

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND CAREER SUCCESS OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: THE MODERATING ROLE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

Achieving success in career is a major accomplishment an average employee looks forward to and the academics of Nigerian Public Universities are not an exception. The purpose of this research was to examine the empirical relationship between work-life balance and career success of academic staff of Nigerian Public Universities with digital technology as the moderating variable. Work-life balance dimensions used are flexi-time and job-sharing, while, job security, and promotion were used to measure career success. 6,836 academic staff formed the population of the study. Taro Yamane's formula was used to obtain a sample size of 378. Descriptive survey design was used. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient and Partial Correlation Coefficient was used as tool for analysis. Findings showed that flexi-time and job sharing have low but positive significant relationship with job security and promotion. Digital technology positively and significantly influences the relationship between work-life balance and career success. Based on the findings the study recommends policymakers at every level involved in university management to advocate for academic's flex-time arrangement, this will increase their satisfaction on the job thereby jettison the intention to quit. also, public universities should employ more academic staff for effective job-sharing practice.

Keyword

Work-life balance, career success, flexible-time, job sharing, promotion, job security, digit-tech

Introduction

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

A career is a central part of every employee's life and everybody including the academic staff wants to have a successful career (Corinne, 2012). To some individuals, career is seen as dream, goal and accomplishment. While to others, a career is a meal ticket for daily income whereas, others see it as an identity and insight into what is to be achieved in a lifetime. Definitional, one

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can say career success is the constructive emotional or work-related feats one accumulates over years of work experience (Corinne, 2012). Known broad career success measures in literature have both objective and subjective measures. Regardless of the difference in perceptions revealed above, the desire for the career success of average academics justifies the relentless rigorous effort they put in their work.

Scholars have made efforts to improve career success. Notable works include; Abele, Spurk, and Wolmer (2010) and Andrea (2009) whose works were centered on how best to measure career success using job satisfaction, career satisfaction, promotion, salary, status, and span of control. Riordan and Louw-Potgieter (2011) used the constructs of work centrality and caregiving to improve women academic's career success. Obers' (2014) effort was directed at scrutinizing the choices and challenges confronting women's academic career success; Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2015) explored the academic staff career development and output amongst state universities. Ukwayi, Uko, and Udida (2013) analyzed career stress amongst academic staff of Nigerian Public University. Despite research carried out with other constructs in a bid to improve the career success of employees, the academics are still confronted with issues of career dissatisfaction and career failure, this brings the predictor variable work-life balance to bear.

Problem Statement

Work-life balance (WLB) referred to the obligatory balance created by employee for various domains of life like career, family, and social life to achieve an equal level of satisfaction on the time and attention given to these domains. Gulbahar, Ghulam, Qamar, and Romina (2014) were unequivocal in their stance, work-life balance to them entails appropriate arranging of work (profession and aspiration) at one end and then life consisting of (health, leisure, household) at the other end.

Earlier researches have considered the banking sector (Salolomo&Agbaeze 2019), health sector (Fisher-McAuley, Stanton, Jolton, &Gaven 2003), business process outsourcing sector Yusuf (2018), information and communication industries (Field, Smith-Ruig, Sheridan, & Conway 2017). Researches conducted on the educational sector are bordered in the South-west geopolitical region of Nigeria and outside Nigeria (Aroosia, 2018, Chokowe& Sithole, 2017). Though, some of these studies were longitudinal studies, using of case study research design, snowball and random sampling technique which is different from what the current study intends to use. Also, these researches adopted dimensions and measures such as work interfering personal-life (WIPL), personal life interfering with work (PIWL), and work/personal-life enhancement (WPLE) on one hand, job fulfilment, salary, status, a span of control, and career satisfaction which have been highly critiqued in a scholarly forum that they do not in clear terms directly operationalize a balanced work-life but are embedded in the dimensions such as flexi-time, telecommuting, and job-sharing for worklife balance; meaningfulness, promotion, job security as measures operationalizing career success which the current study is using.

Construct and content-wise there seems to be a paucity of researches that examined worklife balance relationship with career success using digital technology as moderating variable.

Conceptual framework

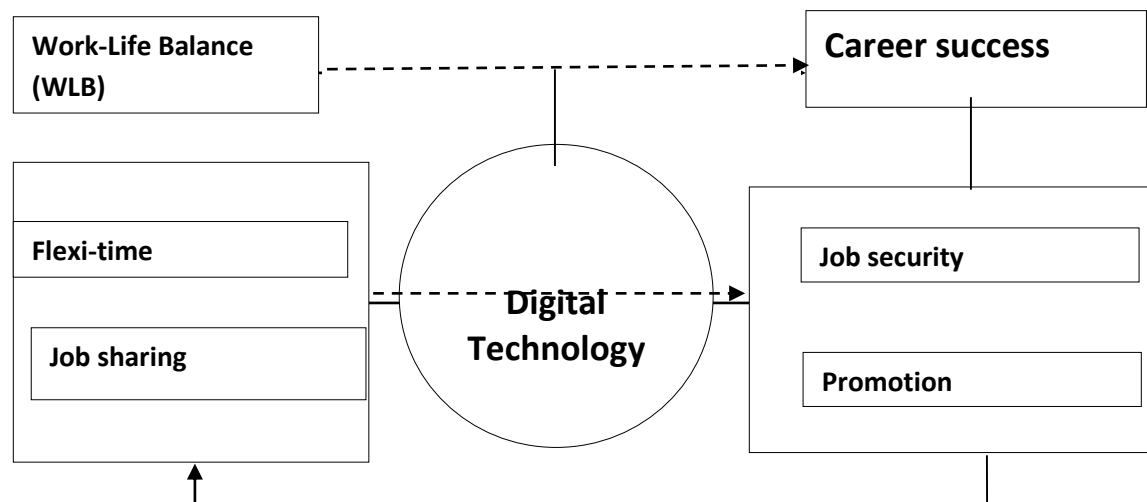


Fig. 1 conceptualized by researcher.

Objectives of the Study

Primary concern of this empirical exercise is to survey the link between worklife balance and career success of academics in Public Universities in Nigeria. Specific objectives are to;

1. Examine the relationship between flexible time and job security
2. Determine if there is a relationship between flexible time and promotion.
3. Determine if job sharing is significantly related to job security.
4. Establish if there is a relationship between job sharing and promotion.
5. Ascertain the moderating effect of digital technology on the relationship between worklife balance and career success.

Research Questions

To achieving the set objectives, succeeding explorative questions were articulated to guide the investigation.

1. What is the correlation between flexitime and job-security?
2. What is the empirical link between flexi-time and promotion?
3. What is the correlation between job sharing and job security?
4. What is the relationship between job sharing and promotion?
5. Does digital technology moderate the correlation between work-life balance and career success?

Research Hypotheses

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

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between flexi-time and job security.

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between flexi-time and promotion.

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

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

H₀₅ There is no significant moderating effect of digital technology on the relationship between worklife balance and career success of academic staff.

Scope of the Study

Content wise current dissertation remains delimited to work-life balance and career success of academic staff with moderating role of digital technology. Work-life balance dimensions used in this study are flexi-time, and job sharing. Whereas, career success measures to the stated ones above is to create a niche or point of departure from previous researches. The study was focused on federal universities in South-South geopolitical region in Nigeria. The research adopted a micro level analysis, as it deals with individual staff career success. Therefore, the unit of analysis consists of the academic staff of the various chosen universities.

Review of Related Literature

WorkLife Balance Conceptualization

Worklife Balance (WLB) discourse, research, and practice according to Chokowe and Sithole (2017) became popular and grew exponentially in the 1980s due to upsurge of socio-economic development in the western countries, which has caused revolution in the global work context. The business experienced a rapid change leading to more challenging and deepened work practices and business environments (Posthuma, Campion, Masimova, & Campion, 2013). This stimulated panic, inadequate time, and engagements (Gambles, Lewis & Rapoport, 2006), these tensions are sternly related to new-fangled work practices (Bunting, 2004), that create a sense of worklife imbalance (Guest, 2002). Work-Life-Balance appears to embrace the importance of preventing remunerated work from interfering with personal life.

Earlier conceptualization of what we currently known as work-life balance has undertaken several semantic modifications (Salolomo & Agbaeze, 2019), few literatures called it “work and family life balance”, other tagged it “ life-role balance” (Haar, et al., 2014). The last concept avers that role balance is propensity to completely get engaged in performing all role in one’s entire role system, by approaching every role with utmost attention and focus. This conceptual revolution has attracted diverse perceptions to work-life balance discussions lately.

Scholars in the higher educational system are key actors in promoting government’s agenda in harmonizing and fostering oneness amongst its people that are to carry the yearning of the nation (Subramaniam et al., 2020). The researchers further opined that their contribution propagates information and cultivates the morals of innovative research. As indicated in recent policies in the education sector that liberalizes education. Education is the foundation through which national prosperity is built (Knight & Morshidi, 2011).

Career Success

Attaining success in career is the dream of the average academics, but the question is, what is career success?

Field et al., (2007) tried to explain a career in a continuum of relationships that exists between an individual and the workplace, occupational context, or organizational context. Collin, (2006) said individuals move through the ranks, accumulating work-related experiences, setting in motion the construction of stories and meaning. Secondly, career represents two coexisting meanings, the subjective or intrinsic, and the objective or extrinsic (Collin et al., 2004). Career success is the constructive cumulative outcome or perceived achievement of an employee over years of work experience (Corinne 2012).

Corinne (2012) further noted that career investigators have held four couched conjectures about career success which has shown to meaningfully affected literature on career success. The first implicit supposition of career researchers is that the objective career outcomes like salary and promotions are tolerable pointers of career success in all working contexts. Secondly, that job satisfaction and career satisfaction are broad dimensions upon which people subjectively judge their career accomplishment. The third supposition is that people use the same career attainment parameters for both objective and subjective domain. Finally, that people assess their career achievement only by self-related standards and do not compare their career achievement with the career achievement of others.

Digital Technology

Digit-tech are electronic apparatus, devices, and resources that generate, store, and process and disseminate information. Such apparatus like social media, electronic mail, multimedia, mobile phones, and the computer system. Kapur (2019) posits that the extensive utilization of digit-tech includes computers systems, tablets, smartphones, and collaboration tools. The scholar added that the primary purpose of digit-tech is to form interconnection amongst persons and groups swiftly, smoothly, and efficiently. There has been a phenomenal contribution of technology for improved work performance in organizations; especially those determined to break off from the shackles of traditional work settings and culture by embracing automation of the workplace. Digital technological importance is felt in every sphere of work setting including the educational sector; Kapur (2019) noted that institutions of higher learning, and individuals largely depend on digit-tech, for it is regarded as a support system for learning. Wikramanayaka (2014) also states that digital technology usage in education has aided speedy transmission of knowledge amongst people and established structures effortlessly. The contributor further said advances in digital technology has created boulevards of learning, as it makes information available, and communicable from anywhere possible.

Research Methodology

The current research adopted descriptive survey design, being that it is a cross-sectional study. This choice is premised on the position according to Bello et al., (2018) that a cross-sectional design studies the current state of a group's characteristics and behavior of a population at a given time to give a vivid picture of the phenomenon being investigated. The study population consisted of 6,836 academic staff generated from six federal universities in the six states that constituted South-south geopolitical region of Nigeria. Information on study population was generated from National Universities Commission (NUC) system statistical digest (2018). Taro Yamane's (1967) sample size determination technique was used to draw 378 sample sizes for the study. The researcher used Stratified Random Sampling Technique. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection and was validated content and construct wise. The instrument was subjected to

Cronbach's Alpha variable investigation technique with a brink of 0.76. Spearman Ranking Order Correlation Coefficient (Rho) was used to measure the direction of the relationship between worklife balance and career success. Partial correlation is suited as a statistical tool for measurement of the controlling impact on correlation between independent and dependent variable with the aid of SPSS version 23.

Result

Demographic Data Analysis

Tables showing summary of questionnaire distribution and collection, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient and demographic distribution of respondents are all showing in appendix I behind manuscript.

Bivariate Analysis

H₀₁ there is no significant relationship between flexitime and job security

For hypothesis one, the result revealed link between flexitime and job security is $r = .176$ indicating a low positive relationship which is significant $p = .005 < .05$. This result implies there is significant link between flexible time and job security. Hypothesis one is therefore rejected and is restated as thus; there is significant connection between flexitime and job security. This means that an increase in flexitime amongst academics increases their continuity (job security) on the job. Descriptive table 4 showing the above result is in Appendix II behind manuscript.

H₀₂ there is no significant relationship between flexi-time and promotion

For hypothesis two, the result revealed that the correlation between flexitime and promotion is $r = .271$ indicating a low positive relationship which is significant $p = .000 < .05$. This result implies that there is significant relationship between flexitime and promotion. meaning academics' flexitime arrangement increases their chances of promotion success. Descriptive table 5 showing the above result is in appendix II behind manuscript

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

For hypothesis three, the result revealed that the correlation between job sharing and job security is $r = .179$ indicating a low positive correlation which is significant $p = .004 < .05$. This result implies that there was a significant correlation between job sharing and job security. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and is restated that there is a significant correlation between Job sharing and job security. This result implies that the more job sharing is practices amongst academics the increase there is the tendency to increase job security. Descriptive table 6 showing the above result is in Appendix II behind manuscript.

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

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

and promotion. invariably it means that job sharing promotes academics chances of getting a promotion. Descriptive table 7 showing the above result is in appendix II behind manuscript

Hos. Digitech does not significantly moderate the relationship between work-life balance and career success

The direct correlation between work-life balance and career success without the introduction of the control variable shows a low positive partial correlation $r = .186$ significant $p = .002 \leq .05$. However, with the control variable been introduced the correlation between work-life balance and career success though dropped down significantly but still positively partially correlated $r = .126$ with $p = .05 \leq .05$. The result implies that digital technology significantly moderates correlation between worklife balance and career success. Therefore, null hypothesis five was rejected and thus restated there is significant extent to which digital technology moderates the association between work-life balance and career success. Table showing this descriptive SPSS output result is found in Appendix II behind manuscript.

Findings

On the basis of statistical output of the data collated, the research revealed that; flexitime, and job sharing both have low and positively significant correlation with Job security, and Promotion. This means public universities that promote alternative work arrangements like flexible time and job sharing will definitely promotes job security and seamless promotion amongst its academics staff on the career ladder.

Undoubtedly, Digital technology is seen to have meaningful control of the correlation between work-life balance and career success. This implies that by virtue of upsurge in the use of digital technology amongst the academic staff of the chosen university leads to both increase in work-life balance and career success.

Contribution to Knowledge and Practical Implication

This research exercise has a major focus to ascertain the significant link between work-life balance and career success with digital technology as moderating variable. The practical implication submits that as academics experience work-life balance by implementing flexitime and job sharing there is a tendency that they impeccably achieve career success. Similarly, digital technology is also seen to significantly moderate the connection between the predictor variable and the criterion variable. Thus, the current research establishes career success of academics of Nigerian Public Universities specifically the Federal Universities to be wheeled significantly on the balance life of the various life domains. This impress on policymakers in the sector under investigation to consciously make policies that would promote academics career success via a balanced work-life programs.

Recommendation

On the basis of findings and conclusion reached, the researcher recommends that policymakers at every level involved in university management should advocate for academics flexitime arrangement, this will increase their satisfaction on the job thereby jettison the intention to quit.

Also, the management of public universities should encourage academic staff flexitime work practices to enable them to balance other life domains and afford them time to research and publish for their promotion as evident in the present study. In addition, Job sharing practice should be encouraged amongst academics to create room for knowledge sharing. This way, they tend to appreciate their work more and be willing to stay on the job.

As a matter of urgency public universities should employ more academic staff for effective job-sharing practice this would give academics ample time to plan, attend conferences, perform community service which is strategic to their promotion and career success. More so, Academics should be trained and provided with digital technologies like laptops, tablets; constituent accessories, and internet facilities that are relevant to their job for seamless career pursuit to also strike a balance in various life domains.

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Appendix 1

Table 1 Summary of Questionnaire Distribution and Collection

Cases	Number Distributed	Number Retrieved	Percentage (%)
FP	10	8	80
UO	14	14	100
UB	104	48	46
UC	96	71	73
UP	83	67	81
UU	71	48	68
Total	378	256	

Source: Survey Data, 2021.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient

Variables	Items Num.	Cronbach's Alpha
Flexitime	6	.88
Job Sharing	4	.83
Job Security	6	.89
Promotion	6	.86
Digital Technology	6	.79

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021.

Table 3 Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Demo. Variable	Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	175	68.4
	Female	81	31.6
	Total	256	100

Career Designation	Prof./Asst. Prof	40	15.6
	Senior Lecturer	46	18.0
	Lect. I & II	126	49.2
	Asst. Lect. & Grad Asst.	44	17.2
	Total	256	100
Work Experience	1-5 years	70	27.0
	6-10 years	82	32.0
	11 + years	104	41.0
	Total	256	100
Highest Qualification	B.Sc.	6	2.0
	M.Sc.	95	37.0
	Ph.D./Post-Doctoral	155	61.0
	Total	256	100

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021.

Appendix II

Table 4. SPSS output of flexitime and Job security

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

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

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021

Table 5 SPSS output of flexible time and promotion

			Flexitime	Promotion
Spearman's rho	Flexitime	Corr. Coefficient	1.000	.271**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	256	256
	Promotion	Corr. Coefficient	.271**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	256	256

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

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021

Table 6 SPSS output of Job Sharing and Job Security

			Job Sharing	Job Security
Spearman's rho	Job Sharing	Corr. Coefficient	1.000	.179**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
		N	256	256
	Job Security	Corr. Coefficient	.179**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
		N	256	256

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

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021

Table 7 SPSS output of Job Sharing and Promotion

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

		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	256	256

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

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021

Table 8 Multivariate Correlation between WLB, Career Success and Digit Tech

Control Variables			WLB	Career Success	Digi-Tech
- none ^a	Work-Life Balance	Correlation	1.000	.186	.228
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.002	.000
		Df	0	256	256
	Career Success	Correlation	.186	1.000	.134
		Significance (2-tailed)	.002	.	.038
		Df	256	0	265
	Digi-Tech	Correlation	.228	.134	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.038	.
		Df	256	256	0
Digi-Tech	Work-Life Balance	Correlation	1.000	.126	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.051	
		Df	0	256	
	Career Success	Correlation	.126	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.051	.	
		Df	256	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Partial) correlations.

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

Source: SPSS Output of Survey Data, 2021