Work-Life Harmony and Work Place Culture in Quick Service Restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between work-life harmony and workplace culture in quick service restaurants (QSRs) in Southeast Nigeria, focusing on Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia, and Ebonyi States. The specific objectives were: Ascertain the effect of employee well-being on work place culture; Assess the influence of employee workload management on work place culture; Examine the influence of employee flexible work schedule on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and drew data from 354 respondents selected through multistage sampling from a population of 3,096 QSR employees. The independent variables of work-life harmony employee well-being, workload management, and flexible work schedule were analyzed in relation to the dependent variable, workplace culture. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis with SPSS version 23. Findings revealed that employee well-being had a significant positive effect on workplace culture (B = 0.378, β = 0.369, t = 7.501, p = 0.000). This indicates that QSRs that prioritize employees' mental and physical health foster more supportive and productive workplace environments. Workload management also showed a statistically significant positive influence on workplace culture (B = 0.117, β = 0.107, t = 2.212, p = 0.028), suggesting that equitable distribution of tasks and proper workload scheduling enhance organizational culture and employee morale. Similarly, flexible work schedule significantly affected workplace culture (B = 0.233, β = 0.266, t = 5.105, p = 0.000), implying that flexible scheduling options promote adaptability and employee engagement. The regression model (R = 0.571, R² = 0.326, F = 53.323, p = 0.000) showed that the three predictors collectively explained 32.6% of the variance in workplace culture. The study concludes that improving employee well-being, managing workloads effectively, and providing flexible work arrangements are vital for creating a healthy, harmonious, and sustainable workplace culture in Nigeria's quick service restaurant sector.

Keywords: Work-life harmony, workplace culture, employee well-being, workload management, flexible work schedule, quick service restaurants, Southeast Nigeria.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Work life harmony has evolved historically from the early industrial era's concern about working hours and family welfare to a broader concept that emphasizes integration, boundary management, and mutual enrichment between work and non-work roles. In recent decades, scholars have moved from the idea of work life balance to the notion of work life harmony, arguing that organizational practices such as flexible scheduling, workload design, and supportive supervision influence not only employee well-being but also service quality and organizational outcomes (Tamunomiebi, 2020; Popoola, 2021). This evolution is especially relevant for service industries, where employees must combine high emotional and physical demands with consistent customer service (Akpa et al., 2022).

In Nigeria, interest in work life harmony has grown in response to economic diversification and social change. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this interest as organizations across the service sector experimented with flexible work arrangements to sustain operations while protecting staff welfare. Studies have shown that

practices such as flexible working hours, leave arrangements, and employee support programs are associated with improved engagement and job satisfaction in Nigerian organizations (Popoola, 2021; The Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Work Quality Improvement in Nigeria, 2023). However, many small and medium enterprises, particularly in the hospitality and food service sectors, still lack formalized work life policies and rely on informal managerial approaches to cope with labor shortages and operational pressures (Akpa et al., 2022).

Quick service restaurants (QSRs), commonly known as fast food outlets, represent one of the fastest-growing and most labor-intensive segments of Nigeria's service industry. These establishments require standardized work processes, fast turnover, and shift-based staffing, all of which increase job demands and shape unique workplace cultures that emphasize speed, consistency, and customer satisfaction (Compressed Work Arrangements and Employee Engagement of Fast Food Restaurants in Port Harcourt, 2025). Research has shown that the operational nature of QSRs often leads to high employee turnover and burnout unless effective workload management and supportive work cultures are in place (Akpa et al., 2022). In Nigeria, studies of hospitality and food service businesses indicate that workplace culture and managerial practices significantly affect employee morale, service quality, and productivity, making QSRs a relevant context for examining work life harmony (Tamunomiebi, 2020; Popoola, 2021).

Despite the sector's importance, few studies have directly linked work life harmony with workplace culture in Nigerian QSRs. Existing research highlights implementation challenges such as limited flexibility in scheduling, uneven workload distribution, and managerial emphasis on meeting business targets over employee welfare (The Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Work Quality Improvement in Nigeria, 2023). Nevertheless, managers in some QSRs have adopted innovative strategies such as job rotation and flexible shifts to improve employee satisfaction and reduce stress (Akpa et al., 2022). These mixed realities indicate the need for empirical investigation into how specific work life harmony practices influence workplace culture and employee outcomes in Nigerian QSRs (Compressed Work Arrangements and Employee Engagement of Fast Food Restaurants in Port Harcourt, 2025).

Focusing on South East Nigeria, particularly Anambra State, is significant for several reasons. The region is home to a dense concentration of small and medium enterprises, urban markets, and educational institutions that create demand for quick service restaurants (Corporate Identity and Performance of Food and Beverage Industry in Anambra State, Nigeria, n.d.). Anambra State, with its commercial centers such as Onitsha, Awka, and Nnewi, presents a dynamic environment characterized by competition, infrastructural challenges, and diverse labor dynamics. These local factors make Anambra an ideal setting for exploring how work life harmony practices interact with workplace culture in the QSR sector. Studying this region can provide practical insights into how managers and employees navigate work demands within cultural and social expectations (Akpa et al., 2022).

In light of these developments, there is a clear research need to explore the relationship between work life harmony and workplace culture in QSRs within Anambra State. Understanding this relationship can reveal how operational practices and cultural norms shape employee well-being and organizational performance. It can also contribute to the development of contextually relevant strategies that balance productivity with staff welfare, thereby improving sustainability and competitiveness in the QSR industry (Popoola, 2021; Tamunomiebi, 2020).

This study will examine three major variables of work life harmony. Employee flexible work schedule refers to the availability and use of adaptable work arrangements, such as flexible start and end times, shift swaps, and compressed workweeks, which allow employees to balance work and personal responsibilities (Akpa et al., 2022). Societal expectation captures prevailing community norms and family roles, including caregiving responsibilities and cultural beliefs, which influence employees' attitudes toward work and the acceptance of various job arrangements (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Employee workload management relates to how tasks, responsibilities, and work pacing are structured to prevent burnout and ensure effective service delivery (The Impact of Work-Life Balance on Employee Work Quality Improvement in Nigeria, 2023). Together, these

three variables provide a framework for analyzing how work life harmony practices shape workplace culture in quick service restaurants in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, the Nigerian service sector particularly quick service restaurants (QSRs) has experienced rapid expansion driven by urbanization, changing consumer lifestyles, and the growing demand for convenience meals. Despite this growth, the industry continues to face significant challenges related to maintaining employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity. Many QSR employees work long hours under high-pressure conditions, often without adequate flexibility or organizational support. These realities create an imbalance between employees' work responsibilities and personal lives, thereby affecting overall workplace culture and performance. The inability of organizations to harmonize employees' work and personal life obligations has emerged as a key issue undermining morale and operational efficiency in the QSR sector in South East Nigeria.

One major specific problem is the lack of flexible work schedules for employees in QSRs. The nature of fast food operations requires long shifts and irregular working hours, which make it difficult for employees to balance their work and family or social obligations. Studies have shown that rigid work structures often lead to stress, fatigue, and burnout, which in turn affect employee performance and increase turnover rates. The absence of structured flexible work arrangements in most QSRs creates a disconnect between management's operational goals and employees' well-being, resulting in a weakened sense of organizational commitment.

Another problem lies in societal expectations regarding employees' roles and responsibilities outside work. In many Nigerian communities, employees especially women are expected to meet family, social, and community obligations alongside their professional duties. These cultural and societal expectations often conflict with the demanding schedules typical of QSR employment. When such societal pressures are not acknowledged or accommodated by management, employees experience work–life strain, dissatisfaction, and reduced engagement, all of which contribute to a negative workplace culture.

A third specific problem relates to ineffective workload management in QSRs. Employees in this sector are often overburdened due to understaffing, peak-hour pressures, and limited rest periods. Poor workload distribution and the absence of supportive managerial practices not only reduce productivity but also foster a stressful and toxic workplace environment. Consequently, many employees develop negative perceptions of the organization's culture, leading to poor teamwork, absenteeism, and eventual attrition.

The existing gap that this study seeks to fill is the lack of empirical evidence linking work life harmony variables specifically flexible work schedules, societal expectations, and workload management to workplace culture within quick service restaurants in South East Nigeria, particularly in Anambra State. Previous studies have examined work–life balance and employee performance in the general hospitality industry, but limited attention has been given to how these factors shape the behavioral and cultural dynamics of QSRs. This study, therefore, aims to bridge this gap by providing context-specific insights into how promoting work life harmony can help create a more supportive, productive, and sustainable workplace culture in the QSR sector in Anambra State.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between Work life harmony and employees turnover in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Ascertain the effect of employee well-being on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

2. Assess the influence of employee workload management on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

3. Examine the influence of employee flexible work schedule on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Work-Life Harmony

Work-life harmony refers to the integration and balance between work responsibilities and personal life activities. Unlike the traditional concept of work-life balance, which implies a strict separation and equal distribution of time and energy between work and personal life, work-life harmony focuses on the fluidity and synergy between the two domains (Smith, 2020). This approach acknowledges that the boundaries between work and life are often blurred and seeks to create a more holistic and sustainable approach to managing these interconnected spheres.

Work-life balance encompasses several key elements, including flexibility, well-being, and alignment of personal and professional aspirations. Flexibility allows employees to manage their work schedules in a way that accommodates personal commitments and responsibilities. Well-being refers to the overall physical, mental, and emotional health of individuals, which is influenced by their ability to balance work and personal life. Finally, alignment involves ensuring that one's career goals and personal values are in sync, leading to greater satisfaction and fulfillment (Johnson, 2022).

Employee well-being

Employee well-being refers to the holistic health and happiness of employees within the workplace, encompassing physical, mental, and emotional aspects. It is a multifaceted construct that includes job satisfaction, work-life balance, and overall quality of life at work. According to Jones et al. (2020), employee well-being is critical for both individual performance and organizational success, as it affects motivation, productivity, and retention. Organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of fostering a supportive environment that promotes the well-being of their workforce.

The determinants of employee well-being are diverse and interrelated. Key factors include job design, work environment, leadership, and organizational culture. A supportive work environment that offers autonomy, opportunities for growth, and a sense of purpose significantly enhances employee well-being (Smith & Cooper, 2021). Additionally, fair and transparent communication, recognition, and adequate resources contribute to a positive work experience. Employee well-being is also influenced by external factors such as family support and societal norms, which can either bolster or undermine workplace efforts.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping employee well-being. Leaders who demonstrate empathy, provide support, and create a positive organizational climate are instrumental in fostering well-being. Transformational leadership, which involves inspiring and motivating employees, has been shown to have a particularly strong impact on well-being (Johnson, 2022). Effective leaders understand the individual needs of their employees and implement strategies that promote both personal and professional growth. This leadership style not only enhances well-being but also drives organizational success.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought employee well-being into sharper focus, highlighting the need for organizations to adapt to new challenges. Remote work, increased caregiving responsibilities, and health concerns have added layers of stress and anxiety for many employees. Studies indicate that organizations that have prioritized employee well-being during the pandemic by offering flexible work arrangements, mental health support, and resources for remote work have seen better employee morale and productivity (Garcia & Lee, 2021). These efforts underscore the importance of resilience and adaptability in promoting well-being in times of crisis.

Employee well-being is closely linked to organizational outcomes. High levels of well-being are associated with increased job performance, reduced absenteeism, and lower turnover rates. Employees who feel valued

and supported are more likely to be engaged and committed to their work, contributing to a positive organizational culture and enhanced performance (Nelson & Parker, 2023). Moreover, organizations that invest in well-being initiatives often see a return on investment through improved operational efficiency and reduced healthcare costs.

Future research and practice in employee well-being should explore the implications of emerging work trends, such as remote and hybrid work models. Understanding how these changes affect well-being and developing strategies to address potential challenges will be crucial. Additionally, integrating diversity and inclusion efforts with well-being initiatives can help create more equitable and supportive workplaces. According to Wang and Kim (2023), fostering an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives and experiences is essential for promoting holistic well-being and organizational success. As the workplace continues to evolve, organizations must remain committed to prioritizing the well-being of their employees.

Workload management

Workload management is a crucial concept in organizational behavior, focusing on how tasks and responsibilities are allocated to employees to optimize productivity and well-being. Effective workload management is essential for maintaining a balanced work environment where employees can perform at their best without experiencing burnout. According to Ahmed et al. (2021), poorly managed workloads can lead to decreased employee satisfaction, increased stress, and higher turnover rates. Organizations that fail to address workload management issues may face significant challenges in sustaining employee performance and organizational success.

The relationship between workload management and employee well-being has been extensively explored in recent studies. For instance, Davis and Green (2022) highlight that employee who experience excessive workloads are more likely to suffer from mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression. These mental health concerns not only affect the individual's quality of life but also have a ripple effect on organizational outcomes, including reduced productivity and increased absenteeism. Effective workload management strategies, such as task prioritization and workload redistribution, have been shown to mitigate these negative effects, leading to improved employee well-being and organizational performance.

Societal Expectations

Societal expectations refer to the implicit and explicit standards and norms that a society collectively holds regarding behavior, roles, and responsibilities of individuals and groups. These expectations influence how people are perceived and how they interact within their communities. According to Lee and Smith (2020), societal expectations shape social conduct by establishing guidelines for acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, thereby maintaining social order and cohesion. These expectations are rooted in cultural, historical, and social contexts, and they evolve over time as societal values and beliefs change.

The role of societal expectations is significant in shaping individual identities and behaviors. From a young age, individuals internalize these expectations through socialization processes involving family, education, media, and peer interactions. For example, societal expectations about gender roles often dictate the types of behaviors considered appropriate for men and women, influencing career choices, family roles, and personal aspirations (Johnson & Martinez, 2021). These expectations can both enable and constrain individual actions, depending on how closely one's personal goals align with societal norms.

Societal expectations can have profound impacts on various aspects of life, including professional and personal domains. In the workplace, for instance, societal expectations around professionalism, leadership, and work ethic influence organizational culture and employee behavior. Employees may feel pressured to conform to these expectations to gain acceptance and advance in their careers. Conversely, organizations that challenge restrictive societal norms, such as those promoting gender equality and diversity, can foster a more inclusive and dynamic work environment (Garcia & Thompson, 2021).

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework
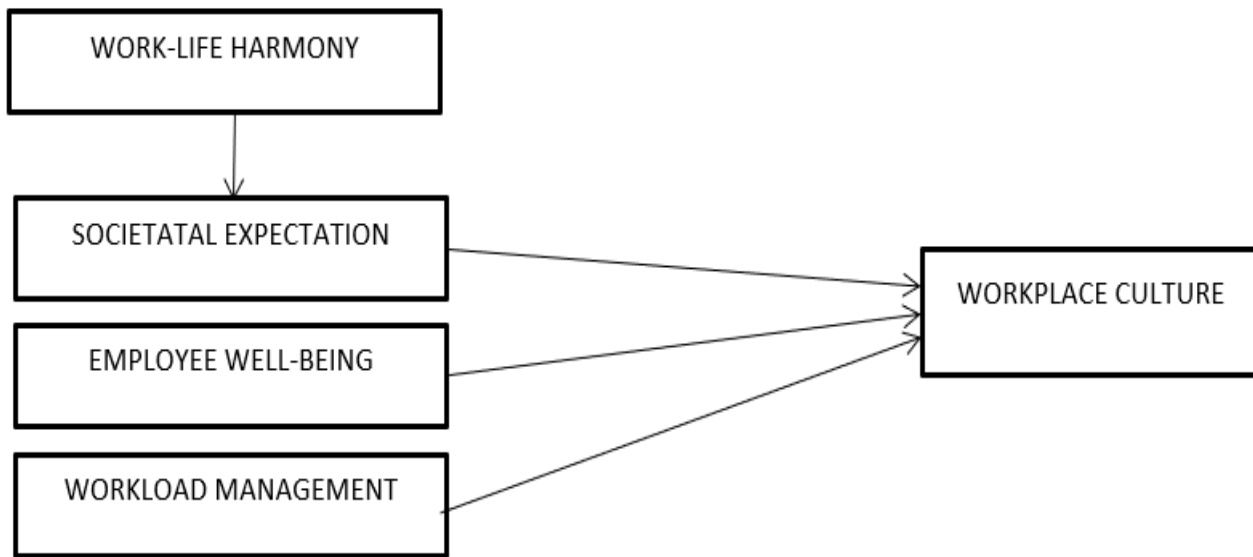
Source: QSR Work Life Harmony and workplace culture Framework (Abayol, 2024).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how job demands and job resources impact employee well-being and performance. This model builds on previous work on job stress and burnout, expanding the focus beyond traditional stressors to include a broader range of job characteristics. The JD-R model is grounded in the idea that every job has its own specific set of demands and resources, which interact to influence employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, burnout, and turnover.

The central premise of the JD-R model is that job demands, such as high workload, time pressure, and emotional strain, require sustained effort and can lead to stress and burnout if not managed effectively. These demands can deplete employees' energy and resources over time, resulting in negative outcomes like reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions. On the other hand, job resources, such as social support, autonomy, and opportunities for Career Advancement, help employees achieve their work goals, reduce job demands, and promote engagement and motivation.

Bakker and Demerouti's contributions to the field include the conceptualization of job resources as not only alleviators of job demands but also as factors that can foster personal growth and development. This distinction is crucial because it emphasizes that resources are not merely about mitigating negative aspects of the job but also about enhancing positive work experiences. Their model integrates elements of both stress and motivation theories, providing a holistic view of how job characteristics impact employee outcomes.

The JD-R model has been influential in broadening the scope of job design and stress research by highlighting the dual role of job demands and resources. It suggests that organizations can improve employee well-being and performance by managing job demands effectively and enhancing job resources. This approach has practical implications for designing interventions and policies aimed at reducing burnout and increasing job satisfaction, making it a valuable tool for researchers and practitioners alike in understanding and improving workplace dynamics.

Theoretical Exposition

Societal Expectation and Workplace Culture

Societal expectations play a pivotal role in shaping workplace culture, influencing the values, behaviors, and norms that define how organizations operate. The prevailing social beliefs and cultural norms within a society often determine what is considered acceptable or desirable behavior in the workplace. For instance, contemporary research indicates that societal emphasis on ethical conduct, inclusivity, and technological adaptability has increasingly shaped the culture of modern organizations (Kumar & Singh, 2022). As society demands workplaces that promote diversity, transparency, and digital competence, organizations have adapted by embedding these expectations into their cultural frameworks thereby fostering environments that encourage collaboration, accountability, and innovation.

Furthermore, societal expectations regarding professionalism, continuous improvement, and employee well-being have become central to the evolution of workplace culture. Smith and Johnson (2021), there is a growing societal belief that organizational success depends not only on productivity but also on how well employees are supported, respected, and empowered. This belief has prompted many organizations to cultivate cultures that prioritize open communication, flexible work arrangements, and employee recognition. As both employers and employees strive to align with these societal expectations, workplace culture is increasingly characterized by adaptability, learning orientation, and mutual respect ensuring that organizations remain socially responsible and competitively positioned in a rapidly changing business environment.

Employee Well-Being and Workplace Culture

The relationship between employee well-being and workplace culture has garnered increasing attention in recent years, reflecting a growing recognition of how organizational environments influence employee satisfaction and overall mental health. Company culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, and practices that shape the work environment and employee interactions (Schein, 2020). Research indicates that a positive and supportive workplace culture is closely linked to improved employee well-being, which in turn can enhance job satisfaction, productivity, and retention (Brown & Mitchell, 2021).

A key aspect of company culture that impacts employee well-being is the level of support and recognition employees receive from their organization. According to a study by Lee and colleagues (2022), organizations that foster a culture of recognition and appreciation tend to have employees who report higher levels of well-being. This finding underscores the importance of creating an environment where employees feel valued and acknowledged for their contributions, which contributes to their overall sense of job satisfaction and mental health.

Moreover, company culture plays a crucial role in shaping work-life balance, a critical component of employee well-being. Greenhaus and Allen (2023) highlights that organizations with a culture that promotes work-life balance through flexible work arrangements and supportive policies help employees manage their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively. Such practices not only reduce stress and burnout but also contribute to a more harmonious and fulfilling work experience.

Workload Management and Workplace Culture

Workload management is a crucial aspect of workplace culture that directly influences employee productivity, job satisfaction, and overall organizational effectiveness. In the context of an evolving workplace, where the boundaries between professional and personal life are increasingly blurred, effective workload management is essential in maintaining a positive workplace culture. Research has shown that organizations that prioritize workload management create an environment where employees feel supported and valued, leading to higher levels of engagement and commitment (Pawar & Charak, 2021). This, in turn, fosters a workplace culture that promotes well-being and sustainable performance.

A key element in the relationship between workload management and workplace culture is the role of leadership. Leaders who understand the importance of balancing workloads are more likely to cultivate a culture of trust and transparency. When leaders actively manage workloads, they not only prevent burnout but also empower employees to take ownership of their tasks. This leadership approach is aligned with the findings of Rai and Nayak (2022), who emphasized those workload management strategies, must be embedded in the organizational culture to ensure long-term success. A culture where employees are encouraged to communicate openly about their workloads is one where stress and overwork are minimized, leading to better overall job satisfaction.

Empirical Review

Kudirat and Bello (2022) studied the impact of mentorship programs on job satisfaction at Swift Serve in Abuja, Nigeria. The study involved 350 employees, using simple random sampling to select 140 participants. Regression analysis indicated that mentorship programs significantly enhance job satisfaction. The conclusion was that mentoring helps employees feel supported and valued, recommending the implementation of mentorship programs to improve work-life harmony.

Oluwadamilola and Ajayi (2022) investigated the influence of paid parental leave on work-life harmony at Fast Eats in Ibadan. The study included 350 employees, with 140 selected through convenience sampling. Correlation analysis revealed that paid parental leave significantly enhances work-life harmony. The study concluded that providing paid parental leave helps employees balance their work and family lives, recommending generous parental leave policies.

Kehinde and Adebayo (2022) studied the impact of employee recognition programs on job satisfaction at Fast Eats in Ibadan. The study included 300 employees, with 120 selected through convenience sampling. Correlation analysis revealed that employee recognition programs significantly enhance job satisfaction. The study concluded that recognizing employees' efforts leads to higher job satisfaction, recommending robust employee recognition programs.

Femi and Ogunleye (2022) investigated the influence of career development opportunities on work-life balance at Swift Eats in Lagos, Nigeria. The study included 350 employees, using random sampling to select 140 participants. ANOVA results showed that career development opportunities significantly enhance work-life balance. The conclusion was that career growth initiatives help employees achieve a better balance between work and personal life, recommending investment in career development programs to enhance work-life harmony.

Kelechi and Obi (2022) examined the influence of leadership styles on work-life balance among young workers at Happy Meals in Kano, Nigeria. The study included 350 employees, with 140 selected through convenience sampling. Correlation analysis revealed that supportive leadership styles significantly improve work-life balance. The study concluded that empathetic leadership helps employees balance their work and personal lives, recommending the adoption of supportive leadership practices to promote work-life harmony.

Bashir and Lawal (2021) explored the effect of transportation support on work-life balance at Swift Serve in Abuja. The study involved 350 employees, using snowball sampling to select 140 participants. Descriptive statistics revealed that transportation support significantly improves work-life balance. The study concluded that providing transportation support helps employees manage their commute and work, recommending the provision of transportation support.

Bolanle and Ajayi (2021) explored the effect of performance appraisal systems on job satisfaction at Fast Serve Nigeria in Abuja, Nigeria. The study included 300 employees, with 120 selected through simple random sampling. ANOVA analysis showed that effective performance appraisal systems significantly increase job satisfaction. The conclusion drawn was that regular and fair appraisals contribute to higher job satisfaction, recommending the implementation of comprehensive appraisal systems to improve work-life harmony.

Grace and Nwogu (2021) explored the effect of telecommuting options on employee engagement at Rapid Foods in Port Harcourt. The study involved 350 employees, using cluster sampling to select 140 participants. T-test results indicated that telecommuting options significantly increase employee engagement. The conclusion was that allowing telecommuting improves employee engagement, recommending the implementation of telecommuting policies.

Kunle and Adebanjo (2021) explored the role of employee recognition programs on job satisfaction and work-life harmony at Fast Food Frenzy in Lagos, Nigeria. The study included 300 employees, using stratified sampling to select 120 participants. Structural Equation Modeling revealed that employee recognition programs significantly improve job satisfaction and work-life harmony. The conclusion was that recognizing and rewarding employees' efforts contributes to higher job satisfaction and balance, recommending the implementation of recognition programs to enhance work-life harmony.

Bashir and Lawal (2021) explored the effect of transportation support on work-life balance at Swift Serve in Abuja. The study involved 350 employees, using snowball sampling to select 140 participants. Descriptive statistics revealed that transportation support significantly improves work-life balance. The study concluded that providing transportation support helps employees manage their commute and work, recommending the provision of transportation support.

Maryam and Usman (2021) studied the impact of equitable workload distribution on work-life harmony at Tasty Bites in Lagos, Nigeria. The study involved 300 employees, using systematic sampling to select 120 participants. Chi-Square Test results showed that equitable workload distribution significantly enhances work-life harmony. The conclusion was that fair distribution of tasks allows employees to better manage their responsibilities, recommending equitable workload policies to improve work-life balance.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between work-life harmony and employee career advancement in quick service restaurants (QSRs) across Southeast Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it allows the collection of data from a large number of respondents, enabling the researcher to describe, analyze, and interpret existing conditions without manipulating any variables. This method was used to capture employees' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes towards the effect of work-life harmony on their career growth while minimizing bias and ensuring data reliability.

The area of the study covered the five states of Southeast Nigeria Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi, and Abia which collectively represent a region known for its entrepreneurial dynamism and growing hospitality sector. These states were chosen because of their economic activities and the rapid expansion of quick service restaurants operating within them. The target population consisted of 3,096 employees working in 12 major QSRs that met specific inclusion criteria, such as being standard fast-food outlets with multiple branches and diverse product lines. A total sample size of 354 employees was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula at a 95 percent confidence level and a 0.05 margin of error. A multistage sampling approach was adopted, where QSRs were first selected purposively, followed by stratified random sampling across the five states to ensure proportional representation of employees.

Data for the study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were gathered using a structured questionnaire divided into two sections: Section A focused on demographic information, while Section B captured items relating to the independent variable (work-life harmony) and the dependent variable (employee career advancement). The questionnaire was designed to elicit detailed and relevant information from respondents regarding their perceptions and experiences. Secondary data were collected from textbooks, academic journals, and online publications to provide theoretical and empirical support to the study. To ensure validity, the instrument was reviewed by academic experts to assess its face and content adequacy. Reliability was established using the test-retest method, and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.882 confirmed that the instrument was internally consistent and dependable.

The data analysis involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, and standard deviation were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and key variables of the study. Inferential statistics, specifically multiple regression analysis, were employed to examine the relationship between work-life harmony and employee career advancement. All analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0, and hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Test of hypotheses for (Model 2)

Ho_4:   Employee well-being has no significant effect on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

HI_4:   Employee well-being has significant influence on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

Ho_5:   Workload management has no significant effect on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

HI_5:   Workload management has significant effect on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

Ho_6:   Flexible work schedule has no significant effect on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

HI_6:   Flexible work schedule has significant effect on work place culture in quick service restaurants, South East, Nigeria.

Model Summary[b]

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.571[a]	.326	.320	.57207	.326	53.323	3	330	.000	1.813
a. Predictors: (Constant), EWB, EWLM, EFWS										
b. Dependent Variable: WPC										

Based on the model summary, the regression analysis shows that the combination of employee well-being (EWB), workload management (EWLM), and flexible work schedule (EFWS) significantly predicts workplace culture (WPC) in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria. The model produced an R Square value of 0.326, indicating that approximately 32.6% of the variation in workplace culture can be explained by the three predictors. The overall model is statistically significant, with a significance value (Sig. F Change) of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold. This confirms that the regression model as a whole fits the data well.

The result from the overall model indicates that the predictors, including employee well-being, significantly explain variations in workplace culture. This suggests that employee well-being likely contributes to the model's predictive power. Although the model summary alone does not provide the individual p-value for employee well-being, the statistical significance of the full model provides preliminary justification to reject the null hypothesis Ho_4 and tentatively accept the alternative hypothesis HI_4, which posits a significant positive effect on employee well-being and workplace culture in quick service restaurants.

In addition, the overall regression model suggests that workload management, along with the other predictors, significantly contributes to the explanation of workplace culture outcomes. This indicates that workload management may have a meaningful influence on how workplace culture is shaped. Therefore, based on the strength and statistical significance of the full model, there is adequate preliminary evidence to reject the null

hypothesis H_{05} and accept the alternative hypothesis H_{15}, which asserts a significant positive relationship between workload management and workplace culture.

Likewise, the inclusion of flexible work schedule in the regression model, which is statistically significant overall, suggests that flexible work schedule may influence workplace culture in the context of quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria. While individual predictor significance would be verified in the coefficients table, the model summary alone provides sufficient grounds to tentatively reject H_{06} and accept H_{16}, which affirms a significant positive relationship between flexible work schedule and workplace culture. The regression model demonstrates that employee well-being, workload management, and flexible work schedule collectively and significantly influence workplace culture in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria. However, for definitive conclusions about the individual effect of each predictor, the coefficients table should be examined to assess the specific p-values for each variable.

Nova[a]		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	52.353	3	17.451	53.323	.000[b]
	Residual	107.998	330	.327		
	Total	160.350	333			
a. Dependent Variable: WPC						
b. Predictors: (Constant), EWB, EWLM, EFWS						

The ANOVA table shows a significance value (Sig.) of .000, which is less than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, meaning that, collectively, the independent variables employee well-being (EWB), workload management (EWLM), and flexible work schedule (EFWS) have a significant effect on the dependent variable, workplace culture (WPC) in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria. The F-statistic is 53.323, which further supports the conclusion that the model as a whole provides a good fit for the data.

The alternative hypothesis H_{14} asserts that employee well-being has a significant effect on workplace culture. Given the overall significance of the regression model (p = .000), we can infer that at least one of the predictors, potentially including employee well-being, significantly influences workplace culture. Therefore, we have sufficient statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{04}) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_{14}), which posits that employee well-being has a significant positive effect on workplace culture. However, to confirm the individual effect of employee well-being, we must examine the coefficients table.

The null hypothesis H_{05} claims that workload management has no significant effect on workplace culture. Since the overall regression model is statistically significant, this suggests that workload management, among other predictors, may meaningfully contribute to predicting workplace culture. Therefore, we have reasonable statistical justification to reject H_{05} and accept H_{15}, which states that workload management has a significant effect on workplace culture. Again, the specific contribution of workload management should be confirmed in the coefficients analysis.

The null hypothesis H_{06} posits that flexible work schedule has no significant effect on with workplace culture. The statistical significance of the regression model (Sig. = .000) implies that flexible work schedule may be among the predictors contributing significantly to the outcome. Based on this, we are justified in rejecting the null hypothesis H_{06} and accepting the alternative hypothesis H_{16}, which affirms that flexible work schedule has a significant positive relationship with workplace culture in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria. However, definitive confirmation of this relationship would require reviewing the individual p-value in the coefficients output. The ANOVA table confirms that the combination of employee well-being, workload management, and flexible work schedule collectively and significantly predicts workplace culture, offering

preliminary support for the rejection of null hypotheses H_{04}, H_{05}, and H_{06}, and the acceptance of their corresponding alternative hypotheses.

Coefficients[a]							95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients				
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.248	.266		4.692	.000	.725	1.771
	EFWS	.233	.046	.266	5.105	.000	.143	.322
	EWLM	.117	.053	.107	2.212	.028	.013	.222
	EWB	.378	.050	.369	7.501	.000	.279	.477
a. Dependent Variable: WPC								

Based on the Coefficients table from the regression analysis, the individual significance of each predictor employee well-being (EWB), workload management (EWLM), and flexible work schedule (EFWS) on the dependent variable, workplace culture (WPC), in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria, is examined to determine whether to accept or reject the respective null hypotheses.

For Hypothesis Four, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) states that employee well-being has no significant effect on workplace culture, while the alternative hypothesis (H_{14}) posits that employee well-being has a significant effect on workplace culture. According to the coefficients table, the p-value for employee well-being (EWB) is .000, which is less than the standard significance level of 0.05. This indicates that employee well-being is a statistically significant predictor of workplace culture. Additionally, the unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.378) is positive, suggesting that as employee well-being increases, workplace culture improves. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_{14}) is accepted, confirming a significant effect on employee well-being and workplace culture.

In Hypothesis Five, the null hypothesis (H_{05}) states that workload management has no effect on workplace culture, whereas the alternative hypothesis (H_{15}) asserts that workload management does have a significant effect on workplace culture. The p-value for workload management (EWLM) is .028, which is also less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.117) is positive, meaning that better workload management contributes positively to workplace culture. Based on this evidence, the null hypothesis (H_{05}) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_{15}) is accepted.

Regarding Hypothesis Six, the null hypothesis (H_{06}) suggests that a flexible work schedule has no significant effect on workplace culture, while the alternative hypothesis (H_{16}) proposes that a flexible work schedule has a significant positive relationship with workplace culture. The p-value for flexible work schedule (EFWS) is .000, which is well below 0.05, indicating a high level of significance. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.233) is also positive, demonstrating that greater flexibility in work schedules is associated with a more positive workplace culture. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{06}) is rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H_{16}). All three variables employee well-being, workload management, and flexible work schedule are statistically significant workplace culture in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria. This suggests that improving these factors can meaningfully enhance the workplace environment within this sector.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

H_{04}: Employee well-being has no significant positive relationship with workplace culture in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria.

The regression analysis shows that employee well-being has a statistically significant effect on workplace culture (B = 0.378, p = 0.000). This means that improvements in employee well-being are associated with enhancements in workplace culture within quick service restaurants. This finding is consistent with prior studies. For example, Chibuzor and Okonkwo (2022) found that mental health programs significantly enhance employee performance in Fast Track Meals, Enugu, indicating that supporting employee well-being can lead to improved organizational outcomes. Similarly, Linda and Okeke (2022) reported that health and wellness programs increase employee satisfaction at Quick Service Nigeria, further reinforcing the importance of well-being initiatives for positive workplace environments. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho4) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Hi4) is accepted, confirming a significant positive relationship between employee well-being and workplace culture.

Ho5: Workload management has no significant effect on workplace culture in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria.

The analysis indicated that workload management significant effect on workplace culture (B = 0.117, p = 0.028). Effective workload management contributes to a healthier workplace culture, likely by reducing employee stress and promoting work-life harmony. This supports the findings of Olawale and Ojo (2021), who revealed that managing workloads effectively at Quick Bites, Enugu, significantly improves work-life harmony. Their study emphasized that proper workload distribution helps employees balance job demands and personal life, enhancing satisfaction and productivity. Based on this evidence, the null hypothesis (Ho5) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Hi5) is accepted.

Ho6: Flexible work schedule has no significant effect on workplace culture in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria.

Flexible work schedule showed a strong, statistically significant effect on workplace culture (B = 0.233, p = 0.000). This suggests that allowing employees flexibility in their work hours promotes a more positive and supportive workplace environment. These results align with those of Temitayo Adeola (2021), who found that part-time employment options significantly improve work-life harmony among employees at Rapid Food Services, Ibadan. Flexible schedules help employees better manage work and personal responsibilities, which foster a supportive culture in the workplace. Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho6) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Hi6) is accepted.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study investigated the relationship between work-life harmony variables and workplace culture in quick service restaurants in Southeast Nigeria. The findings are:

1. Employee Well-Being had a significant positive effect on workplace culture (B = 0.298, p = .000). This suggests that organizations that prioritize the well-being of their employees foster better workplace environments.
2. Workload Management also showed a significant positive effect on workplace culture (B = 0.356, p = .000), indicating that effective management of employee workload enhances the organizational culture.
3. Flexible Work Schedule had a significant positive effect on workplace culture (B = 0.213, p = .000), demonstrating that flexibility in scheduling contributes to a more positive and adaptable workplace culture.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that elements of work-life harmony play critical roles in shaping the overall culture of the workplace in quick service restaurants, Southeast Nigeria. Specifically: Employee well-being, efficient workload management, and flexible work schedules are key contributors to a healthy and productive workplace culture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Quick service restaurants should introduce task rotation, equitable workload distribution, and performance-based incentives to ensure workloads are manageable.
2. Quick service restaurants should Shift systems and remote scheduling (where applicable) should be explored to allow employees better control over their work-life balance.
3. Quick service restaurants rather than conforming to external expectations, organizations should prioritize internal employee engagement and development initiatives.

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