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WORK LIFE BALANCE INITIATIVE AND JOB SATISFACTION.

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ABSTRACT.

Balancing work life at individual and organizational levels has become an emerging challenge for employees. Poor work life balance poses a threat to employee's performance in an organisation. Work life balance is perceived as different things to different people and different things at different stages of life. With the specific objectives as: to examine the impact of employee wellness programs on job satisfaction and the relationship between job satisfaction in local government service commission, to determine the influence of flexible work arrangement and job satisfaction in Local Government Service Commission and to ascertain the effects of demographic variables on the relationship between work life balance initiative and job satisfaction in Local Government Service Commission. In line with the

objectives, three research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study anchored on Spill Over Theory propounded by Aaron Makafui Ametorwo as a framework for analysis. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources; the primary data were collected through questionnaire, while the secondary data were sourced from academic journals and internets. Validated questionnaire was used to administer the instrument to 211 respondents of which 192 respondents returned the questionnaire. The data collected were presented in frequency tables and analyzed using percentages and the hypotheses were tested using chi-square. Findings show that significant wellness programs influence job satisfaction of employees in local government service commission and there are significant impacts of flexible work arrangement on employees' job satisfaction in Local Government Service Commission. It recommends that employees of Local Government Service Commission need to be allowed flexible working hours because it fosters creativity and innovation on the part of employees and The study also recommends that demographic variables such as women, married employees, older employees need to be given leave when necessary to tackle personal engagements so as not to juggle work and family issues same time.

Introduction

In the hectic and demanding world of today, work life balance has been identified as an important factor in the lives of employees across various commissions. Achieving a healthy work-life balance is crucial for several reasons and understanding its importance is crucial for both the organization and an individual. The problem of employees and a good work-life balance is becoming increasingly important in the corporate sector (Kangure, 2016). Organizations are realizing how crucial their workforce is to their overall performance. They are also beginning to see how closely employees' well-being and productivity are related.

According to Clarke (2017), lack of work-life balance results in numerous health problems at work place. Stress causes health problems like hypertension, digestive troubles, chronic aches, pains, heart problems, depression, anxiety and insomnia. Burnout can cause fatigue, mood swings, irritability and a decrease in job satisfaction. When people are dissatisfied with their workplace and job, it leads to a negative impact on their work outcomes and personal life Kluczyk (2017). Some employees have real problems managing their time with work duties and family responsibilities which leads them to feel dissatisfied with work arrangements in the workplace. What is more, stress and anxiety are increased due to work overload.

Another problem is that some employees in open office environments are dissatisfied because of lack privacy and its distraction. The open office environment may be an obstacle in reaching a good work life balance. In addition, some employees cannot exhaust their tasks at the workplace because of workload and other work conflicts and sometimes they stay longer hours to update account especially in local government service commission; up till the weekends just to accomplish some tasks. As such, the working parents will not have time for their children and that's why most children become wayward in the process because of poor upbringing.

Work-life balance has become essential for both people and enterprises in the fast-paced, fiercely competitive workplace of today. In light of this, organizations have placed a strong premium on output and productivity while frequently ignoring the happiness and well-being of their workforce. A healthy work-life balance not only benefits employees but also improves organizational outcomes, including service delivery, creativity, and job satisfaction Orogbu (2018). Employees who successfully juggle work and family obligations report lower stress levels and more job satisfaction, which results in higher levels of engagement and commitment (Azeem and Akhtar, 2017). These people have higher levels of motivation and morale, reduced burnout rates, and a higher likelihood of maintaining good mental health. As a result, organizations that focus and encourage work-life activities are more likely to benefit from a staff that is highly engaged and productive. Mwangi (2017) argued that the effects of work-life balance go beyond the specific employees and may affect organizations. More broadly, companies may recruit, appoint, promote and keep top talent-increase employees' loyalty and dedication, and promote a healthy company culture by adopting work-life balance initiatives. However, organizations that invest in work-life balance programs frequently see a decline in employees' turnover and absenteeism, which leads to significant cost savings. Balancing work time and personal life is a challenge that must be faced by the majority of employees who work in organizations or companies, especially in the local government service commission. (Dennira & Ekowati, 2020).

Local government service commission is a government agency that is established by the constitution, or by the legislature, to regulate the employment and working conditions of civil servants, oversee hiring and promotions, and promotes the values of the state service.

Its role is roughly analogous to that of the human resources department in corporations. The local government service commission is often independent from elected politicians, maintaining the separation of the permanent, professional civil service from government ministers. According to Epie (2020), the local government service commission is known for its long hour culture, and high work load of employees. They are most likely to be faced with issue of work life balance, due to the nature of the work environment. Policies are being made regarding work life balance, including but not limited to fitness classes, parental leave, recognition and rewards for work achievements, regular check ins and feedback mechanisms but its implementation has become an issue that needs to be looked into.

More so, some employees who work longer hours seemingly find that it is difficult for them to be involved with their family activities and feel that work impact on their full participation with their family which in turn impacts negatively on their work life balance. From this backdrop, this research work tends to investigate the effect of work-life balance initiatives and job satisfaction in Nigeria with particular reference to Anambra State Local Government Service Commission, Awka.

Objectives of the Study:

The broad objective of the study is to determine the effect of work life balance initiative on job satisfaction in local government service commission. The specific objectives include:

1. To examine the impact of employee wellness programs on job satisfaction in local government service commission.

2. To determine the influence of flexible work arrangement and job satisfaction in local government service commission.

3. To ascertain the relationship between work life balance initiative and job satisfaction in local government service commission.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Work Life Balance

The term "work life balance" can be defined as a state of equilibrium in which the requirements of both the work and personal life of an individual are equal. This word was coined in 1986 but its use has been intermittent for a number of years in everyday language. Work life balance programme is a global phenomenon. Workers want flexibility and autonomy over their work and personal

lives in global cultures as well. Interestingly, services for work life had existed as early as the 1930s. The W.K. Kellogg Company developed four six-hour shifts before World War II to replace the conventional three regular 8-hour shifts, and the new shifts resulted in improved morale and efficiency of workers. Firms started to provide work life services in the 1980s and 1990s. While the first wave of these initiatives was mainly to help women with children, the work life programmes today are less gender-specific and consider other family responsibilities Work-life balance is defined as a 'fit' between the multiple roles in the life of a person, in its broadest sense (Hudson, 2015).

Work-life balance has a definition that the balance between work and life outside of work itself and refers to a person's ability to arrange many demands in life simultaneously; so that they can make themselves fit through both roles they have (Putra, 2023). Work-life balance according to (Schermerhon, 2023) is a person's ability to balance two life roles including the role of a worker and a role in personal life and relating to people in the surrounding environment. According to (Krichmeyer, 2020), work-life balance is defined by satisfying experiences obtained in all living environments that require personal resources such as energy, time and commitment in the process to be well distributed throughout the environment (Fan & Potočnik, 2021).

The concept of work life balance has become important in today's society as a result of changing labour demographics (Steven Glasgow & Katherine Sang, 2011). Due to hectic work schedules employees are suffering from physical, psychological and emotional fatigue. They are not able to enjoy their personal and professional life simultaneously. Nowadays, they are being dissipated from living a healthy and prosperous life. They are more prone to absenteeism, fatigue, stress, tardiness, burnout, bad performance, lack of motivation, high work turnover, reduces work quality, job satisfaction, productivity and creates poor employee efficiency and poor employee commitment etc.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to how best an employee is achieving his or her job requirements. Armstrong (2017) defined job satisfaction in terms of output; "the achievement of the set quantified objectives. Job satisfaction rate emanates from the appropriate behaviour and effective

application of knowledge, skills and expertise. The environment that motivates job satisfaction need to change the way employees' function as the traditional mode of training is not effective to enhance change. Job satisfaction upheld as a source of profitability and organization's effectiveness (Aronson, Laurenceau, Sieveking, & Bellet, 2015), continues to attract attention and consensus among researchers who view it as an index of the affective responses of personnel in the workplace (Oshagbemi, 2003; Shallal, nd). Nwafor, A.E., Chukwueloka, C.S, Nwumeh, U. J. Umetiti, C. B. (2023), Based on findings, reported that welfare and skill development has significant impact on employee productivity. Welfare scheme and staff skill development contribute to employee job satisfaction and job performance. This concept has in a special way been of interest to both administrators and researchers (Sekaran, 2019). This concern arises from a number of empirical revelations: satisfied workers are more productive (Appelbaum & Kamal, 2020); deliver higher quality of work (Tietjen & Myers, 2019) and improve on a firm's profitability, spur firm competitiveness and success (Garrido, Perez, & Anton, 2015; Aronson, Laurenceau, Sieveking, & Bellet, 2015). Many researchers have considered work life balance as an approach that improves job satisfaction (Noblet & Rodwell, 2019; Agarwal & Hauswald, 2019). Based on this, work life balance helps to overcome distance related obstacles to corporate-decision making through subjective intelligence and permits employees to be satisfied on their jobs. Nwafor, A.E, Ojiako C.J, & Umetiti C.B. . (2024), reported that organizational reward policy has significant impacton employee productivity. The organizational reward policy is a form of positive reinforcement and motivation that makes employees work harder for high quality of outputs.Rewards such as performance bonuses and retirement benefits contribute to employee commitment to task accomplishment, job satisfaction and good service culture.

As earlier pointed out, past studies on the relationships between work life balance and job satisfaction have showed significant and positive results (Schriesheim, Neider, & Scandura, 2018). Though there is considerable literature available that have evolved to examine the link between work life balance initiative and job satisfaction world over, still little is known about the effect of work life balance on employees' job satisfaction. Still, there is paucity of research

on how work life balance acts as a criterion in influencing job satisfaction.

Wellness Programs on Job Satisfaction

Bloom & Van Reenen (2017) asserted that firms adopting better work life balance policies and programmes are the ones who enjoy the benefits accruing to the concept. Paryani (2018) opined that work life policies and programmes can improve the level of job satisfaction and increase organizational commitment among their employees. Work life balance programmes are usually referred to in practice as 'flexible working' having different forms of operations such as: part-time working, job sharing, term-time working, shift working, annualized hours, compressed hours, teleporting/e-working, home working, career breaks, study leave, zero hours contracts and V-Time (Paryani, 2019). The essence of the work time policies is to ensure there is a balance between employment and non-work duties that are beneficial to both the employer and employee with the most effective programmes and policies being those established after a dialogue between the employer and employee (Ojo, Falola & Mordi, 2018). A number of scholars have different categories in which they classify the WLB policies. Morgan & Milliken (2019) classified them into three: the provision of careers' arrangements, alternative work arrangements and offsite working arrangements. Lobel & Kossek (2020) categorized the concept under four categories based on time based, information based, money based and direct services. Glass & Finley (2019) also named three classifications of the WLB policies as: parental leave, alternative work arrangements and employer supported child care. The successful formulation, execution and implementation of WLB policies usually rely on the awareness of top management and the organization's culture. In recent times, there has been a concise and encompassing view of the WLB initiative. Oludayo, Gberevbie, Popoola & Omonijo (2021) broadly mentioned the initiatives according to the challenges employees face which include: Time usage policies as expressed by flextime, telecommuting, job sharing and part-time work; leave policies in organizations to cover paid and unpaid leaves for childbirth, the care of young and other matters of importance requiring personal attention; Dependent care policies which covers resource and referral services to support child or elder care and; counseling and wellness initiative which include assistance programmes (EAP), wellness programmes, financial counseling, relocation counseling, educational seminars at the workplace on balancing work and family

life, peer support groups, training for supervisors to help them be more attuned to the work-family problems of employees.

The work life balance policies and programs are an investment in an organization for improving employee performance, productivity, reducing absenteeism, less stressed workforce, improvements in employee health, wellbeing, greater employee loyalty, commitment, motivation, achieving improved customer services, better health, flexible working as well as satisfied and motivated workforce. Hence, work life balance is extremely important for employees and increases their performance in the organization.

Flexible Work Arrangement and Job Satisfaction

Employees gain more control over time through favourable flexible time initiatives or even by virtue of exploring flexibility in terms of when or where they work from (Dulk, 2021). This enables them to balance family care, personal and other non-work responsibilities. Apparently, flexible work hours and the ability to work on an individually set schedule are consistently rated as the most valuable options provided by employers. Initiatives that are given expression under this arrangement are factored under two major categories of the review: time policies and leave policies and they include: flexitime, telecommuting, job-sharing, compressed work week and part-time work for time policies and paid vacations, parental leaves, paid family and medical leaves for leave policies. It is essential to assert that while all employees can take advantage of these set of initiatives, they are more important to the employees who have care-giving roles either for children or elderly family members.

Flexitime (flextime) is an arrangement that consent to employees to opting for the time to begin and finish their work day on an individual but regular programme, while working full-time.

• Telecommuting provides the employee with an opportunity to perform her work roles from a satellite office or from home.

• Job Sharing according to Morgan and Tucker (2019) is an arrangement where two or more employees are made responsible for handling what was originally a single full-time job.

• Paid vacation is an arrangement where employees are given part of full financial

support for vacations to allow for the principle of ergonomics to be at play.

Relationship between Work Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Work life balance is the ability to experience a sense of control and to stay productive and competitive at work while maintaining a happy, healthy work life with sufficient leisure. It is attaining focus and awareness despite seemingly endless task and activities competing for time. It increases the motivation of employees, relieve stress and maximize productivity. By having a good balance employee can have a good quality of work life. Work life balance has become an important issue for both employees and organization. Work life balance has a positive relationship with job satisfaction. From an organizational perspective, work life balance may be a part of good performance and from an employee perspective work life balance may be a positive factor in deciding to work for or remain with a particular organization (George & Sheppard, 2016). Organizational performance is the ability of an organization to reach its goals and optimize results (Nwafor, Umetiti & Ndu-Anunobi 2024). Work Life Balance from the employee perspective, is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home (Mendis & Weerakkody, 2018).

Empirical Review

Shephard and George (2021) conducted a study titled work life balance programs and improved job satisfaction. The research explored the contributions of work life programs on employee performance. Data were collected through semi structured interviews from a purposeful sample of 10 managers and 10 non-managerial employees. The results revealed that work-life balance programs could help improve organizational culture and employee overall job satisfaction.

Shahzadi, Javed, Pirzada, Nasreen & Khanam (2014) conducted a study on Impact of work life balance on job satisfaction. The data was collected from 160 respondents. Regression analysis was applied to find the effect of work life balance on employee's job satisfaction. The results of this study revealed there exist significant and positive relationship between work life balance and employee job satisfaction. It was concluded that intrinsic rewards has a significant positive relationship with work life balance and employee job satisfaction.

Jayatilake & Adikaram (2016) evaluated the impact of work life balance on employee job

satisfaction. Factors involved were job satisfaction and work life balance with respect to working hours, Working conditions, work life balance programs, employee intention to change of job and work pressure. Primary and Secondary data was used to collect the data. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed among the employees. Likert scale was used to collect the data. Correlation and Regression were used to analyse the data. The findings suggested that work life balance has a significant impact on employee job satisfaction.

Khatri, Parkash and Behl, Jyoti (2018) conducted a study on impact of work-life balance on performance of employees in the organizations. They attempted to explore the concept of work-life balance in the context of employment relations and the significance of work-life balance for employers and employees. The sample size was taken 200 regular employees. Likert scale was used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, regression and factor analysis were used to analyse the data. The findings indicated that work-life balance approach is positively associated with employees' job satisfaction in the organization and is applicable through joint efforts of the employees and employers.

Jayatilake & Adikaram (2018) evaluated the impact of work life balance on employee job satisfaction in public sector. Factors involved were job satisfaction and work life balance with respect to working hours, working conditions, work life balance programs, employee intention to change of job and work pressure. Primary and Secondary data was used to collect the data. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of different sectors. Likert scale was used to collect the data. Correlation and regression were used to analyse the data. The findings suggested that work life balance has a significant impact on employee job satisfaction in public sectors.

Obiageli, Uzochukwu, Chinedu & Ngozi, Deborah (2019) examined work life balance and employee job satisfaction. They identified there exist poor working organizational culture in the organization which may not encourage various types of work life balance practices. The research was based on descriptive survey research design. The sample size was taken 262. Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis were used to analyse the test. Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument. It was found that there exists significant positive relationship between leave

policy and service delivery. The results revealed that leave policy motivate employee ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively. Hence, work life balance practice is an important factor in increasing employee job satisfaction. The researcher recommended that managers should prioritize creating different work life balance incentives that will improve employee job satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

This research work was anchored on Spillover Effect, propounded by Aaron Makafui Ametorwo (2016) as a framework for analysis. According to this theory, work-family spillover involves the transfer of thoughts and behaviour between the work and family domains. As a result, experiences from one domain are likely to affect experiences in the other. Spillover is usually limited to the inter-domain and within the individual or intra-individual. It postulates the conditions under which spillover between the work micro system and the family micro system occurs. It can either positive or negative.

This study aims to show how spillover is not limited to the individual experiencing the strain and stress, but is also extended to their workplace, clients and customers and significant others. It is noted that this is a process that results from psychological strain of individual experiences that have the capacity of affecting the levels of strain in another individual in the same social environment. This means that in spillover, individuals in the same work setting or home environment as the individual experiencing the strain and stress can also be affected by such emotions thereby generating similar reactions in them. Therefore, spillover can be simply described as intra-individual, inter-domain contagion of stress.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The relevance of this theory to the study is that when organizations adopt positive work life it will enable employees to have a positive work life balance in which will make them be effectively committed to achieving the organization's goals. Work-Life balance has become a primary concern to employers and policy makers in the corporate sector because of the time that employees spend in the offices. Their work pressures are likely to spill over to their home life. On the other hand, the effects of not spending much time at home, or with non-work related programs, their home pressures might also spill over and affect work productivity. It is important, therefore, that programs be deliberately implemented to create a balance between the

two domains. There is need for a situation where what is gained in the work domain might become a positive spillover to the home domain, and vice versa. This spillover theory has been proved useful in explaining how positive or negative experiences can be transferred from one life role to the other.

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. This method was adopted because it afforded the researcher to examine work life balance initiatives and job satisfaction in local government service commission, Awka. This was carried out through questionnaire dispatching, in the process of achieving research findings, logical conclusion, and significant recommendation that would lead to convenient solution to the research problem.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Anambra state local government service commission, Awka. The commission domiciled at Government House, Awka. It is a personnel outfit handling appointments, promotion, discipline and welfare of centrally deployed (unified) staff in the Local Government Service Commission, Anambra State

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of 448 respondents from the Human Resource unit, finances and supplies unit, marketing, Legal Service and Admin unit. They were the staff strength of the Local Government Service Commission; the population is made up of 248 males and 200 females. These were holistically selected for the study as it therefore covers the convenient variables of the research study.

Sample Size:

The researcher decided to take a sample because the population is large and would be cumbersome if all the elements were to be studied. The sample was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size determination formula and is shown below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N\ (e)^2}$$

Where

n = Sample size

N = Population of the Study

I = Mathematical Constant

e = Margin of Error

In this study, the population is 448 and the margin of acceptable or allowable error is 0.05 i.e. 5% substituting in the above formula, We have

$$n = \frac{448}{1+448\ (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{448}{1+448\ 0.0025}$$

$$= \frac{448}{1+1.12}$$

$$= \frac{448}{2.12}$$

$$= 211.32$$

Approximately equal to 211

Therefore, the total sample size is 211

Sampling Technique

The population of study was 448, a sample size of 211 was derived using the Yaro Yamane sample size determination formula.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected for this research from the field were presented using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages. They were presented in frequency tables and explanations were made for easy comprehension and analyzed using simple percentage.

The formulae for simple percentage:

$$\frac{f\ x\ 100}{n}$$

Where;

F = Frequency

n = sample size

The statistical tool used for data analysis is chi-square which was also used to test the hypotheses at the appropriate level of confidence (0.05).

The formula for the chi-square is stated as follows: $X^2 = \sum \frac{(fo-fe)2}{fe}$

Where x^2 = chi square,

$\sum$ = summation (Sigma)

Fe = expected frequency,

Fo = observed frequency

Our decision rule for each hypothesis will be as follows:

Accept Ho if C.V < T.V,

Reject Ho if C.V > T.V

Where C.V = calculated value of chi-square test (x^2)

T.V = table value/critical value/ratio, > = greater than < = less than

Discussion of Findings

Discussion Based on Objective One

There are significant extents to which wellness programs influence job satisfaction of employees in local government service commission. The statement was confirmed to be true in the test of hypothesis one and review of related literature. The evidence is shown in the calculated value (234.81) which is greater than the critical value (9.49); in the empirical review conducted by Ojo (2018) on work life balance practices and wellness programs and employee experience in local government civil service commission. It was found that that there is need wellness

programs and has significant effect on job satisfaction.

Discussion Based on Objective Two

Influence of flexible work arrangement and job satisfaction in local government service commission. The statement was confirmed to be true in the test of hypothesis two and review of related literature. The evidence is shown in the calculated value (245.55) which is greater than the critical value (9.49); in the empirical review conducted by Oludayo, Falola, Ahaka & Fatogun (2018) on work-life balance initiative as a predictor of employees' job satisfaction. It was found that flexible work arrangement, employee time out, employee social support and dependent care initiative are predictors of employee job satisfaction.

Discussion Based on Objective Three

Effects of demographic variables on the relationship between work life balance initiative and job satisfaction in local government service commission. The statement was confirmed to be true in the test of hypothesis three and review of related literature. The evidence is shown in the calculated value (45.13) which is greater than the critical value (9.49); in the empirical review conducted by Jacqueline, Chrine, Crispin & Febby (2021) on Effects of demographic variables on the relationship between work life balance initiative and job satisfaction in local government service commission. It was found that parenting and pregnancy policy has no impact on the job satisfaction. Pregnant and parent employees mainly expect maternity leave for adoption and it is covered from the leave arrangements.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of work life balance initiative on job satisfaction in Local Government Service Commission Awka, Anambra state. The findings from this study has revealed that wellness programs influence the job satisfaction of employees in local government service commission

The study also revealed that there is significant impact of flexible work arrangement on the job satisfaction of employees in local government service commission whereby working at your own convenient provide employees with more control over their work schedule, leading to job satisfaction, working from anywhere or at any time makes employees work more efficiently and effectively.

Finally, the study indicated that demographic variable affect the relationship between work life balance and job satisfaction whereby

married employees may face more challenges balancing work and family responsibilities and women often bear more home responsibilities than men, making work life balance more crucial for their job satisfaction.

Conclusion

The study concludes that when stress makes working for Local Government Service Commission an unpleasant experience, employees begin to look for new jobs or consider retirement. The research found that employee wellness programs and work-family priorities affected performance of employees within the Office of Local Government Service Commission, Anambra State. The research also found out that supervisors regularly commended on individual employee for an outstanding performance. This resulted in performance above the average, increased quality of work performance and most of the employees always surpassed the set work targets. These findings are in support of the research findings by Tausig and Fenwick (2021) that a good work/life balance can enable employees to feel more in control of their working life and lead to: increased job satisfaction, lower absenteeism, improvements in employee health and well-being.

Recommendations

In order for the organization to improve and maintain good performance, it is very prudent that work life balance should be addressed. This particular research work recommends that:

1. Local Government Service Commission needs to give proper attention to processes and procedures in the organization. These types of procedures include coming up with wellness programs that focus on building the mental and healthy capacity of employees which can result to improvement in performance and job satisfaction.
2. The research recommends that employees of Local Government Service Commission need to be given flexible working hours because it fosters creativity and innovation on the part of employees.
3. The research also recommends that demographic variables e.g women, married employees, older employees need to be given leave when necessary to tackle personal engagements so as not to juggle work and family issues same time.

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