Work Life Balance and Psychological Well Being of Employees in the University of Cape Coast.

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the Work Life Balance (WLB) and the wellbeing of employees in the University of Cape Coast. Descriptive survey method was adopted. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a total of 291 respondents from both the lecturing and administrative staff to respond to the questionnaire. Frequencies and Data on hypotheses were tested using the independent samples t-test and Pearson product moment correlation. The results of the study indicate that differences exist between lecturers and administrative staff in their work life balance and their wellbeing. Furthermore, negative relationship exists between WLB and employees' wellbeing. Implication for practice is also addressed.

Key words: Work life balance, Psychological wellbeing, Employees.

Introduction

Academics across the globe are concerned with issues of work life balance as evidenced by the findings narrated below. Work life balance and job stress issues are particularly relevant for academics, as juggling several different tasks, whether from the same or different roles (e.g., work and personal life), creates conflict (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). In another study, academics in the UK testified that more work life conflict tended to make them less healthy, less satisfied with their jobs, and more likely to have seriously considered leaving academia (Kinman & Jones, 2008). Studies conducted on their counterparts in the USA found that work life conflict among a sample of academics in t h e USA was primarily predicted by job stress, over and above average work hours, household responsibility, raising young children, satisfaction with day care and support of partner (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). Full-time academics in the USA (regardless of rank or discipline type) have been found to work in excess of fifty work hours per week (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). In addition, a large proportion of academics in New Zealand (NZ) worked more than ten hours of overtime in addition to their normal full-time hours (Houston, Meyer, & Paewai, 2006). There are some provisions in place to help academics cope with job stress and work life conflict issues. Like other organisations, these tend to be aimed at flexible working arrangements (Reiter, 2007) and stress management techniques (Kinman & Jones, 2003) but academics need to be proactive in utilising these initiatives.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2011) found that across the industrialised world, working hours are becoming increasingly unpredictable, creating tensions between workers and employers and putting work life balance at risk. While working hours are increasing in some industrialised countries and shrinking in others, today's world of work is characterised by the atypical and unpredictable nature of working time, and the increase in weekend and night work. The ILO (2011) noted that the growing tendency to more atypical and unpredictable working hours is having a dramatic effect on workers and employers. All of these things are creating increasing tensions which make WLB a big issue. The ILO observed that, increasingly, we need new policies to help promote WLB. The issue of flexible working time is especially critical for workers with family responsibilities, such as women who face the need to balance their working hours with their domestic and care obligations. The ILO proposes that decent working time policies should make sure that working time arrangements are healthy, family friendly, promote gender equality, advance enterprise competitiveness and facilitate worker choice and influence over their hours of work (ILO, 2011).

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Further Study conducted in Ireland shows that the Irish workforce has undergone immense change as a result of worldwide recession. Recent economic downturns and increased competition have put pressure on organisations to perform, and on employees to increase their productivity. Organisations deal with these tough economic times by cutting expenditure, decreasing staff levels and increasing work load for the remaining employees (O'Connell, Russell, Watson & Byrne; 2010). It is noted that the wellbeing of workers who keep their employment but have fear that they could lose their job is negatively affected by the job insecurity. Many individuals feel under pressure to work longer hours to keep their jobs, and to meet their family expenses (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). O'Connell, Russell, Watson and Byrne (2010) revealed that the main causes of poor WLB amongst Irish employees are excessive working hours and a lack of work schedule flexibility. In addition, technology makes employees accessible around the clock while fears of job loss incentivise longer hours in the office. Another study at Harvard Business School revealed that 94 percent of working professionals reported working more than 50 hours per week and nearly half said they worked more than 65 hours per week. Experts seem to agree that compounding stress from never-ending work days is damaging to employees. The damage is often seen in the disintegration of personal and work relationships, employees' health and their overall happiness (Seligman, 2011).

Work Life Balance and Category of Work

Olsen, Maple, and Stage (1995) carried out a study on faculty job satisfaction and found that differences in faculty do affect the work life issues of employees. Specifically, Olsen, Maple, and Stage found that the amount of time spent at work by teaching staff affects their WLB more than other staff members in universities. In line with this view, Zhou and Volkwein (2004) reported that faculty members in different fields with different demands and opportunities in academic settings have different issues regarding their work life balance. Thus, the faculty members with more demanding jobs are more likely to struggle with their WLB. Olsen, Maple, and Stage (1995) again indicated that even though differences in faculty and discipline create different life situations, the differences do not affect the overall job satisfaction levels. The conclusion from the view of Olsen, Maple, and Stage is that differences in category of work do not affect the wellbeing of workers.

The study of Iiacqua, Schumacher and Li (1995) revealed that variables of the workplace such as rank and other categorisations were significantly related to issues of job satisfaction at the work place. Thus, for individuals doing different activities at the work place, the issues that would make them more satisfied at work are different. Similarly, several other studies have confirmed that faculty members in different areas of the same institution have different and distinctive organisational commitments and social support systems at the work place (Clark, 1997; McGee & Ford, 1987; Smart & Elton, 1982). The implication is that once they are in different areas of the same institution, what will make them satisfied and committed at the work place with less stress are different.

A recent meta-analysis examined age as a moderator of relationships between job autonomy and different positive and negative indicators of occupational well-being. Findings differed for the specific indicators of occupational well-being under consideration. The negative relationship between job autonomy and emotional exhaustion was stronger among older compared to younger workers, whereas the negative relationships of job autonomy with poor mental health and perceived job stress were weaker among older compared to younger workers. The positive relationships of job autonomy with job satisfaction, affective organizational commitment, and work engagement were also weaker among older compared to younger workers (Ng and Feldman, 2015).

Positive Effects of Work Life Balance

Lazăr, Osoian, and Raţiu (2010) identified the following benefits for individuals and organisations that promote WLB practices. The effects of introducing work life balance practices on employee attitudes and perceptions include job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job stress and turnover. All of these factors, in turn, affect job performance, direct and indirect absenteeism costs, costs associated with the loss and replacement of valued employees, customer satisfaction, and organisational productivity;

Reduced costs:

Particularly those related to reduced absenteeism and turnover. Both absenteeism and high turnover rates in organisations are indicative of low morale and job stress. Thus, reducing absenteeism is an important organisational objective for reducing costs. Organisations like Capital One Financial, a financial services company, reported that WLB practices reduced turnover and increased productivity and employee satisfaction.

The Canadian Teleworkers Association has also reported that about 25 percent of IBM's 320,000 employees worldwide telecommute saving the company $700 million (Hartel, Fujimoto, Strybosch, & Fitzpatrick, 2007).

Negative Effects of Work Life Balance

There is compelling evidence that work life imbalance portends grave consequences for employees, their organisations, and society (Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000; Lockwood, 2003; Mordi & Ojo, 2011). Conflicts, particularly between work and family, significantly affect quality of family life and career attainment for both men and women. Personal and societal consequences of work life imbalance, according to Hobson, Delunas and Kesic (2001), include: Increased level of stress and stress-related illness, lower-life satisfaction, higher rates of family strife, violence, and divorce, rising incidence of substance abuse, growing problems with parenting and supervision of children and adolescents, escalating rates of juvenile delinquency and violence. The continuous inability of employees to balance work and life responsibilities according to Hobson, and Kesic (2007) can have the following organisational consequences: Higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, reduced productivity, decreased job satisfaction, low levels of organisational commitment and loyalty and rising health care cost.

In general, enrolment in Ghanaian universities has accelerated since the 1990s when there were only government-owned institutions. The number of people enrolled in university including public and private stood at 183,687 in 2012/13, with public universities accounting for 70 percent of all students. In 1990/91 there were barely 10,000 people attending university education in Ghana. This means that the demand for higher education in the country has increased tremendously, and for teaching staff to meet the demand, experts believe universities must start sponsoring people to attain the qualification requirement, and thus enable more people to lecture in those institutions (B&FT, 2016).

Again, research carried out in the area of WLB in the West African Sub-region (Fapohunda, 2014; Opoku-Addai, 2012; Stella, Paul, & Olubusayo, 2014) involves two variables such as WLB and productivity, WLB and organisational policy, WLB and Stress among others, but this study examines three variables, that is, Work Life Balance, Organisational Policy, and Wellbeing of Employees. More especially other studies looked at staff as a whole unit but this study seeks to segment the staff (lecturers and administrators) and compare to see if there are differences in WLB, Policy, and Wellbeing.

In view of this, the researchers find it worthy to study the work life Balance and how it impacts the wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast. The findings of the study may provide useful information to counsellors in assisting employees to overcome the challenges associated with balancing the demands of career and nonworking responsibilities such as family, community and recreation.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose is to examine the extent to which work life balance impacts the wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:
1. Examine the differences in WLB between lecturers and administrative staff.
2. Determine the difference in wellbeing between lecturers and administrative staff.
3. Differentiate between WLB and wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff.

Research Hypotheses

1. H_0: There is no significant difference in work life balance between lecturers and administrative staff.
H_1: There is significant difference in work life balance between lecturers and administrative staff.
2. H_0: There is no significant difference between wellbeing of lecturers and wellbeing of administrators.
H_1: There is a significant difference between wellbeing of lecturers and wellbeing of administrators
3. H_0: There is no significant relationship between work life balance and wellbeing of employees.
H_1: There is a significant relationship between work life balance and wellbeing of employees

Method

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive approach aimed at examining the impact of work life balance on wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast. The research design is a descriptive survey which according to Kumar (2005), attempts to describe systematically a situation, problem, service or programme or provides information about the living conditions of people in a community.

The main purpose of such studies is to describe what is prevalent with respect to the problem or issue under study in order to help refine procedures. This design was selected because it has the advantage of generating a reasonable amount of responses from a relatively wide range of respondents. Also, it provides meaningful and lucid picture of events to explain people's perception and reaction on the basis of data gathered at a particular point in time (Kumar, 2005).

Population

The target population for the study was all lecturers and administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast. The study intended to use the entire population of 1,217 made up of 681 lecturers and 536 administrative staff (UCC Human Resource Unit; 2017). However, as a result of the limited time frame and financial constraints, samples of the population were used.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study was confined to lecturers and administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast. The University of Cape Coast was chosen because of proximity and the researcher's familiarity of the area and also due to logistical, financial and time constraints. Lecturers and administrative staff were chosen due to the key positions they occupy in education delivery in training human resources which is vital in developing a nation.

The sample size for the study was 163 lecturers and 128 administrative staff making a total of 291 drawn from the total number of 681 lecturers and 536 administrators respectively. The study adopted the simple random sampling procedure to select 163 lecturers and 128 administrative staff for the study.

Data Collection Instrument

Questionnaire was the main instrument used in the collection of data. Questionnaire was used because the lecturers and administrative staff could read, understand and respond to the questionnaire with no assistance. This work sought to adapt an instrument developed by Brett and Stroh (2003) which measures WLB and work life balance policies; and Grossi, Groth, Mosconi, Cerutti, Pace, Compare, and Apolone, (2006) instrument which measures wellbeing. Some changes were made to the questionnaire to suit the local environment. The survey consisted of 41 questions; this included 36 Likert–type scale questions related to WLB and psychological wellbeing. The questions include: 25 questions related to WLB, 16 questions related to psychological wellbeing.

Measure of work life balance

Brett and Stroh (2003) developed a survey of WLB that operationalizes the construct from a situation perspective, which measures WLB according to the respondents' point of view and overall satisfaction with variables related to WLB. The survey is composed of 36 questions and includes the following measures and indicators: family involvement, family satisfaction, family to work stress, work to family stress, family alienation, balance, work overload, job satisfaction, and job involvement.

Brett and Stroh's (2003) WLB survey was developed to understand WLB from the subjective experience of the employee. The authors intended to account for a more elastic sense of time and balance, for instance when someone multitasks by doing chores while caring for children, and allows for a self-report within a situation list definition of work life balance (Brett & Stroh, 2003; Reiter, 2007). For the purpose of this study four subscales were considered. The reliability indexes for the four subscales were (a) work life balance (0.79), (b) employee policy (0.84), (c) work overload (0.80) and job satisfaction (0.84) (Brett &Stroh, 2003).

Psychological general wellbeing index form

The Psychological General Wellbeing Index (PGWBI) was originally published by Harold J. Dupuyin 1970. The PGWBI is one of the most widely used generic measures of wellbeing or quality of life in terms of mental health. The PGWBI is a self- perceived evaluation of Psychological Wellbeing composed of 22 items with six subscales related to anxiety, depression, positive wellbeing, self-control, general health and vitality (Grossi et al. 2006). The measure is scored on a numbered scale where a higher score is considered indicative of better quality of life or wellbeing (Barlesi, Barrou, Loundou, Doddoli, Marie, Claude-Clade, Aquier, & Thomas: 2006). This measure is widely used and is one of the first quality of life measures related to mental health; it has been translated into multiple languages and is used across the world. The measure has proved reliable and valid (Lundgren-Nilson, Jonsdottir, Ahlborg, & Tennant: 2013; Grossi et al., 2006). Grossi et al. (2006) have developed a short version of the measure containing only six questions related to anxiety, vitality, depressed mood, self-control and positive wellbeing. This measure has proved reliable (Cronbach's alpha, 0.80) and valid (Grossi et al., 2006).

Pretesting of the Instruments

To ensure the reliable and valid of the instrument, the instrument was pretested with staff of the University of Development Studies (UDS) Tamale Campus UDS between 20th and 31st March, 2017. In all 30 lecturers and administrative staff responded to the questionnaire. The WLB and Psychological wellbeing subsections proved reliable and valid with Cronbach's alpha, 0.79 and Cronbach's alpha, 0.85 respectively.

Scoring of the Instrument

The item mean value determined for the work life balance component was two and half (2.5) because it was measured on a four point Likert-Type scale format. The greater the score the lesser the work life balance of the employee and the lower the score the higher the work life balance of the employee. The maximum score for the WLB item is 40 and the minimum score is 10. The mean value of 25 and above indicates the employee has work life imbalance while the mean value below 25 indicates work life balance.

The wellbeing section had an item mean of three (3) because it was measured on a five point Likert-Type scale format. The greater the score the higher the wellbeing of the employee and the lower the score the lesser the wellbeing of the employee. The maximum score for the policy item is 80 and the minimum score is zero (0). The mean value of 40 and above indicates the employee is experiencing positive wellbeing while the mean value below 40 indicates the employee is experiencing negative wellbeing.

Data Collection Procedure

The Ethical Review Board of the College of Education Studies of the University of Cape Coast gave an approval for the study to be conducted after all ethical requirements have been satisfied. The consent of all the participants was sought before the administration of the questionnaire. All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they reserve the right to withdraw from participating in the data collection. Participants were also informed that their own identity will remain undisclosed. It was explained to participants that the questionnaire is completely anonymous and does not include questions asking for any personal details, such as names of participants.

The questionnaire was administered to lecturers and administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast daily within the working hours of 8:30am to 4:30 from 10th to 19th May, 2017. The introductory part of the questionnaire explained the importance of the study to respondents and the need for their participation in the study. This ensured that both the lecturers and administrative staff willingly participated in the study. Data were collected from 163 lecturers and 128 administrative staff totalling 291 respondents representing 100 percent response rate. This was made possible by daily visits of the team to respondents to remind them and devoting time to wait patiently for respondents as well as agreeing on designated points to drop the questionnaire for collection.

Data Analysis

The analysis was based on data collected through the administration of the questionnaire. The results from the quantitative survey was analysed with the aid of the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), version 19. The first step involved the use of descriptive statistics to analyse the demographic data. Data on hypotheses one (1) and two (2) were tested using the independent samples t-test. Data on hypothesis three (3) was tested using Pearson Correlation. All the statistical tests were conducted at 0.05 level of significance

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis One

H_0: There is no significant difference in work life balance between lecturers and administrative staff.
H_1: There is a significant difference in work life balance between lecturers and administrative staff.

This hypothesis sought to find out whether significant difference existed between lecturers and administrative staff in their work life balance. The independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Independent Samples t-Test of Work Life Balance between Lecturers and Administrative Staff

Responsibility	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Lecturers	143	35.7	4.09	273	11.226*	.000
Administrators	132	29.4	5.23			

*Significant at p<0.05

The results in Table 1 show that difference exists between lecturers and administrative staff in their work life balance. The results revealed that the mean for the lecturers was 35.7 while that of the administrative staff was 29.4. Again, the standard deviation (SD) for lecturers was 4.09 while the standard deviation (SD) for administrative staff was 5.23. It can be concluded therefore from Table 1 that there is a significant difference in the work life balance of lecturers and administrative staff. Therefore, based on the result the null Hypothesis One which states that "there is no significant difference in work life balance between lecturers and administrative staff" was rejected; t(273) =11.226, p<0.05. Hence the alternative Hypothesis was upheld.

Hypothesis Two

H_0: There is no significant difference in the wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff.
H_1: There is a significant difference in the wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff.

The purpose of research hypothesis two sought to find out whether significant difference existed between lecturers and administrative staff in their wellbeing. The independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Independent Samples t-Test of Wellbeing of Lecturers and Administrative Staff

Responsibility	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Lecturers	143	43.1	6.02	273	.418	.676
Administrators	132	42.8	7.05			

The results in Table two show that difference exist between lecturers and administrative staff in their wellbeing. The results revealed that the mean for the lecturers was 43.1 while that of the administrative staff was 42.8. It was also observed that the standard deviation (SD) for lecturers was 6.02 while the standard deviation (SD) for administrative staff was 7.05. It can be concluded from Table 2 that there is no significant difference in the wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff t(273)=0.418, p>0.05).

Hypothesis Three

H_0: There is no significant relationship between work life balance and wellbeing of employees.
H_1: There is a significant relationship between work life balance and wellbeing of employees.

This hypothesis sought to find the relationship that existed between the work life balance and wellbeing of university staff. The Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Work Life Balance and Wellbeing of Employees

Variable	Wellbeing		
	N	r	p-value
Work Life Balance	291	-.135*	.021

*Significant at p<0.05

Table 3 shows the relationship between employees' work life balance and their wellbeing. It can be observed that there existed a significant but low and inverse relationship between employees' work life balance and their wellbeing at the 0.05 significant level. The Pearson Correlation figure of -.135 is significant at 0.021 significant level.

Again, the negative Pearson Correlation value (-.135) shows that the relationship between work life balance and wellbeing is a negative one. This implies that the more respondents had issues with their work life balance, the lesser their wellbeing.

Discussion

In testing the hypothesis one, the study showed that there was a significant difference in the wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff. Lecturers and administrative staff therefore have different issues that affect their wellbeing. The different tasks involved in lecturing and administration work could be responsible for this difference. Lecturers usually engage in teaching, setting examination questions, marking and other academic related activities while administrative staffs engage in administrative tasks. Based on the kinds of tasks of lecturers, it was not surprising that the lecturers had more difficulties in their wellbeing compared to administrative staff.

This finding supports the finding of Olsen, Maple, and Stage (1995) that differences in faculty does affect the work life issues of employees. Specifically, Olsen, Maple, and Stage revealed that the amount of time spent at work by teaching staff affects their wellbeing more than other staff members in universities. In line with this view, Zhou and Volkwein (2004) reported that faculty members in different fields with different demands and opportunities in academic settings have different issues regarding their work life balance. Thus, the faculty members with more demanding jobs are more likely to struggle with their wellbeing.

The results from the testing of hypothesis two revealed that there was no significant difference in the wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff. This finding implies that there is no difference in the wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff with respect to the current study. Even though it was found in the study that the lecturers had more issues in their wellbeing than the administrative staff, the lack of difference in the wellbeing of lecturers and administrative staff implies that the lecturers did not let their wellbeing issues get better of them. As such their health and general wellbeing were not affected differently by the issues they encountered regarding their wellbeing. The findings are in line with the findings of Olsen, Maple and Stage (1995) that even though differences in faculty and discipline created different life situations, the differences did not affect the overall job satisfaction levels. Therefore, it can be concluded that differences in category of work does not affect the wellbeing of workers.

Again, it was observed that there was a significant relationship between employees' WLB and their wellbeing. The relationship was found to be a negative one. This implies that the more issues respondents had with their work life balance, the lesser their wellbeing. Since, the study revealed that the major issues for university staff had to do with time spent at work, there is the likelihood that staff members can experience considerable amount of stress in their work. In this sense, the negative relationship between work life balance and wellbeing among employees is understandable. This finding corroborates the finding of Hochschild (1997) that there is a negative relationship between WLB and wellbeing of employees. Thus, the challenges and higher demands from work and family life have been found to have negative effects on the wellbeing of workers. Along this same line of finding, the study of Seligman (2011) and Hill (2005) showed that common consequences of issues with WLB are depression and distress, leading to lower productivity, poorer work quality, higher absenteeism and staff turnover which are all signs of poor wellbeing among employees. This was confirmed by the current study's finding that a negative relationship exists between WLB and employees' wellbeing.

Implication for practice

Employees' work life balance is negatively related to their wellbeing which denotes that when there are fewer issues with work life balance then wellbeing can improve the more. Thus, the inability of employees to balance their time regarding their work and their personal lives can affect their overall wellbeing which requires counselling intervention to resolve. Workplace guidance and counselling should be enforced for employees in the university to help employees in their work life balance.

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