

Effect of Work-Life Balance On Employee Performance in Nigerian Development Consulting Sector

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Abstract: *This study evaluates the effect of work-life balance on employee performance in the development consulting sector in Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey research design, and using a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique, collected data from a sample size of 395 respondents out of 28,590 staff of 1,906 firms, determined using the Taro Yamane formular. The scales in the questionnaire were content validated and has a high correlation coefficient of 0.98. The data collected were checked for normality using the Skewness and Kurtosis statistic; and subsequently analyzed using Multiple Regression analysis. The research findings reveal that some dimensions of work-life balance (Work Interference with Personal Life and Personal Life Interference with Work) had a positive effect on employee performance, while others (Work-Personal Life Enhancement and Work-Personal Life Constraint) had a negative effect on employee performance. These results are in line with the theoretical literature, particularly the Resource Drain Theory and Work-Family Enrichment Theory. It was therefore recommended that sustainable policies involving remote work, flexible physical work hours, and capacity building on managing job stress within a competitive environment, among others will improve work-life balance and ensure that institutional memory stays in-country, leading to more sustainable outcomes for Nigerian communities. This study also lends strong evidence to the inclusion of the dimension of "Work-Personal Life Constraint" when adapting instrument scales in the measurement and examination of work-life balance, in relation to the Resource Drain Theory.*

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Employee Performance, Development Consulting Sector

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic work environment, balancing work and personal life has become a significant practical issue for employees and employers. While flexibility offers benefits like reduced commuting time and increased autonomy, it also challenges employees in separating work from personal life, leading to longer working hours and difficulties in disconnecting from work demands (Perreault & Power, 2023). Prioritizing one aspect over the other can stress one's life

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK and exposes some side effects on employees, such as unclear boundaries between work and life (Asfahani, 2021; Palumbo, 2020; Palumbo et al., 2020; Weitzer et al., 2021). Technological advancements, globalization, and competitive market pressures have blurred the boundaries between professional obligations and personal time, leading to challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). This often results in increased stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction, adversely affecting employee performance and productivity. Khalid et al. (2022) found that employees experiencing high levels of work-life conflict are prone to burnout and decreased, impairing their productivity.

In the Nigerian context, the encumbrance of work roles on employee family roles is further heightened by demographic changes, an increase in the number of women in the workforce, dual career couples, a rise in the number of single parents, and employees' growing reluctance to accept long hours of work culture (Stella, (2024). Nigerian employees are thus faced with the challenge of prioritizing between work and non-work roles (Mmakwe & Ojiabo, 2018), which results in work-family imbalance. Hence, harmonizing work and family life poses as a major challenge facing employees in the organizations.

However, there is a significant gap in understanding the combined impact of work-life balance and employee performance in the development consulting sector. Development consulting refers to external experts or firms contracted to provide knowledge-intensive services that design, manage, or evaluate development interventions, rather than deliver aid money or projects directly (Chun, 2022). Development Consultants act as knowledge producers/brokers, generating and translating expert knowledge for donors, governments and beneficiaries. Borda-Rodriguez (2013) highlights the typical functions of Development Consulting firms to include technical assistance, assessments, evaluations, advisory work, training, programme and project management using knowledge, skills and technology-based services that support the full aid/project cycle (diagnosis, design, implementation, evaluation) to create value in development cooperation, in the aid and policy world. In Nigeria, various multilateral development agencies such as The World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), French Development Agency (AFD), European Union (EU), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), amongst others provide aid, loans and funding for various development projects.

As the activities of development consulting firms are focused on facilitating public sector reform, economic growth, and social development in sectors like agriculture, energy, infrastructure, finance, education, and public policy (DAI, 2024); it is interesting to see how the work-life balance of their employees fare in relation to their performance in the development consulting work environment in Nigeria. This study has one main objective which is to examine the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria. However, to pursue this main objective, some specific objectives are also aimed at in this study. These specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the effect of Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL) on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

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2. To examine the effect of Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria
3. To examine the effect of Work-Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria
4. To examine the effect of Work-Personal Life Constraint (WPLC) on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

The following null hypotheses were raised for the study:

H₀₁: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL) has no significant effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

H₀₂: Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) has no significant effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

H₀₃: Work-Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) has no significant effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

H₀₄: Work-Personal Life Constraint (WPLC) has no significant effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

The scope of the study is the development consulting sector in Nigeria, with 1,906 consulting firms in total, with an average of 15 staff per firm, making approximately 28,590 staff derived by multiplying the number of firms by average employee range. Given the absence of a centralized registry of development consulting firms in Nigeria, this population estimate is derived using industry benchmarks from consulting industry association directories (Association of Management Consulting Firms of Nigeria, and The Nigeria Development and Humanitarian Civil Society Directory); development sector databases (Nigeria Development Update and World Bank consulting firms database) and Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) official registry of all registered consulting firms in Nigeria. Development consulting firms are organizations providing advisory, research, capacity building, program design, and implementation services in the development sector (Okon et al., 2025). Their employees are private sector workers in Nigeria that may experience various work-life challenges during the course of carrying out their work. The significance of the scope of the study lies in its benefits to employees of development consulting companies, business management and owners, multilateral and institutional donors and development project financiers, and by extension Nigerian citizens and the general public through development projects delivered by more focused staff for the overall economic growth and development of the nation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Work-Life Balance

In literature, work-life balance is often defined as achieving harmony between work and non-work commitments, allowing employees to function effectively in both roles (Isaacs, 2016). Work-life balance refers to the condition where individuals can equitably divide their time and energy between work demands and personal life (Calasanti & Pietila, 2023). This concept encompasses fulfilling work responsibilities without sacrificing health, family relationships, and social activities. Fisher (2003) explained work-life balance as a work-related stressor concerning

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issues of energy, time, strain, and goal accomplishment. His definition was centered on the theory of preservation of resources, one-to-one consultations with a varied set of employees, and published conclusions of qualitative investigation leading to work and family conflict. Operationally defined, work-life balance (WLB) is said to be the aggregate time an individual uses to carry out his work in comparison with the aggregate time spent with relations and other personal engagement (Abioro et al., 2018). Various definitions have been proposed, but the core idea is to achieve a balance that enables individuals to lead satisfying and productive lives inside and outside the workplace.

A review of literature over the years show that work-life balance has evolved conceptually from a unidimensional construct to one that is multidimensional capturing both the negative and positive interrelationships between work and personal life domains. This conceptual review focuses on four constructs developed within a broader framework: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), Work-Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE), and Work-Personal Life Constraint (WPLC). The first three constructs originated from the psychometric work of McAuley et al. (2003), which were subsequently refined by Hayman (2005) as measurable dimensions of work-life balance; and are adapted by this study to include the fourth construct of Work-Personal Life Constraint (WPLC).

Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL)

Work Interference with Personal Life refers to the extent to which work-related demands, responsibilities, and experiences negatively impact an individual's ability to participate in and derive satisfaction from personal life activities. According to Hayman (2005), this construct encompasses work-related factors that intrude upon an individual's personal life, including time-based constraints, strain-based spillover, and the neglect of personal needs due to occupational obligations. WIPL is conceptually aligned with what the broader literature terms "work-to-family conflict" (WFC) but extends beyond family-specific roles to include all domains of personal life including leisure, health, social activities, and personal development. As Fisher et al. (2009) argue, limiting measurement to family roles risks excluding meaningful targets of interference for workers without traditional family responsibilities. The conceptual underpinning of WIPL is grounded in role theory and the scarcity perspective Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), which posits that individuals have finite resources (time, energy, attention). When work demands consume these resources, fewer remain available for personal life roles.

Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW)

Personal Life Interference with Work refers to the extent to which personal life demands, responsibilities, and experiences negatively impact an individual's ability to perform effectively in the work domain. According to Hayman (2005), this construct captures the reverse phenomenon of WIPL, specifically, how personal life obligations drain energy, reduce effectiveness, and create obstacles to work performance. PLIW is conceptually aligned with what the literature terms "family-to-work conflict" (FWC) but, like WIPL, extends beyond family roles to include all personal life domains. As noted in Fisher et al. (2009), family-to-work conflict occurs when experiences in the family interfere with work life. Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) broadens this to include non-family personal activities such as health management,

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social obligations, and personal pursuits. The conceptual underpinning of PLIW is also grounded in the scarcity perspective but emphasizes the bidirectional nature of role conflict. Research has consistently found that work roles are more likely to interfere with family roles than vice versa (Greenhaus et al., 2006; Kelloway et al., 2013; and Wayne et al., 2022).

Work-Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE)

Work-Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) refers to the positive synergy between work and personal life domains, whereby participation in one role generates resources, skills, or positive effect that improves functioning or satisfaction in the other role. According to Hayman (2005), this construct captures the support and mutual enhancement provided between work and personal life domains. WPLE is conceptually aligned with what the broader literature terms "work-family enrichment" or "work-family facilitation." As defined by Greenhaus and Powell (2006), work-family enrichment is "a process whereby involvement in one domain establishes benefits and/or resources which then may improve performance or involvement in another domain". WPLE extends this concept beyond family to encompass all personal life domains. The conceptual underpinning of WPLE is grounded in role enhancement theory, which proposes that "the combination of certain roles has a positive, rather than a negative effect on well-being" (Sieber, 1974). Research by Wayne et al. (2022) demonstrates that bidirectional enrichment predicts subsequent job and family satisfaction, suggesting that "enrichment appears to primarily initiate the balance satisfaction process as it unfolds over time".

Work-Personal Life Constraint (WPLC)

Most workplaces are still designed for an employee with no domestic care duties or a partner handling home life. Today, most households have all adults working, but workplace structures and social supports haven't caught up (Hasdiana, 2023). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identified Work-Personal Life Constraint (WPLC) conceptually as the structural, temporal, and psychological limitations imposed on an individual's personal life domain by the demands, expectations, and requirements of their work role. WPLC encompasses time-based constraints (insufficient personal time due to work hours), strain-based constraints (depleted cognitive and emotional resources for personal engagement), and behaviour-based constraints (incompatible behavioural repertoires across domains). This definition emphasizes the unidirectional nature of constraint (work constraining personal life), distinguishing it from bidirectional formulations of work-family conflict that recognize influence in both directions.

Employee Performance

Employee Performance can be described as responses in the form of behaviours reflecting what has been learned by the employee or the kind of training that the employee has received; it encompasses the outcome of the mental and psychological capabilities (Faiza & Nazir, 2015). Employee Performance contributes to the overall betterment of the processes of the organization particularly in terms of efficiency and productivity (Abualoush et al., 2018). Employee's performance in any organization is a key area in the work environment. The essence of balancing both private and work life is to encourage healthy environment that can guarantee loyalty of the staff and secure high level of performance (Ogechi & Nwaeke, 2019).

Theoretical Review

Resource Drain Theory (Goode, 1960; Frone, 2003)

Resource Drain Theory, also known as the Scarcity Hypothesis, was originally articulated by Goode (1960) and later refined in the work-family conflict literature by Frone (2003). The theory posits that every individual possesses finite resources—including time, energy, attention, and psychological capacity. When multiple roles (e.g., worker, spouse, parent, caregiver) compete for these limited resources, conflict inevitably arises. Specifically, resources devoted to one role become unavailable for other roles, leading to role strain, fatigue, and reduced performance across domains. Frone (2003) operationalized this concept within the work-family interface by distinguishing two directional pathways:

Work-to-family conflict (WFC): Here, work demands deplete resources needed for family life, for example, a project manager in Nigeria works 14-hour days to meet USAID reporting deadlines, leaving no energy for spouse or children.

Family-to-work conflict (FWC): Family demands deplete resources needed for work. For example, a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) officer must care for a sick child overnight, arriving at work exhausted and unable to focus on data analysis. The resources drain theory states that a negative correlation between family and work domains exists in such a way that any personal resource expended on one domain reduces the number of resources available to the other domain.

Border Theory

Clark (2000) in his work/family Border Theory, defined borders as encompassing psychological categories and tangible boundaries that divide the times, place and people associated with work versus family. This theory distinguishes three types of boundaries between work and non-work, family or personal life domains namely: physical, temporal and psychological boundaries. Extending role theories such as the compensation theory, border theory looks at how roles in life are separated by boundaries or borders. Permeability and flexibility are key related concepts to examine how boundaries between life domains affect integration, transitions, and conflicts between domains. Much like managing a physical geographical boundary, the Border theory implies that certain roles, and their related character attributes, are restricted specifically to one side of the divide between work and life while others can only be allowed to transit after sufficient moderation or modification.

Work-Family Enrichment Theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006)

Work-Family Enrichment Theory explains how good work-life balance enhances productivity through skill transfer, positive affect, and social capital. While Resource Drain Theory explains only the negative consequences of role interaction, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) proposed Work-Family Enrichment Theory (also called Facilitation Theory) to explain positive consequences. Enrichment occurs when resources gained in one role improve the quality or performance of another role. The theory identifies five types of resources that can

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transfer across domains: Skills and Perspectives, Psychological and Physical Resources, Social Capital, Flexibility, and Material Resources.

This study adopts a multi-theoretical framework comprising two complementary theories: Resource Drain Theory and Work-Family Enrichment Theory. The rationale for employing two theories is that work-life balance (WLB) is not a unidimensional construct that can just be measured by one variable. The different organizational and individual practices are what make up the construct of work-life balance. Hence, it encompasses both negative effects (where imbalance depletes resources and reduces productivity) and positive effects (where balance enhances resources and boosts productivity). Single-theory approaches tend to capture only one side of this duality. By integrating both theories, this study provides a complete lens for examining the full spectrum of WLB effects on employee productivity within the unique, high-pressure context of development consulting firms operating in Nigeria. The rationale to adopt two theories rather than one is justified on the grounds of completeness, context sensitivity, and practical relevance.

Empirical Review

Research by Badaruddin et al. (2024) explored the relationships between work-life balance, professional development, and employee performance, focusing on how these factors interact to enhance job satisfaction and productivity. The research employed a qualitative approach, utilizing in-depth interviews, focus groups, and observational data to gather insights from employees across various organizations, with the objective of analysing how work-life balance and professional development initiatives impacted employee performance. The findings indicated that a balanced work environment, coupled with access to professional development opportunities, significantly enhances employee performance. Employees with a healthy work-life balance reported lower stress levels and higher job satisfaction, leading to increased productivity. Additionally, professional development was found to improve technical and managerial skills, boosting confidence and job competence. The study highlighted the importance of integrating work-life balance policies with continuous professional development programs to achieve sustainable employee performance and organizational success. As a critique, the study did not explore these relationships quantitatively. Hence this study seeks to do so within the development consulting sector in Nigeria to further validate and expand upon the findings of Badaruddin et al. (2024).

Abioro et al. (2018) also examined the influence of work-life balance practices on employees' productivity in the Nigerian University System. The study employed Stratified sampling technique in selecting a sample of three hundred and forty-one (341) respondents from among the working population of two thousand, three hundred and twenty-four (2,324) employees working at Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. Primary data was collected through the use of structured questionnaire. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Flexitime, Job Sharing and Telework were used as proxies for the independent variable: Work-Life Balance. Findings from the study revealed that there is a significant effect of work life balance on employees' productivity. The results also indicated a moderate positive effect between Flexitime, Job Sharing and Telework on Employees Productivity. It was therefore

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recommended that management in the helm of affairs, while considering work-friendly policies, should make flexitime, job sharing and telework their priorities. By so doing, it will afford all employees the opportunity of total concentration on their work, hence increase productivity. As a critique, the study was focused on the education sector in Nigeria, with sample gotten from a single Nigerian university as opposed to a more representative sample selection across the sector. Hence, other organizations may be included in the future studies so as to enrich the body of knowledge and robustness of research on the topic of work-life balance and employee productivity.

Bataineh (2019) investigated the impact of work-life balance and happiness-at-work on employee performance. A questionnaire-based survey was designed to test the aforementioned relationship based on a dataset of 289 employees' from the pharmaceutical industry in Jordan (specifically Med Pharma Company). Regression analysis was conducted to examine the research hypotheses. The results indicated that work-life balance and happiness positively and significantly affect employee performance. However, job satisfaction had no impact on employee performance, which contradicts with the past studies in the hospitality and ICT industries (Pawirosumaro et al., 2017), which reported that job satisfaction had a significant positive effect on performance. The study was established from the applicable past work, and as the extant literature showed, there had been lack of studies on the subject in the context of pharmaceutical industries. Hence, aside from being an expansion to the theoretical development, the study is of value to management of pharmaceutical industries in the development and implementation of practices for the improvement of employee performance. Limitations of the study included the focal domain of the study being only one company is used as the sample for pharmaceutical industries, while other organizations were neglected.

Other empirical research study on work-life balance and employee performance include those carried out by Bhende et al. (2020) which demonstrated that employees who balance work and personal life have higher performance levels and better work quality, as work-life balance helps employees focus and stay motivated, ultimately enhancing overall performance. Furthermore, the correlation between work-life balance and performance was further supported by the findings of Soliman (2023), who highlighted that employees with better work-life balance exhibited higher performance levels and better overall work performance. In addition, Wahyuni's (2024) study also indicated that employees who balance their work and personal lives are more productive and perform better than others. Studies by Leitão et al. (2021) and Hammer (2021) found that high levels of work-life conflict led to burnout, lower job satisfaction, and decreased performance. Preena (2021) revealed a strong positive relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in a Sri Lankan shipping company.

Literature Gap

Existing research focuses more on the presence of work-life balance policies and professional development programs rather than their effectiveness in implementation. For example, Hammer (2021) highlights the importance of organizational support in reducing work-life conflict but does not detail how this support is practically applied in daily work environments towards employee performance. By examining the theoretical framework, similar studies on work-life balance

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK adopted the Border theory rather than the Compensation theory, Resource Drain theory, Work-Family Enrichment Theory, or other theories. In the practical sense of work-life balance, these borders arise from the finite resources that every individual possesses, including limited time, energy, attention and psychological capacity.

Hence, this gap presents this study with a justification for adoption of these concepts, along with a multi-dimensional theoretical framework encompassing the Resource Drain theory and Work-Family Enrichment theory. This study considers the factors covered by the other theories and it extends on these by relating the theoretical with the practice of the subject of organisational policies having direct influence on the determination of balance between work and life, particularly in industries with diverse cultures where employees with multi-cultural backgrounds coexist. In the development consulting context, where various work experts and consultants from different countries operate, understanding these interactions can provide valuable insights for designing holistic organizational strategies that enhance employee well-being and performance. This presents an opportunity to explore an understudied population with a methodological need. To the researcher's best knowledge, this is the first study that systematically adapts multiple indicators used for measuring WLB, as derived from both organizational and individual WLB factors, encompassing both negative effects (where imbalance depletes resources and reduces performance) and positive effects (where balance enhances resources and boosts performance). While this study adopts Koopmans et al.'s (2013) 4-dimension indicators for measurement of Individual Work Performance; it also adapts Hayman's (2005) 15-item scale for measuring WLB on the factors of Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), and Work-Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE); with Frone's (2003) work-life conflict indicators of time, energy, psychological capacity and resource constraints. These indicators are justified by the multi-dimensional theoretical framework adopted by the study. Hence, this study will address the gap of instrument scales which may be adapted in the measurement of work-life balance as an inherently multi-directional construct, assuming either a positive or negative effect when analysed with other measured phenomena.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey research design, and using multi-stage stratified random sampling technique, collected data from a sample size of 395 respondents determined using the Taro Yamane formular. The population of the study consisted of all the 28,590 staff of 1,906 consulting firms in Nigeria. Primary data was collected from the respondents using questionnaires. The scales in the questionnaire were content validated and has a high correlation coefficient of 0.98. The data collected were checked for normality using the Skewness and Kurtosis statistic; and subsequently analyzed using Multiple Regression analysis. For operationalisation of the variables, the study adapts Hayman's (2005) 3-dimension indicators for measuring Work-Life Balance; while as a proxy for measuring Employee Productivity, it adapts Koopmans et al.'s (2013) 4-dimension indicators examining Task Performance, Contextual Performance, Adaptive Performance, and Counterproductive Work Behaviour.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Dependent Variable: Employee Performance (EP)	
Mean	3.267559
Standard Error	0.083905
Median	3.304348
Mode	3.652174
Standard Deviation	0.907577
Sample Variance	0.823695
Kurtosis	-0.20046
Skewness	-0.38171
Range	3.913043
Minimum	1
Maximum	4.913043
Sum	1289.304
Count	395

Source: Researcher's field survey (2026)

In testing for normality of the data, the Skewness statistic (-0.38171) and the Kurtosis statistic (-0.20046) are closer to 0 and between -2 and +2, which means the data achieves normality. Also, the Mean and Median values converge around the same unit value of 3.2 – 3.3, which confirms approximate normality.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Result

	Variable	Co-efficient	Standard Error	t-statistic	P-value
0	Intercept	1.599938179	0.218625901	7.318154759	.000
1	WIPL	0.61666573	0.058016148	10.62920852	.000
2	PLIW	0.195401466	0.051593892	3.787298439	.000
3	WPLE	-0.130474755	0.043534895	-2.997015514	.003
4	WPLC	-0.195863248	0.029238412	-6.698833235	.000

ANOVA

	df	SS	MS	F	Significance (F)
Regression	13	94.56696329	23.64174082	2697.297253	.000
Residual	379	0.89167711	0.008764974		
Total	394	95.5486404			

Regression Statistics

Multiple R	0.894849683
R Square	0.899725891
Adjusted R Square	0.899358959
Standard Error	0.083621441
Observations	395

Source: Researcher's field survey (2026)

The Adjusted R-square statistic (0.89) implies that approximately 89% of the variability in the dependent variable (Employee Performance) is explained by the model, implying that the model adapted by this study has a good fit. The Adjusted R-square is interpreted rather than the R-square as there are more than one independent variable in the model. The ANOVA F-statistic (2697.29) is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.000, and it also confirms the overall significance of the regression model.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀: Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL) has no significant effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

From the calculated t-statistic (10.629), coefficient (0.616) and associated p-value (0.000) of WIPL, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL) has a significant positive effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria. The coefficient value depicts that on the average, a unit increase in WIPL will increase employee performance by 0.616 units.

H₀: Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) has no significant effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

From the calculated t-statistic (3.787), coefficient (0.195) and associated p-value (0.000) of PLIW, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW) has a significant positive effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria. The coefficient value depicts that on the average, a unit increase in PLIW will increase employee performance by 0.195 units.

H₀: Work-Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) has no significant effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

From the calculated t-statistic (-2.997), coefficient (-0.13) and associated p-value (0.003) of WPLE, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that Work-Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) has a significant negative effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria. The coefficient value depicts that on the average, a unit increase in WPLE will decrease employee performance by 0.13 units.

H₀: Work-Personal Life Constraint (WPLC) has no significant effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria

From the calculated t-statistic (-6.698), coefficient (-0.195) and associated p-value (0.000) of WPLC, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis that Work-Personal Life Constraint (WPLC) has a significant negative effect on Employee Performance in the Development Consulting sector in Nigeria. The coefficient value depicts that on the average, a unit increase in WPLC will decrease employee performance by 0.195 units.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study illuminate the intricate and multi-dimensional relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. While some dimensions of work-life balance

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(Work Interference with Personal Life and Personal Life Interference with Work) had a positive effect on employee performance, others (Work-Personal Life Enhancement and Work-Personal Life Constraint) had a negative effect on employee performance. This results are in line with the theoretical literature, particularly the Resource Drain Theory and Work-Family Enrichment Theory, that work-life balance (WLB) is not a unidimensional construct that can just be measured by one variable. The different organizational and individual practices are what make up the construct of work-life balance.

Hence, it encompasses both the negative effects and positive effects in balancing resources, time and productivity within the unique context of development consulting firms operating in Nigeria, with an environment characterised by high job demands (donor pressure, security risks, infrastructure deficits) and high job rewards (meaningful mission, competitive pay, career growth). The Resource Drain theory predicted negative outcomes due to demanding schedules and roles both at work and at home, while the Work-Family Enrichment Theory predicted positive outcomes as the resources gained in one role enhance performance in the other role. The findings of this study show that together, these theories provide a robust foundation for examining the full effect of work-life balance on employee performance for future studies.

Some respondents suggested that working from home does not affect work performance or their personal life. This is in agreement with the study of Wolor et al. (2021) that said conflicts due to work or non-work obligations do not affect the employee performance as the employees were thankful that they are still working. Regardless of non-work-related factors triggered at home, they concentrate on performing and doing their job. However, this is in contrast to the results from the study that revealed a significant effect of work-life balance on employees' performance due to such factors (Abioro et al., 2018).

Research by Bhende et al. (2020) demonstrated that employees who balance work and personal life have higher productivity levels and better work quality. Work-life balance helps employees focus and stay motivated, ultimately enhancing overall performance. This correlation between work-life balance and productivity was further supported by the findings of Soliman (2023), who highlighted that employees with better work-life balance exhibited higher productivity levels and better overall work performance. In addition, Wahyuni's (2024) study also indicated that employees who balance their work and personal lives are more productive and perform better than others.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The general conclusion of this study is that work-life balance has a significant effect on employee performance in the development consulting sector in Nigeria. This study explored the intricate relationship between work-life balance and employee performance and addressed key research questions on how the dimensional constructs of Work Interference with Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference with Work (PLIW), Work-Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE) and Work-Personal Life Constraint (WPLC) factors on the overall employee performance. The value of this research lies in its contribution to academic knowledge and practical application. The

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originality of this study is evident in its holistic approach, emphasizing the importance of integrating work-life balance policies with continuous professional development to achieve sustainable employee performance.

When comparing these findings with previous research, this study's results are consistent with earlier studies showing that work-life balance affects employee performance, however it goes further to determine the direction of effect from the aforementioned multiple factors that measure the concept of work-life balance. The practical implications of these findings are crucial for managers and organizational leaders. Organizations should adopt a holistic approach that includes work-life balance policies and professional development programs to improve employee performance. Sustainable policies such as remote work, flexible physical work hours, scheduled career breaks/sabbaticals, trainings on managing job stress within a competitive environment, timely notification on change in work schedule, and option of decline for overtime work, can help employees better manage their personal and professional lives. Organizational leaders should also promote a work culture that supports work-life balance. This can be achieved by demonstrating empathy, providing necessary resources, and encouraging employees to continue learning and growing.

In addition, organisations should provide supportive organisational culture and educate employees to fully understand available WLB policies, practices and implementation measures in order for them to take full advantage of such policies. This increases the levels of job satisfaction, commitment and engagement as it ultimately increases the performance of the employees. It is also helpful in reducing the stress level of employees. As an addition to knowledge on research proxies for measuring the construct of work-life balance with a multi-directional view, this study also lends strong evidence to the inclusion of the dimension of “Work-Personal Life Constraint” when adapting instrument scales in the measurement and examination of work-life balance, in relation to the Resource Drain Theory.

Suggestions for Further Studies

As employees all over the world slowly begin to leverage technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) toward working smart, not hard, further studies could distinguish between employee productivity (output per hour while working remotely) and employee presenteeism (being physically present at work but mentally absent). In the Nigerian development consulting sector, where physical work presence is often culturally valued, the findings of such a study could liberate employees to work smarter, not just longer. Future research could also benefit from a larger, more diverse sample and a mixed-methods approach across diverse industries to further validate and expand upon these findings. These limitations serve as a foundation for future studies to build upon, offering guidance for researchers and practitioners aiming to enhance employee performance through strategic organizational practices.

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