

Chapter 5

Prioritized Work-Life Balance and Job Effectiveness of Business Education Graduates

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Introduction

Work-life balance involve how much control one feels over the number of hours put into work in comparison to the number of hours one makes available beyond the boundaries of work (Cathy, 2019). The balance between work and life activities and how it is achieved changes from one individual to another as it depends on when an individual feels satisfied both the job and personal life.

Work-life balance concept in its broad sense requires organizations/institutions to effectively integrate employee's work and non-work roles such that the levels of multiple-role conflict and the associated stress and job dissatisfaction are minimized or avoided. Work-life balance is a method which helps employees of an organization to balance their personal and professional lifestyle. Ezedeen and Stephen (2017) averred that the subject to work-life balance strategies continues to get a great deal of attention across psychologist, academicians, researchers and corporate organization and this has led to growth in conducting new research continually as employees and employers try to demystify work-life balance definitions, concept and even attributes.

However, Blackson (2020) noted that with an increased participation of women in the workplace, women are able to fend for themselves resulting in upsurge of single parents, dual-earners couples and more involvement from working mothers. Owing to such paradigm shifts, economic changes, social demands and other factors, striking a balance between work and personal life has gradually come to the forefront causing friction between the employees and organization management and even among themselves.

Abdullahi et al. (2022) contended that happy employees are more productive and being recognized gives them the feeling of job mastery and that they are a great fit for their role and for the organization/institutions, hence recognition can improve employees' productivity, enhance loyalty and promote collaboration. Similarly, Owen (2023) affirmed that employee recognition is an important part of any workplace because it improves morale, bring sense of positivity and appreciation and makes employees to be more committed in their workplace. Owen stressed that the main goal of employees recognition is to let employee know that the effort they put in their job and the work results they achieved are valued and appreciated for the benefit of retention. However, Peter and Boateng (2023) identify benefits of recognizing employee's in workplace which includes: Building posit, work environment, reducing employees' turnover rate, and improves retention, fosters organization loyalty and improve employees engagement in the workplace. In the same vein, Owen (2023) supported the above assertion stating that employee retention makes them feel human at workplace, boost their productivity rate,

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improves morale and employee's happiness and helps with recruiting top talent. Owen also posits that when employees are not recognized, appreciated and acknowledge, it is then view by them as work dehumanization. Finally, recognition reinforces what employees want to see more of thereby allowing them to see more good work and better performance. Thus, many organizations have yearly formal reviews that provide employees with the insight they need in order to determine how to grow in their position or develop the skills needed to move up.

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The authors in their study findings revealed that employees are often pre-occupied with work when not working, and when in the company of family and loved ones, experience an inability to be meaningfully engaged in non-work spheres. For many people, work has become cognitively inescapable in the sense that technological devices have further added to this pressure annihilator at the line between home and office, hence today, employees are available to their employer round the clock. Similarly, Cohen (2018) noted that work or life balance is not only about finding the physical time to attend to responsibilities and duties but more importantly it is about finding the cognitive space necessary to process, organize and respond to the thinking demands of life within a complex society. Cappelli (2019) argue that from the beginning, it is important to understand that work-life balance does not mean to devote an equal amount of time to paid work and non-paid roles, in its broad sense, it is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or fit between the multiple roles in a person's life. Although, definitions and explanation may vary, work-life balance is generally associated with equilibrium between the amount of time and effort an individual devotes to work and personal activities in order to maintain an overall sense of harmony in life. Work-life balance from business education graduates perspective is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home. Scholars have observed that educational institutions need to be aware of the changing needs of staff/employee and provide flexible work-life balance strategies in order to retain their employees. Also, organizations/institutions that seek to increase their staff morale, commitment, satisfaction and reduces source stress and problem at workplace must equally improve their ability to recruit and retain talented staff.

Prioritize work-life balance remains a core issue for employed parents and employers alike despite that the global economy is going through major financial and economic crisis. Pressure from an increasingly competitive work environment are leading to conflicting priorities for employers and employees creating considerable stresses for employees trying to cope with work and family responsibilities (Wharton & Blair, 2018). Employers and employees both have covet-quality of life just as there is responsibility and opportunity in life so individuals careers are also guided by opportunities and responsibilities and thus it is their duties to ensure that these two sets of factors don't work at cross purposes. Work and life are two different segments, yet at times depending with different organization and their different cultures, work and personal life tend to be integrated creating some interdependence.

Employee's Recognition and Job Effectiveness of Business Education Graduate

Employees do not only want attractive pay and benefit but also expect that their efforts are valued, appreciate and treated fairly (Peter & Boateng, 2022). Hence, recognition is the timely, informal and formal acknowledgement of a person's or teams behavior, effort or

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business result that supports the organizations goals and values, and which is usually beyond normal expectations. Consequently, employee when recognized feels that their organization have human feeling towards them. Harrison (2023) averred that workplace by managers in the organization should considers recognizing these employees no matter how little. Employee recognition as a measure of work humanization is the acknowledgement, appreciation or approval of the positive accomplishments or behaviours of an individual or team. It also encompasses praise or a personal note of acknowledging achievements including small gestures that are important to employees. Recognition as a component of workplace humanization is regarded as an important tool in promoting employees motivation and organizational success, this is because employees are likely to be motivated to improve their performance based on recognition and are also likely to be less motivated if organization neglects their contribution (Abdullahi, Hashim & Hamid, 2022).

In addition, Umeke and Owhondah (2021) asserts that when employees are recognized in the workplace like their other counterparts, they feel more connected and are likely to stay with their organization, thus being committed, this is because recognition strengthens the essential bonds of a culture that workers want to be part of. It is worthy of note that employees recognition as a form of work humanization is a crucial factor that enforces job satisfaction. Most employees consider investing money in benefits and increased salaries to improve happiness, while importantly financial input is not the only way to improve job satisfaction. Employees' recognition is the act of publicly acknowledging workers in the workplace for who they are and what they do hence with employee's appreciation, workers recognize each other and make the workplace feel more inclusive and human.

Organizational Justice and Job Effectiveness of Business Education Graduates

Organizational justice according to Herbert (2021) is referred to how an organization/institutions treats its employee and which is seen as fair enough by those employees to encourage their loyalty to the organization. For Omunakwo and Ogunbe (2023), organizational justice is seen as an employee's perception of their organization behaviours, decisions and outcomes to be fair in nature. Organizational justice is concern with all aspects of workplace behavior including salary, access to training and gender equality as well as how bosses treat their subordinates. Thus, it is developed from equity theory which can tends that people evaluate justice depending on how much they contribute (input) and how much they receive (output).

Herbert (2021) buttressed that an organization will do what is justice with the central aim of influencing their workers to improve commitment, which leads to better performance and productivity. In return also employees will improve their commitment to better performance because they will benefit from the organization in the long run. For Wigwe and Onye (2022), organizational justice makes employees to be healthier, that is they are better at their jobs and are more likely to share Sideas that help the organization to succeed. It is worthy of note that organizational justice is all about fairness and matters about workplace behavior. It includes gender equity, access to training, fair treatment from superiors, good wages etc. Studies have shown that justice based dealings of organization with their employees can build up their trust in the organizations which may improve their job engagement, as well as organizational engagement. In another development, Klein, Max and Alagoa (2021) averred that organizational justice as a dimension of workplace humanization increases employees job satisfaction, commitment and trust, and decreases turnover, counter productive work behavior and even workplace violence. However,

employee's perception of organizational justice determines their positive and negative attitude towards the organization and therefore their organizational commitment. It is pertinent to know that there are two main components of organizational justice, which outcome justice is based on moral propriety. In another development, Peter and Boateng (2022) affirmed that organizational justice focuses on how employees in workplace judge the behavior of their organization and also how this behavior is related to their attitudes and behaviours regarding the organization. When employees feel that they have been treated fairly, organizations are able to maintain control over potentials challenges and threats they face from staff, thus reaping the benefits of being a good employer.

Furthermore, studies have equally showed that organizational justice is linked to employees health and well being. Employees are better at their jobs and are more likely to share ideas that will help the organization to succeed if they are treated fairly in the workplace. In terms of employee engagement in the decision making process, organizational justice is viewed as a critical necessity for the functioning of companies. Thus, employees respond more positively to an organization commitment when its processes, regulations relationship and distribution mechanisms are fair and reasonable, and improved organizational fairness results in better employee's performance and also Greenberg (2020) posits that with the aid of organizational justice, organization management must increase employees job satisfaction and commitment, and decrease their likelihood of leaving their jobs. Organizational justice is the combination of employee's attitudes to their workplace as a result of comparison of expected outcomes by employees in exchange for their contributions to their own organization with expected outcomes by employees of other organizations. Therefore, employee's level of commitment is directly influenced by the organization's level of fairness towards its employees. In addition, employees loyalty to their workplace, particularly their emotional attachment is motivated by their view of fairness inside the organization, this is because when employees feel that they have been appropriately treated, showing their dedication to the organization almost comes naturally to them but the situation is reversed when an employee feels that the company is being unjust, hence a prove of workplace dehumanization (Amesi, 2020).

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on Abraham H. Maslow Hierarchy Theory (1954), Holmans and Pfeffer (1961) and (1983) Social Exchange Theory, and Need for achievement theory by McClelland (1961), and their implication to the variables under study.

Abraham H. Maslow Hierarchy Theory

This study was anchored on the motivation theory propounded by Abraham Maslow in 1954. The theory posits that the hierarchy of needs follow in an ascending order of

- a) **Physiological Needs:** In an organizational context, physiological needs are the employees' concern for salary and basic working conditions. It is only when the basic needs are met in the organization that the employee can be motivated to progress to higher level needs.
- b) **Safety or Security Needs:** These are needs for safety and security and emotional injuries, threat from danger and deprivations. In the organizational context, the safety needs are job security, salary increase, safe working environment etc. To satisfy safety needs of employees the manager should provide safe working conditions, pension schemes, gratuity, and grievance procedures.

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- c) **Social Needs (belongingness and love needs):** This is the need for meaningful interaction - love acceptance by others, affection relationship. These needs equated for peer acceptance, need for compatible work group, professional friendship and team spirit.
- d) **Esteem Needs:** They are twofold in nature.
 - i) Self-esteem needs which include the needs for self-confidence, achievement, competence, self-respect, and knowledge and for independence and freedom.
 - ii) Esteem of others – these are related to one's reputation needs for status, for recognition, for appreciation and respect from one's associates. The esteem needs are egoistic in nature.
- e) **Self-Actualization Needs:** This represents the highest level of need in the need hierarchy. It is the need to realize one's potentials, or the desire to become what one wants to become, accomplishing things in life and reaching the peak of one's potentials. This need is seldom met by human beings.

In the organization it can be equated to one's desire to excel in one's job promoting innovative ideas and achieving highest performance in managing a unit in the organization. The theory offers that the organization or the manager should create the right work environment to enhance employee motivation (Obong, 2019). The theory posits that each person has a hierarchy of five sets of needs that must be satisfied ranging from basic psychological needs, safety needs, social belonging, esteem needs, and finally self-actualization.

The basic assumption of the theory is as follows:

- i) Human beings have needs that are never completely satisfied.
- ii) Human action is targeted at fulfilling the needs that are unsatisfied, at a given point in time.

This theory was concisely adopted as the theoretical support for this study because it is related to the variables (work humanization and business education graduates effectiveness. Again, this theory predicts that as employees' personal needs are met, it influences their performance to getting higher needs satisfied hence, person with an unfulfilled need could be persuaded to work to satisfy that need.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory propounded by Homans (1961) and Pfeffer (1983). Holds that human behavior and social interaction are basically an exchange of both tangible and intangible activities. It notes that behavioural compliance on the part of the individual is exchanged for something which is perceived to be contingent on the individual's behavior. It is exchange of benefits, giving others something more valuable to them than is costly to the giver, and vice versa. This mutually benefiting is important to all parties involved because in the long run the relationship produces maximum gain for the parties and the organization as well. It is argued that people in organizations engage in a self-interested exchange process with the owner of the organization and among themselves, and strive to maximize the benefits of such an exchange process. Parties in exchange process carryout a cost-benefit audit to determine the viability of the exchange relationship. Social exchange is composed of actions of purposive actors that presuppose constellations of their interests and resources. These processes are governed to reciprocal relations. Exchange is defined as social interaction characterized by reciprocal stimuli. It examines the processes establishing and sustaining reciprocity in social relations, or the mutual gratifications between individuals (Ahiauzu & Asawi, 2019).

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The basic assumptions of the social exchange theory are:

1. Theory is the rational man model
2. Actors in social exchange make choices freely in regard to alternative courses of action while guided by cost-benefit considerations.
3. Individuals establish and continue social relations on the basis of rational value maximizing choices.
4. Participation in the exchange relationship is largely a product of intrinsic rewards.
5. Rational choice and behaviourisms.

The Social Exchange Theory is adopted as the anchor of this study because it is apt to the variables this study. This theory posits that the relationship between an employee and employer is a social exchange and that people in organizations engage in a self-interested exchange process with owners of the organizations and among themselves, strive to maximize the benefits of such exchange process. To accomplish this, the parties in the exchange process carry out a cost-benefit audit to determine the viability of the exchange relationship.

Summary

This book prioritized work-life balance, employee's recognition and organizational justice as variables of workplace humanization enhances job effectiveness of business education graduates in tertiary institutions in Rivers State to a high extent. In addition, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female business education graduates on extent prioritized work-life balance enhances job effectiveness. Management of institutions should display equal fairness in the areas of employees' remuneration so that there will not be room for any marginalization.

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