents (N=250)**

Item	Number	Percentages	Cumulative %
<b>Gender:</b>			
Male	120	48.0	48.0
Female	130	52.0	100.0
<b>Staff Category:</b>			
ASUU	95	38.0	38.0
NASU	155	62.0	100.0
<b>Department:</b>			
Registry	88	35.2	35.3
Bursary	44	17.6	52.8
Bus. Admin	8	3.2	56.0
Accounting	5	2.0	58.0
Establishment	92	36.8	100.0
<b>Year of Service:</b>			
1-5	28	11.2	11.2
6-10	47	18.8	30.0
11-15	93	37.2	67.2
16 Above	82	32.8	100.00

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The information in table 2 shows that 48% of respondents were males, and 52% were females. It therefore indicated that majority of the staff sampled were females. However, it also revealed that 38% of the staff were members of ASUU, while 62% were non-academic staff (NASU). Hence, the data shows that majority of the respondents were NASU members. Moreover, the table signifies that 35.2%, 17.6%, 3.2%, 2.0% and 36.8% of the respondents were

from Registry, Bursary, Business Administration and Establishment Departments respectively. Finally, table 2 shows that 11.2%, 18.8%, 37.2% and 32.8% of the respondents have spent between 1-5years, 6-10years, 11-15 years and 16 years above in service. Hence, the result revealed that majority of the respondents have served the university between 11-15years.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of work life balance and employees productivity**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>FLEXITIME</b>			
There is a good flexible working condition in my university.	250	3.5229	1.40059
The adoption of flexitime strategy can be a tool for job satisfaction for all employees.	250	3.5033	1.26763
Long hours of works brings about conflict between work and family	250	3.9608	.99923
My work schedule mostly denied me from attending appointment and special events in my family.	250	3.6667	1.39076
I am happy with the quality of my work output.	250	3.8366	1.23788
<b>JOB SHARING</b>			
Employees were permitted to share jobs in order to ease work stress in the University.	250	3.8758	1.29432
The strategy of Job sharing is capable of retaining employees in my University.	250	4.0065	1.07909
There is provision to relieve staff on maternity and paternity leave in my University.	250	3.7908	1.29093
The attainment of employee and organizational productivity is made easy with job sharing arrangement.	250	3.9739	1.11773
Productivity will increase when employees are permitted to share jobs among themselves.	250	3.8889	1.21154
<b>TELEWORK</b>			
The adoption of telework strategy is an avenue for employees to be lazy in my University	250	3.9346	1.30623
Telework as a work life balance policy will affect employees productivity	250	3.9150	1.11773

Telework adoption by employees always affect their performance appraisal score.			
There is provision of telework practice in my University	250	3.7908	1.32115
<b>EMPLOYEES PRODUCTIVITY</b>			
Employees with good work life balance are more productivity in my University	250	3.4967	1.42406
Management encourages her employees to proceed on leave as and when due to aid productivity	250	2.3595	1.24401
Productivity will increase when employees are permitted to share jobs among themselves	250	3.8889	1.21154
There is high rate of employees productivity in my University	250	3.5490	1.35210
The strategy of Job sharing is capable of retaining employees in my University	250	4.0065	1.07909
<b>AVERAGE</b>		<b>3.547</b>	

Source: Authors computation, 2018

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of work life balance variables and employees productivity with the mean and standard deviation values of the factor analysis. However, on the statement of evaluation the average mean value is (3.547).

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis I**

$H_0$ : there is no significant relationship between work life balance and employees productivity.

**Table 4a:**

**Correlations**

		Flexitime	Employees Productivity
Flexitime	Pearson Correlation	1	.534 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
Employees Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.534 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

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

4b.

**Correlations**

		Job sharing	Employees Productivity
Job sharing	Pearson Correlation	1	.623 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	250	250
Employees Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.623 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	250	250

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

**4c. Correlations**

		Telework	Employees Productivity
Telework	Pearson Correlation	1	.228**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	250	250
Employees Productivity	Pearson Correlation	.228**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	250	250

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

**Interpretation:**

The entries in table 4a-c show the result of Pearson Product Moment correlation carried out to test the relationship between independent variable (work life balance) and dependent variable (employee’s productivity). Given the correlational analysis, the result reveals that there is a moderate significant relationship between work life balance and employee productivity, where flexitime ( $r = 0.534, P < 0.01$ ); job sharing ( $r = 0.623, P < 0.01$ ), and telework ( $r = 0.228, P < 0.01$ ). Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis that a significant relationship exist between work life balance and employees productivity.

**Hypothesis II**

$H_0$ : there is no significant effect of work life balance on employee’s productivity.

**Table 5a**

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.414 <sup>a</sup>	.171	.154	2.58175	.171	10.253	3	149	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Telework, Flexitime, Job sharing

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

**Table 5b**

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	205.022	3	68.341	10.253	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	993.147	149	6.665		
	Total	1198.170	152			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Telework, Flexitime, Job sharing

**Table 5c**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	7.231	1.894		3.818	.000
Flexitime	.177	.079	.184	2.245	.026
Job sharing	.210	.075	.235	2.806	.006
Telework	.140	.072	.148	1.934	.055

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

It was also found out from table 5a-c, that there is a significant effect of work life balance factors on employee's productivity; ( $R^2 = 0.171$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.154$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). These indicates that of the variation in employee's productivity, work life balance factors accounted for 15.4%. Further analysis also reveals that of all the work life balance factors, job sharing accounted for (23.5%); where flexitime and telework accounted for the variation in employee productivity at (18.4%) and (14.8%) respectively.

**4. Conclusion**

This study examines effect of work life balance practices on employee's productivity in the Nigerian university system. An employee is said to derive pleasure and self fulfilment at home and work when there is lowest of role conflict. Based on the review of literature, it is apparent that decision on issues relating to flexitime, telecommuting and job sharing form the basis for ensuring an efficient and effective employees' attitude to work. A critical analysis on the subject matter of this research was carried out and discoveries have been made. Three variables which are flexitime, job sharing and telework was used as a determinant of work life balance for the study. The results revealed a moderate positive relationship of these identified factors on employee's productivity. Therefore, based on the foregoing, this research concludes that for Universities to achieve high level of performance, there is need to pay more attention on the work life balance of its workforce across all levels.

**5. Recommendations**

Based on the results of this research, it is therefore recommended that management in the Nigerian universities, should focus more on different work life balance incentives, such as (compressed work schedules, wellness programmes and telecommuting) to enhance workers productivity. Provision should also be made for nursing mothers in terms of child care assistance which can be inform of crèche and after school services. There is also need for job sharing (shift work) for employees on essential duties to reduce the stress and also for them to have time for their respective family. By so doing, it will afford all employees the opportunity of total concentration on their work and also with a better output.

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