

Work Life Balance'S Effect On Employee Performance In Private Universities In Nigeria

By

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of technology and the increasing demands of the modern workplace have made achieving work-life balance a significant challenge for both individuals and organizations. To address this issue, organizations must develop and implement practical policies that promote work-life balance, as these strategies have a direct impact on employee performance. This study examined the extent to which flexible work arrangements and the working environment influence employee performance among staff at a private university. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, targeting a population of 601 employees, from which 234 participants were selected using stratified sampling techniques. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis to identify and evaluate relationships among the variables. The findings revealed that employee performance improves when flexible scheduling is combined with a supportive work environment. Specifically, staff reported higher productivity levels when provided with autonomy over their schedules and when working under favorable physical and organizational conditions. These results underscore the need for academic institutions to critically assess and revise existing workplace policies to ensure they adequately support employee well-being. In line with the findings, universities are encouraged to institutionalize work-life balance initiatives across all organizational levels to enhance overall staff performance and satisfaction.

Keywords: Work-life balance, employee performance, flexible work schedule, good working conditions, Private Universities.

Introduction

In the modern dynamic workforce, the pursuit of work-life balance has become an acute issue for both employees and organisations. Those who are capable of balancing both domains have been found to experience greater job satisfaction, higher well-being, and enhanced performance rates

(Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Previously, the two existed in isolation from each other. But social changes—such as the growth of dual-income families, the participation of women in the workforce, and technological advancements in communication—blurred the lines between the two, increasing the demand for effective work-life balance approaches. This research investigates the effect of work-life balance on the performance of employees at Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, with the hope of proposing organisational approaches to increasing both wellbeing and productivity.

The increasing focus on the achievement of work-life balance is due to the documented advantages: improved employee morale, less absenteeism, fewer turnover intentions, and enhanced organizational commitment. Still, for most employees—especially the working parents and older professionals—this balance eludes them. Extended working hours due to professional commitment or organizational requirements can contribute to psychological distress, including stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion (Chamunorwa, 2018). The stress is most pronounced for dual-earner couples who have the added burden of performing both professional responsibilities and parental responsibilities. Under these circumstances, restricted parental involvement may have a detrimental influence on cohesion in the family, with corresponding risks for the growth, development, and well-being of the children.

In Nigeria, the workforce also suffers from long working hours, inflexible-job structures, high job loads, and lack of flexibility in the workplace. These stressors, apart from exerting tolls on personal lives, also fuel a multitude of organizational issues—such as low productivity, escalated staff turnover, and poor employee morale. The situation in both the public and private sector today is visibly reflective of increasing disconnection in the aspect of employer expectations vis-a-vis the well-being of the employees. A mismatch of professional to personal responsibilities has the potential to generate high stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction, reducing overall productivity at the end of the day (Kumari&Devi, 2013).

While the value of work-life balance is commonly recognized, how directly this contributes to staff performance at universities in Nigeria is unclear. For universities like Al-Hikmah University, where the academic staff have high expectations of their employees, including both the academic staff and the non-academic staff, knowing how this applies is critical. Precisely, the effect of initiatives like flexible hours and congenial places of work on staff productivity and well-being is unknown.

Research Objectives

The study's objectives are as follows:

- i. i. To ascertain how Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin workers'performance is impacted by flexible work schedules.
- ii. ii. To look at how Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin workers'performance is affected by their working conditions.

Research Questions

The issue statement, which is as follows, led to the formulation of the following research question:

- i. i. How does a flexible work schedule affect Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin workers'performance?
- ii. ii. How do the working conditions affect the performance of Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin employees?

Research Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant impact of a flexible work schedule on employee performance at Al-Hikmah University in Ilorin.

H0₂: There is no significant impact of working conditions on employee performance at Al-Hikmah University in Ilorin.

Scope of the Study

The study sought to understand how work-life balance influences employee performance among Al-Hikmah University Ilorin staff members. Al-Hikmah University serves as the oldest privately operated academic institution throughout the North Central territory of Nigeria. The school investigation focused mainly on performance analysts of academic staff and nonacademic personnel.

Literature Review

Researchers extensively investigate both employee work performance and work-life balance matters. Multiple prominent themes emerged from research studies according to the literature.

Work life Balance

Work-life balance is the equitable blending of career responsibilities and personal commitments so that the two are not compromised. It entails the effective time, effort, and resource sharing between career and personal life so that both aspects are unaffected. As proposed by Greenhaus and Allen (2011), the state of work-life balance is where people handle career responsibilities and personal requirements in a way that the two have fewer conflicts, enabling them to achieve greater overall wellbeing. Clark (2000) is of the opinion that where career life is considered complementary to personal life, the two are capable of enabling improvement in different aspects of life, thus less stress in the two lives. As stated by Grzywacz and Carlson (2007), work-life balance is the measure of how efficiently an individual is able to balance personal responsibilities at the workplace and how events in the two aspects influence the other, either positively or negatively. A good work-life balance has many positive physical and health consequences. A person who is capable of setting priorities for personal needs and takes part in activities outside of the workforce has less burnout, stress, and absenteeism. Consequently, this leads to overall improved health along with vitality that contributes to enhanced employee satisfaction and productivity.

Employee Performance

Employee performance has several aspects, including commitment, engagement, creativity, productivity, and overall organizational efficiency. It is the result of an employee's efforts and contributions to the organization. According to research, people who manage their work and personal lives effectively are more productive and perform well. These people are generally more effective in their time management, stress management, and maintaining concentration, which contributes to the quality and efficient performance of the organization. Apart from economic measures, other non-economic measures, like staff satisfaction, motivation, and absence, are also vital to the assessment of performance (Nilsen & Ringholm, 2019). To keep up with the competition and remain efficient, an organization should care for employees and promote a culture that values their well-being. According to Fatima et al. (2012), work

performance is the level at which employees efficiently fulfill their responsibilities and comply with the rules of the organization.

Employees are commonly considered a firm's key asset. Baral and Bhargava (2010), and Abdulkareem et al. (2023), posit that actively involving employees in the process of development of performance is critical to establishing a successful business enterprise. Performance is "the achievement of set measurable objectives," according to Armstrong (2007), who opines that determining to what extent an employee achieves the criteria for the job is the most effective way to measure success. Effective usage of knowledge, skill, and experience creates high performance. While some employees are always productive without the need for incentives, other employees may need more encouragement to excel to the best of their capacities. Well-managed process of performance has the ability to enhance morale, resulting in achieving the unexpected outcomes (Lula, 2018; Abdul et al., 2018).

Flexible Work Schedule

Flexible schedules are alternative schedules that deviate from the traditional workday and the traditional workweek. Employers provide flexibility in their schedules to employees to enable them to select their schedule for their job, which helps them manage their personal and family responsibilities. Flexible scheduling permits employees to restructure the shifts' starting and ending times, giving them more control of their schedules. Alternative schedules are also available that permit employees to labor outside the confines of organizational time, including the traditional workweek (Ajirowo, 2019; Kattenbach et al., 2010; Shockley et al., 2007; Spreitzer et al., 2017). These schedules go against traditional office culture norms since they provide the employees with the freedom to labor without the need to report to the same office location at the same time every day.

Research carried out by Possenried and Plantenga (2011) and Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard (2014) classifies the main types of flexible work arrangements (FWAs), including locational flexibility, job duration flexibility, and scheduling hours flexibility. Though these are independently applicable, several of these are usually utilized jointly so that the effectiveness is enhanced, according to Chung (2009). Some of the most common flexible work arrangements

are: contract work, part-time labor, job sharing, teleworking, flextime, phased retirement, and term-time labor (Ajirowo et al., 2023; Omondi & Obonyo, 2018). These help employees to carry out their assignments at the time they are most concentrated, creative, and energized.

Working Conditions

No matter the size, complexity, or location of a firm, the working environment has a significant influence on employee performance. A sense of enjoyment or fatigue, including discouragement at times, can arise from the work. But unpleasant working conditions like intense noise, poor lighting, and cluttered environments negatively affect the level of performance. Exposure to harmful substances in the workplace also contributes to various adverse outcomes. Some of these include stress, long hours of work, fatigue, low productivity, accidents at the workplace, and occupational diseases. Organizations greatly cherish the level of employee performance, but this is only possible where employees have opportunities for professional growth and are given the chance to work in environments that value their health and well-being. Working environments that are not risky to the well-being of employees allow them to carry out their activities effectively and support the success of the organization (Aggarwal, Devi, & Kaur, 2014; Ajirowo et al., 2022).

Theoretical Review

Spillover Theory

Staines introduced the spillover idea in 1980. The spillover hypothesis describes work-life balance relationships as a method to understand how elements from professional environments impact personal lives. The spill over hypothesis postulates that experiences, feelings, and actions from one domain (job or personal life) may transfer to the other domain and affect the person's overall balance and well-being.

The theory suggests that the experiences and demands of work can affect an individual's personal life, and vice versa. Positive experiences, such as being supported by coworkers or having a fulfilling career, can cause happy feelings that carry over into personal life and improve well-

being in general. Conversely, unfavorable events, such as stress at work or extended workdays, can produce unfavorable feelings that seep into one's personal life and lead to discontent and conflict.

Likewise, experiences in personal life, such as family responsibilities or personal stressors, can spill over into work, impacting job performance and satisfaction. For example, if an employee is dealing with personal issues or family demands, it may affect their ability to concentrate, be fully engaged, or manage work-related tasks effectively.

Organizations need to curtail unwanted work-personal boundary interactions while building beneficial work-personal connections to reach work-life balance goals. Work-life balance becomes achievable for workers when organizations establish guidelines and policies which support staff members in their dual responsibilities at work and home. Flexible work schedules, family-friendly perks, work-life balance culture promotion, and fostering open communication are a few examples.

By establishing limits, prioritizing tasks, engaging in self-care, and requesting assistance when necessary, people may actively participate in attaining work-life balance. People should aim for greater peace and well-being in both areas by acknowledging the possibility of work-life overflow and adopting proactive measures to control it.

In general, the spill over theory clarifies the intricate interactions between work and personal life and emphasizes the significance of controlling these areas to attain work-life balance. Individuals and organizations may foster an atmosphere where work and personal life coexist peacefully by recognizing and managing spillover effects.

Empirical Review

Allen et al. (2023) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of over 25 studies examining flexible work arrangements. Their review consistently found that such programs enhance employee performance. Specifically, remote work, flexible scheduling, and shortened workweeks were shown to significantly improve employee satisfaction and productivity.

Similarly, in 2022, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) published a study indicating that greater job satisfaction is strongly correlated with good work-life balance. In the research findings, over 85% of respondents across different industries who had a rating

of "good" or "excellent" for their work-life balance also had high job satisfaction (SHRM, 2022). It is implied that flexible schedules help to maintain a good environment that keeps employees productive, motivated, and committed.

Johnson et al. (2021) investigated the productivity of employees under flexible schedules. According to their findings, employees who have flexible schedules are 20% more productive than employees who have rigid schedules. The improvement in productivity was due to employees' capacity to operate at their productive hours, leading to the efficiency of the organization.

In Ghana, Morrison et al. (2020) examined the effect of work-family conflict on employee performance in the bank industry. Contributing to the conflict at work included work loads, long hours, and family responsibilities. The banks responded to these with flexible schedules, support from the supervisor, accommodations at the workplace, and family care provisions like provision of childcare. A negative link between the conflict at the family-workplace level and employee performance was established, revealing that high conflict lowered the level of work done.

Govender, Migiro, and Kyule (2018) investigated the correlation among flexible schedules, satisfaction at work, and outcomes related to the job in the Durban Westville Eskom Shared Services Department. The study established that employees enjoyed their then-present work conditions but desired greater flexibility strongly. It concluded that enhanced flexibility at the workplace is associated positively with employee satisfaction that also facilitates retention, leading to improved performance.

Aggarwal, Devi, and Kaur (2014) analyzed the role of workplace policies on employee potential and productivity. Based on a theoretical framework, their study emphasized that enhanced conditions at the place of work—such as flexible arrangements—result in improved staff quality and productivity rates.

Ajala (2017), in examining the influence of work-family conflict and family-work conflict on job performance, found that the two are interlinked and have a strong correlation. According to the findings, unresolved conflict in both directions negatively influences job performance. The findings affirm the necessity for flexible policies to suit the dual roles of the employees, especially women.

Methodology

In order to solve the research problem, the cross-sectional survey research design was used to conduct this study. ‘Due to the nature of the research, the six hundred and one (601) Al-Hikmah University personnel were the target demographic. Below ‘is a presentation of the demographic breakdown provided by the school authorities for the study.

Table 3.1 Population of the Study

S/N	Institution	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff	Total
1	Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin	171	430	601

Source: Field Survey, 2023

A research sample size was developed following criteria established in the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table to match the workforce dimensions of the selected institution. Establishing a study sample size of 234 was possible through the table followed by its utilization in the research where a sufficient sample size was obtained.

Table 3.2: Sample Size

S/N	Institution	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff	Total
1	Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin	67	167	234

Source: Field Survey, 2023

In order to obtain detailed information from employees, the study used stratified sampling in conjunction with standardized questionnaire for quantitative data. Among the statistical analysis methods used to examine the gathered data was standard multiple regression. Together with identifying relevant intervening factors, the study determined the direction and size of the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance.

Data Analysis

Table 4.1 Gender Distribution of the Respondent				
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	128	54.7	32.7

	Female	106	45.3	100.0
	Total	234	100.0	

Source: The Researcher's Field Survey, 2023.

The distribution reveals that men comprise 128 respondents who represent 54.7 percent of the total while women make up 45.3 percent as 106 respondents according to Table 4.1. Data collection procedures and participant responses did not show any preference toward male or female participants. The implication is that both male and female perspectives were fairly represented, ensuring gender balance and reducing bias in the study's findings.

Table 4.2 Age distribution of the Respondent				
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 25	6	2.6	2.6
	25-34	27	11.5	14.1
	35-44	113	48.3	62.4
	45-54	78	33.3	95.7
	55 and above	10	4.3	100.0
	Total	234	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023.

Table 4.2 demonstrates that the respondent group consists of 6 individuals (2.6%) under 25 years of age and 27 people (11.5%) between 25-34 years of age, and 113 respondents (48.3%) fall within the 35-44 age bracket, 78 people (33.3%) are between 45-54 years old, and the remaining 10 individuals (4.3%) are 55 years or older. This indicates that the majority of the sampled respondents were between the ages of 35 and 44, when they were sufficiently developed to provide reliable information about the research. The maturity and experience of this group enhance the reliability of the data, making their perspectives particularly relevant to the study's focus.

Table 4.3 Educational Qualification of the Respondent			
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent

HND/BSC	26	11.1	11.1
Master's degree	151	64.5	75.6
PhD	57	24.4	100.0
Total	234	100.0	

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023.

The survey results demonstrate that between the respondents 26(11.1%) obtained HND/BSC degrees while master's degrees were earned by 151 (64.5%) individuals and PhD degrees were achieved by 57 (24.4%) participants. This indicates that the respondents have adequate knowledge of the subject matter hence being able to provide reliable responses to the items of the research instrument. The implication is that the high level of education among respondents enhances the credibility and reliability of the data collected for the study.

Table 4.4 Marital Status of the Respondent				
		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	49	20.9	20.9
	Married	185	79.1	100.0
	Total	234	100.0	

Source: The Researcher's Field Survey, 2023.

The data shows that more respondents are married based on Table 4.4 above. This shows that they are closely connected to the study issue and possess a sufficient comprehension of the subject area.

Test of Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant impact of a flexible work schedule on employee performance at Al-Hikmah University in Ilorin.

H0₂: There is no significant impact of working conditions on employee performance at Al-Hikmah University in Ilorin.

Table 4.4a: Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate

1	.855 ^a	.730	.725	.670
a. Predictors: (Constant), flexibility in scheduling of hours, flexibility in location, flexibility in length of the work				

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023.

A table named Table 4.4a shows the model summary. This table presents the adjusted R square value showing how alterations in the independent factors affect the changes in dependent variables. The calculated revised R squared value appeared in the table results as 0.725. Total variation in employee performance amounted to 72.5% because of flexible work schedules which included scheduling hour flexibility and location flexibility and job duration flexibility when using a 95% confidence level estimation. About 72.5% of employee performance advancements can be explained by flexible working schedules when considering features such as location flexibility and control over work hours and job duration.

Table 4.4b: ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	320.739	3	106.913	133.976	.000 ^b
	Residual	184.261	231	.798		
	Total	505.000	234			
a. Dependent Variable: employees' 'performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), flexibility in scheduling of hours, flexibility in location, flexibility in length of the work						

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023.

The ANOVA table appears in Table 4.4b. A probability value of .000 meets the alpha threshold of 0.05 to confirm that F-statistics in the table are significant. The significant F-statistic in this model indicated its definition precision.

Table 4.4c: Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.116	.180		.644	.520

Flexibility in Scheduling of Hours	.277	.058	.230	4.786	.000
Flexibility in Location	.673	.056	.611	11.940	.000
Flexibility in Length of the Work	.324	.055	.265	5.924	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employees' Performance					

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023.

Table 4.4c presents the coefficients of the independent variables. Flexible scheduling hours show a moderate positive relationship with employee performance ($\beta = 0.277$, $t = 4.786$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a statistically significant impact. This suggests that the ability to adjust work schedules contributes positively to performance.

Flexibility in choosing workplace locations demonstrates a strong positive relationship with employee performance ($\beta = 0.673$, $t = 11.940$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that geographical flexibility significantly enhances staff output.

Work duration flexibility also shows a statistically significant association with employee performance ($\beta = 0.430$, $t = 6.606$, $p < 0.001$), though the strength of the relationship is moderate. This implies that variations in the length of work contribute meaningfully to job performance.

The regression constant of 0.116 indicates the baseline level of employee performance when all independent variables are held at zero. Overall, the p-values being less than the 0.05 significance level confirm that flexible work arrangements significantly influence employee performance at Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. These findings align with previous studies by Govender and Migiro (2018), Mensah, Kpakpo, and Asante (2020), and Lula (2018).

H0₂: There is no significant impact of working conditions on employee performance at Al-Hikmah University in Ilorin.

Table 4.5.a: Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.797 ^a	.635	.632	.860
a. Predictors: (Constant), physical environment, occupational health and safety				

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023.

Table 4.5a presents the model summary. Working conditions create a very strong relationship with employee performance since the correlation coefficient equates to 0.797 ($r = 0.797$). Nearly 65% of the relationship exists between employee performance (the dependent variable) and working environment (independent variables) based on the coefficient determination measurement of 0.635. The data indicates a potential rationale for working condition improvements (physical environment and occupational health and safety) which explain roughly two-thirds (64%) of employee performance changes. The other external elements which were excluded from the model explain 36% of the total variation.

Table 4.5b: ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	320.739	2	160.370	201.977	.000 ^b
	Residual	184.261	232	.794		
	Total	505.000	234			
a. Dependent Variable: Employees' 'Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical Environment Occupational Health And Safety						

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

The ANOVAtable appears in Table 4.5b. The outcome achieves statistical significance as the exhibited F-statistic and the model passes the threshold and relates to the probability value of.000 below the alpha threshold of 0.05.

Table 4.5c: Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardize Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.092	.150		.616	.539
	Physical Environment	.348	.062	.294	5.610	.000
	Occupational Health And	.621	.057	.567	10.817	.000

	Safety					
a. Dependent Variable: Employees' 'Performance						

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.5c displays the coefficient values for the independent factors. A moderate relationship between performance results and the physical environment is indicated by the study's coefficient value of 0.348. With a p-value of .000 and [5.610], as well as an alpha level of 0.05, the data demonstrate a statistically significant association between physical environment attributes and employee performance, supporting the hypothesis. High-performing people are the result of physical office environment changes.

The data indicates a substantial positive correlation between occupational health and safety and employee performance, with a coefficient value of 0.621. Based on the results, the p-value of .000 and the [t-statistics] value of 10.817 show a substantial connection between worker performance and occupational health and safety because the alpha level is greater than .05. When workplace safety and health laws change, employee performance rates also vary.

When all other factors, such as the physical surroundings and occupational health, are kept at zero, employee performance would be 0.092.

The 0.000 statistically significant p-value suggests that Al-Hikmah University Ilorin's working environment significantly affects employee performance, as it is below the pertinent significance threshold ($p < 0.05$). These findings align with research by Aggarwal, Devi, and Kaur (2014), Mensah, Kpakpo, and Asante (2020), and Ajala (2017).

Conclusion

The research found that work-life balance has a strong bearing on employee performance at Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. More specifically, the study found the following:

1. **Flexible Work Schedules:** Workers tend to excel when they are offered the possibility of flexible schedules. By providing flexibility in the timing and location of work, firms can improve job satisfaction, efficiency, turnover reduction, and workforce diversity and inclusion. By accommodating the individual preferences of employees' schedules, employees are empowered, a

sense of autonomy is enhanced, and engagement and performance are boosted. It is, nonetheless, critical to note that enabling the flexible work schedule needs to have meticulous planning, effective communication, and well-established policies to achieve successful implementation and to avoid some of the potential difficulties.

2. **Working Environment Influence:** The research also established that the working environment influences employee performance. A good working condition has a positive influence on employee productivity, job satisfaction, and general well-being, leading to an increase in the level of performance. Some of the most important elements of the working environment that have a direct effect on employee performance are the physical environment like ergonomics, lighting, temperature, and noise. A good workspace that is comfortable and well upheld minimizes distractions, reduces stress levels, and increases concentration, factors that lead to high productivity.

Recommendations

The study's findings are based on the following recommendations to organizations and employers in their efforts to initiate flexible schedules of work and enhance the performance of employees:

1. **Establish Clear Policies:** The organization needs to have well-defined, concrete policies that dictate flexible work arrangements to maintain uniformity throughout the firm. These policies should also be effectively communicated to the employees to foster understanding and widespread support.
2. **Ongoing Evaluation and Adjustment:** There is a need to continually evaluate the success of flexible work arrangements based on employees' feedback. Policies should regularly be reviewed and adjusted to keep pace with shifting employee requirements, technological changes, and best industry practice.
3. **Regular Evaluation of Working Conditions:** Periodically, employee surveys, feedback meetings, and reviews should assess the organization's working conditions. This would inform where to improve and allow for intervention to catch issues before they arise.

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