

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The study investigated the relationship between Work-life Balance (WLB) and Emotional Intelligence among staff of the University of Ilorin, a conventional public institution in Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study population was all staff of the University of Ilorin which was put at 6,000. Using Taro Yamane (1967) formula, a sample size of 375 was selected. The actual participants were picked through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire developed from the combination of Hayman (2005)'s WLB Scale and Daniel Goleman (1997)'s EI Dimensions made of 30 items. Three hypotheses were formulated. Two of them were tested with Pearson rho Correlation and the third with Linear Regression Analysis. It was found (i) that work-life balance was significantly related to emotional intelligence [ $r(373) = 0.483, p < 0.01$ ]. (2) that work-life balance is significantly correlated with Self-regulation [ $r(373) = 0.908, p < 0.01$ ] and (3) that Work-Life Balance had a significant influence on Self Awareness. The value of R square shows that 35.9% of the variation in the dependent variable (self-awareness) is explained by the independent variable (work-life balance). The model is highly significant at ( $F = 103.692, p = .000$ ) which shows that it can be used to predict the outcome variable. The value of coefficient ( $\beta = 0.599$ ) is significant and positive, showing that work-life balance leads to increase in self-awareness. From the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that for the degree of employees' emotional intelligence to improve tremendously, organisations must enact adequate Work-Life Balance policies to reduce strains and pressures of workers. Employers should organise periodical capacity building for staff to develop their emotional intelligence; and organisations must ensure that staff take advantage of their (the establishments) life-enriching welfare policies such as opportunities for leave and sponsored holidays.*

**Keywords:** Work-life Balance; Emotional Intelligence; Self-Awareness; Self-Regulation.

### Introduction

People are created into families and naturally they survive through economic activities they do at work. The men in primitive societies lived and work in the same location, thereby having minimum pressures and less stress. The modern man's work place is separated from his family in terms of the spatio-temporal and this has come to be complicated by globalisation, new technologies, business restructuring. Work-Life Balance (WLB), as a concept, refers to the positive equilibrium that should exist between work-life and family-life arising from elimination of role conflict between life (family) and work. The boundary between family and

work could be so nebulous to warrant family-work conflict, meaning erosion of work engagement by family pressures or work-family conflict which means a situation in which work is so overwhelming to make family life suffers. Redmond Valiulis and Drew (2006) refer to work-life balance as a flexible work arrangement which make any categories of workers deliver on their job beats while still coping adequately with the demands of their homes.

Anticipation of Work-Life balance by workers, in modern business organizations, is akin to dreaming for Eldorado where the craze for market leadership, and sustained high profitability are drivers of the mechanism of allocating jobs vis-a-vis the degree of job burnout and stress acquired by workers on the go. One way or the other, the role conflict arising from unbalanced interaction between work and family will affect either (work-family) negatively in terms of thrown-up unpleasant attitudes, perception and work behaviours or work deliverables. Brough, O'Driscoll & Kalliath (2005) found as well as Adebola (2005) and Noor (2004) that WLB could cause job burnout, poor health and occupational stress. Work-family conflict has been defined by Greenhaus & Beutell, (1985) as when the demands from work affect the family or when family pressures affect work.

Emotional intelligence is a construct that refers to the effective utilization of one's emotions to control oneself and to maintain productive relationship with people within the spheres of one's influence or jurisdiction. Emotional intelligence has five dimensions namely, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social relationship. Goleman (1997) defines emotional intelligence as the ability for recognizing our feelings and the feeling of other people with a view to motivating ourselves largely with the intention to manage our relationship with other people. Salovey & Mayer (1990) said emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor our emotions, sort them out and use the knowledge of these emotions to act or behave to other people, thereby achieving positive relationship results. Money & Peter (2014) describes emotional intelligence as the middle-man in a 3-layer cake. According to them, the bottom layer is our inherited traits, acquired traditions imbibed in early life all of which seem always rigidly formed and hardly yield to changes. The top layer is the exterior part of us which carry work patterns, attitudes and behavior will manifest as a result of work, training and acquired skills.

The top layer can be modified through capacity building, skills acquisition and role acting. The middle layer is the domain of emotional intelligence and the warehouse of our attitudes, perception, values and beliefs. Emotional intelligence has the capacity to enhance strong attributes and to suppress the weak attributes hooked in the bottom layer.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The job of a university faculty involves research, teaching and community service while the non-teaching staff in the universities is engaged in variety of laborious assignments in support of teaching and learning. An average university staff works long hours. Nearly everyone working in the University have to work hours on end on campus and take work home to be able to meet deadlines such as grading of scripts, writing of research reports or minutes of meetings. The Nigerian University system has observable polarization based on the divides tagged variously as academic versus non-academic, professors versus non-professors, senior staff versus junior staff, PhD holders versus non-PhD holders, learned versus non-learned and so on, thereby generating schism and role conflicts. There are the issues of wage differentials, multiple wage bargaining

systems, inter-union skirmishes and perennial industrial unrests. In all of these, individuals have the socio-economic issues to cope with as they operate as constituents of their own families. It is therefore reasonable to foresee the possibility of work-family conflicts or family-work conflict which may affect the way they manage their emotions at work or at home.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To examine the relationship between work-life balance and emotional intelligence among University of Ilorin
- ii. To investigate the correlation between work-life balance and self-regulation among staff of the University of Ilorin
- iii. To examine the influence of work-life balance on self-awareness among the employee of University of Ilorin

### **Hypotheses**

These hypotheses were formulated as indicated below:

- i. There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and emotional intelligence among employees of University of Ilorin
- ii. There is no significant correlation between work-life balance and self-regulation among the employees of University of Ilorin
- iii. Work-life balance has no significant influence on self-awareness among the employees of University of Ilorin

### **Literature Review**

#### **Concept of Work-life Balance**

Work-life balance was defined by Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea and Waters (2002) as the relationship which ensues from the spatio-temporal interaction between work and non-work situations. Work-Life Balance policies are the aggregate of institutional practices aimed at making a worker feel at home at work and not getting so engrossed at work that he/she is estranged from his/her family or family responsibilities. The concept assumes the possibility of integrating work life into a normal life whereby neither the family nor work suffers from inadequate attention.

Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux and Brindley (2005) assert that work life balance has the tendency to drive organizational effectiveness because of its implication on the wellness, behavioural outcomes and attitudinal patterns of the employees.

Work-life balance is a derivation of work-family or family-work conflict which happens when one's role as a worker conflicts with his/her role in the family (as husband/wife/parent/child), or roles as an active religious person, sport lover or fun seeker. (Orogbu, Onyeizugbe and Chukwuemeke, 2015).

Scholars such as De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott and Pettit, (2005), De Cieri and Bardoel, (2009) have identified four dominant elements of work-life balance to include Leave/holiday, flexible work schedules, care of dependent and general employment policy. In the Nigerian University system, leave policy allows for short-time recess (for example; causal leave, sick leave) and long-term leaves (such as; annual leave ranging from 30-42 days, sabbatical leave of one year enjoyable once in 6 years and of course research leave). The University of Ilorin (2014)'s Revised Conditions of Service for Senior Staff provides for a variety of leave entitlements. The idea of paid flexible working arrangement has not taken root in Nigerian Universities generally, but staff actually work from home beyond the official hours. On the issue of care of dependents, only the female workers have consideration in terms of maternity leave of 84 days and nursing mothers are granted two hours off-duty daily plus crèche facility to care for their babies (University of Ilorin, 2014 p.38). Under general employment policy, aspect of the University of Ilorin conditions of service that enhances work-life balance include; provisions for staff development programmes, study leave, sponsored conferences attendance, sponsored tours besides TetFund sponsored Academic Staff Training and Development which is funded by the national Government in all Nigerian Universities. All these fit into the list of family friendly policy itemized by Hartel (2007) as they help to minimize pressures on employees.

Clarke, Koch and Hill (2014) assert that work-life balance is largely involved with the degree of harmony achievable by individuals in the volume of their devotion to work and life (i.e., family and personal activities).

### **Concept of Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to understand, utilise and manage one's own emotions in positive ways to dilute stress, relate well, show sympathy with people, overcome difficulties and resolve conflicts. (Pahuja and Sahi, 2012)

Salovey and Mayer (1990) first created the term emotional intelligence. It was Daniel Goleman in his 1996 book who popularised the concept and described it as the ability to recognize, understand and manage our emotions. Goleman (1998) posited the five dimensions of emotional intelligence as self-regulation, self-awareness, motivation, empathy, and relationship management.

In the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Psychologists developed intelligence quotients (I Q's). Much later, theorists began to argue that cognitive intelligence measurable by I. Q tests did not encapsulate the totality of man's intelligence. Gardner (1983) postulated that there are multiple of intelligences and that a man has the ability to exude variety of intelligence, depending on the domain in which a particular attitude is required. Singh (2001) identified manifestation of emotions to include, anger, sadness, fear, enjoyment, love, surprise, disgust and shame. Unlike intelligence quotient which operate in the cognitive domain of man, emotional intelligence has bipolar manifestations as it deals with personal competence and social competence. The former is sub-divided into self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation. The latter, which is relational, is sub-divided into the elements of empathy and social skills.

On the other hand, the social intelligence concept is explainable again from the point of recognition and regulation. Self-awareness and social awareness show recognition whereas self-management and relationship management show self-regulation.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Role Stress Theory**

This study is grafted on role stress theory posited by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), the role stress theory is an offshoot of the classical role theory as expounded by scholars such as Rosenthal (1964) and Katz and Hahn (1978). Conflict between work and family generates from tilted use of time i.e., time devoted to one role makes it difficult for an individual to fulfil the requirements of the other role. Also, the strain from participation in one role makes it difficult for one to fulfil the requirements of the other role. Equally, the special behaviours required in one location make the exhibition of behaviours expected of one's role in the other location tedious. The time-consuming issues are hours of work, inflexible work schedule and shift work. In the family, pressures on time comes from attention demanded by children, spouse's own employment, and presence of large family. Strains at home come from family conflict and non-co-operation by spouse. The pressure from home increases when the expected behaviours such as warmth and openness are absent.

### **Goleman Mixed Theory**

Two measurement tools based on the Goleman mixed theory are used in this study namely, the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) created in 1999 and Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) which was created in 2007. Mayer and Salovey (1997) propounded the ability model of emotional intelligence while Bar-on (1997) put forth two-mixed models of emotional intelligence each bifurcated between recognition and regulation on one hand and personal competence versus social competence on the other.

### **Review of Empirical Studies**

Ojo, Salau and Falola (2014) in their study of WLB in three sub-sections of the service industry in Nigeria (namely, education, power and banking) found that the functional WLB initiatives in the higher education system include full time job, part time job, flexitime, term time, home working, study leave, parental leave (care for sick dependents), maternity leave and creche (for child care). According to the scholars, paternity leave is available in the banking industry but not in both the higher education and the power sector. Ojo et al. (2014) found that there is a gap between availability of WLB initiatives provided by employees and usage of such by employees.

A number of scholars (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott & Pettit (2002); Kirby and Krone (2002) and De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott, Pettit, 2005), found that an organisation culture that is supportive of WLB initiatives may be warehousing managers and employees who are reluctant to utilise those initiatives. Azeem and Akhtar (2014) investigated the effects of work life balance and job satisfaction on organisational commitment. The scholars found significant relationship among the variables of work -life balance, job satisfaction and organisational commitment.

Kamau, Muleke, Makaya and Wagoki (2013) investigated the influence of work -life balance practices on employee job performance in Eco bank in Kenya. They found that WLB significantly influenced employees' performance. Dissanayaka and Ali (2013), in a study of 96

textile firm workers in Sri Lanka, investigated the impact of work life balance on employees' performance. They found a significant relationship between the two variables.

Panda (2008) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived stress among 62 business management students. The study found that emotional intelligence is negatively correlated with perceived stress and that there are no gender differences for EI and perceived stress. Vishwanathan (2008) in a study found that there is significant linkage between students' emotional disposition and their academic performance.

Waite and Gallagher (2000) found that employees with high emotional intelligence can be self-regulated enough to promote their well-being and balance. Bar-on (2005) found that emotional intelligence helps individuals to build adaptive responses to variety of work situations. Grewal and Salovey (2005) found that emotional intelligence is positively related with job performance. In their own study, Moon and Hur (2011) discovered that emotional exhaustion has negative influence on job performance.

Shukla, Mohsin and Singh (2013), in a study in the National Capital Region (NCR), India of 80 staff of a leading Printing Press, found a moderate but positive relationship between emotional intelligence and employee engagement. Nikolau and Tsaousis (2002) found a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and organisational commitment.

In his own study, Wu (2011) found that employees with high emotional intelligence are able to reduce or transform the negative effects of emotional exhaustion on job performance. Ugoani, Amu and Kalu (2015) in a study of a dyad of 47 managers and subordinates in Aba Nigeria, found a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style. Mathew, Emo, Funke, Zeidner, Roberts, Costa Jr and Schulze (2006) in their comparative study of emotional intelligence with five-factor personality traits found that people with high EI have better ability to cope with work pressures and are highly committed towards their work.

Sy, Tram-Quon and O'Hara (2006) in their study of 187 food service employees, found that employees' emotional intelligence was positively associated with job satisfaction and performance. Weinzimmer, Baumann, Gullifor and Konbova (2016) found that work- life balance mediates positively the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance.

Applewhite (2017) in her study of Foster care workers, found a significant relationship between the elements of emotional intelligence and various element of work-life balance.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study population consist of all employees of the University of Ilorin which was put at over 6,000. A sample size of 375 was determined using Taro Yamane (1967) formula. Participants were selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire. The items for the questionnaire were made up of two major scales namely the Work-Life Balance (WLB) and the Emotional Intelligence Scale. The WLB Scale consists of 15 items adopted from Hayman (2005)'s WLB Scale. The Emotional Intelligence Scale was adapted from Daniel Goleman

(1997)'s EI Dimensions (EIS). The EI Scale has 15 items subdivided in groups of three-item subscales each for Self-Regulation, Self-Awareness, Motivation, Empathy and Social Skills. The Cronbach alpha co-efficient for the WLB Scale is 0.797 while Cronbach alpha coefficient for the EI scale is 0.866.

The data collected were analysed using Pearson rho correlation and Linear Regression analysis with the application of statistical packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0.

### Data Analysis

The results and findings of the study are as indicated below.

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between Work-life Balance and Emotional Intelligence among staff of the University of Ilorin.

Table 1: A Summary Table of Pearson, correlation showing the relationship between Work-life balance and Emotional intelligence.

| Variables              | N   | M       | SD      | DF  | R      | P    |
|------------------------|-----|---------|---------|-----|--------|------|
| Work life balance      | 375 | 55.6984 | 8.14695 | 373 | .483** | .000 |
| Emotional Intelligence | 375 | 39.4020 | 7.04606 |     |        |      |

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

The result in table 7 above revealed that work-life balance was significantly related to emotional intelligence [ $r(373) = 0.483, p < 0.01$ ]. Therefore, hypothesis one was not supported by the result of the study, and it is subsequently rejected. Thus, it is concluded that work-life balance is significantly related to emotional intelligence among staff of the University of Ilorin.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant relationship between Work-life balance and Self-regulation among staff in University of Ilorin.

Table 2: A Summary Table of Pearson, r correlation showing the relationship between Work-life balance and Self-regulation.

| Variables         | N   | M       | SD      | DF  | R      | P    |
|-------------------|-----|---------|---------|-----|--------|------|
| Work life balance | 375 | 55.6984 | 8.14695 | 373 | .908** | .009 |
| Self-regulation   | 375 | 9.4688  | 4.60021 |     |        |      |

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

The result in table 7 above revealed that work-life balance was significantly related to Self-regulation [ $r(373) = 0.908, p < 0.01$ ]. Therefore, hypothesis two was not supported by the result of the study, and it is subsequently rejected. Thus, it is concluded that work-life balance is significantly related to Self-regulation among staff of the University of Ilorin.

Hypotheses 3: Work-life balance has no significant influence on Self-Awareness among staff of the University of Ilorin.

Table 3: Linear Regression Analysis of influence of Work-life balance on Self-awareness

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R2 | F       | Sig (P≤0.05)      | Standardized Coefficients (β) | T      | Sig (P≤0.05) |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------------|
| 1     | .599 <sup>a</sup> | .359     | .356        | 103.692 | .000 <sup>b</sup> | .599                          | 10.183 | .000         |

P = ≤0.05

The value of R square shows that 35.9% of the variation in the dependent variable (self-awareness) is explained by the independent variable (work-life balance). The model is highly significant at ( $F=103.692, p=.000$ ) which shows that it can be used to predict the outcome variable. The value of coefficient ( $\beta = 0.599$ ) is significant and positive, showing that work-life balance leads to increase in self-awareness. Hence on the basis of the aforementioned findings,  $H_3$  proves to be true, affirming that work-life balance significantly and positively influenced Self-awareness among staff of the University of Ilorin.

### Summary of the findings

- Work-life balance is significantly and positively related to emotional intelligence among staff of the University of Ilorin.
- Work-life balance is significantly and positively related to Self-regulation among staff of the University of Ilorin.
- Work-life balance has significant and positive influence on Self-awareness among staff of the University of Ilorin.

### Discussion of Findings

This study sought to assess the relationship between work-life balance and emotional intelligence among staff of the University of Ilorin. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested using Pearson rho correlation and linear regression analysis tools.

Hypothesis one which states that there is no significant relationship between work-life balance and emotional intelligence was rejected as Pearson correlation reveal coefficient value of 0.483 and P-value of 0.000. This shows that there is a significant relationship between Work-life Balance and Emotional Intelligence. This is consistent with the findings of Sy et al (2006) in their study of 187 food service employees in which they found that employees' emotional intelligence was positively associated with job satisfaction and performance. Weinzimmer et al (2016) found that work-life balance mediates positively the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance.

Hypothesis two which states that there is no correlation between work-life balance and self-regulation among staff of the University of Ilorin was rejected. The findings indicated that work-life balance is significantly correlated with self-regulation among the respondents. The estimated Pearson correlation indicated the coefficient value of (0.908). This finding corroborates that of Applewhite (2017) who found in her study of Foster care workers that there was a significant relationship between various elements of emotional intelligence and various elements of work-life balance. It is also in line with the finding of Waite and Gallagher (2000) that employees with high emotional intelligence can be self-regulated enough to promote their wellbeing and their balance living.

Hypothesis three which states that work-life has no significant influence on self-awareness among staff of the University of Ilorin was also rejected. This reveals that work-life balance will significantly influence employee's self-awareness at work. The findings are supported by the discovery of Bar-on (2005) which was that emotional intelligence helps individuals to build adaptive responses to variety of work situation.

The findings of the study agree with the postulation of the role stress theory of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) that the fulfillment of one role is capable of affect one's fulfillment of one's role in another realm which can be reworked to say that work-life balance would preclude tilted fulfillment of a particular role better than the other. When the equilibrium between work and life seem to have been achieved, the actualization of emotional intelligence as envisaged by Daniel Goleman would be achievable.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, the relationship between work-life balance and emotional intelligence has been examined among 375 employees of the University of Ilorin. The findings show that there is a significant association between the variable of work-life and the elements of emotional intelligence.

In a typical Nigerian University, staff carry heavy workload, work long hours and take heavy work home to do overnight or during holidays. This eat into their 24-hour time per day with the result that there is the possibility of spill-over usage at work (or for work) time anticipated for use at home for leisure and social activities. This could present role conflict, role ambiguity and boundary spanning activities which will culminate in strains, stress, or strained relationship due to the expectations of spouse, children, dependents, friends, associates or co-religionists. The University of Ilorin, like any other Nigerian public University, has conditions of service which provide for coping mechanisms to preclude conflict between work and family. These include variety of leave and holidays, provision of baby-friendly environment at work for nursing mothers. The idea of sabbatical leave of one full year for lecturers once in 6 years to retool in a different environment is an effective ice breaking mechanism that could help beneficiaries to unwind and freshen up. However, the restriction of the benefit of sabbatical Leave to only the upper echelon of the faculty leaving the bulk of the workers to grind in their perpetual "busy" schedules may be a minus.

Manifestation of high emotional intelligence among University employees will reduce schism, role conflict, intra-union conflict, inter- union conflict and of course the polarization of the University broadly into academic versus nonacademic. The presence of work-life balance will

definitely improve emotional intelligence and the latter will reduce skirmishes in the Nigerian higher education system.

### Recommendations

It is in view of the foregoing that it is being recommended that:

- i. The degree of employees' emotional intelligence could improve tremendously if adequate Work-Life Balance policies are put in place to reduce strains and pressures of workers
- ii. Employers should organise periodical capacity building for staff to develop their emotional intelligence
- iii. Organisations must ensure that staff enjoy mandatorily their (the establishments) life-enriching welfare policies such as opportunities for leave and sponsored holidays

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