

# Work-Life Balance and Work Engagement of Electricity Distribution Firms in South-South, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study examined the relationship between work-life balance and work engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria. The cross-sectional survey was adopted and a total of two thousand seven hundred and ninety-four (2794) employees of Port Harcourt electricity distribution firms and Benin electricity distribution firms employees was covered. A sample size of three hundred and fifty employees was drawn from the population. The simple random sampling technique was used in this study. Data were collected from respondents using copies of questionnaire. The retrieved data was analysed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The result revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the work-life balance with the measures of work engagement (emotional engagement and physical engagement). The study concluded that both emotional engagement and physical engagement are positively influenced by work-life balance. Hence, the study recommended among others that electricity distribution firms should implement flexible work arrangements and promote a healthy work-life balance. Providing options such as flexible schedules or remote work can contribute to physical engagement by reducing stress and fatigue, leading to a more energized and engaged workforce*

**Keywords:** *Work-Life Balance; Work Engagement; Emotional Engagement; Physical Engagement.*

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## 1.0 Introduction

Considering the role of electricity distribution company to the general development and wellbeing of other sectors, it is important that the employees get engaged in their job as their engagement will not only affect the electricity distribution companies but will also have an impact on the success of firms in other sector. The engagement of employees in organization has been one of the most discuss construct in the field of management owing to its ability to boost and improve the fortune and total wellbeing of the organization. According to Isimoya, Bakare and Olaniyan (2020) work engagement of employees in the workplace make the employees to display high passion towards their work because the job engagement serve as a cord that bond the employees with their given responsibilities in the workplace. In congruence with the above assertion, Andrew, *et al.* (2017) maintained that the engagement of the employees make it difficult for the employees to leave the organization and enhance their retention rate.

The ability to engage employees in this stiffened competitive global business environment is desirable not only because an engaged employee is likely to go the extra mile, have a longer stay with an organisation, but also, are able to utilize their skills to perform their jobs along with their supervisors and co-workers energetically toward achieving organisational goals (Memon et al., 2018). According to Isimoya, Bakare, & Olaniyan (2020) employee engagement refers to harnessing organisation members' selves to their work roles In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally.

The quest towards improving engagement is an unending desire in organization and the work-life balance in the workplace has a way of influencing the attitude and general outcomes of individual in organization. Work-life balance is an inherent component of the quality of working life and hence an issue of growing significance in contemporary labour markets. Clark (2000) defined work-life balance as the measure by which individuals are proportionately occupied as well as fulfilled with work and family roles). The authors argued that job quality covers the quality of work and the quality of employment in the workplace. Work-life balance (WLB) is defined as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum conflict (Clark, 2000). In other words, quality of employment refers to the conditions and ethics of employment, monetary and non-pecuniary benefits, working time arrangements and work-life balance, employment security and social protection, skills development and training as well as work motivation and employment-related relationships of an individual (Achatz & Gundert, 2017). Several scholarly works has been carried out by scholars on job engagement. Clement and Eketu (2019) examined organizational climate relate with engagement of workers in the deposit money banks in Rivers State. A close investigation into the engagement of employees in the electricity distribution companies was carried out by Ohiare and Amah (2023) where they looked into the relationship between reward programmes and engagement of employees. There is however a dearth of work on how work-life balance relate with work engagement of electricity distribution companies in South-South Nigeria. This study is thus informed to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between work-life balance and work engagement of electricity distribution companies in South-South Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The present workplace is gradually been replaced with employees who like to try different work environment before building a career within a certain workplace. This quest of working in a different work setting has intensified the problem of low engagement of the workers which has negatively impacted the financial outcome of the organization. Schrita and Mohamad (2020) noted that productivity of the firm is most likely to derail when the employees are not well engaged in their work. Ozigi and Amah (2022) posited that the problem of employee engagement in the electricity distribution company has become more worrisome because most of the workers pay little or no concern about the security of the company's property. The need to tackle the challenges of low engagement has made many scholars to search for ways to enhance employee engagement (Akhigbe & Osita-Ejikeme, 2021).

In addition, twice as many are so disengaged that this negative behavior is spread to other employees (Bersin, 2014). Employee engagement has emerged as one of the greatest challenges in today's workplace. With complexities and stringent regulations in many organizations,

employee engagement has continued to challenge organizations in the future (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). The quest towards addressing the challenge of engagement has led to focus on things to better the work-life balance of the employees. Work-life balance of the employees can impact their psychological state which could help improve their positive attitude towards the organization. It is on this premise that this study examined how the engagement of employees can be enhanced from the standpoint of work-life balance.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives are to;

- i. Investigate the effect of work-life balance on emotional engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria.
- ii. Determine the implication of work-life balance on physical engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions served as a guide in this study;

- i. What is the effect of work-life balance on emotional engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the implication of work-life balance on physical engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses served as tentative answers to the research hypotheses

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant effect of work-life balance on emotional engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria.

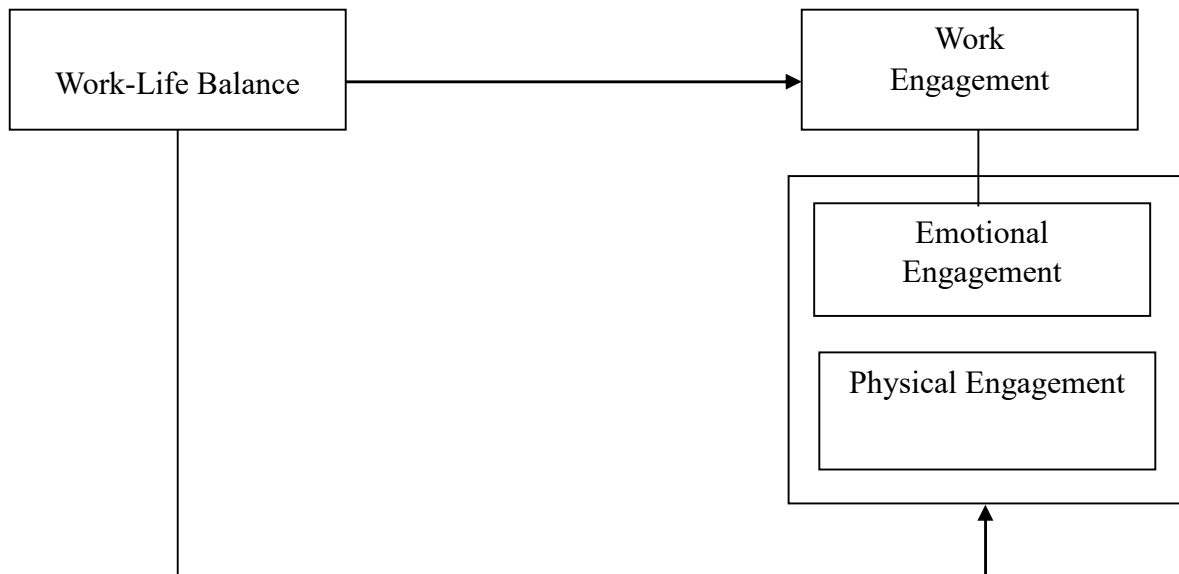
Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant implication of work-life balance on physical engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

This research is anchored on the Social Comparison Theory. Social exchange theory (SET) is the most theory used and accepted by recent researchers on the topic of employee engagement, which provides a meaningful and theoretical basis for understanding, plus studying the engagement of individuals in the workplace (Saks, 2006). The (SET) was constructed by Blau (1964) and Emerson (1981). It provides a basis for manager role in creating feelings of employee obligations to reciprocate the organization and showing positive work attitude (Blau, 1964;

Masa'deh et al., 2018). While Emerson (1981) defines (SET) as the involvement of two people who provide benefits to each other and contingent upon benefits by others. People in this theory, are able to make the social decision at their workplace based on the recognized cost and mutual benefit. So, they will be engaged in work actions when there is a fair system in the job (Dajani, 2015) because exchange role usually involves reciprocity or repayment principles, such as the action of one side create and lead to a response by another side (Saks, 2006). For example, when individuals are assured security in their job or employment, or receive economic and social-emotional resources from the organizations they work for, they feel obligated to respond showing the engaged behavior inking of repaying (Arunkumar & Renugadevi, 2013). The employees feel obligated to bring themselves more deeply into their role performance as repayment for the resources they receive from their organization, and when the institution's fails to provide these resources, individuals are more likely for disengaging themselves from their function (Kahn, 1990). Based on (SET) when the employee has given empowerment and training needed, he/she feels a sense of consideration and repays his/her organization by showing engaged behavior which effects on employee performance (Nawaz et al., 2014).

### Conceptual Framework



**Source:** Sloan centre on aging & at Boston College, 2018. (Work-Life Balance), (Piasna 2023) Kumara Somi & Reny, Rastag (2019), Navneet Gera, R.K. Shama and Panla, Saini (2019), (Employee Engagement), (Shaufeli 2022)

## **Work-Life Balance**

The term "work-life balance" refers to striking a balance between work and personal time. According to Lazar et al. (2010), maintaining a sense of overall harmony in one's life requires striking a balance between the time and effort an individual invests in both professional and personal pursuits. Job-life balance, according to Otieno (2010), is the act of successfully juggling paid job with other activities that are essential to people. Work-life balance (WLB) is very imperative to any organizations and individuals to obtain top-notch management of various tasks at the place of work, place of rest, and personal life, as workers/individuals with high work-life balance tends to contribute more towards organizational growth and success ( Akhigbe, 2021).

As women's participation in the labour force increases, work-life balance is becoming increasingly valued, and at the same time, a policy focus. Lack of work-life balance can influence employee wellbeing and performance on the job, as well as having negative spillover effects at home (cited in Norris 2004). Implementing work-life balance can be difficult. For example, a survey of Australian and New Zealand workers found that respondents thought 'trust and respect' with their manager and company more important in achieving work-life balance than 'a broad range of flexible work practice options and family support initiatives' (Kerslake 2002:29). Work-life balance was conducive to productive and less stressed employees (Kerslake 2002). Recognising that achieving a balance between paid work and other activities that matter had become a significant challenge for some people, the Government established the Work-Life Balance Project. Led by the Department of Labour, this project aims to develop policies and practices promoting a better balance between paid work and life outside of work.

Findings from case study research and a consultation exercise showed that people on lower incomes had the greatest difficulty in achieving work-life balance, highlighting the importance of job security, decent pay and conditions in achieving work-life balance. Areas where government regulation could improve opportunities for work-life balance, especially for low-income, casual and precarious workers, included better leave provisions, breastfeeding breaks, and income support (DoL 2004b).

## **Work Engagement**

Work engagement or worker engagement is a business management concept. In connection with this, Mujiarsih and Jenita, (2012) means that: Work engagement or worker engagement is a business management concept which states that employees with high engagement are employees who have full involvement and have high morale in their work as well as in matters relating to the activities of the company in the long run. Meanwhile, according to Schaufeli et al., (2002) "engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption". That engagement as a positive, emotional and motivational state of mind is characterized by passion, dedication and absorption.

Based on the concept of Schaufeli et al. (2002) it can be explained that engagement is a force that refers to energetic work, being ambitious enough to work hard, even in difficult situations. This dedication is linked to meaningful work experience and dedication in the work signal that the individual prides in his work, finding inspiration. Exist within the organizational reward system which, if implemented by an employee, will improve the functioning of the organization. The

concept of work engagement by Kahn in Saks, (2006) "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances ". Kahn defines personal involvement as a process that leverages the members of the organization to play a role in their work; involvement, people work and express physically, cognitively, and emotionally directed to show their performance. Richard et al, (2009) for example, Nelsons and Simmons, argues that: Job involvement is a set of work attitudes that bring employees to feel positive emotions for their work to become meaningful individuals, consider their workload to be managed, and have hope about the future of their work.

### **Emotional engagement**

Employee emotional engagement refers to employees' feelings of attachment, commitment and loyalty towards their jobs. It measures how emotionally attached an employee is to their job and its tasks, goals, and mission. Emotional engagement is based on the process of managing one's emotions while at work. People who are emotionally involved in their jobs are more likely to feel good or happy about it, and experiencing such a positive effect gives them a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction for a job well done (Lawal, 1993) Employee emotional engagement can be increased through activities such as providing recognition for achievements, offering rewards/perks, creating a sense of ownership among employees, and giving them opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the organisation.

Kahn (1990) states engagement is a motivational concept and it is unique from one employee to another. It develops an employee's full potential physically, cognitively and emotionally according to the work role performance. The emotional engagement deals with how the employee feels about their role and if they possess a positive or negative attitude towards the organization and its leader(s). Emotionally engaged employees feel a sense of pride in their job and organization; hence, possesses a sense of ownership and therefore, likely to stay and deliver optimal performance (Dale, 2012).

### **Physical engagement**

Physical engagement is tied to physical (and mental) well-being. One of the leading drivers of employee engagement is whether or not employees feel their leaders care about them and are invested in their health and well-being. Employee's attitude and activities show that they are invested in the work. Employees who are physically engaged devote their emotional and physical energy to work. People with a lot of energy have better overall health, which allows them to contribute more to business (Nwa, 1999). To get the most out of the workforce, a business needs to ensure that its employees are physical and mentally healthy. This has become even more important with the rising health crises worldwide. Many companies do not just offer medical coverage for their employees. They also offer mental health services to those who need support. According to (Lawal, 1993) a healthy, active workforce is one that is also productive and creative. This applies to all industries. Hence, the need to get a highly motivated workforce that elicits positive behaviour to engender engagement and better performance.

## **Empirical review**

Abdulaziz, Bashir and Alfalih (2022) investigated the influence of work-life balance and work overload on teacher's organizational commitment, noting the mediating role of job engagement and the moderating effect of perceived organizational support. A random sample of 278 teachers was collected from the Qassim province of Saudi Arabia. Structural equation modeling AMOS 26 was used to analysis the data which indicated that work-life balance has a direct and significant impact on organizational commitment and work overload has a negative impact on organizational commitment. The study highlighted that job engagement partially mediates the relationship between work-life balance and the organizational commitment of teachers. However, the moderating effect of perceived organizational support was insignificant

Clement and Eketu (2019), studied organisational climate and employee's engagement in Nigeria banks. Reward, autonomy and engagement recognition/encouragement were considered as the dimensions of organizational climate, while affective and cognitive engagements were the measures of employee engagement. The cross-sectional survey was used in the study. And a total of 384 employees from 21 selected deposit money banks formed the population of the study. However, a sample size of 196 employees was derived. The systematic sampling technique was used in order to avoid biasness in selection of sample items. The Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between the dimensions or organizational climate and the measure of employee engagement. The findings revealed a positive correlation between the dimensions of organizational climate and the measure of employee engagement.

Rapti, Rayton and Yalabik (2017) studied employee psychological ownership and work engagement. Their study explained the link between employee psychological ownership (EPO) and work engagement. The results indicated that psychological ownership has a significant influence on work engagement; the more employees perceive ownership over their targets, the more engaged they become in their work and/or organization. In addition, Law, Li, Zhang, Wang, and Liang (2018) stated that the relationship between psychological ownership and work engagement was positively correlated. The research posited that when people develop possessive feelings for some important tangible or intangible objects, they may extend their self to these objects and consider them as being parts of their self. As a result, they strive to maintain, protect, and consolidate their possessive feelings for these objects, which also contribute to their mental health (Fashola, Kenku & Obasi, 2018). Furthermore, it describes that a psychological state that an individual feels ownership of his or her job and considers it as a part of the extended self, employees who are high in work engagement are described as being fully there, devoted, attentive, and focused in their work roles, and bring their complete selves to perform.

## **3.0 Methodology**

This study used a cross-sectional survey and the target population was two thousand seven hundred and ninety-four (2794) employees of Port Harcourt electricity distribution firms and Benin electricity distribution firms. The sample size was determined using the Yemen's (1968) formula for sample size determination. As a result, 350 questionnaires were distributed to

employee of the firms. In this study, a simple random sampling technique was used. This method was chosen because it provides a true representation of the entire population and reduces the possibility of researcher bias in the sample case selection. Work-Life Balance (independent variable) was measured using 5 (e.g. e.g. I am able to maintain a healthy balance between my work and personal life). The criterion variable (Work engagement) was operationalized with emotional engagement and physical engagement, 5 items were used in measuring emotional engagement (e.g. I feel emotionally invested in the success and outcomes of my work) and 5 items were used in measuring physical engagement (e.g. My job requires significant physical activity or movement). Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement, 2 indicating disagreement, 3 indicating agreement, and 4 indicating strong agreement. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 aided the analyses of the bivariate hypotheses using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient statistical tool.

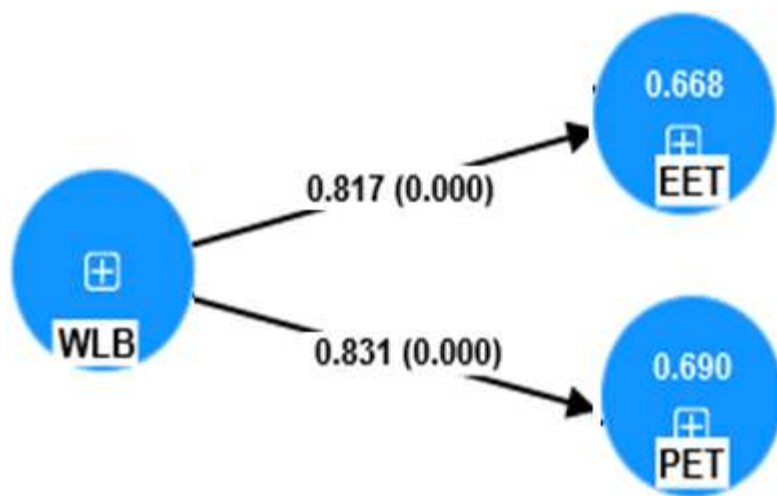
#### 4.0 Result

A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed to respondent, however, only 315 (90%) copies were returned and used for the study. The hypotheses test was undertaken at a 95% confidence interval implying a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule is set at a critical region of  $p > 0.05$  for acceptance of the null hypothesis and  $p < 0.05$  for rejection of the null hypothesis.

#### Correlation between Work-life balance and emotional engagement

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant effect of Work-life balance on emotional engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant effect of Work-life balance on physical engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria.



**Figure 1: Work-life balance and Measures of work engagement**

Source: SmartPLS 3.3.3 output on Research Data, 2024

Figure 1 also shows the result of the Path relationship between work-life balance and emotional engagement. This shows a  $\beta = 0.817$ . An increase in work-life balance will lead to a corresponding



increase in emotional engagement and a reduced work-life balance will bring about a decrease in emotional engagement. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between work-life balance and emotional engagement. This answers the first research question which sought to find out the relationship that exists between work-life balance and emotional engagement. The analysis shows a significant level of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This implies that there is a significant relationship between work-life balance and emotional engagement. The study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between work-life balance and emotional engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria

Figure 1 also shows the result of the Path relationship between work-life balance and physical engagement. This shows a  $\beta = 0.831$ . An increase in work-life balance will lead to a corresponding increase in physical engagement and a reduced work-life balance will bring about a decrease in physical engagement. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between work-life balance and physical engagement. This answers the first research question which sought to find out the relationship that exists between work-life balance and physical engagement. The analysis shows a significant level of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This implies that there is a significant relationship between work-life balance and physical engagement. The study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that *there is a significant relationship between work-life balance and physical engagement of electricity distribution firms in South-South, Nigeria*

## **5.0 Discussion of Findings**

Based on the above findings, the study realized

### **Work-life balance and emotional engagement**

Based on the bivariate analysis on the connection between work-life balance and emotional engagement, it was observed that work-life balance relates significantly with emotional engagement with P-value of 0.000 which was less than 0.05 level of significant ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected owing that work-life balance relates with emotional engagement significantly. However, the outcome revealed a positive correlation between work-life balance and emotional engagement ( $\beta = 0.817$ ). This indicates that when job security of electricity distribution firms increase, the emotional engagement increases. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.668 shows that a unit changes in the work-life balance will account for up to 66.8% variation in emotional engagement rate. Thus, work-life balance in the electricity distribution firms is very vital in tackling emotional engagement. This aligns with the findings of Sands and Harper (2007) that Work-life balance relates with work engagement.

### **Work-life balance and physical engagement**

Based on the bivariate analysis on the connection between work-life balance and physical engagement, it was observed that work-life balance relates significantly with physical engagement with P-value of 0.000 which was less than 0.05 level of significant ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected owing that work-life balance relates with physical

engagement significantly. However, the outcome revealed a positive correlation between work-life balance and physical engagement ( $\beta = 0.831$ ). This indicates that when job security of electricity distribution firms increase, the physical engagement increases. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.690 shows that a unit change in the work-life balance will account for up to 69.0% variation in physical engagement rate. Thus, work-life balance in the electricity distribution firms is very vital in tackling physical engagement. This aligns with the findings of Anwar and Qadir (2017) that work engagement relates with work life balance and job satisfaction.

### **5.3 Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study focused on assessing the relationship between work-life balance and work engagement within electricity distribution firms in the South-South region of Nigeria, considering key measures such as physical engagement and emotional engagement. The findings emphasize the importance of a comprehensive approach to work-life balance in electricity distribution firms. In exploring work engagement, the research identified physical engagement and emotional engagement as integral components. Physical engagement refers to the tangible involvement of employees in their tasks, while emotional engagement reflects the emotional connection and commitment to the organization. Both dimensions were found to be positively influenced by work-life balance. In alignment with the conclusions, the following recommendations are proffered;

- i. Electricity distribution firms should implement flexible work arrangements and promote a healthy work-life balance. Providing options such as flexible schedules or remote work can contribute to physical engagement by reducing stress and fatigue, leading to a more energized and engaged workforce.
- ii. Electricity distribution firms should foster a supportive environment that prioritizes employee well-being. Introduce initiatives such as wellness programs, mental health support, and recreational activities to enhance emotional engagement by showing the organization's commitment to the holistic welfare of its employees.
- iii. Electricity distribution firms should recognize and celebrate individual accomplishments. Acknowledging and appreciating the unique contributions of employees can enhance emotional engagement by fostering a sense of pride and fulfilment in their work.

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