Perceived Emotional Stress, Work-Life Balance and Job Performance among Employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala, Nigeria

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Abstract

Interest in employee job performance as it relates to Colleges of Education has received the attention of researchers in recent years. Nevertheless, there is dearth of studies examining this phenomenon in Benue State. This study thus examined the influence of perceived emotional stress and work-life balance on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala, Benue State. A total of 214 participants whose ages ranged from 31-63 years with the mean age of 45.7 (SD = 10.98) participated in the study. They were comprising of 143 (66.8%) males and 71 (33.2%) females were. Three instruments; Perceived Emotional Stress Scale, Work-Life Balance Questionnaire (WLBQ), and Individual Work Performance Scale, were used for data collection. Three hypotheses were postulated in the study and tested using multiple linear regression and standard multiple regression. Findings showed a significant influence of perceived emotional stress on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala. Findings also showed that all the dimensions of work-life balance scale significantly influenced job performance among employees. It was also found that perceived emotional stress and work-life balance jointly influenced job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-ala. It was concluded that perceived emotional stress and work-life balance are significant independent and joint determinants of job performance among employees of College of Education, Katsina-Ala. It was recommended among others that the management of College of Education Katsina-Ala should avoid cumbersome schedules for their staff, and that, staff of the College should learn to adopt relaxation techniques to reduce stress, inherent in both the academic and administrative work they perform for the College.

Key Words: Perceived Emotional Stress, Work-Life Balance, Job Performance, Employees

Introduction

Interest in employee job performance particularly as it relates to the educational sector has been the concern of researchers in recent times. This is so because, job performance in educational institutions is a key determinant in achieving institutional goals and objectives. Hence, institutions explore various ways of motivating their workforce. Policies in educational institutions are geared towards improving employee's job performance in order to remain ahead of competitors. They need to improve the performance of their workforce and monitor them; failure to which, they may become liable to face several challenges that could hinder institutional growth (Obiageli et al., 2015).

A number of factors such as perceived emotional stress and work-life balance are found to have huge influence on job performance among employees of tertiary institutions of learning. Perceived emotional stress is a reaction to the pressures of everyday life. Worry, fear, anger, sadness and other emotions are also all normal emotional responses. Stress implies a level of challenge that is severe enough to require major readjustments to meet the challenge or that is prolonged enough to alter one's system functions. Stress can therefore be described as the adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur in an individual as a result of his or her inability to cope with the demands being made on him or her, that is, tension from extra-ordinary demands on an individual (Yumatov, 2020). It therefore means that, stress can be negative and it can result from placing an individual in a work environment that is incompatible with their work style.

Another variable implicated in job performance is work-life balance. It is referred to as the ability of a worker to manage both paid work and social life adequately (Darko-Asumadu et al., 2018). To manage both domains efficiently depends on the strategies employed by both employees and employers. Darko-Asumadu et al. (2018) added that employers have increasingly realised that, to enhance work-life balance, they must consistently improve the quality of life of employees and their families in order to increase the quality of work. This suggests the need for vibrant institutions to promote work and life integration with the target of enhancing the commitment of workers. Therefore, as institutions aim at reducing cost and increasing performance in the global academic system, it is crucial for employers to implement policies to help workers balance paid work and non-work roles. According to Dundas (2018), work-life balance is about effectively managing and juggling between paid work and all others activities that are important to an individual.

Perceived Emotional Stress and Employee Job Performance

Oseremen et al. (2022) examined empirical analysis of the effect of work stress on employee productivity in the banking industry in Edo State University Uzairue, Nigeria. The study used survey design with a sample size of 400 working employees; this was premised on the purposive sampling method. The result indicated that employee workload, role ambiguity, and role conflict significantly predicted employee productivity.

Itoya and Igbokwe (2020) examined the effect of stress on employee performance in Delta State University, Abraka. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Findings indicated that pressure of work overload and role conflict as sources of stress have negative and significant effect on employee performance in tertiary institutions. The study recommended among others that employers should endeavour to always assign tasks that their employees' capabilities can adequately cope with to avoid situations that lead to stress.

Oyewole et al. (2020) investigated sources and types of emotional stress and their impact on performance of lecturers in a private university in South-western Nigeria. The study was carried out through survey method by administering structured questionnaire on respondents randomly selected from the academic staff of Bowen University Iwo. It was found out that both sources and types of stress have significant impacts on academic performance of lecturers when performance is considered from the points of view of teaching, publication and community service.

Sofoluwe et al. (2015) investigated the relationship of emotional stress and job performance in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. The research design was descriptive survey of correlational type. The findings revealed that gender and stress significantly

influenced academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. It was recommended that the workload of the lecturers should be reduced so as to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in their teaching career.

Work-life Balance and Employee Job Performance

Onuorah and Ugochukwu (2020) investigated work life balance and employee productivity in selected banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. Finding from the study revealed a significant effect of workload pressure on employee productivity while role conflict had a significant effect on employee productivity. The study further revealed that family stress exerted significant effect on employee productivity. The study recommended that employees should relax in various forms which do not hamper their work.

Dotun and Idowu (2019) examined the link between work-life balance (WLB) and employee's performance in two selected sectors in Nigeria. This study employed a survey research design. This study showed that there was a significant positive relationship between WLB and employees' performance in the selected banks but no significant relationship between WLB and employees' performance in the selected tertiary institutions.

Kasau (2017) examined work life balance and employee performance in the ministry of finance and economic planning Kitui county government, Kenya. The study adopted an explanatory research design and a descriptive research design. The findings of the study indicated that there was a negative correlation between leave policy and employees' performance as well as between welfare policies and employees' performances. They recommended more flexible work arrangements be made available to all employees as long as it won't compromise their performance.

Ansari et al. (2015) examined the impact of work-life balance on employee productivity in Pakistan. The sample size was n=150 generated through sampling table and received 80% response rate from the respondents. Study revealed that, work-life balance practices, when connected appropriately, would impact employee performance positively. However, research was targeted at the banking sector in Pakistan and not college employees in Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

i.   There will be a significant influence of perceived emotional stress on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala Benue state.
ii.   There will be a significant influence of work life balance on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala Benue state.
iii.   There will be a significant joint influence of perceived emotional stress and work life balance on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala Benue state.

Design

This study adopted cross-sectional survey design to investigate the influence of perceived emotional stress and Work-life balance on employee job performance in College of Education Katsina-Ala, Benue State. In the study, the independent variables are perceived emotional stress and work-life balance while the dependent variable is job performance.

Sample Size Determination

The sample for this study was estimated using the Krejcie and Morgan Table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Using this table, a sample of 214 is deemed representative of a population of 475 employees of College of Education Katsina-ala.

Sampling Technique

The study employed the use of multi-stage sampling technique where stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to arrive at the 214 employees. First stratified technique was used to draw samples amongst the Academic and Administrative Staff as seen below:

Academic Staff $\qquad \frac{286}{475} \text{ x } \frac{214}{1} = 128.85 \approx 129$

Administrative Staff $\qquad \frac{189}{475} \text{ x } \frac{189}{1} = 85.14 \approx 85$

Therefore, a summation of the above values gives the aggregate sample size of 214 employees. Secondly, the researcher used simple random sampling in selecting respondents from each cadre. In each cadre, secret balloting was used to randomly draw out the required sample as calculated above.

Participants

The participants for the study were 214 staff of college of Education Katsina-ala. They comprised of 143 (66.8%) males and 71 (33.2%) females. Their ages ranged from 31 – 63years with a mean age of 45.69 years (SD=10.98). As for their ethnic groups, 137 (64%) were Tiv, 36 (16.8%) were Idoma while the remaining 41 (19.2%) were from other ethnic groups. In terms of their religion, 162 (75.7%) were Christians, 16 (7.5%) were Muslims while 36 (16.8%) were practicing other religions. As for their marital status, 26 (12.1%) were Single, 97 (45.3%) were Married, 60 (28.1%) were Divorced while 31 (14.5%) were widowed. Concerning their educational qualifications, 6 (2.8%) had National Diploma, 16 (7.5%) had NCE, 86 (40.2%) had Degree/HND, 61 (28.5%) had M.Sc. while 45 (21%) had Ph.D. qualifications. In terms of their years of experience, 10 (4.7%) worked for less than a year, 97 (45.3%) worked for 1-10years, while 107 (50%) worked for over 10years. Among them, 129 (60.3%) were academic staff while 85 (39.7%) were administrative staff.

Instruments

For the purpose of data collection, the researchers used the Perceived Emotional Stress Scale, Work Life Balance Questionnaire (WLBQ), and Individual Work Performance Scale.

Demographic Variables: The respondents' Age, Gender, Qualification, Marital status, and Experience were assessed in the study.

Perceived Emotional Stress Scale (PESS)

Perceived emotional stress scale was developed by Cohen et al. (1983). It was developed to measure the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. PESS predicts both objective biological markers of stress and increased risk for disease among persons with higher perceived stress levels. The original PESS consists of 14 items but the researchers reduced the items to 10 questions as the 10 questions adequately cover what is required as validated by two research experts. A senior lecturer from Psychology department and another senior lecturer in Test and Measurement from Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria. Scores on the PESS-10 demonstrated adequate internal consistency reliability (α=.78). To determine one's score on this scale, ratings within each scale are summed and divided by the total number of items in that particular scale. Scores on each item of the scale ranged from 1-5, with 1 indicating low perceived emotional stress and 5 indicating high perceived emotional stress. The present study obtained an alpha coefficient of .78.

Work Life Balance Questionnaire (WLBQ)

The Work-Life Balance (WLB) questionnaire was developed by Hayman (2005). The 15-item scale designed to capture employee perceptions via three subscales: Work Interference with Personal Life comprising of (items 1-7, α=.90), Personal Life interference with Work (items 8-11, α= .90), Work Enhancement of Personal Life (items 12-15, α=.80). Work Life Balance Questionnaire (WLBQ) is measured on a 4-point Likert scale of SA (Strongly Agree)=4, A (Agree)=3, D (Disagree)=2, SD (Strongly Disagree)=1. The present study obtained an alpha coefficient of .71.

Individual Work Performance Scale

The individual work performance scale was developed by Ramdani et al. (2017) to measure an individual work performance. The scale has three subscales: Task performance (α= .93) comprised 5 items (1-5). Contextual performance (α= .90) comprised 8 items (6-13) and Counterproductive work behaviour (α= .83) comprised 5 items (14-18). The response format was A(Always)=5, O(Often)=4, S(Sometimes)=3, R(Rarely)=2 N(Never)=1. The present study obtained an alpha coefficient of .84.

Procedure

This study was conducted among academic and administrative staff of College of Education Katsina-Ala. The researchers drafted a letter of introduction which was used to introduce the researchers at College of Education, Katsina-Ala and seek approval for the study. The researchers sought the consent of the employees and assured them of all forms of ethical considerations such as confidentiality, explaining to them that their responses will be used for the purpose of the study only. The researchers were assisted by two postgraduate students who were trained for two days to help the in the data collection process. Respondents were contacted on the school premises; secret balloting was used to draw the sample for the study. Afterwards, the researcher visited each Department, approached available academic staff in their offices and after seeking their approval to participate in the research, asked them to draw one piece of paper from the box. Those who picked the acceptable code "Yes" were sampled for the study. The same procedure was followed in selecting 85 and 129 respondents from the administrative and academic staff strata. All the employees selected were handed a copy of the questionnaire after they were properly instructed on how to fill it. It took the researchers 14 days to complete the process. After the administration of 230 copies of questionnaires only 214 representing a return rate of 93% were returned and used for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

Hypothesis one and two were analysed using Multiple linear regression. Hypothesis three was tested using Standard Multiple Regression.

Results

Table 1: Summary of Multiple Linear Regression showing the Influence of Perceived Emotional Stress on Job Performance among Employee of College of Education Katsina-Ala

Variables	R	R^2	F	df	B	T	Sig.
Job Performance							
Constant	.313	.098	23.078	1,212		12.186	.000
Perceived Emotional Stress					-.313	-4.804	.000
Task Performance							
Constant	.413	.171	22.977	1,212		17.323	.000
Perceived Emotional Stress					-.413	-4.793	.000
Contextual Performance							
Constant	.617	.381	130.472	1,212		9.447	.000
Perceived Emotional Stress					-.617	-11.422	.000
CWB							
Constant	.537	.288	85.824	1,212		3.314	.000
Perceived Emotional Stress					.537	9.264	.000

The result presented in table 1 showed that there was a significant influence of perceived emotional stress on job performance among staff [R^2=.098, F(1,212)=23.078, p<.001, β=-.313, t=-4.804, p<.001]. This implies that perceived emotional stress explained 9.8% of the variance observed in job performance. Meaning that employees who scored higher on perceived emotional stress performed lower on job performance. Therefore, hypothesis one was supported.

As for the dimensions of work performance, the result showed that there was a significant influence of perceived emotional stress on task performance among staff [R^2=.171, F(1,212)=22.977, p<.001, β=-.413, t=-4.793, p<.001]. This implies that perceived emotional stress explained 17.1% of the variance observed in task performance. The result also showed that there was a significant influence of perceived emotional stress on contextual performance among staff [R^2=.381, F(1,212)=130.472, p<.001, β=-.617, t=11.422, p<.001]. This implies that perceived emotional stress explained 38.1% of the variance observed in contextual performance. The result also showed that there was a significant influence of perceived emotional stress on counterproductive work behaviour among staff [R^2=.288, F(1,212)=85.824, p<.001, β=.537, t=9.264, p<.001]. This implies that perceived emotional stress explained 28.8% of the variance observed in counterproductive work behaviour.

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Linear Regression showing the Influence of Work-Life Balance on Job Performance among Employee of College of Education Katsina-Ala

Variables	R	R^2	F	df	β	T	Sig.
Job Performance							
Constant	.309	.095	24.137	1,212		25.220	.000
Work-Life Balance					.309	11.595	.000
Task Performance							
Constant	.270	.073	16.697	1,212		22.182	.000
Work-Life Balance					-.270	-4.086	.000
Contextual Performance							
Constant	.165	.027	5.931	1,212		26.520	.000
Work-Life Balance					.165	-2.435	.016
CWB							
Constant	.163	.027	5.773	1,212		13.259	.000
Work-Life Balance					.163	2.403	.017

The result presented in table 2 showed that there was a significant influence of work life balance on job performance among staff [R^2=.095, F(1,212)=224.137, p<.001]. This implies that work life balance explained 9.5% of the variance observed in work performance. This result shows that the higher one's level of work-life balance the higher the productivity or job performance. The result presented in Table 4.2 showed that there was a significant influence of work life balance on task performance among staff [R^2=.073, F(1,212)=16.697, p<.001]. This implies that work life balance explained 7.3% of the variance observed in task performance. The result presented in table 4.2 showed that there was a significant influence of work life balance on contextual performance among staff [R^2=.027, F(1,212)=5.931, p<.001]. This implies that work life balance explained 2.7% of the variance observed in contextual performance.

The result also showed that there was a significant influence of work life balance on counterproductive work behaviour among staff [R^2=.027, F(1,212)=5.773, p<.001]. This implies that work life balance explained 2.7% of the variance observed in counterproductive work behaviour. Thus, hypothesis two was also supported.

Table 3: Summary of Standard Multiple Regression Showing the Joint Influence of Perceived Emotional Stress and Work-Life Balance on Job Performance among Employee of College of Education Katsina-Ala

Variables	R	R^2	F	df	B	T	sig.
Job Performance							
Constant	.338	.114	13.606	2,211		11.521	.000
Perceived Emotional Stress					-.320	-4.938	.000
Work-Life Balance					.127	-1.956	.052
Task Performance							
Constant	.402	.162	20.366	2,211		17.436	.000
Perceived Emotional Stress					-.298	-4.728	.000
Work-Life Balance					.253	4.015	.000
Contextual Performance							
Constant	.649	.421	76.698	2,211		10.318	.000
Perceived Emotional Stress					-.628	-11.978	
Work-Life Balance					.200	3.817	.000
CWB							
Constant	.553	.306	46.478	2,211		1.676	.000
Perceived Emotional Stress					.529	9.214	.000
Work-Life Balance					-.133	-2.316	.021

The result presented in table 3 showed that there was a significant joint influence of perceived emotional stress and work life balance on job performance among staff [R^2=.114, F(2,211)=13.606, p<.001]. This implies that perceived emotional stress and work life balance jointly explained 11.4% of the variance observed in job performance. This hypothesis was also supported. The result also showed that there was a significant joint influence of perceived emotional stress and work life balance on task performance among staff [R^2=.162, F(2,211)=20.366, p<.001]. This implies that perceived emotional stress and work life balance jointly explained 16.2% of the variance observed in task performance. This shows that the interaction between perceived emotional stress and work-life balance had a positive influence on employee job performance. The result also showed that there was a significant joint influence of perceived emotional stress and work life balance on contextual performance among staff [R^2=.421, F(2,211)=76.698, p<.001]. This implies that perceived emotional stress and work life balance jointly explained 42.1% of the variance observed in contextual performance. The result also showed that there was a significant joint influence of perceived emotional stress and work life balance on counterproductive work behaviour among staff [R^2=.306, F(2,211)=46.478, p<.001]. This implies that perceived emotional stress and work life balance jointly explained 30.6% of the variance observed in counterproductive work behaviour.

Discussion

Hypothesis one was tested to find out if there will be a significant influence of perceived emotional stress on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala Benue State. Results indicated that there was a significant influence of perceived emotional stress on job performance among employees. Perceived emotional stress connotes an individual's subjective experience of stress, it involves how a person interprets and reacts to stressors. This trait is capable of influencing employee performance because emotional stress can lead to difficulty in concentrating which can result to lower work output. It can also diminish motivation for work and lead to counter-productive work behaviours. Thus, this result tallies with the conclusions of Oseremen et al., (2022) who found that stress significantly influenced job performance. Also, Anandasayanan, and Subramaniam (2013) revealed that teachers' stress significantly impacted their performance. Other researchers such as Itoya, and Igbokwe (2020) found that putting too much pressure and stress on employees often results in negative consequences, capable of reducing their performance. Additionally, Oyewole et al. (2020) revealed that stress had significant impact on performance of lecturers. Lastly, Sofoluwe et al. (2015) revealed that stress significantly influences job performance in tertiary institutions.

Hypothesis two was tested to find out if there will be a significant influence of work-life balance on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala Benue state. Results indicated that there was a significant positive influence of work-life balance on job performance among employees. Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between an individual's professional responsibilities and their personal life. It is capable of influencing employee performance because balancing professional work and personal life can prevent emotional and physical exhaustion which can lower performance at work. Hence, this result agrees with (Kasau, 2017) who revealed that the principles of work-life balance were associated with the employee's performance. Also, Onuorah and Ugochukwu (2020) found that work load pressure, role conflict and family related stress had negative significant effect on employee performance. Similarly, Kasau (2017) found that flexible work arrangements and family policies were found to be positively correlated to employees' performance. Furthermore, Ansari et al. (2015) revealed that, work-life balance practices, impacts employee performance positively. However, this finding disagrees with Dotun, and Idowu (2019) who revealed that there was no significant relationship between Work-life balance and employees' performance.

Hypothesis three was tested to find out if there will be a significant joint influence of perceived emotional stress and work-life balance on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala Benue State. Results revealed a significant joint influence of perceived emotional stress and work life balance on job performance among employees. However, this finding lacks the support of previous studies. Nonetheless, the interaction between perceived emotional stress and work-life balance may play a crucial role in shaping employee performance because emotional stress can decrease resilience making it hard for employees to handle challenges but a balanced lifestyle enhances emotional wellbeing, allowing employees to handle stress better and sustain good performance levels.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that;

i.   Perceived emotional stress plays a negative role on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala, Benue State.
ii.   Work-life balance has positive influence on job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala, Benue State.
iii.   Perceived emotional stress and work life balance jointly influences job performance among employees of College of Education Katsina-Ala, Benue State.

Recommendations

Given the findings obtained from the present study, it was recommended that;

i.   The management of College of Education Katsina-Ala, should avoid cumbersome schedules for their employees. This will reduce the burden of work and ensure that the employees can cope adequately and maintain a good work-life balance.
ii.   Employees of College of Education Katsina-ala should learn to adopt relaxation techniques like practicing meditation, having a positive attitude, socializing with co-workers, among others. This can be a useful approach for reducing stress and ensuring a better work-life balance.
iii.   Employees of College of Education, Katsina-Ala, Benue State, should always strive to distinguish official work with personal life. Official duties should be strictly monitored and completed before personal life activities. This will ensure a better job performance among employees.

Limitations of the Study

In the process of conducting this study, a number of limitations were met by the researchers which constrained the work in diverse ways:

i.   The study was affected by the difficulty in accessing respondents for data collection. It was difficult to easily access the employees to respond to the questionnaire due to the level of their engagement and unavailability. However, the researchers were able to walk around this limitation by dropping copies of the questionnaire with those who were available with the agreement to give them more time to fill and return them.

ii.   Another limitation is in the applicability of the study findings. The results obtained here are not useful for making causal inferences because the study was not experimental in nature, neither were the variables manipulated in any way. Thus, it can only be said of the extent to which the independent variable predicts the dependent variable.

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