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Original Research

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WORK-FAMILY BALANCE BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE ACADEMIC STAFF OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN OSUN STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Maintaining a healthy balance between one's professional and family roles is a growing difficulty for both employees and employers. This study is a comparative study of work-family balance between male and female academic staff of selected universities in Osun state. It was aimed at understanding the significant relationship between work-related experiences and work-family balance among male and female academic staff. A systematically random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Statistical methods such as percentages, means, standard deviations and regression analysis were used for the study. The findings indicated that the differences in coping strategies and the ability to maintain a healthy work-family balance between male and female academic staff at both universities were not statistically significant. In other words, male academics employed a smaller number of techniques than their female counterparts. It was recommended that universities implement institutional policies in order to demonstrate their commitment to creating a family- and worker-friendly environment.

Keywords: Family life, Healthy balance, Work-Family balance, Work life.

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INTRODUCTION

Finding a healthy balance between work and personal life is a challenge faced by individuals of all ages and occupations (Parker, 2015; Vasumathi, 2018). It can be difficult to achieve a healthy balance between work and personal life due to the competing demands of both work and family (Shalini, 2017). Maintaining a healthy balance between one's professional, domestic and personal obligations can sometimes be difficult (Ojo et al., 2021). Unhealthy work-life balance is associated with mental and behavioural health issues such as anxiety, depression, guilt, decreased levels of productivity. A lack of a healthy balance between work and personal life might result in elevated levels of stress and fatigue (Parker, 2015). Because of this, both men and women struggle to find a good balance between their work and personal lives (Ojo et al., 2021).

Numerous programmes emphasizing work-life balance have been established over the years in an effort to facilitate a more favourable balance for employees (Bataineh, 2019). However, the majority of the focus has been on women in the workplace, and men and those nearing retirement age are frequently less likely to participate in these activities (Toffoletti & Starr, 2016). To get started, you must have a thorough understanding of the word "work-life balance" and its precise meaning. The concept of "work-life balance" has not been sufficiently characterized in previous research in a clear and consistent manner (Ravenswood & Harris, 2016). The vast majority of definitions, according to Bataineh (2019), can be classified as either absolute or situational in character. More situational definitions acknowledge that the "work-life balance" is changeable and dependent on the individual's personal ideals and life circumstances. When a person is satisfied with his or her level of functioning in all parts of life (including work, family and leisure) he or she is said to have attained work life balance (Bataineh, 2019). Finding a healthy balance between work and life does not include completing the tasks related to one's many vocations, but rather engaging in the activities of each (Ravenswood & Harris, 2016). This implies that a person does not ignore responsibilities, but rather finds a way to maintain a major involvement with friends, leisure activities, community activities, religious activities and family commitments while still attaining their employment needs (Ravenswood & Harris, 2016). This type of definition puts the focus on a person's ability to find a good balance between their work and personal lives.

Throughout African history, women in traditional African societies performed the great majority of unpaid labour. However, the assault of globalization and the alteration of women's position in the workforce have generated a huge array of pressure points that push both men and women to work for paid employment while also performing unpaid domestic obligations (Sheldon, 2019).

Despite the fact that work-family balance is difficult to achieve for both men and women across all professional paths, female academics in patriarchal societies such as Nigeria are more likely than male academics to face work-family imbalance due to incompatible expectations. Despite the difficulty of achieving work-family balance in patriarchal societies like Nigeria (Ong et

al., 2020), there are various aspects of academic employment that affect one's work and family duties. Academics seeking promotions, for instance, must demonstrate a high level of expertise in both contemporary research and publication in journals with a high impact factor (Tai et al., 2021). In addition to other everyday employment tasks, such as being a teacher, advisor, editor, consultant or committee member, a substantial amount of effort is expended on this component. The feeling of conflict is caused by these clashing responsibilities (Hashim&Shawkataly, 2017). Both a person's work and family rank among the most important aspects of adulthood. Work and family life have the potential to clash, and vice versa. Both can simultaneously maintain their equilibrium. Because of globalization, equal employment opportunities, changes in working hours and changes in the population, both people and businesses are facing big problems.

Work and family each have their own definitions; and these definitions suggest that establishing "work-family balance" is a challenging task. According to Kim Yoo-Kyung & Koo, Hye-Ryoung (2016), "work-family balance" refers to the proper management of paid employment and family-related activities. Work-family balance was defined by Ojo et al. in 2021 as the degree to which a person is committed to and happy with both his work and family roles.

A company's employees are its most valuable asset due to their significance to the company's daily operations and ultimate success (Mohsan, Nawaz, Khan, Shaukat, and Aslam, 2011). Managers are more aware than ever before that employees play a crucial role in the promotion of the organization's image, its competitiveness and, eventually, its economic success (Kim Yoo-Kyung & Koo, Hye-Ryoung, 2016; Austin-Egole, Iheriohanma & Nwokorie, 2020). Businesses are frequently concerned with their employees' output; maximizing their efficiency and potential; retaining individuals through job satisfaction; and maintaining their loyalty to the organization. This explains why majority of workers will be compelled to devote more time and energy to their employment at the expense of their family obligations. Work-family conflicts commonly arise when individuals refuse to juggle the demands of their employment and their families. This disagreement has the capacity to destroy productivity, turnover, satisfaction, motivation, organizational dedication and morale. Additionally, it has the ability to undermine morale. Work-family balance involves the phenomena of work-family conflict as well. If a person has attained a healthy work-family balance, it is likely that there will be no conflict between their professional and personal lives. The terms "work-family conflict" and "work-family collision" are used to describe an unbalanced work-family relationship (Muluk, 2017).

Work-family balance has been the subject of some empirical studies within the area of business. Some chronic incapacity of corporate employees to manage work and family duties can lead to increasing absenteeism and turnover, decreased productivity, decreased job satisfaction, lower levels of organizational loyalty and growing healthcare expenditures. Additionally, this limitation can have an adverse effect on the health of employees' families (Srivastava & Srivastava, 2019). Similarly, research indicates that keeping a healthy balance between work and family life may increase productivity (Ojo et al., 2021). Lyness and Judiesch (2008) were

concerned about the impact that managers' capacity to maintain a healthy work-family balance would have opportunities for career advancement. They discovered that managers with a better balance between their professional and home lives were viewed as having greater career progression chances. Kim Yoo-Kyung & Koo, Hye-Ryoung (2016) examined how men and women in midlife balance professional and family obligations and came to the conclusion that both men and women try to find a balance between their home life and their work life.

Similar to how certain professions are more demanding than others, diverse family configurations have varying time, financial and care requirements. For example, households with young children have a higher need for child care services than those with older children or adolescents. Those who do not have small children may not require child care but they may have an aged parent who requires care and financial assistance (Srivastava&Srivastava, 2019). Abnormal behavior in the children, duplication of dwellings, parental separation, and divorce are all potential outcomes that might directly result from an imbalance in the household.

Abdullahi (2019) determined through qualitative research that the indicator consists of life-related aspects such as work-related stress, a personal concept, leisure activities and social obligations. In addition, an attempt was made to understand how Indian employees view maintaining a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives. The data revealed that male and female business owners had vastly different methods of combining their work and family lives, regardless of whether or not they were married. The research did not, however, examine how Indian business owners managed their work and family lives, nor did it analyze the difficulties they faced in attempting to achieve this balance. In the study conducted by Ojo et al. (2021) and titled "self-efficacy and social support as predictors of work-family balance," the researchers discovered that social support was much more influential than self-efficacy.

In the empirical research conducted by Goldner (2015), which examined two dimensions of work-family interfaces, it was discovered that both work interference with family and family interference with work occur in the Nigerian context. A poll of Nigerian executives found that job-related variables (such as the importance of one's career, the number of hours spent working, and the level of involvement in one's work) were strongly associated with the extent to which one's work interfered with their family life. This held true for both male and female executive positions. It was found that only one family-related factor (the number of children) had a significant effect on how much family life got in the way of work for female.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As the border between home and work continues to blur, there is a growing concern about how difficult it will be for working professionals to juggle their work commitments with their other obligations (Parker, 2015). Employers, employees, researchers and legislators are placing an increasing emphasis on work-family harmony (Srivastava & Srivastava, 2019). Employers seek solutions to the difficulties workers have while attempting to maintain a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives in order to boost employee productivity. It

would suggest that female academics work longer hours, which contribute to an increase in family conflict. When the expectations of family members are disregarded, there is an imbalance between work and family as well as an excess of responsibilities (Ojo et al., 2021). As a result of changes in socioeconomic variables and societal attitudes regarding work and family, maintaining a healthy work-life balance is now a fundamental daily duty for both male and female academic professionals. Despite the fact that keeping a healthy work-life balance was once more difficult, this is still true. This study is being done because no known empirical study has been done on how academic staff in universities in Osun State balance work and family life.

This study takes into account the fact that female and male academics have diverse work histories and various family responsibilities. This is due to societal and cultural expectations regarding the roles that men and women should play in the house as well as a lack of institutional assistance and comprehension of family issues. Both male and female academics confront additional obstacles as a result of the imbalance between work and family brought about by the different roles they occupy within their organizations. Even though there is a lot of literature about how work and family affect each other, not much has been written about how academic staff at institutions of higher learning in the state of Osun balance their work and family live. This is why a comparative study is needed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives guided the study.

- (1). To investigate if there is a significant mean differences between coping strategies and balancing work-family among male and female academic staff of Bowen University and Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU).
- (2). To ascertain if there is a significant relationship between work-related experiences and work-family balance among male and female academic staff of Bowen university and Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU).

Research Questions

- (1). What significant mean differences exist between coping strategies and balancing work-family among male and female academic staff of Bowen university and Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)?
- (2). What significant relationship exist between work-related experiences and work-family balance among male and female academic staff of Bowen University and Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)?

Hypotheses

- H₀: There is no significant mean difference between coping strategies and balancing work-family among male and female academic staff of Bowen University and OAU.
- H₀: There is no significant relationship between work-related experiences and work-family balance among male and female academic staff of Bowen University and OAU.

METHODOLOGY

The research employed a descriptive cross-sectional methodology. Using a questionnaire, work-related experiences and family obligations affecting work-family balance among male and female academic staff at ObafemiAwolowo University (OAU) and Bowen University were discovered and evaluated. This study's population consisted of faculty members from two universities in Osun State. The study included 834 academic employees from OAU, consisting of 667 males and 167 females, and 232 academic staff from Bowen University, consisting of 164 males and 68 females.

The population for this study consisted of academic staff of two selected universities in Osun State. There were 834 academic staff in OAU which comprised 667 males and 167 females and 232 academic staff in Bowen University made up of 164 males and 68 females drawn for the study. The sample for the study comprised of married male and female academic staff. Systematic random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Both Universities were classified into homogeneous group (existing faculties; 13 in OAU and 7 in Bowen University). Specifically, 15 male and nine female academics in OAU while nine male and five female academics in Bowen University were randomly selected. There were 282 respondents from OAU and 70 respondents from Bowen University making a total of 352 respondents (35% of the total population of academic staff of both Universities).

The information necessary for this investigation was gathered from primary data sources. In the month of March 2014, data were collected Monday through Friday, excluding public holidays, for four weeks until the required sample size was reached. The information was gathered via a semi-structured questionnaire. Only subjects who met the inclusion criteria were considered for the study. The researcher described the goal and benefits of the study as well as the means by which confidentiality would be maintained. When appropriate, pertinent information regarding the study was provided. Each questionnaire was divided into four sections, labeled A, B, C and D. In Section A, information on socio-demographic variables such as age, gender and marital status, among others, of the academic staff were included. Section B inquired about work-related experiences that influenced work-family balance. Section C included questions regarding the impact of family obligations on work demand. Section D included questions about achieving a work-family balance through coping mechanisms. The in-depth interviews allowed for a more in-depth examination of areas that the questionnaire could not adequately address.

RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents

Socio-economic characteristics	University				Total	
	OAU		Bowen University		Male	Female
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Age group						
<30 years	14 (8.4)	8 (14.0)	-	2(10.0)	14(6.7)	10(13.0)
30 – 39 years	49 (29.3)	20 (35.1)	3(7.0)	5(25.0)	52(24.8)	25(32.5)
40 – 49 years	68 (40.7)	21 (36.8)	16(37.2)	11(55.0)	84(40.0)	32(41.6)
50 – 59 years	23 (13.8)	8 (14.0)	8(18.6)	-	31(14.8)	8(10.4)
60 years & above	13 (7.8)	-	16(37.2)	2(10.0)	29(13.8)	2(2.6)
Religion						
Christianity	139 (83.2)	48(84.2)	42(97.7)	20(100.0)	181(86.2)	68(88.3)
Islam	28 (16.8)	9 (15.8)	1(2.3)	-	29(13.8)	9(11.7)
Job rank						
GA	19(11.4)	7(12.3)	-	1(5.0)	19(9.0)	8(10.4)
AL	24(14.4)	9(15.8)	6(14.0)	5(25.0)	30(14.3)	14(18.2)
LII	28(16.8)	11(19.3)	11(25.6)	4(20.0)	39(18.6)	15(19.5)
LI	33(19.8)	16(28.1)	9(20.9)	4(20.0)	42(20.0)	20(26.0)
SL	34(20.4)	9(15.8)	9(20.9)	2(10.0)	43(20.5)	11(14.3)
Reader	11(6.6)	2(3.5)	3(7.0)	4(20.0)	14(6.7)	6(7.8)
Professor	18(10.8)	3(5.3)	5(11.6)	-	23(11.0)	3(3.9)
Length of service in years						
<10years	87(52.1)	36(63.2)	21(48.8)	13(65.0)	108(51.4)	49(63.6)
10-19 years	45(26.9)	18(31.6)	14(32.6)	6(30.0)	59(28.1)	24(31.2)
20-29 years	19(11.4)	2(3.5)	2(4.7)	1(5.0)	21(10.0)	3(3.9)
30-39 years	16(9.6)	1(1.8)	6(14.0)	-	22(10.0)	1(1.3)
Marital Status						
Married & WS	142(85.0)	45(78.9)	40(93.0)	20(100)	182(86.7)	65(84.4)
Divorced	2(1.2)	1(1.80)	1(2.3)	-	3(1.4)	1(1.3)
Widowed	2(1.2)	3(5.30)	-	-	2(1.0)	3(3.9)
Married & not WS	20(12.0)	7(12.3)	2(2.7)	-	22(10.5)	7(9.1)
Highest educational qualification						
Bachelor degree	14(8.4)	6(10.50)	1(2.3)		15(7.1)	6(7.8)
Master degree	47(28.10)	18(31.6)	20(46.5)	10(50.0)	67(31.9)	28(36.4)
Doctorate degree	106(63.5)	33(57.9)	22(51.2)	10(50.0)	128(61.0)	43(55.8)

Source: Field Work 2019

Table 1 above presents the distribution of the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. Respondents in ages 40-49 years constituted majority of the married academic staff in both universities and 37.2 percent of the male respondents in Bowen University were of the ages 60 years and above. It could be observed that there were more elderly academic staff that have retired from public universities to further their career in private universities.

Data on religion of the respondents showed that majority of respondents were Christians, 86.2 percent male and 88.3 percent female were Christians. Notably, all female respondents in Bowen University were Christians. This is probably a pointer to religious preference of the employer being a faith-based owned institution. It can also be seen that religion permeates all aspects of human life and experience (Durkheim, 1912) since every respondent indicated being attached to one religious faith or another.

The job rank of respondents reflected that at entry level of graduate assistant, almost equal number of females and males were employed: 9.0 percent and 10.4 percent in OAU and Bowen University respectively. This in part reflected gender equality. Also 20.5 percent of the male respondents from both universities were senior lecturers (SL) while 26.0 percent of the female respondents were lecturer 1 position (L1). This suggested that males were more in SL rank and females more amongst L1.

Lastly, 39.5 percent males and 42.9 percent females were less than 10 years in wedlock. The marital status of respondents showed that 86.7 percent and 84.4 percent of married males and females lived with spouses in both universities. All the married females in Bowen University indicated they were living with their spouses and the result also revealed that 61.0 percent of male and 55.8 percent of female academic staff in both universities had Ph.D certificate.

Table 2: Difference of Means for Coping Strategies in Balancing Work and Family with Respect to Staff Gender

Academic Staff	OAU				Bowen University			
	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney	Asym p. Sig.	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney	Asymp. Sig.
Male	167	104.59	3439.000	0.001	43	29.71	331.500	0.137
Female	57	135.67			20	36.92		
Total								
N		Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney		Asymp. Sig.		
210		134.96		6186.000		0.02		
77		168.66						

Source: Field Work 2019

Table 2 above presents the difference in coping strategies in balancing work and family with respect to gender. Academic staff’s coping strategies and work-family balance were ranked, ordered by the staff in OAU, Bowen Universities and (Combination of both universities). Mann-Whitney U test was used to compared the ranks for the OAU male (n=167) and female (n=57) academic staff. The test revealed a significant difference between the staff, where female academic staff was ranked higher in coping strategies than their male counterparts, $U = 3439$, asymp. sig = 0.001 $p < 0.05$. The sum of the ranks was equal to 104 for the former group and 135 for the latter group.

For Bowen University, male (n=43) and female (n=20) academic staff, the test revealed no significant difference between the staff where female academic staff tended to rank higher in coping strategies than their male counterparts, $U = 331.500$, asymp. sig = 0.137 $p > 0.05$. The sum of the ranks was equal to 29.71 for the former group and 37.92 for the latter group. Moreover, general difference was also considered, male (n=210) and female (n=77) academic staff. The test revealed a significant difference between the staff where female academic staff were ranked higher in coping strategies than their male counterparts, $U = 6186.000$, asymp. sig = 0.02 $p < 0.05$. The sum of the ranks was equal to 134 for the former group and 168 for the latter group. This therefore, established that coping strategies among the staff were different from each other. In other words, male academics had lower strategies compared to female academics.

Table 3: Difference of Mean for the Interface between Work and Family among Academic Staff

Work and Family Interface	OAU				BOWEN University			
	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney	Asym p. Sig.	N	Mean	Mann-Whitney	Asymp. Sig.
Male	167	111.72	4630.00	0.759	43	29.43	319.50	0.102
Female	57	114.77			0	20	37.52	
Total								
	N	Mean	Mann-Whitney		Asymp. Sig.			
	210	141.35	7527		0.03			
	77	151.24						

Source: Field Work 2019

Table 3 above presents the extent of burden of interface of work and family among academic staff and it was ranked ordered by the staff in OAU and Bowen University. Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the ranks for the OAU male (n=167) and female (n=57) academic staff. The test revealed a significant difference between the staff, where female academic staff tended to rank higher than their male counterparts, $U = 4630.000$, asymp. sig = 0.759 where $p > 0.05$.

The sum of the ranks was equal to 111.72 for the male group and 114.77 for the female group for the Bowen University, male (n= 43) and female (n=20) academic staff. The test revealed a significant difference between the staff, where female academic staff tended to rank higher than their male counterpart, $U = 319.50$, $\text{asympt. sig} = 0.102$, where $p > 0.05$. The sum of the ranks was equal to 29.43 for the male group and 37.52 for the female group. Furthermore, the same test was carried out for the two universities, male (n=210) and female (n=77) academic staff. The test revealed a significant difference between the staff, where female academic staff tended to rank higher than their male counterparts, $U = 318.500$, $\text{asympt. sig} = 0.03$ $p < 0.05$. The sum of the ranks was equal to 141 for the male group and 151 for the female group. Conclusively, extent of burden of interface of work and family was higher for female compared to their male counterparts.

4.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to advance knowledge on the subject of maintaining a good work-family balance among university faculty in the state of Osun. According to the findings of various studies, maintaining a healthy balance between one's work and personal commitments is one of the most fundamental characteristics of successful organizations and employees. This is because the funds from work are used to provide for the family and if the family is neglected in favour of one's career, there will be no one to rely on in the event of job loss.

The first hypothesis, which asserts there are no meaningful differences, is rejected. It was determined that the differences in coping strategies and the ability to maintain a healthy work-family balance between male and female academic staff at Bowen University and OAU were not statistically significant, indicating that staff members employed a variety of coping strategies. In other words, male academics employed a smaller number of techniques than their female counterparts. This provides validity to Ogbogu's (2013) assertion that variables such as extended work hours, packed schedules and other comparable difficulties have a negative impact on academic women's job performance and well-being. In addition, contrary to the findings of this study, Safari et al. (2012) discovered that female academics are more likely than their male colleagues to use coping methods that are entrenched in work-related experiences. In this study, however, male academics were shown to be more involved with work-related experiences that led to coping skills than female academics, which is consistent with the conclusion that academic staff from private institutions demonstrated a greater degree of coping skills.

The second hypothesis, that there is no significant association between work-related experiences and work-family balance among male and female academic staff at Bowen University and OAU, was rejected among female academics from both universities ($\chi^2 = 5.33$; $p < 0.05$). This suggests that there is an association between work-related events and the capacity to maintain a healthy work-family balance. According to Olatunji & Akinlabi (2012), women in academics experience greater occupational stress than men in academics. It is likely that this is

the outcome of social gender role expectations for women that differ from their workplace experiences. In accordance with the findings of Bennett's (2006) study, family-related obligations were stronger for female academics due to role pressure and overflow between work and family obligations. Additionally, women are more likely than men to undertake jobs at home. Greenhaus et al. (2006) concur with the conclusion that family responsibilities had a greater influence on the professional commitment and performance of married female employees than they did on their married male

CONCLUSION

Work and family were discovered to be two desired realities that required equal attention to attain balance among the male and female academics who participated in this survey. This was determined to be the case by the findings of this survey. Academic men and women are able to find a balance between their professional and domestic responsibilities. Female academics, on the other hand, were subjected to a greater burden of interaction than their male counterparts and employed a greater number of coping mechanisms in order to achieve a sense of equilibrium than their male counterparts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, a number of recommendations are offered to address issues of work-family balance.

- It is evident that changes need to be made at the policy level to ensure that gender becomes an integral part of educational policies. Gender-friendly policies, such as those that enable academic staff to balance work and family demands without creating interference between having family and establishing an optimal career path. These should include policies that make provisions for excess work load for both male and female academic staff so as to have time enough for family responsibilities, flexible time and job sharing, making available internet facilities as a means of coping strategies. Also to bring to bear the strict process for promotion so that it can be favorable to both male and female academics. This would enable academic staff to develop their maximum potential.
- More so, seeing that female academic staff had dual roles in terms of involvement to family responsibilities as well as work place responsibilities, they have proven not to be equal to their male counterparts. The finding implies that both male and female academic staff should be involved in family responsibilities so as to reduce the burden off both male and female in academics.

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