

Finding Sustainable Balance Between Your Work And Personal Life

Otusile, E; Ibeh

J. M; Ndubuisi, U

College of General and Communication Studies,
Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike,
Abia State, Nigeria

Abstract: *Finding the right balance between the different spheres of life especially as it relate to work and personal life will help an individual feel better and fulfilled, and tend to bring about efficiency and effectiveness. Nevertheless, this balance can only be achieved by a conscious effort of the individual to be able to manage multiple roles (work and personal life). The researcher adopted the qualitative research method to review the literature relating to work life balance and ways of sustaining it. After critical reviews of related works on the topic understudy, we found out that to find a sustainable balance between work and personal life has to do with having the proper mind set whereby you set a goal for your work and personal life, proper planning and make the most out your time. The study recommended that work life balance as a concept is what everyone should embrace because it gives an individual a sense of fulfillment.*

Keywords: *Work life balance, sustainability, individual, productivity.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Work life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. Employees with work life balance feel their lives are fulfilled both inside and outside of work (Byrne, 2005), and they experience minimal conflict between work and non-work roles. Those who achieve this balance tend to have higher level of satisfaction with their job and life in general, as well as lower level of stress and depression.

However work life balance is also essential to combat stress; the stress associated with unbalanced life style is costly; it damages productivity and increase individual health risks. Individuals who have the opportunity, to balance their professional and personal lives are happier, healthier and more productive. In order words work life balance expresses the affiliation between your work and the dedication to your life after the work place, and how they can affect each other. Government and management want to capitalize on involvement in the workforce neglecting the need to make life

worth it after the work hour. Nevertheless, in our challenging lives many people find it really difficult to balance work and the household tasks of caring for children, family members with a disability or elderly parents. The employee at times really find it difficult and tricky to carve out quality time for study, get involved in volunteer tasks, take care of their own fitness or participating in games and hobby.

Studies of work/life balance generally consider one's ability to manage simultaneously the multiple demands of life. Traditionally work/life balance is assumed to involve the devotion of equal amounts of time to paid work and non-work roles. However more recently the concept has been recognized as more complex and has been developed to incorporate additional components.

While there is no consistence definition of work life balance, the concept of balancing work and personal life seem simple but so hard to answer because it is something different to everyone.

Work life balance has been described as creating space and time for oneself and for the people you care about in life.

Managers have continuously described work life balance as all about recognizing that everyone has different challenges and needs and the freedom to handle these obligations. For the purpose of this research work, the definition of work life balance proposed by (Barrena, 2007) would be adopted because of its broad and encompassing nature. The definition consist of both employees and employers working together constructively to meet the business needs as well as in non-work aspects of employees lives. It comprises of both employees and employers who are both central to the subsequent use and successful implementation of work life balance and policies and practices. This can only be achieved as a joint effort between employer and employees.

In order words, in the light of the above conceptual exposition of work life balance, it is quite glaring that to sustain a balance between work and personal life, there has to be a two way thing between the employees and employers by implementing policies that will help to balance both work and non-work and also it has to do with individual planning both work and personal schedules. Hence this paper tries to find out possible ways which an individual can use to have equilibrium between work and personal life.

II. THEORETICAL FAME WORK

The work life balance research has been greatly dominated by the role theory. The theory proposed that work life balance is important for individual's psychological well-being, high self-esteem, satisfaction and overall sense of harmony in life can be regarded as an indicator of successful balance between work and family role (Clark, 2000). However, there is a lack of consensus on how work-life balance should be defined, measured, and researched, and thus, the theorizing of what constitutes work-life balance, how it develops, and what factors enable or hinder it, is still in progress (Jones et al., 2006). (Greenhaus et al, 2003) have also questioned the self-evident assumption that work-family balance always leads to favorable outcomes since according to them, this is an empirical question which has not yet been firmly answered due to miscellaneous definitions of work-family balance.

The origins of research on work life balance can be traced back to studies of women having multiple roles. (Barnett and Baruch, 1985) investigated the psychological stress connected to the balance of rewards and concerned generated by individual women's multiple roles as paid worker wife and mother. They found out positive role quality – more rewards than concerns experienced in giving role – was related to low levels of role overload, role conflict and anxiety. Work/life Balance has also been seen as a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both person's job and personal life are equal. In the typology of role perception, it is argued that women may perceive their work and family roles in multiple and qualitatively different ways. According to the conflict hypothesis, multiple roles with infinite demands are likely to cause role strain and conflict for individuals because the resources they have to meet these demands are finite and scarce (Goode, 1960). The core statement of the enhancement hypothesis, in turn, is that multiple roles provide benefits in

the form of privileges, status security, psychological energy and personal growth which expand individual resources and facilitate role performance (Sieber, 1974). Most writers and theorist have regarded role conflict and role enhancement as independent dimensions, and therefore they argued that it is possible to experience simultaneously either- high conflict and low enhancement, high enhancement and low conflict, low conflict and low enhancement or high conflict and high enhancement. They found that regardless of the level of enhancement, women who experienced high role conflict were more depressed and less satisfied as parents than women belonging to the low conflict-high enhancement group. Hence in managing multiple role, employees need to analyze strategies for achieving balances in life.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is an explanatory research based on insight drawn from the existing literature of different studies, periodicals and books related to the topic of the study in order to investigate how to sustain a balance between work and personal life

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to (Clark, 2000) work family balance is defined as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict. (Marks and MacDermid, 1996) conceptualize balance quite differently as they explained that role balance is not an outcome but rather both a behavioral pattern of acting across roles in a certain way and a corresponding cognitive-affective pattern of organizing one's inner life of multiple selves. Specifically, according to (Marks and MacDermid, 1996) there are two ways to engage multiple roles: as either positive or negative role balance. Positive role balance refers to the tendency to engage in every role with equally high effort, devotion, attention and care, whereas negative role balance refers to the tendency to engage in roles with apathy, cynicism, low effort and low attentiveness. (Forest et al, 2011) are of the view that work life balance aim at minimizing the amount of work life conflict experience by workers. They are of the view that work life conflict are the result of an effect of imbalance between work and other area of the employer's lives.

(Hyman and Summers, 2004) classified seven major problems which are associated with current practices over work-life balance these are unevenness of adoption across different sectors and organizations, lack of formalization of policies at organizational level, restricted employee voice over the introduction and implementation of policies , policies are primarily to meet business needs rather than those of employees, there is no evidence of reduction in working hours, tangible and intangible work intrusions into domestic life , domestic responsibilities are still conducted primarily by women irrespective of their employment status. Whereas, as revealed by (Comfort, et al., 2003), a satisfied workforce may be valuable because employees are then less likely to be absent and consequently affect the bottom line whereas (Clutterbuck, 2003) had his view point that overwork causes

stress- related absenteeism, poor retention levels, low creativity, appalling customer service and unethical employees behavior. Companies offering positive policies on Work-Life Balance tend to also benefit from shorter absences by people on maternity leave. (Buddeberg-Fischer et al., 2008) stressed that a well-balanced integration of professional and private life is an essential goal for the new generation. Moreover, informal arrangements and managerial discretion are important in realizing work and care balance (Burgess et al., 2007). Some technical industries can seem uninviting to women who want to work but are also conscious of family responsibilities and expectations. Many women consider work/life balance a non-negotiable when evaluating job opportunities. Oil and gas companies in particular can have a hard time attracting female candidates as the sector is associated with lengthy periods spent on oil rigs without family contact. Setting boundaries and having conversations with managers about needs for family and personal time are vital to creating a more welcoming workplace, (Vanguard News Paper 2016). (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000) suggest alternative methods for reducing the stress. For example, more autonomy in the workplace and networking with peers can increase the quality of work life. Their studies show that individuals who work for organizations that allow individuals to spend more time at home, work in virtual employment, and make flexible time arrangements, tend to perform better as a parent than those who do not have these opportunities. Maintaining satisfaction on both fronts is important for reducing the feelings of conflict. Work life balance is an area of increasing importance to both the employee and employer because employee need it to balance work and personal life while employer requires it to increase productivity and reduce cost (Abbott & De Cieri, 2008).

According to (Rajesh and Nishants, 2014) work life balance for women employees is highly desirable and if there is no job satisfaction and consistency in life, it can create a dilemma for working women. Work life balance requires attaining equilibrium between professional work and personal work, so that it reduces friction between official and domestic life. The ultimate performance of any organization depends on the performance of its employees, which in turn depends on numerous factors. These factors can be related to job satisfaction or family or both. It has been argued that lack of balance can lead to many negative outcomes. For instance: stress, burnout, depression, and lower work contributions. The combination of work and family demands often leads to time pressure, stress and conflict. It is generally assumed that burnout is caused by a heavy workload, the increased mental demands of today's jobs, and other work-related characteristics such as low levels of job autonomy and organizational support. Work and family are the two most important domains in a person's life and their interface has been the object of study for researchers world-wide. There is a felt need to balance and integrate family needs and career requirements. The ability to balance between workplace's needs and personal life's needs is perceived as an important issue among employees globally.

V. STRATEGIES TO SUSTAINABLE BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE

A. HAVING THE PROPER MIND SET

- ✓ Decide what is important to you - Is work or family more important? Both are necessary, so conscious effort need to be made on how to balance your time and commitment
- ✓ Have work goals, - think of realistic goals for yourself to achieve at work. When you succeed at work, the rewards will spill over into your family life.
- ✓ Have goals for life too - If you have goals at home, they can positively affect your work life strive for personal growth. Hear something new, whether or not it relates to your job.

B. PLANNING CAREFULLY

- ✓ Choose the correct line of work – Your profile of work hold the most important spotlight when it comes to maintaining a balance between work and personal life. If the work that you do is what you love, making the balance is a way easier job.
- ✓ Think about work life balance when planning your family - Just as you should consider how your job affect your personal life, you should also think about how your personal life affect your family to complete your job.

C. MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

- ✓ Get organized – Use to do list at work and at home. Create list of most importance get the most difficult or most important tasks done easily in the morning, so you will have progressively easier task throughout the day.

D. TAKE CARE OF YOUR SELF

- ✓ Take time for yourself - It can be exhausting having to play the role of employee and family member. You need to decompress. Play golf, go shopping, or see a movie. Blow off some steam before it builds up and you explode. Take some time where all you have to worry about is yourself. This is key.
- ✓ Get enough sleep - Prioritize it. You may be up against deadlines or have dozens of time-sensitive tasks to complete. Without sleep, your brain won't be able to function on a level needed to take care of all of those problems. Get a solid 8 hours of sleep a night, every night.
- ✓ Eat healthy - It is tempting to grab fast food, while you rush from the office to your home. Take time to eat healthy. Healthy nutrition translates to more energy, which you'll need to maintain a balance
- ✓ Exercise - Working out, walking, going for a jog, or swimming at a pool can be great on a number of levels. You get some time to yourself. While you are working out, your brain will continue to examine problems from work or at home. Eventually, you'll discover answers. The most obvious result is that you'll feel better about

yourself and feel better too. Those “gains” will make balancing work and life easier.

VI. CONSEQUENCE OF IMBALANCE

- ✓ *Health Risks* - Imbalance promotes poor health. Overtime, this can lead to devastating and possibly life changing consequences
- ✓ *Absenteeism* – Poor health increase employee absenteeism and this is a costly problem for employers
- ✓ *Burnout*– Most people know that over worked employees eventually burnout. Burnout is the physical and psychological response to long term stress,
- ✓ *Stress* – work life imbalance is a major source of stress for most individuals. Stress connection to obesity for workers in sedentary jobs is more significant than diet.

Note: there is a distinction between stress, exercise and keeping fit e.g. driving for long hours without breaks standing to lecture for too long, farm work can all be stressful but not necessarily regarded as exercise.

- ✓ *Marital issues* – improper work life can bring about marital issues in marriage and in the home such as divorce, broken home, single parenting and moral delinquency in children.
- ✓ *Societal alienation* – work life imbalance may impede participation in social, religious, communal activities.

VII. CONCLUSION

Having critically looked at the relevance of work life balances, it is important to know that the individual experiences greater work life balance hence better health and wellness, greater organizational commitment, greater job satisfaction, better goal achievement and family happiness. Going further, work-life balance entails having some breathing space for yourself each day, feeling a sense of accomplishment, while not being consumed by work, and having an enjoyable domestic life without short-changing career obligations. And it's rooted in whatever fulfillment means to you within 24-hour days, seven-day weeks, and however many years you have left. Finally, the aim of balance is to live a well-rounded life, to renew and refresh your creative energies on a regular basis so you can achieve your higher potential

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing this work recommends that:

- ✓ Efforts should be made toward developing a proper perspective of work, social life and family life
- ✓ Maintain an organized work plan and time table
- ✓ Ensure a good self attention

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