WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN FOOD AND BEVERAGE FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to empirically examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. With task and contextual performance were used as measures of employee performance, the study adopted cross-sectional survey in its design. Primary data was collected through self- administered questionnaire. The population of the study was made up of 574 employees of the investigated firms while the sample size was 288 employees as determined using the Krejci and Morgan (1970). Data generated were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical technique. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was adopted in testing the stated hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences at a 95% percent confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The outcome of the study showed that no organization can achieve its purpose and objectives without having performing employees with a balanced work-life. This paper further noted that employees whose work-lives do not constitute a threat to their other aspects of lives are happy and dedicated to their jobs; and this impact positively on their performance. Therefore, we conclude that worklife balance is an effective managerial tool through an organization can enhance its employees' task and contextual performance. Based on the findings of the study, the subsequent pointers were made:(i). The managers of food and beverage firms in Rivers State, Nigeria under study should recognize and encourage work-life balance as their core parameters to increase employee commitment, because empirical result showed that there is a strong influence in the results from the test of hypotheses in the study.(ii) The management in the managers of food and beverage firms in Rivers State, Nigeria under studied should make sure they develop policies and strategies on different work life practices such as job sharing,

emotional and coworker support policies that will encourage the employees to be more productive on their job in the workplace.

Key Words: Work-Life Balance, Employee Performance, Task Performance, Contextual Performance

INTRODUCTION

Food and Beverage firms refer to organizations that produce, manage, regulate, and distribute food and beverages. They are considered as an essential subsector of the manufacturing sector. This is because one salient characteristic of human being is that they must eat food to survive. Therefore, the food and beverages firms in Port Harcourt are the major producers of consumer goods which sustain the lives of people in our society. According to Okere (2012), the food and beverage subsector sector is the strongest in the manufacturing industry as it represents 22.5% of Nigeria's manufacturing sector and 66% of total consumer expenditure. However, just like every other sector, food and beverage firms is a labor-intensive organization; meaning that the extent to which they achieve effectiveness is largely dependent on the quality of its employees.

The need for having the right mix of employee to drive effectiveness is particularly important for any organization because the human aspect of the organization remains the most valuable organizational resources. Accordingly, Reddy and Reddy (2010) maintain that the thought that human beings are the greatest assets of the organization is premised on the fact that they are dependable, reliable, and responsible and have the capacity for making valuable and substantial contribution in the pursuit of organizational goals, and as such ought to be treated with respect and recognition. In line with the forging argument, Tamunomiebi and Wobodo (2018) reinforced that of all the resources an organization might have, its pool of employees remains the most valuable to reckon with, especially as its success or failure largely depends on their performance and commitment towards the goals of the organization.

Therefore, today organizations that are considered successful are increasingly realizing that there are a number of factors that contribute to employee effectiveness and performance. For instance, Saeed and

Asghar (2012) hold that employee performance principally depends upon many factors like employee motivation, employee satisfaction, compensation, job security, organizational structure; work-life balance and others. Amid these identified factors, in this study, our central focus is to determine how work-life balance could be used to promote employee performance. This is because work-life balance has been adjudged by scholars to be one of the strategic tools that managers explore to deal with arrays of organizational problems in relation to managing employees' work-life and off work-life harmony to promote job satisfaction and enhanced performance. The idea of work-life balance could easily be linked with the first global convention on QWL in 1972 at Arden House, Canada (Davis & Cherns, 1975) as cited in Reddy and Reddy (2010). Philosophically, it trails a deposit of ideology which encourages the thought that human beings are the greatest assets within the organization because they are dependable, reliable, and responsible and have the capacity for making valuable and substantial contribution and therefore ought to be treated with respect and recognition (Reddy & Reddy, 2010). A balanced work-life can be considered as basically the quality of the work condition and the perception of the worker of the work environment and other job-related factors in the broader sense.

However, amid organizations' quest for the right managerial tools to manage the recurring problem of poor performance related issues, to the best of our knowledge, we have not seen any empirical study that is directed at determining the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance within the purview of food and beverage organizations operating in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Although some studies have been carried in this perspective but with different focus. For instance, Sofijanova and Zabijakin-Chatleska (2013) examined the relationship employee involvement and performance of manufacturing sector in Republic of Macedonia. Domfeh (2012) on the other hand examined the impact of employee retention strategies on the performance of selected rural banks in Ashanti Region in Ghana. More so, Maran Lawrence and Maimunah (2009) evaluated the link between human capital development and performance. Based on this identified gap, it is the interest of this study to empirically examine the

relationship work-life balance and employee performance of food and beverage organizations operating in Port Harcourt.

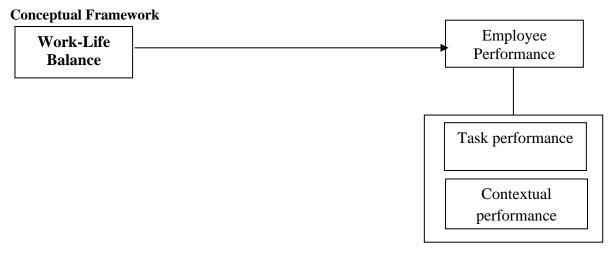


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Indicating the Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance.

Source: Desk Research, 2023.

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions was put forward.

- i. What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee task performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between work-life balance and employee contextual performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

The importance of identifying the theoretical underpinnings that define the relationship between a study variable has immensely been acknowledged by scholars. In this study, we identified resource base view theory as the right baseline theory that best explain the complex relationship between work-life balance and employee performance

Resource-Based View Theory

Resource-Based View theory was originally conceptualized by Penrose (1959), and further enhanced in the work of Wernerfelt (1984) and Connor (1991). The theory argues that through effective utilization of an organization's internal resources such as employees, the organization gains competitive advantage over its competitors (Kraaijenbrink *et al.*, 2010). It explains that resources available or acquired by an organization are the basic drivers of its performance outcome. It further states that if an organization is to attain a state of sustainable competitive edge, it must acquire and control valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resource and capabilities. In line with the assumptions of this theory, we can see that in today's knowledge driven economy, the human aspect of the organization remains a critical resource for any organization wishing to remain operationally sustainable amid competition. With the above views in mind, it means that for any organization to continuously maximize the potentials of its human resources, such organization must ensure that it not only acquires or hires the best but also ensures that it develop and adopt effective strategies that motivate employees to perform as they constitute competitive advantage for the organization.

In pursuit of this, studies have shown that one proven approach managers adopt is work-life balance policies development and implementation wherein the employees' work-life does not constitute a threat to or conflict with their non-work-lives such as family and other socials engagements. This is because employees are not willing to work in an organization whereby the prevailing culture is not supportive, and as such, many even quit the job (Garg & Yajurvedi, 2018), thus leaving the organization with huge asset loss in terms of human capital. On the other hand, because every employee wants to enjoy a balanced work-life which they strive to achieve often times through industrial action and dialogue with the management, directly or indirectly; where this is achieved, the employees are bound to remain with the organization, thus reducing unwarranted turnover. This view is supported in Ivancevich and Matteson (2002) when they argue that a balanced work-life has the potential of inducing internal motivation such as growth satisfaction,

general job satisfaction, work effectiveness, quality of work-life, improved work performance, low absenteeism and turnover.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Work-life Balance

Given the strategic nature of the human aspect of the organization, the concept of work-life balance has become a phenomenal topic in the field management for both employers and employees across the globe irrespective of organization's form. This is why Chemirmir et al. (2017) assert that work-life balance benefits are universally appealing and fosters the perception that the organization is supportive of employees' personal welfare or needs. This is based on the notion that employees are essential asset that are to be improved and not necessarily exploited (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2012). According to Chandra (2012) work-life balance refers to the ability to respond to personal situations that help the individual worker to accomplish their responsibilities and ambitions, which in turn leads to shared advantage of the person, organization and the general society. It is associated with the efforts of employees to divide their time and energy between work and other essential aspects of their lives (Hobbler & Lemmon, 2009).

In the same vein, Verma (2007) maintains that it is concerned with adjusting the pattern of work so that the employee can benefit from a better fit between their work and other areas of their personal life and in long run hope to achieve sustainable development and profitability. Furthermore, Sverko *et al.* (2002) view it as a state of pleasant or satisfying understanding involving employees' work commitment and their individual lives. The need for implementation of work-life balance policies in Nigeria work organizations will be considered as a necessary step in the right direction given its proven array of positive implications on organizational objectives. As pointed out in Morgan (2009), employers who implement work-life balance programs and offer flexible working arrangements are likely to have a competitive advantage in the

employee market, and in particular, in relation to the new generations of employees such as the Gen X or Millennials, Gen Y and Gen Z.

Concept of Employee Performance

Organizational performance has always been an important concern for managers of organizations (Kelidbari, Dizgah, & Yusefi, 2011). Achieving organizational performance however depends on employees' performance. This validates that Chien (2004) assertion that employee productivity performance is vital for the success of every organization in this dynamic environment. According to Zhang (2012), employee performance is the extent to which an organizational member contributes to achieving the goals of the organization. Orogbu, Onyeizugbe and Chukwuemeke, (2015) refer it to the value added in an activity or task achieved by an employee at work. Anitha (2013) on the other hand views it as an indicator of financial or other outcome of the employee that has a direct connection with the performance of the organization as well as its achievement. It is also seen as a set of financial and non-financial indicators showing information on the degree of the realization of goals by organisations (Lebans & Euske, 2006).

Based on these definitions, we can see that employee performance is important element of corporate attainment. This is because no organization succeeds without gaining unabated employee commitment which usually reflected in their productivity output. Therefore, employee performance demands for the individual's investment of his complete self into his role expectation. This is why organizations continuously invest millions of naira every year on recruitment, training and development of employees to improve and sustain output per worker. Output of employee is considered as the quantity and quality of goods and services delivered by employee to his organization over a given period of time (Nwinee, 2006). It is also viewed as the total effort contributed by the employee to his organization towards the realization of set objectives.

Measures of Employee Performance

Task Performance

This type of employee performance covers the central purpose for which the employee was engaged by the organization. It is that aspect of the employee work activities that contribute to organizations official operations and is more likely to be described by the formal job role. According to Williams and Karau (2016), task performance refers to actions that are part of the formal reward system and addresses the prescription as indicated in the descriptions of the role, Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Schaufeli, De Vet and Van der Beek (2011) indicate that it reflects the core job responsibilities of an employee. This is why it also called regarded as "in-role prescribed behavior" and is reflected in specific work outcomes and deliverables as well as their quality and quantity. Therefore, task performance is connected with transformation of raw materials into finished product and services which are basic to the organization's strategic business domain. It shows the level or the extent an employee achieves a given target. Task performance comprises of activities that translate the organization's policies, missions, and resources into tangible and intangible goods produced by the organization and to enable the efficient operation of the organization (Motowidlo et al., 1997).

When employees use technical skills and knowledge to produce goods or services or accomplish a specialized task that supports the actual functions of an organization, the employees are said to be involved in task performance. Task performance covers the fulfillment of the requirements that are part of the agreement between the employee and the organization. Effective task performance contributes to individual and organizational performance (Behrman & Perreault, 1982). Accordingly, Borman and Motowildo (1997), argue that this contribution can be direct (i.e. the application of a part of organizational technology), or indirect (i.e. providing materials or services needed to perform organizational processes). Therefore, task performance is connected with transformation of raw materials into finished product and services which are basic to the organization's strategic business domain. In consonance with this observation, it may be

safe to say that workers who demonstrate task oriented behavior are capable of achieving desired performance levels that are outlined by their organization or manager. In this circumstance employees regard their work as a series of sequenced and prioritized tasks.

Contextual Performance

Given the nature of today's work environment, no organization easily succeeds by leaning on employee task performance alone without encouraging and leveraging on the benefits of employee extra role behavior like contextual performance. According to Koopmans *et al.* (2011), this extra- role behavior is discretionary in nature and not mandatory. It is a product of undiluted dedication and commitment on the part of employees. Therefore, anytime an employee's performance goes over and above is his task performance benchmark, contextual performance sets in. Zhang (2011) defined it as anything that employees choose to do freely at any time on their own accord, which usually does not form part of their specified contractual responsibility. Furthermore, Motowildo and Kell (2012) maintain that contextual performance behaviors improve organizational effectiveness through its effects on the psychological, social, and organizational aspects of the job done by employees.

An employee engages in contextual performance when they are for instance involved with voluntarily helping colleagues, putting in extra effort to complete a given task, putting in extra hours to get work done on time and so forth (Van Scotter, 2000). Edwards, Bell, Arthur and Decuir (2008) propose that employees who are less satisfied with their jobs may exhibit lower levels of contextual performance behaviors and are therefore less likely to engage in such contextual performance activities, thus concluding that overall job satisfaction will have a stronger relationship with contextual performance than with task performance. This type of behavioral tendency is strategic to organizational effectiveness and efficiency, especially as it is borne out of employees' positive job attitude, loyalty and commitment (Berbe & Rofcanin, 2012). It is likened to organizational citizenship behavior. Again, examples of this type of performance behavior will

encompass volunteering for additional work, strict adherence to organizational laid down rules, and procedures even when personally inconveniencing, lending a helping hand and cooperating with colleagues and various other discretionary behaviors that results in effective employee performance.

Empirical Review

Azeez *et al.* (2017) examined work-life balance and organizational commitment of working postgraduate students in Lagos State University. The study adopted survey approach and found that work-life balance and organizational commitment are positively related. Dissanayaka and Ali (2013) investigated the impact of work life balance on employee performance using survey approach. The finding of the study indicates that there is a positive relationship between work life balance and employee performance and concluded that systematic effort is needed to enhance work-life balance of the employee to achieve better employee performance.

Thevanes and Mangaleswaran (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between work-Life balance and job performance of private banks in Batticaloa region of Sri Lanka and discovered thatwork-life balance has positive and significant relationship with job performance in overall. Similarly, Fayyazi and Aslani (2015) examined the impact of work-life balance on employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention. The outcome of the study proves that work-life balance has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction, and a significant negative relationship with turnover intention.

Otieno (2010) examined the influence of work-life balance on job satisfaction and commitment of women employees in commercial banks in Kisumu city, Kenya. The study adopted a quantitative methodology with semi-structured questionnaire as its means of data collection. The study finding reveals that work-life balance has a positive influence on employee commitment and job satisfaction and thus recommends that organizations should include work-life balance as part of human resource practices in order to have satisfied and committed employees and thus reduce turnover rates. Simonetta and Manfred (2010) examined work-life balance and staff experience at oxford Brookes University. The study utilized quantitative approach

with a sample size of 492 respondents. The finding indicates that it is important to achieve a balance between paid work and personal life; and that this enables them to work better. Hence, the study hypothesize that:

 \mathbf{H}_{01} : There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and task performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt

 \mathbf{H}_{02} : There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and contextual performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology provides a thorough account of the design to be used in the collection and analysis of data. Thus, a Baridam (2007) describes research design as a model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning casual relationships among variables under investigation. Similarly, Asika (2006) views it as the procedure, technique and guide on how research work will be carried out. It is associated with a diligent and scientific enquiry or investigation into a subject or problem in order to come up with the latest discoveries so as to resolve an identified societal problem. The study adopted cross-sectional survey in its design. Primary data was collected through self- administered questionnaire. The population of the study was made up of 574 employees of the investigated firms while the sample size was 288 employees as determined using the Krejci and Morgan (1970). Data generated were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical technique. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was adopted in testing the stated hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences at a 95% percent confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

The reliability for this study was carried out using a form of intra-rating assessment which is the Cronbach alpha. The Cronbach alpha assesses the consistency of data distribution in line with related items on the same construct or variable (Sullivan, 2001; Bryman & Bell, 2003). In this study, the Nunally (1980, in

Sekaran, 2003) benchmark of 0.70 was adopted in assessing the evidence of data consistency (where a > 0.70) and inconsistency (where a < 0.70).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alphas of Study Variable

S/N	Variables	No. of items	Alpha (α)
1	Work Life Balance	9	0.768
2	Task Performance	3	0.926
3	Contextual Performance	3	0.868

Source: SPSS Output, 2023.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

In this section, the output of the primary data was presented. Analysis was carried out on individual variables and measures. Mean scores and standard deviations are also illustrated. The presentation begins with the independent variable which is work life balance which was measured as a unidimensional construct. It then proceeds to the dependent variable – employee performance, whose measures are task performance and contextual performance. These were all scaled on the five (5) point Likert scale (ranging from 1: **SD**= strongly disagree, 2: **D**= Disagree, 3: **U**=undecided, 4: **A**= agree and 5: **SA**= strongly agree).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variable

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work-Life Balance	238	1.11	5.00	3.8590	1.15273
Employee Performance	238	1.00	5.00	3.7724	1.27285
Valid N (listwise)	238				

Source: SPSS 23.0 data Output, 2023

Table 2 above illustrates the descriptive statistics for independent and dependent variables with mean scores of 3.8590 and 3.7724 indicates that most of the respondents were on the agree range of the measurement scale.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

This was the basis for our choice of the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation to test our hypothesized relationships in our study. This section was therefore used to present answers to our research questions and hypotheses. We commenced by first presenting a proof of existing relationships.

Relationship between Work-Life Balance and Measures of Employee Performance

Tables 3 and 4 show the result of correlation matrix obtained for work-lifebalance band measures of employee performance. Also displayed in the tables are the rho-values which with which we answered our research question 1 while the statistical tests of significance (p - value) was used to accept or reject the hypotheses and generalize our findings to the study population

Table 3: Correlations Matrix for Work-Life Balance and Task performance

			Work-Life	Task
			Balance	Performance
Spearman's rho	Work-	Correlation	1.000	.620**
	LifeBalance	Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N	238	238
	Task Performance	Correlation	$.620^{**}$	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	238	238

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 23.0 data Output, 2023

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and task performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 3 shows a Spearman's correlation coefficient (rho) of 0.620 which indicates a positive very high relationship between work-life balance and task performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. This is indicative of a very strong correlation between work-life balance and task performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Similarly displayed in table 3 is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained the

probability value is (0.000) < (0.05) level of significance; hence the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is a significant relationship between work-life balance and task performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 4: Correlations Matrix for Work-Life Balance and Contextual performance

			Work- LifeBalance	Contextual Performance
Spearman's rho	Work-LifeBalance	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.671**
		Sig. (2-tailed) N	238	.000 238
	Contextual Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.671**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed) N	.000 238	238

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 23.0 data Output, 2023

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and contextual performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 4 shows a Spearman's correlation coefficient (rho) of 0.671 which indicates a positive very high relationship between work-life balance and contextual performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. This is indicative of a very strong correlation between work-life balance and contextual performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. Similarly displayed in table 4 is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained the probability value is (0.000) < (0.05) level of significance; hence the researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there is a significant relationship between work-life balance and contextual performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The general finding of this study revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. This reinforces previous studies by Sakthivel *et al.* (2011) showed that work-life balance reflections on employee satisfaction in selected manufacturing firms. It however found that a correlation exists between work-life balance and employee satisfaction. Cote and Miners, (2006) affirmed that work life balance in different industries has a strong link with the performance. Researchers came up with the idea that the staffs with High emotional intelligence were happier than others and held more commitment, with their respective organizations. In similar vein, (Idris, Ahmad and Ahmad (2011) examined the effect of emotional intelligence on employee commitment and job satisfaction amongst staff in public and private sectors and discovered that a high and significant correlation exist between two variables (Luna-Arocas & Mosley, 2015). Recent studies affirmed that work life balance furthermore serves organizations by empowering them to secure the best and unrivalled people, place the right people in the right positions and improve employee productivity (Armstrong & Baron, 2005; Leonard, 2010; Misko, 2008).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study indicates that there is a positive and significant relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt. This finding holds important implications for both employers and employees in the industry. By prioritizing and promoting work-life balance, organizations can enhance employee performance and overall productivity. Employees who are able to achieve a healthy balance between their work and personal lives are likely to experience higher job satisfaction, reduced stress levels, and improved well-being. This, in turn, leads to increased motivation, engagement, and commitment to their work, resulting in higher levels of performance. Based on the findings of the study, the subsequent pointers were made:

- i. The managers of food and beverage firms in Rivers State, Nigeria under study should recognize and encourage work-life balance as their core parameters to increase employee commitment, because empirical result showed that there is a strong influence in the results from the test of hypotheses in the study.
- ii. The management in the managers of food and beverage firms in Rivers State, Nigeria under studied should make sure they develop policies and strategies on different work life practices such as job sharing, emotional and coworker support policies that will encourage the employees to be more productive on their job in the workplace.

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