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WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

There are growing concerns that the quality of work and family life of employees is declining and acts as a precursor to poor contributions and performance at work. Manufacturing firms in Ogun State are not an exception. Several factors have been attributed to the decline in the employee performance in the manufacturing firms such as work overload and work hours. This study investigates the effect of work life balance on employee performance in selected manufacturing firms in Ogun state. A survey research design was adopted. The population was 26,754 which consisted of five selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State, Nigeria. The sample size was 520 data were analyzed using descriptive and simple linear regression. The findings revealed that work hours ($\beta = 0.473$, $t = 10.346$, $p < 0.05$) have a statistically significant positive effect on employee performance, while work overload ($\beta = -0.558$, $t = 9.370$, $p = 0.000$) has negative significant effect on employee performance of the selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State. The study concluded that work life balance practices such as work overload and work hours have effects on employee's performance in manufacturing firms. Work hours alone are not enough to increase employee performance of a highly skilled, motivated and experienced workforce that an organization needs to excel. Therefore, this study recommends human resources managers to strive to look for newer and innovative employee performance enhancing initiatives because employees are keen on them.

Introduction

According to Akpa, Egbu, Akinlabi and Magaji (2019), work life is one of the prevailing issues in many organizations today, as the result of inability of workers to balance work and family which has led to increase in poor work performance. In the mid-nineteenth century, the distinction between work and leisure was created (Burke, 2001). Anthropologists describe happiness, according to Kristensen, Bjorner, Christensen and Borg (2004), as having as little distinction as possible between work and play. However, since the 1980s, the notion of work-life balance has been expanded to include factors that affect employees, including work overload and work hours (Cummings & Worley, 2005). Despite its growing popularity, the notion of work-life balance (WLB) did not receive widespread acceptance until the twenty-first century. The concept's acceptability was delayed due to its perceived insignificance, which was linked to the male-dominated full-time workforce at the time, as well as the tendency of women engaging in unpaid work such as nurturing, caring, and domestic work (Shah, 2014, Akpa, et al 2019, Magaji, Akpa & Ogundiwin 2020). Work-life balance is a crucial topic in the twenty-first century. Human resources professionals, on the other hand, have only recently begun to regard work-life balance as a business issue that benefits both employees and employers (Orogbu, Onyeizugbe & Chukwuemeke, 2015). Work-life balance has largely supplanted the term "work-family balance" in recent years (Oduma, Caroline & Were, 2014). Work-life balance is becoming more popular as a result of changing demographics in the workforce and a rising realization that work-life balance is critical for many people (Orogbu, Onyeizugbe & Chukwuemeke, 2015; Hye, 2014; Farh & Wang, 2012; Mohsan, Nawaz, Khan, Shaikat & Aslam, 2011). According to Ojo, Salau, and Falola (2014), European countries and the United States of America were early adopters of work-life balance programmes due to the pervasiveness of technology and sociocultural diversity in those countries. In recent years, there has been a rise in the importance associated to employee WLB in Africa, as management and business studies have begun to appear highlighting the significance, relevance, and challenges of WLB practises in developing countries. Employees in Nigerian organisations have developed personal coping mechanisms as a result of the current social-economic upheavals, which is far from ideal, especially when examined in relation to employee performance. As a result, additional empirical research into the difficulties affecting employees' work-life balance in African countries, particularly in Nigeria, the continent's most populous country, are urgently needed.



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Studies investigating the impact of work life balance initiatives on employee performance of Nigerian firms have been focused on the banking and health sectors (Akanji, 2013; Orogbu, et.al. 2015; Osioma, Hilda, Nzewi, & Ilo, 2015). While these sectors require adequate attention it is equally important to investigate work life balance practices in manufacturing sector if Nigeria is to move from a developing country to a developed one. As reported in the Agency report (2017) the manufacturing firms in Nigeria has been on a decline and this study investigates the possible contributions of negligence of work life balance practices and consequent decline in employee performance (Akanji, 2013) This study looks into work overload and work hour being the variables for work life balance in order to determine an employees' work life balance as its affect their performance (Kelly & Moen, 2007, Rubery, Keizer & Grimshaw 2016)

Work overloads occurs when an individual engages in multiple roles with unlimited demands causing role strains and role conflict because of the demands and expectations the individual has to fulfil are scarce and limited (Hon & Kim, 2018). It is evident that work overload leads to work-life conflict, when an employee is saddled with lots of task with limited time frame. Work overload has been a construct of concern for human resources practitioner as they strive hard to maintain an equilibrium in the work place to ensure employee performance. With the incessant advancement of globalisation where competition is at its peak, work overload has been a subject of concern. (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Bacharach, Bamberger & Conley, 1991). Work hour is the amount of time spent by an employee to carry out a task or job (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2017). Work hour has been a subject of much discussion among human resource experts vis-à-vis employee work life balance however, the discussions have been rather inconclusive. With a growing number of the work-force putting in long hours on the job, it is fast becoming the norm worldwide (Messenger, Lee, & McCann, 2007). According to Mamedu and Ogwime (2017) long work hours and time pressures at work result in deficient employee performance, also increase in weekends and evening work leads to less quality time with family members. It would be of great importance to investigate the impact of working hours on employee performance. This study focuses on how work-life balance affects the performance of employees in setting where work-life balance is a challenge such as manufacturing firms in Ogun State.

Literature review

Work Overload

The increasingly competitive nature of the labour market creates an environment where employees engage in more work than they have the resources to do satisfactorily. The consequent reduction in performance has been widely reported in literature leading to an increase in the investigation of the effects of work overload. Elloy and Smith (2003) distinguished between domestic overload where demands created by housekeeping tasks exceeds the amount of time available to complete them, and work overload, where one does not have enough time to complete work tasks. According to Ali and Farooqi (2014) work overloads occurs when an individual engages in multiple roles with unlimited demands causing role strains and role conflict because the demands and expectations the individual has to fulfil are scarce and limited. Duxbury, Higgins and Lyons (2010) defined work overload as when an individual has too many role statuses such as parents, student, child, friend, spouse, worker and community leader, making it difficult to meet the demands of each status to the satisfaction of all the role partners and the satisfaction of self. Work overload is conflict occurring when the level of demand exceeds a person's available resources, when the person has too many tasks that require attention (Aytaç, & Basol, 2018). Work overload is related to the total time demands placed on an individual by his or her multiple roles (Sousa, 2013). Work overload occurs when an individual has too many work demands given the limited time available to satisfy them (Bhowte & Paturkah, 2013). The extent of Work overload would depend on the level of demand imposed upon a person and other factors in the person's environment (Aytaç, & Basol, 2018).

Elloy and Smith (2003) postulated the existence of two types of work overload; Quantitative and Qualitative. They posited that qualitative overload refers to a situation where task is too difficult to complete, while quantitative overload is experienced when there are too many tasks to be done. Literatures have revealed that work overload is a key predictor of employee performance. High levels of work overload means that an individual has too many roles demands and obligations but is unable to perform them all effectively and it has an effect on the equilibrium of work and life activities. Frone, Yardley and Markel (1997) reasoned that work overload represents a strain-based predictor, because having too much to do and too little time is likely to lead to emotional exhaustion because there is no balance and it negatively affects performance of employees.



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Bilal, Shah, Kundi, Qureshi and Akhtar (2014) in his study posited that most employees are engaged with too much task because of the competitive nature in securing job, fear of the unknown, and accolades at the detriment of their wellbeing. Osman, Shariff and Lajin (2012) posited that when employees are taxed beyond their understanding, competence, talent and available working hours they tend to be less productive, job burnout, poor customer delivery, experience high family conflicts, emotional stress and exhaustion, and workplace accident. Literatures shows organization overload their employees in the quest of achieving high productivity, on the long run causing a negative effect to the organization (Mufeed & Showkat, 2018). They further linked their study that work overload has a negative effect on both the organization and family commitments. It's impossible for an employee to be engage in two task at the same time. It's either the employee stays at work late and miss a family event. Hence, it's imperative for managers to ensure that employees are not overloaded with work in order to achieve the desirable performance.

Work Hours

Ojo, Salau, and Falola (2014) defined working hours as the average time an employee spends at paid labour. Their definition excludes unpaid labour such as personal housework or caring for children or pets. In many countries, the work week is regulated under law. Limitations are placed on the average number of hours employees are allowed to work, resting hours are established and annual holidays are stipulated under law. Working hours varies among individuals depending on the location, lifestyle choice, culture and the profitability of the individual's livelihood (Dzurizah, 2014). An example of how the profitability of an employee's livelihood determines their working hours can be seen with employees who are supporting children and paying huge mortgages. Such an individual will definitely need to work more hours just to be able to afford the basic costs of living than an individual with the same earning power with no children. Staying long hours at work means less time is spent doing non work activities making it interesting to note how it affects the work life balance of employees. Additionally, some working hours are not regarded as work time. Dzurizah (2014) noted that lines of working hours have become blurred with employees taking work back home during non-working hours. Taking work back home encourages long working hours and can be counter –productive to the employee's work life balance.

A considerable amount of research showed that work demands such as number of hours worked is positively and strongly associated with family conflict and has negative effects on employee performance (Higgins & Duxbury, & Irving, 1992; Saltzstein, Ting & Saltzstein, 2001; Burke, 2002). Working long hours, evenings and weekends restrain the time that employers have for family activities. Pocock (2003) picked up on moodiness at home that results from working excessively long hours, the guilt that parent feel for not attending their children's significant events at school. In a daily study, Van Hoof, Geurts, Kompier and Taris (2007) showed that working overtime was associated with higher level of work-life imbalance in both men and women. According to Guest (2002), long working hours, time pressures at work result in unmotivated employees and also increase in weekends and evening work leads to less quality time with family members. Van et.al. (2007) attributed positives such as increased family time, increased leisure time, increased productivity to adherence to standard working hours. However, some studies have reported that reducing working hours results in reduced satisfaction among employees (Golden, 2015; Landivar, 2015). Therefore, it is of great importance to this study to ascertain the impact of working hours on employee performance.

Employee Performance

The extent to which an organisational member contributes to the achievement of the organization's goals is referred to as performance in an organisational context (Zhang, Farh & Wang, 2012). Performance was defined by Orogbu, Onyeizugbe, and Chukwuemeke (2015) as the value added in an activity or task completed by an employee at work. Given the importance of employee performance to an organization's growth, it's become critical to look into the factors that influence employee performance. As companies seek a competitive advantage in the competitive human resource market, there has been an increased focus on investigating the impact of work-life balance on employee performance in recent years. Uddin, Luva and Hossian (2013) delineated employee performance as the degree to which members of the organization contribute to reach organizational objectives. Performance of employees could include: quantity of output, quality of output, timeliness of output, service delivery and cooperativeness (Gungor, 2011). (Hye, 2014). (Garcia-Muiña, González-Sánchez, Ferrari, & Settembre-Blundo, 2018). (Mohsan, Nawaz, Khan, Shaukat & Aslam, 2011). Employee performance, according to Nyokabi (2014), is a rating system used in many corporations to determine an employee's abilities and output (Palenzuela, Delgado, & Rodríguez, 2019, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008, Allo, 1999). Organizations require high-performing individuals in order to achieve their objectives, deliver specialised



products and services, and, most importantly, achieve competitive advantage, which is what all businesses strive for (Sonnentag & Frese 2002).

Empirical Review

Employee Performance and Work Overload

Imam, Qureshi and Khan (2011) looked into the impact of work overload on employee performance, and found that it has a positive and significant impact. The effect of work overload on task-related employee performance was investigated by Tahir, Yusoff, Azam, Khan and Kaleem (2012) in which they found to be deteriorating as a result of work overload. In their study of the effects of work overload on employee performance, Pradana and Salehudin (2015) discovered that work overload causes burnout, which has a negative impact on employee performance. The effects of work overload on employee performance were investigated by Kissi, Asare, Agyekum, Agyemang and Labaran (2019), and the results of regression analysis revealed that work overload had a negative effect on employee job performance. Gallagher and Meurs (2015) looked into the relationship between work overload and employee performance and discovered that employees with high positive affectivity did not have lower job performance under high work overload.

In a separate study, Karatepe (2013) looked at the impact of work overload on employee performance in the electronic manufacturing industry and found out that Work overload has a significant impact on performance. In a study on the link between work overload, depersonalization, and performance by Weigl, Stab, Herms, Angerer, Hacker and Glaser (2016), Work overload and performance have a positive relationship, according to their findings. Skinner and Pocock (2008) found work overload to be a key indicator of self-efficacy. Saira, Zahid and Mehboob (2013) explored the impact of work overload on employee performance in the banking sector and found a strong positive impact of work overload on employee performance. Jones, Chonko, Rangarajan and Roberts (2007) evidenced in their study that degree of overload determines how efficient an employee towards his commitments and responsibility. Iroegbu (2013) in a study investigating the impact of overload on performance. Findings revealed that a strong relationship exist between work overload and performance. Literature has been mixed in terms of reporting the impact of work overload on employee performance. While it is largely reported that there exists a strong positive relationship between work overload and employee performance, some still argue that reduced work load does not necessarily lead to improved employee performance. It is therefore of great interest to this study to further investigate the effect of work overload on employee performance especially as it concerns manufacturing companies in Ogun state Nigeria.

Work Hours and Employee Performance

Studies of Karim (2020) and Igbokwe, Itoya and Eziuzo (2020) showed that when employees spend long hours at work, and less with their families, their health and work performances begin to depreciate. Hoornweg, Peters and Van der Heijden (2016) investigated the impact of working hours on employee performance of engineers in a telecom company. Findings revealed that a negative impact of late working hours was a predictor to the engineer's declining performance. Hence, study shows that when employee work hours are mismanaged there is tendency for such employee to be less productive. John (2014) in a study exploring the productivities of working hours, study revealed that a strong connection exist between working hours and productivity. The amount an employee works determine how productive and efficient they will be in other domains. Aliya, Maiya, Farah and Hina (2015) in their exploration of the factors affecting employees in the banking sector did report that a strong relationship exist between working hours and employees performance. Employees working a longer period sometimes are less productive. Mishra and Smyth (2013) affirmed that when employees have no choice than to work long hours it has a significant effect on their performance. Employees should have control of their work hours in order to boost productivity.

Angrave and Charlwood (2015) also attributed the effect of long working hours to employee performance in a comparative study of nurses. Findings revealed that nurses perform better when they have control of their working time. Goudswaard, Verbiest, Preenen and Dhondt (2013) reported that working hours and its resultant impact on employee performance varies from country to country. Macky and Johnson (2000) pointed that improved individual employee performance could improve organizational performance as well. The researchers studied the relationship between working hours and employee performance in Netherlands and Hungary. Results showed sectoral differences regarding working hours and its impact on employee performance. It also revealed a negative relationship between working hours and employee performance. Getting a strong hold on the effect of long working hours on employee performance would go a long way in informing business owners seeking to enhance



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their organizations vis-à-vis employee performance. It is therefore of huge importance to this study to further investigate the effect of long working hours on employee performance.

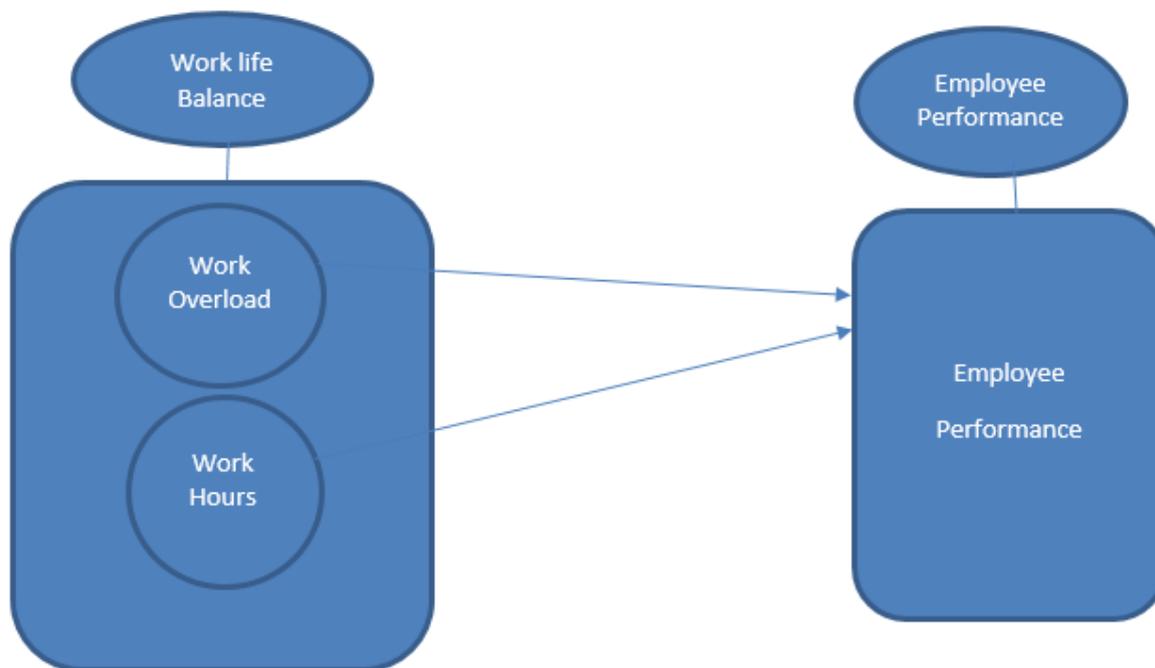


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Source: Researchers’ conceptualization (2021)

Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey research design to investigate the effect of work hour and work overload on employee performance. The design provided the research with germane information to describe the pertinent aspect of the variable. The population was 26,754 comprise of the five selected manufacturing firms (Unilever Plc, Lafarge Cement, Reckitt Benckiser, GZ Industries Limited and Evans Medical Plc) employees from the top, middle and lower management of the selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State. The sample size was 520 which was arrived at using Yamane (1967) formula of sample size determination.

Table 1 Validity Result

S/N	Variables	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlet test of sphericity	Remark
1	Work overload	5	698.714 (000)	Accepted
2	Work Hours	5	618.756 (000)	Accepted
3	Employee performance	10	854.742 (000)	Accepted

Source: Researcher’s Computation, 2021

In this study, the KMO test is greater than 0.5 and Bartlett test of Sphericity result is less than 0.05 indicating that the items that comprised in the research instruments of each variable actually measured what were intended.

Table 2 Reliability Result

S/N	Variables	Number of items	Reliability Index by the Author	Revalidation by the author	Remark
1	Work overload	5	0.746	0.926	Reliable
2	Work Hours	5	0.815	0.903	Reliable
3	Employee performance	10	0.853	0.912	Reliable

Source: Researcher’s Computation, 2021



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The Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to test this internal consistency as well as the reliability. The values obtained were higher than 0.70 alpha benchmark. This confirms that the questionnaire and its variables passed the internal consistency test. The response rate of a test measures the statistical power of a research and the higher the rate the better.

Data analysis Results and Discussion of findings

H₀₁: Work overload has no significant effect on employees' performance in selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State.

Table 3 Summary of Regression Analysis of Work Overload on Employees' Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	30.735	1.132		27.150	.000
	Work Overload	-.558	-.060	.412	-9.370	.000

R = 0.412; R² = 0.170; Adj. R² = 0.168; F_(1,430) = 87.797

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: Researcher's Field Survey from SPSS output, 2021

Interpretation

The table above shows the results of regression analysis between work overload and employee performance. It is indicated in the table that work overload has negative and significant effect on employees' performance in selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State ($\beta = -0.558$, $t = 9.370$, $p = 0.000$). The result is attributed to the fact that employees with heavy workloads will be unable to establish a balance between work (family) and family (work) roles and will also be emotionally exhausted. Such employees exhibit poor performances in the process of delivering their service. The Table shows that work overload affects employee performance ($F = 87.797$, $p = 0.000$). Furthermore, the Table indicates that work overload are responsible for only 17% variance in employee performance. The equation obtained for the regression was the following:

$$EP = 30.735 - 0.558WOL \quad \text{(eq. iii)}$$

Where:

EP = Employee Performance

WHS = Work Overload

The regression equation above explains effects of work overload on employee performance in selected manufacturing companies in Ogun State. The equation shows that when work overload is constant at zero, employee performance takes the value of 30.735 implying that without work overload, employee performance in the selected manufacturing companies would be 30.735. The coefficient of work hours was -0.558. This indicates that an increase in the work overload by one unit leads to a decrease in employee performance in the selected manufacturing companies by 0.558 units. This implies that an increase in works overload will subsequently reduce employee performance in the selected manufacturing. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis two (H₀₂) which states that work overload has no significant effect on employees' performance in selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State is hereby rejected.

Discussion

The result of hypothesis one revealed that work overload has no significant effect on employees' performance in selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State. The results are in agreement with Hassan, Tahir and mad (2011) which found that work load has significant effect on employee performance. Also, the study supported the findings of the works by Tahir, Yusoff, Azam, Khan and Kaleem (2012) who found a decline in employee performance as a result of work overload. The study result is also in agreement with Seon and Mi-Hee (2009) which opined that employees experience burnouts from work overload which in turn affects employee performance negatively. In the same vein, Vietnam and Vu (2016) asserts that work overload had a negative effect on employee job performance. Similarly, the finding is in agreement with both Gallagher and Meurs (2015) position that under conditions of high work overload employees with high positive affectivity did not experience reduced job performance. The study further revealed that supervisor rated performance decreased in the context of enhanced work overload for those with high positive affectivity. Likewise, Nurul (2013) posit that there exist a strong impact between work overload and performance. The more an employee is loaded with work the lesser they perform their



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task. Edwards, Kelly and Azzopardi (2015) pointed out that there is a positive relationship between work overload and performance. Employees who are overloaded with work often get depersonalized a situation where they no longer feel committed to the work hence, making a significant decline in their performance. The finding also agree with Brown, Jones and Leigh (2005) that there is negative relationship between work-overload and employees' performance. The authors indicated that work overload has a key indicator to self-efficacy. Findings revealed that when employees are overloaded their self-efficacy is attenuated. Hence, causing a decline in employee performance.

H₀₂: Work hours has no significant effect on employees' performance in selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State.

Table 4 Summary of Regression Analysis of Work hours on Employees' Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	32.270	.884		36.504	.000
Work Hours	.473	.046	.446	10.346	.000

R = 0.446; R² = 0.199; Adj. R² = 0.197; F_(1,430) = 107.407

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: Researcher's Field Survey from SPSS output, 2021

The above table shows regression analysis between the explanatory variable (Work Hours) and Employee Performance. The table shows the Unstandardized coefficient of Work Hours to be 0.473 (p=0.000) meaning that Work Hours have statistically significant effect on Employee Performance in selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State. This is further shown as F = 107.407 with P<0.05. This means that Work Hours positively influences Employee Performance. The Table shows that there is moderately weak relationship (R=0.446) between Work Hours and Employee Performance. Further evidenced is the fact that the percentage of variance in employee performance explained by Work Hours is about 19.9%. The Table shows that R-squared (R²) which measure percentage of variance in dependent variable explained by explanatory variable significant, meaning that Work Hours predicts employee performance. The equation found for the regression was the following:

$$EP = 32.270 + 0.473WHS \quad \text{(eq. iv)}$$

Where:

EP = Employee Performance

WHS = Work Hours

The regression equation to explain effects of work hours on employee performance. The equation shows that when work hours is constant at zero, employee performance takes the value of 32.270 implying that without work hours, employee performance in the selected manufacturing companies would be 32.270. The coefficient of work hours was 0.473. This indicates that an increase in the work hours by one unit leads to an increase in employee performance in the selected manufacturing companies by 0.473 units. This implies that an increase in works hour will subsequently increase employee performance in the selected manufacturing. Therefore, the null hypothesis one (H₀₁) which states that Work hours has no significant effect on employees' performance in selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State is hereby rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concluded that work life balance practices such as work overload and work hour affects employee's performance in manufacturing firms. Work hours alone are not enough to increase employee performance of a highly skilled, motivated and experienced workforce that an organization needs to excel. Therefore, this study recommends human resources managers to strive to look for newer and innovative employee performance enhancing initiatives because employees are keen on them. Also, WLB initiative needs of the various employees rather than providing generic and repetitive policies which may not be beneficial to some of them and thereby affect their performance. This work was carried out in manufacturing sector, it can be done in other sectors to avoid generalizations.



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