



Moderating roles of workplace spirituality on work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

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Abstract

The study examined the moderating roles of workplace spirituality on work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria. The participants were 249 bank employees whose ages ranged from 26 and 49 years with a mean age of 33.50 years and a standard deviation of 3.20. The study adopted a correlation design using moderated regression statistics to test the hypotheses using two regression models. The result indicated that there were significant correlations among the variables with the work-life balance having negative but significant correlations with workplace spirituality and employee engagement. Analysis of the Beta coefficient showed that work-life balance has a negative significant predictor effect on employee engagement at $\beta = -0.72$, $p < .01$ ($n = 249$) while workplace spirituality had a positive predicting effect at $\beta = 0.44$, $p < .01$ ($n = 249$). It was found that work-life balance significantly predicted employee engagement, workplace spirituality significantly predicted employee engagement, workplace spirituality significantly correlated work-life balance and workplace spirituality significantly moderated the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State, implying that workplace spirituality reduced the negative effects of work-life balance and improved employee engagement. It is recommended that there is a need to explore factors which increase or decrease workplace spirituality among employees as this could help management to establish motivational paradigms which may be catalysts to the sustenance of workplace spirituality to reap its attendant organizational benefits.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Workplace Spirituality, Work-Life Balance, Bank Workers.



Introduction

Employees are an integral part of organizational success; without whom organizations may never actualize their goals (Patel, 2022). Most competitive organizations pay a premium to bring out the best in the day-to-day activities of their workforce. This has made it important to understand how to keep employees fully engaged in realizing their full potential in their organizations (Puspitasari & Darwin, 2021; Ferdous et al., 2020). In profit-oriented organizations such as commercial banks, the need for employees to be fully engaged is critical to keep abreast with competition in the banking industry and maintain organizational relevance in the marketplace.

Employee engagement is an active and positive work-related state that is characterized by feelings of vigour (energy), dedication and absorption in one's work (Ule et al. 2020) which reflects relatively in an increase in job resources over time (Jaharuddin, & Zainol, 2019). Employee engagement refers to workers' commitment and enthusiasm in carrying out and completing a given task by so doing, contributing to organizational success. An engaged employee displays high mental resilience and high levels of energy in the workplace (Ule, et. al. 2020). They maintain clear and conscientious efforts to devote themselves to work and persistence when facing difficulties, demonstrating mental vigour (Rich, et. al. 2010). Both mental and work-related vigour help employees to be more sensitive to opportunities at work and foster a more proactive work style (Wood et al., 2020). Employee

engagement is a sign of dedication expressed through enthusiasm, inspiration and organizational pride; while absorption of work pressures demonstrated by an engaged employee entails full concentration and being highly and happily engrossed in one's work (Riyanto et al., 2019; Amah, 2018).

Employee engagement benefits the organization by stimulating task and contextual performance (Xian et al. 2021) an employee being disengaged from work may result in employee turnover, absenteeism and poor performance (Puspitasari & Darwin, 2021). Maintaining a high level of employee engagement is essential for organizations to succeed in retaining talent, fostering a positive work culture and enhancing overall productivity (Ule. et. al. 2020). With Nigeria's current competitive banking climate catalysed by the banking reforms, the need for fully engaged employees is crucial as part of a successful banking career. Although, most banks are now embracing automation, online and other cashless options to ease customers' transaction experience, the depth and penetration of these services will still take a while to be actualized (Umeghalu et al., 2021). Consequently, bank employees in addition to targets and mandates may need to perform multiple roles and combine roles in other to be at the top of the day-to-day tasks. Because of this, many have decried the banking job as very demanding (Ule, et al 2020). this is a result of identified stressful conditions, unlike other jobs owing to several factors including understaffing, lack of work shifts (Mmakwe & Ukoha, 2018), lack of more branches and full digitalization of services (Umeghalu et



al., 2021). To this end, for bank employees to be relevant in their organizations, they must remain fully engaged amidst job pressures. These job pressures lead to intense workloads, increased stress levels and a significant imbalance between work life and personal life (Oludayo et al., 2018). Work-life balance is satisfaction and good functioning at work and home and other engagements outside of work, with the least role conflict (Puspitasari & Darwin, 2021). Work-life balance is adjusting working patterns regardless of age, race or gender so that everyone can find a rhythm to help combine work with their other life's responsibilities, challenges or aspirations (Nwagbara, 2020). Work-life balance is an increasingly important construct in the workplace because of its outcomes on both employees and the organization. Employees need to balance work and non-work roles to be optimal as individuals physically and psychologically. Work-life balance is associated with employee involvement in the job, organizational productivity and production cost (Wood et al., 2020). There are many factors which could affect work-life balance in organizations as well as drive its relevance. Work-life balance is an important construct with direct measurable consequences on job, employee and organizational outcomes because employees who are stuck with work without the flexibility to attend to other aspects of life's needs may over time have diminished value for work (Nwagbara, 2020).

The balance between work and personal life was equally conceptualized as a work balance between an individual's work and their

life outside work, which indicates that the worker has certain control over his working time. Working time includes the time spent commuting between work and home and unofficial time spent from home addressing work concerns. Organizations that prioritize work-life balance attempt to deepen work flexibility for all workers which takes into account the dynamics of methods used in an actualizing flexible work routine, including shift work, job rotation, overtime and part-time working methods. Organizational policies alone may not fully institutionalize work-life balance excepted they are aided by co-employees who may act as buffers to fellow employees who are stretched along work demands and their personal lives (Obiageli et al., 2015). Co-employees may be unable to offer necessary buffers to colleagues experiencing conflicts in work roles and roles in other aspects of their lives unless they are motivated to exhibit workplace spirituality.

Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life which is transmitted through to the workplace by developing a strong connection to co-workers and other people associated with work, and having consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization (Tantua & Osuamkpe, 2020). Workplace spirituality enhances employees' experience of transcendence through the work process by finding higher meaning in work and facilitating their socializations with ethical responsibility, especially regarding their interaction with members of the organization on work processes, job



tasks and conducts within and outside the workplace. This kind of feeling increases workers' sense of connectedness in the workplace and provides a feeling of completeness and a sense of value (Jin & Lee 2019). Workplace spirituality is also employee behaviour in the workplace which seeks to make out meaning and value from the work system, seeing outcomes in the workplace positively, treating others and self well, genuinely being interested in co-workers, contributing positive ideas, being conscious of the diverse backgrounds of the different workers in the workplace and prioritizing colleagues in the workplace above any other thing (Pourkiani & Sayadi, 2019). Workplace spirituality is known to benefit organizations in many ways most especially as it enhances the organizational image and integrity, creates better organizational health, well-being work-related stressors and work-family conflicts and improves the overall positive feeling among workers and between workers and their owners. A workplace that enjoys workplace spirituality gets energized as healthier interpersonal relationships are promoted (Marwan et al., 2019).

The deployment of workplace spirituality as a pro-work behaviour is what may likely diversify and improve the engagement of employees. Workers whose work-life balance is challenging due to circumstantial situations may find support from co-workers in an atmosphere with workplace spirituality than without (Chinomona, 2017). Considering these possible benefits, the current researcher is optimistic that workplace spirituality may positively influence workers' experience in the workplace and help to engender

effectiveness and efficiency, especially in the presence of a toxic work-life balance. Against this backdrop, the model of this current study has conceptualized that workplace spirituality may moderate the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

Work-life Balance and Employee Engagement

Puspitasari and Darwin (2021) explored the effect of work-life balance and welfare level on millennial employee performance through work engagement. Their study focused on the role of work-life balance and the level of welfare of millennial employees through work engagement as a variable intervening. Puspitasari and Darwin used the purposive sampling method while using a work-life balance measurement tool with a balance dimension in time management, engagement balance, balance in expectation fulfilment, and satisfaction balance. In the method of analysis, the analysis technique used was Structural Equation Modeling based on VB-SEM using SmartPLS software. After data analysis, the result showed that five hypotheses of direct influence were accepted and one rejected. The two hypotheses of indirect influence were each rejected and accepted. Work engagement variables as intervening variables are only capable of mediating work-life balance against employee performance. The study has similarities with the current study as it provides the basis for understanding the relationship between work-life balance and engagement constructs. It is therefore found useful to the current study.

In Nigeria, Oludayo et al. (2018) explored work-life balance initiatives as a predictor of employees' behavioural outcomes to ascertain the



extent to which work-life balance initiative predicts employee behavioural outcomes in some selected commercial banks in Lagos State Nigeria. The structural Equation Model (AMOS 22) was used for the analysis to find the resultant effects and the degree of relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Results showed that work leave arrangement, flexible work arrangement, employee time out, employee social support and dependent care initiative are predictors of employee behavioural outcomes such as job satisfaction, employees' intention and employee engagement.

Workplace Spirituality and Work-life Balance

In evaluating the impacts of workplace spirituality on work-life balance, Jin and Lee (2020) explored the effect of workplace spirituality on the quality of work-life of nurse cancer survivors in South Korea. The data were analyzed using SPSS 22 software to determine descriptive statistics and conduct an independent *t*-test, one-way ANOVA, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and hierarchical multiple regression. After data analysis, the result indicated that the average scores for all NWS and QNWL sub-domains were medium. Age, nursing tenure, and the factors of NWS were positively correlated with QNWL, especially the harmony between the workplace and the individual ($r = 0.65, P < 0.001$). In the second hierarchical regression, controlling general characteristics, harmony between the workplace and the individual ($\beta = 0.38, P \leq 0.001$), and relationship with colleagues ($\beta = 0.19, P = 0.031$) were significant predictors of QNWL explaining 59.0% of the variance. This model was found to be suitable ($F = 16.29, P \leq 0.001$). The finding of the study of Jin and Lee above is

consistent with the current study's model, which establishes a relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance. It, therefore, supports the current study.

Equally, Pourkiani and Sayadi (2019) conducted a study on recognizing and describing the desirable model of workplace spirituality, customer relationship management and quality of work life in the Kerman Health Insurance Organization. The research method was descriptive-correlation research. The instrument of measurement and measurement in this study was a standard questionnaire. To assess the validity of the questionnaire, experts and experts used content validity. To estimate the reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha, structural reliability and composite stability have been used to obtain appropriate grades. To perform statistical analyzes, research questions were tested and the model was presented using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (using structural equation modelling (SEM)) and SPSS and AMOS software. The results of the research in the proposed model showed that the spirituality of the work environment has a positive and significant effect on the quality of work life, with the highest impact through indirect customer relationship management in the health insurance organization. The finding is aligned with the purpose of the current study and therefore provides empirical support to the current study.

Workplace Spirituality and Employee Engagement

Several empirical examinations in the literature have indicated that workplace spirituality could influence employee engagement. For instance, Ule et al. (2020) explored workplace spirituality and employee engagement of University



Lecturers in South-South Nigeria. Data were generated through the use of a questionnaire and were subjected to empirical analysis via the Spearman Ranked Order Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. The outcome indicated that all three dimensions of workplace spirituality had a positive relationship with employee engagement in the academic arena. The result further confirmed the fact that financial gains alone do not stand as the pinnacle of employee motivation, rather lecturers derived the feelings of wholesomeness in their teaching behaviour which emanate from the passion, satisfaction, and meaningfulness they get from the job (teaching) therefore the need for institutions of learning to make lecturers engagement a fundamental part of their philosophy becomes inevitable. The findings seem to support the basis for the current study on the relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance. The study is anchored on Alderfer's (1969) Existence Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory of motivation which holds the very fact that individuals in the organization get stimulated based on three categories of needs. According to him, human needs are premised on the need for Existence, Relatedness, and growth which is the hallmark of seeking balance in human affairs, especially in the work environment. Existence needs to motivate individuals to be committed to their jobs to secure a livelihood while relatedness needs to motivate individuals to maintain interpersonal relationships, and an interconnectedness in sharing their thoughts and feelings through open communication (George & Jones 2008; Jaja & Okpu, 2003). Also, the need for growth paves the way for self-actualization, and productive work through engagement, and creativity which by implication allows people to improve their skills and abilities

thereby engaging in meaningful work (Jones & George, 2008). Although Alderfer argued that when individuals experience frustration or are unable to satisfy needs at a certain level, they tend to focus more on satisfying the needs at the lower level (Amah, 2010) which serves as motivators resulting from their inability to satisfy the higher-level needs. Incidentally, Jaja (2003) holds that employees' inability to satisfy a need for social interaction tends to increase desires for more remuneration or better working conditions therefore, frustration could lead to a regression to lower needs. Owing to Alderfer's position, bank employees in private sector work environments and specifically banks need better working conditions to bring out their best on the job and this should be done in line with adequate remuneration to secure better livelihoods for themselves and their families so that increased engagement towards productivity will not be compromised. By application, the theory holds that bankers' work behaviour is a determinant of the interconnectedness and relationship they share with their work environment. Workplace spirituality may give rise to growth tendencies through interconnectedness with co-workers, resulting in productive work behaviour (highly engaged employee) and a sense of survival or sustenance of livelihood (a balanced work-life).

Methods

Participants

The study sampled 249 bank employees whose ages ranged between 26 and 49 years with a mean age of 33.50 years and a standard deviation of 3.20 drawn from commercial bank institutions in Delta State. Demographic data revealed that 59% were single while 41% were married, 68% were female and 32%



were male. 2.41% had a PhD, 13.65% had a Master's degree, 59% had a B.Sc., 13.7% had HND and 13.65% had an OND. 27.35% were contract staff while 72.65% were professional bank employees. In terms of rank and positions, 30% were executive trainees, 25% were senior executive trainees, 7% were assistant banking officers and 10.65% were banking officers. The participants were drawn from the following commercial banks: First Bank Plc (32 participants), Guaranty Trust Bank Plc (22 participants), Zenith Bank Plc (29 participants), Diamond Bank Plc (16 participants), Fidelity Bank Plc (32 participants), Sky bank Plc (14 participants), Access bank Plc (24 participants), Union bank Plc (14 participants), United Bank for Africa Plc (48 participants) and Eco Trans-international Bank Plc (18 participants).

Procedure

The researcher sampled 249 commercial bank employees from the rest of the cities in Delta State across the three Senatorial Zones of Delta State. Sapele was chosen from Delta's central senatorial zone, Asaba was chosen from Delta's south senatorial zone and Warri was chosen from Delta's North senatorial zone. Considering the challenge of sampling such a large population, the researcher employed the services of 3 National Youth Service Corps members as research assistants for the field work covering all the branches chosen for the study. The research assistants were recruited from NYSC members serving in Delta State. The

researcher provided training for the research assistants and ensured that they understood the study and could perform the administration of the tests during the survey without the assistance of the researcher. The researcher also provided logistics needed like transportation, feeding and stipends for the recruited assistants.

The sampling technique of the banks used for the study was random sampling. For sampling the individual participants of the study at each branch level participants were selected through accidental sampling. The researcher observed ethical guidelines for conducting the study and obtained the consent of respondents. The respondents were not mandated to participate and were informed they could be disengaged from the study at any point. The researcher explained what the participants were expected to do with the questionnaire and also provided instructions at the top of each questionnaire as well as practical assistance. The study lasted for 6 days, two days for each of the three Senatorial Zones. 400 copies of questionnaires were administered (271), 253 (93%) were collected back and 249 (98%) were valid. The valid ones were coded and transferred for data analysis.

Instruments

The researcher made use of three (3) instruments. The instruments used in the study were the work-life balance scale (WLPS) developed by Dex and Bond (2005) Work engagement scale (WES) developed by Salanova et al. (2002), and the



Workplace Spirituality Inventory developed by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009). The research design for this study is correlation design. All statistical analyses were managed using Jamovi analytical tool version 1.6.



Results

Table 1: Zero-order correlation matrix showing the relationship between work-life balance, employee engagement and workplace spirituality among bank employees in Delta State

		Work-life balance	Workplace spirituality	Employee engagement
Work-life balance	Pearson's r	-		
	p-value	-		
Workplace spirituality	Pearson's r	-	-	-
	p-value	0.674*** < .001	-	-
Employee engagement	Pearson's r	-	0.799***	-
	p-value	0.777*** < .001	< .001	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Findings from Table 1 reveal that in the zero-order correlation, a positive significant correlation was found between employee engagement and workplace spirituality at $r(1, 249) = 0.79, p < .001$ whereas a negative significant correlation was observed between employee engagement and work-life balance at $r(1, 249) = -0.78, p < .001$. However, negative the correlation between workplace

spirituality and work-life balance was found negative at $r(1, 249) = -0.67, p < .001$. The finding implies that work-life balance has an inverse relationship with employees' engagement while workplace spirituality has a direct and proportional relationship with employee engagement. Also, workplace spirituality has an inverse influence on work-life imbalance.



Table 3: *The model coefficient for study predictors*

Criterion - Employee engagement

Predictor	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval			
			AR ²	F	T	P
Intercept	46.331	15.215	-	-	3.05	0.006
Work-life balance	-0.723	0.256	0.582	31.7	2.82	0.011
Workplace Spirituality	0.443	0.135	0.715	28.6	3.28	0.004

Data in Table 3 reveal that work-life balance has a negative significant predictor effect on employee engagement at $\beta = -0.72, p < .01$ ($n = 249$) while workplace spirituality had a positive predictor effect at $\beta = 0.44, p < .01$ ($n = 249$). The model fit measures also revealed that work-life balance contributed 58.2% total variance explanation of employee engagement at $F = 31.7, p < .01$. When workplace spirituality was added to the model the variance explained increased to 71.5% at $F = 28.6, p < .05$. This indicates that the introduction of workplace spirituality which has positive predictor effects on employee engagement reduced the negative effects of work-life balance and increased employee engagement, an indication that workplace spirituality moderated the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

Discussion

This study explored the moderating roles of workplace spirituality on work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

In hypothesis 1, findings reveal that work-life balance significantly and negatively predicted employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State. The findings imply that work-life balance has negative characteristics, the higher the work-life balance, the lower employee engagement due to the inverse relationship. The finding is supported by the findings made by Puspitasari and Darwin (2021) which provided evidence that employees who have imbalanced work-life have significantly reduced engagement in work in output. Puspitasari and Darwin also found that work-life imbalance created distortions to employees'



organizational lifestyle which presents negative antecedents to organizational productivity. Such imbalance could come from the need to fulfil family obligations. For example, Xian et al. (2021) found that work-life imbalance could be moderated by family structure as certain family structures increase the stressful conditions on the employees which inadvertently conflict with work roles resulting in poor engagement and employee output. The finding indicates the way work is structured especially regarding the time allowed between job bits and how workers do a job as teams has effects on employees and determines life in other areas of life. If this structure is not well balanced, there is the tendency that employees will perpetually be left catching up in other aspects of their lives; such situations are adverse to their growth as theorized by Alderfer's (1969) Existence Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory of motivation which holds the very fact that individuals in the organization get stimulated based on three categories of needs including existence, relatedness, and growth. The pursuit of these needs creates balance which every individual employee will cherish. Such ERG needs might include health-related needs such as existence, times and support for family obligations for relatedness and time and resources for growth as in other aspects of socialization such as recreational activities. This is also similar to Jaharuddin and Zainol's (2019) finding that work-life balance has a significant influence on job engagement and turnover intention.

In Nigeria, similar findings have been recorded among different samples; for instance, Oludayo et al. (2018) who explored work-life balance initiative as a predictor of employees' behavioural outcomes found that leaves arrangement, flexible work arrangement, employee time out, employee social support and dependent care initiative are predictors of employee behavioural outcomes such as job satisfaction, employees' intention and employees' engagement. This, therefore, provided further evidence for accepting the findings in hypothesis 1 that work-life balance negatively and significantly predicted employee engagement.

In hypothesis 2, it was found that workplace spirituality significantly and positively predicted employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State. The finding means that workplace spirituality has positive characteristics such that the higher the workplace spirituality, the higher lower the employee engagement. For instance, there is empirical evidence from Ules et al. (2020) found that workplace spirituality influenced employee engagement. Ule et al. findings are supportive of the design and findings of the current study in the sense that in Ule's et al. study, all dimensions of workplace spirituality correlated significantly and positively with employee engagement.

Testing hypothesis 3, it was found that workplace spirituality significantly and negatively correlated with work-life balance implying that workplace



spirituality has an inverse influence on work-life balance. The finding yielded an inverse or negative significant relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance, implying that workplace spirituality has a negative influence on work-life balance. The finding in this hypothesis is supported by Jin and Lee's (2020) finding that workplace spirituality positively influences the quality of work life among nurses. Jin and Lee's finding is consistent with the model of the current study which established a negative relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance and therefore supports the current study. Pourkiani and Sayad's findings provided similar support for the negative relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance. The authors found among other things that spirituality of the work environment has a positive and significant effect on the quality of work life. The evidence largely supports the design and findings of the current study that workplace spirituality has a negative predictive influence on work-life balance.

Lastly, the findings of hypothesis 4 indicated that workplace spirituality significantly moderated the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement, implying that the presence of workplace spirituality reduced the negative effects of work-life imbalance on employee

engagement and improved employee engagement behaviours. This is considered in the light of the negative and significant relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance as evidenced in Jin and Lee's (2020) finding that workplace spirituality influences work-life and therefore could negate work-life imbalance. The findings of Sayadikiani and Sayadi (2019) equally provided similar support for the negative relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance hence, laid the foundation for understanding the moderating effects of workplace spirituality in the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement.

Typically, the moderating effects of workplace spirituality on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement are also considered in the light of positive and significant effects of workplace spirituality on employee engagement as equally evidenced in Ule et al.'s (2020) findings that workplace spirituality influenced employee engagement and as such significant and positive association exists between workplace spirituality and employee engagement and so provided further proof for moderating effects of workplace spirituality on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement.

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