

JOB STRESS, WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The important role university lecturers play in ensuring the academic and professional development of students cannot be overemphasized. Yet, the demanding nature of their job can lead to work-related stress, which can negatively impact their performance and overall well-being. Moreover, the balance between work and personal life has become a significant concern in today's fast-paced academic environment. This study investigates the relationship between job stress and job performance, as well as work-life balance and job performance, among university lecturers in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. This study explores three specific job stressors- workload, role ambiguity and role conflict. Data generated in the study was descriptively analysed using mean, and percentages. Multiple regression was used to analyze the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0. The study found that role ambiguity is a significant predictor of job performance. However, there was no significant relationship between workload and job performance and between role conflict and job performance. Additionally, the results showed that work-life balance had a considerable influence on the job performance of lecturers. It is recommended that universities should provide clear expectations, responsibilities, and goals for lecturers to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities, leading to improved performance. Additionally, universities should promote flexible work arrangements, provide resources for stress management, and encourage self-care to enhance lecturers' overall well-being and job performance.

Keywords: Job Performance, Job Stress, Stress, Work-Life Balance

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and competitive business landscape, organizations must optimize the resources at their disposal to achieve their goals and objectives. Similarly, they must prioritize their employees' well-being by promoting a reasonable work-life balance and minimising work-related stress among organizational members. This is crucial, as studies have consistently demonstrated that an inadequate balance between professional and personal life can lead to heightened job stress and reduced job performance (Arif, Rivai & Yuliharsi, 2022; Kartini, Sellina & Nugroho, 2023; Paramita & Supartha, 2022). A study by Arif et al. (2022) found that poor work-life balance was a significant predictor of job stress, which in turn negatively impacted job performance. Similarly, Kartini et al. (2023) and Paramita & Supartha (2022) also highlighted the importance of balancing work and personal life to improve job performance.

Work-life balance (WLB) is a critical aspect of modern employment, referring to the delicate balance between an individual's professional and personal life (Arif et al., 2022; Aruldoss, Kowalski & Parayitam, 2020; Kartini et al., 2023). WLB is a perceptual construct that influences employees' job satisfaction, job performance, and job stress levels (Aruldoss et al., 2020; Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021). Job stress, a pervasive issue across occupations and cultures (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014; Kartini et al., 2023), can have detrimental effects on physical and mental health if left unchecked. As employees strive to meet job expectations, they often face the challenge of balancing work and personal responsibilities, making WLB an important determinant of overall employee well-being (Aruldoss et al., 2020).

In the past few decades, public universities in Nigeria have continued to face a myriad of problems and challenges, including inadequate funding, poor working conditions of university workers, and reluctance by subsequent governments to grant autonomy to public universities since independence (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014). While the 2009 FG/ASSU agreement was meant to tackle the problems bedeviling public universities in Nigeria, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has insisted that claims by the government to have fulfilled the 2009 agreement were merely promissory notes (Sen. Chris Ngige Media Office, 2020). These unresolved issues have not only dampened the morale of lecturers in public universities but have seen a surge in the "Japa" syndrome, a phenomenon where Nigerian academics seek better opportunities abroad. As university lecturers struggle to cope with the demands of their jobs, the issue of poor working conditions and limited resources have led to a significant increase in job stress, resulting in decreased job performance, poor health, and increased turnover intention (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014). Moreover, the 2022 ASUU strike saw public universities adopting multiple academic calendars in order to compensate for lost time. This has not only amplified work-related stress among lecturers in public institutions but might also have negatively affected their WLB and consequently their well-being and overall job performance.

The study examines job stress, WLB and job performance among academic staff in the University of Benin. The study specifically sought to:

- i) determine the relationship between job stress and job performance; and
- ii) ascertain the link between WLB and job performance among lecturers at the University of Benin.

The research hypotheses of the study are stated as follows:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between job stress and job performance among lecturers at the University of Benin.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between job stress and WLB among lecturers at the University of Benin.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Review

Job Stress

Stress, rooted in the Latin word "stringer," refers to the physical and psychological symptoms that arise when an individual fails to adapt to their environment (Selye, 1946). Job stress occurs when there is a mismatch between environmental demands and an individual's resources (Aruldoss et al., 2020). This mismatch can lead to job stress when job demands, expectations, and responsibilities exceed an individual's capabilities, skills, and resources (Kartini et al., 2023; Ornek & Sevim, 2018). Excessive job stress (distress) has been linked to negative outcomes, including job burnout, cardiovascular disorders, health-related illnesses, poor quality of work life, depression, and anxiety (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014; Arif et al., 2022; Shaikh & Wajidi, 2021).

In the university system, job stress can be particularly prevalent due to heavy workloads, role ambiguity, and role conflict (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014). The lack of clear expectations and responsibilities can lead to role ambiguity, exacerbating job stress (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Conflicting tasks and responsibilities can also contribute to role conflict, further increasing job

stress (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). Poor work-life balance can also arise from job stress, leading to decreased job performance and overall well-being (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity occurs when individuals lack clear expectations and understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and accountability within the organization (Katz & Kahn, 1978). This ambiguity can lead to uncertainty about performance evaluation, rewards, and punishment, causing confusion and stress (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). Akinmayowa and Kadiri (2014) reported that unclear expectations can lead to excessive workload, as employees may take on unnecessary tasks to compensate for the lack of clear responsibilities). Similarly, the lack of clear expectations and responsibilities can exacerbate role ambiguity, making it challenging for employees to prioritize tasks and manage their workload effectively (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Role ambiguity can lead to role conflict, as employees may experience conflicting tasks and responsibilities due to unclear expectations (Katz & Kahn, 1978). It can encroach on personal time, leading to poor work-life balance and increased stress (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985); as well as negatively impact job performance, leading to decreased productivity and reduced job satisfaction (Böhle, Knox & Hocking, 2017).

Role Conflict

Role conflict occurs when employees face conflicting job responsibilities, expectations, and tasks, leading to heightened stress levels (Katz & Kahn, 1978). This can happen when employees report to multiple supervisors or have conflicting tasks, causing uncertainty and

tension (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). This happens when employees are tasked with conflicting job responsibilities, expectations and tasks. Employees who are exposed to role conflicts might be prone to amplified stress levels. Similarly, individuals who are given the task of reporting two or more supervisors, superiors or bosses simultaneously might experience increased levels of stress arising from role conflict. Katz and Kahn (1978) opined that workload complexity can create unclear expectations and responsibilities, making it challenging for lecturers to prioritize tasks and manage their workload effectively. Katz and Kahn (1978) further observed that the numerous responsibilities can lead to conflicting tasks and duties, causing lecturers to experience role conflicts between teaching, research, and administrative tasks.

Workload

University lecturers are susceptible to high stress levels due to their extensive workload, which includes teaching, exam preparation, and course advising responsibilities (Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014; Ofoegbu & Nwadiani, 2004). The workload is further exacerbated by inadequate resources, such as instructional facilities, office space, and exam invigilators (Ofoegbu & Nwadiani, 2004). In essence, if the demands of the job exceed lecturers coping abilities, they may face substantial work-related stress with potentially detrimental consequences. Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) observed that excessive workload can encroach on personal time, making it difficult for lecturers to maintain a healthy work-life balance, leading to burnout and decreased job satisfaction. Moreover, chronic stress from the workload can negatively impact lecturers' job performance, leading to decreased productivity, reduced teaching quality, and lower student satisfaction (Böhle, Knox & Hocking, 2017)

Work-life balance

Work-life balance (WLB) is the harmonious alignment of personal and professional obligations, and achieving a conflict-free coexistence between work and family roles (Kartini, et al., 2023;

Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021; Susanto, Hoque, Jannat & Islam, 2022). It is the degree to which an individual's satisfaction and effectiveness in both domains align with their life priorities (Kartini, et al., 2023; Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021). WLB is a shared responsibility between employers and employees, requiring employers to create arrangements that consider both business needs and employees' non-work aspects (Kartini, et al., 2023; Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021). By achieving WLB, employees experience increased motivation, job satisfaction, and reduced job stress, ultimately leading to improved job performance and reduced labour turnover. When employees can manage their work and personal lives effectively, they are more productive, efficient, and dedicated to their work, leading to enhanced performance. Conversely, poor WLB leads to increased stress, decreased motivation, and reduced job performance. WLB plays a critical role in mitigating work stress and improving job performance, highlighting the importance of prioritizing WLB in the workplace. By promoting WLB, organizations can create a supportive environment that fosters employee well-being, leading to improved job performance, reduced turnover, and enhanced overall success (Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021).

Job Performance

Job performance is the culmination of an individual's efforts and dedication to their work, encompassing effectiveness, quality, and efficiency in their tasks and responsibilities (Rusmiati, Harjadi & Fitriani, 2021). Research has consistently demonstrated that job stress has a profound impact on employee performance, leading to decreased productivity, reduced motivation, and diminished overall performance (Aruldoss, et al., 2020; Arif, et al., 2022; Paramita, & Supartha, 2022; Kartini, et al., 2023). Prolonged exposure to job stress can result in burnout, absenteeism, and turnover, ultimately affecting the organization's success (Arif, et al., 2022; Paramita, & Supartha, 2022).

On the other hand, a healthy work-life balance (WLB) has been shown to have a positive impact on job performance (Aruldoss, et al., 2020). When employees can effectively manage their personal and professional responsibilities, they experience reduced stress, increased job satisfaction, and improved overall well-being (Aruldoss, et al., 2020; Arif, et al., 2022). This, in turn, leads to enhanced productivity, better work quality, and increased efficiency. Studies have consistently demonstrated the critical role of WLB in mitigating the negative effects of job stress on performance. Employees who maintain a good WLB tend to exhibit higher levels of job performance, as they are better equipped to manage stress, maintain motivation, and sustain their energy and focus (Roopavathi & Kishore, 2021). In contrast, poor WLB can exacerbate the negative impacts of job stress, leading to decreased performance and reduced overall well-being. Therefore, job performance is positively influenced by WLB and negatively impacted by job stress, highlighting the importance of managing both factors to optimize employee performance and overall success (Arif, et al., 2022; Paramita, & Supartha, 2022; Kartini, et al., 2023).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The paper utilizes spillover theory (Wilensky, 1960) and conflict theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) to explore the link between work-life balance and job performance. The transactional model of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) was used to explain job stress and job performance. Wilensky (1960) proposed that events in one aspect of life can influence performance and well-being in another, leading to either positive or negative spillovers. Positive spillover occurs when skills, attitudes, or emotions from one domain enhance functioning in another, such as when organizational skills gained at work improve family management (Clark, 2000). Conversely, negative spillover happens when stress or adverse experiences from one area negatively affect performance in another. For example, workplace stress might lead to conflicts at home, diminishing both job performance and personal happiness (Geurts et al., 2005).

Grzywacz and Marks (2000) found that employees who feel supported and satisfied at home are more likely to be motivated and productive at work, resulting in positive spillover effects that boost job performance. On the other hand, negative spillover can lead to increased stress, reduced job satisfaction, and poorer job performance. Spillover theory suggests that work-related emotions, attitudes, skills, and behaviours can impact an individual's personal life and vice versa, influencing work-life balance.

Conflict theory, as developed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), focuses on role conflict arising from incompatible work and family duties. They identified three types of conflict: time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based. Time-based conflict occurs when the time demands of one role make it difficult to fulfil the other role's expectations. Strain-based conflict arises when stress from one role makes it challenging to fulfil another role's duties. Behaviour-based conflict occurs when behaviours required in one role are incompatible with those in another. Role conflict can lead to significant stress and negatively impact job performance. For example, long work hours can reduce family time, causing stress and dissatisfaction (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). Similarly, emotional exhaustion from work-related strain-based conflict can harm family relationships and reduce overall well-being and job performance.

The transactional model of stress, proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), explains stress as a result of interactions between an individual and their environment. This model involves two main appraisals: primary and secondary. Primary appraisal is the assessment of whether an event poses a threat, challenge, or harm. Secondary appraisal involves evaluating the resources and options available for coping with the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This model views stress not as a direct reaction to external stimuli, but as a complex process arising from the dynamic interplay between an individual and their environment.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a cross-sectional research design to investigate the relationship between job stress, work-life balance, and job performance among academic staff at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The rationale for adopting the cross-sectional research design is due to the opportunity it allows for a snapshot of the population at a specific point in time. Thereby, providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between job stress, work-life balance, and job performance among academic staff at the University of Benin.

The population of academic staff at the University of Benin is 3000 (Record and Statistics, 2022). The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (1967) for determining sample size.

Using Yamane's (1967) formula which is written as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(0.05)^2}$$
$$= \frac{3000}{1+3000(0.05)^2} = 352.941 \cong 353$$

Hence, approximately 353 respondents were selected for the study using the convenience sampling technique.

Data was collected using a questionnaire adapted from previous studies. Questions used to measure job stressors (workload, role ambiguity and role conflict) were adapted from prior

studies by Akinmayowa and Kadiri (2014), Lodahl and Kejner (1965) and Rizzo, House and Litzman (1970). WLB was measured using 6 items adapted from Aruldoss et al., (2020). Rodwell, Kienzle and Shadur (1998) 9-item scale was used to measure job performance. The Cronbach's alpha values of the variables in the study: workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, WLB and job performance are 0.955, 0.932, 0.917, 0.931 and 0.953 respectively.

The questionnaire was organized into four sections. Section A gathered respondents' socio-demographic information. Section B of the questionnaire assessed job stressors. Section C focused on WLB and Section D explored job performance. All the variables for the study were measured with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). For the sake of ease and accessibility, the study employed a convenience sampling technique to distribute the questionnaires to respondents. By using this convenience sampling technique, the researcher aimed to reach a diverse group of academic staff at the University of Benin, ensuring a representative sample for the study. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents in identified convenient locations where academic staff at the University of Benin frequently visit, such as the ASUU secretariats during union meetings, the staff cafeteria, departmental offices, and the university library. The researchers were able to retrieve one hundred and twenty-six (126) copies of the questionnaire which were considered valid for data analysis purposes. The data generated was descriptively analysed using frequency counts and percentages. Multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. All analyses were done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 24.0.

Demographics of Respondents

In this section, the demographic characteristics of respondents were descriptively analyzed.

Table 1: Respondents Demographic Profile

SN	VARIABLES	Category	Responses	
			Frequency	%
1	Gender	Male	75	59.5
		Female	51	40.5
		Total	126	100
2	Age	Less than 25 years	-	-
		25-40 years	24	19.0
		41-65 years	100	79.0
		66 years and above	2	1.6
		Total	126	100
3	Marital Status	Single	23	18.3
		Married	92	73.0
		Divorced/Separated	11	8.7
		Total	126	100
4	Educational Qualification	BSc	4	3.2
		MSc/MBA	27	21.4
		PhD	95	75.4
		Total	126	100.0
5	Work Experience	Less than a year	4	3.2
		1-5 years	10	7.9
		6-10 years	56	44.4
		11-15 years	37	29.4
		16 years and above	19	15.1
		Total	126	100
6	Job Status/Title	Graduate Assistant	4	3.2
		Assistant Lecturer	8	6.3
		Lecturer II	30	23.8
		Lecturer I	28	22.2
		Senior Lecturer	36	28.6
		Associate Professor	12	9.5
		Professor	8	6.3
		Total	126	100

Table 1 reveals that the majority of the respondents were males, with 75 respondents (%=59.5), while 51 respondents, equivalent to 40.5%, were females. The data further indicated that a significant majority, accounting for 74.4% (100 participants), belonged to the age category of

41 to 65 years. Also, 18.5% (23 respondents) were single, 73.0% (92 respondents) were married, and 8.7% (11 respondents) were either divorced or separated. Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents, comprising 75.4% (95 respondents), had a PhD degree. Similarly, the majority (44.4%) of the respondents had worked for the University of Benin for a period spanning 6-10 years. The data on respondents' job status/title showed that 3.2% of the respondents were graduate assistants, 6.3% were assistant lecturers, 22.2% were lecturer I, 23.8% were lecturer II; 28.6% were senior lecturers, 9.5% were assistant professors; while 6.3% had attained the status of professorship.

Regression Analysis Results

The relationship between the independent variables (i.e. workload, role ambiguity and role conflict) and job performance was analyzed in the section using multiple regression analysis.

Table 2: Job Performance and Job Stressors

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	3.911	0.509		7.682	0.000	
Workload	-0.123	0.103	-0.147	-1.193	0.238	Not Significant
Role Ambiguity	-0.251	0.101	-0.306	-2.479	0.016	Significant
Role Conflict	-0.177	0.102	-0.214	-1.738	0.087	Not Significant
$R^2 = 0.421$; $Adj R^2 = 0.416$; $F\text{-Statistic} = 3.022$; $F\text{-Statistic (Prob)} = 0.036$; $Durbin\text{-Watson} = 1.699$ a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance						

The findings in Table 2 indicate that role ambiguity has a statistically significant negative relationship with job performance ($\beta = -0.251$, $t\text{-value} = -2.479$, $p\text{-value} = 0.016$). This suggests

that as role ambiguity increases, job performance decreases. The p-value of 0.016 is less than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. However, there is no statistically significant relationship between job performance and workload ($t=-1.193$; $p>0.05$), and between job performance and role conflict ($t=-1.1738$; $p>0.05$).

The regression model exhibits a robust explanatory power, with an Adjusted R-squared value of 0.416, indicating that the independent variables successfully explain 41.6% of the variance in job performance. Moreover, the F-statistic of 3.022, significant at $p < 0.05$, confirms that the relationship between the dependent variable (job performance) and the independent variables (role ambiguity, job demand, and work-life balance) is statistically significant. This suggests that the independent variables as a whole have a significant impact on job performance.

Table 3: WLB and Job Performance

The hypothesized relationship between WLB and job performance was analyzed in Table 3

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)			
(Constant)	4.966	0.309		16.083	0.000	
WLB	0.439	0.092	0.516	4.778	0.000	Significant
$R^2 = 0.418$; $Adj R^2 = 0.415$; $F\text{-Statistic} = 22.827$; $F\text{-Statistic (Prob)} = 0.000$ Durbin-Watson = 1.939 a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance						

The results presented in Table 3 establish a statistically significant and positive relationship between WLB and job performance ($\beta = 0.518$, $t\text{-value} = 4.778$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). This

indicates that WLB serves as an important predictor of job performance. The regression model exhibits a robust explanatory power, with an Adjusted R-squared value of 0.415, indicating that the independent variables successfully explain 41.5% of the variance in job performance. Moreover, the F-statistic of 22.827, significant at $p < 0.05$, confirms that the relationship between the dependent variable (job performance) and the independent variables (work-life balance) is statistically significant. This suggests that WLB plays a crucial role in predicting job performance, and the collective impact of the independent variables is substantial

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study empirically explored the relationship between job stress, WLB, and job performance among lecturers at the University of Benin. Job stress was assessed through three dimensions: job demand, role conflict, and role ambiguity. The study's findings indicate that role ambiguity is a significant predictor of job performance, consistent with Üngüren, Engin, and Arslan (2021). However, results show that workload and role conflict do not have a significant relationship with job performance. The non-significant relationship between job demand and job performance contradicts Kartini et al.'s (2023) [2] findings. The lack of a relationship between role conflict and job performance also diverges from existing research (Chen, Yu & Li, 2020). The study found that there is a significant relationship between WLB and job performance. This aligns with Kartini et al.'s (2023) and Susanto et al.'s (2022) assertions that WLB contributes to overall employee job performance. This finding also corroborates a study

by Roopavathi & Kishore (2021), which revealed that workers react unfavourably to a perceived lack of balance between work and personal life.

This study affirms that role ambiguity and WLB are significant predictors of the job performance of university lecturers. Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the well-being and effectiveness of lecturers at the University of Benin and public universities in Nigeria generally:

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i) **Role Clarification:** University administrators should provide clear role definitions and expectations for lecturers to minimize role ambiguity. This can be achieved through regular feedback, clear job descriptions, and opportunities for professional development.
- ii) **Work-Life Balance Initiatives:** Universities should implement policies and programs that support work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, telecommuting options, and employee wellness programs. This will help lecturers manage their work and personal responsibilities effectively.
- iii) **Professional Development Opportunities:** Universities should provide regular training and development opportunities to enhance lecturers' skills and knowledge. This will help them stay updated in their field and improve their job performance.

- iv) Performance Feedback: Regular feedback and performance evaluations should be conducted to help lecturers identify areas for improvement and develop strategies for growth.
- v) Support Mechanisms: Universities should establish support mechanisms, such as mentorship programs or employee assistance programs, to help lecturers manage stress and workload.
- vi) Recognition and Rewards: Universities should recognize and reward lecturers' achievements and contributions to motivate them and enhance job performance.
- vii) Workload Management: Universities should ensure that lecturers' workloads are manageable and reasonable, allowing them to dedicate sufficient time to teaching, research, and other responsibilities.
- viii) Collaborative Culture: Universities should foster a collaborative culture that encourages teamwork, innovation, and knowledge sharing among lecturers.

By implementing these recommendations, universities can improve job performance, work-life balance, and overall well-being among lecturers, leading to enhanced student learning outcomes and institutional success.

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