PREDICTIVE ROLE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON THE WORK ENGAGEMENT OF BANK EMPLOYEES: MODERATING ROLE OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AMONG BANK EMPLOYEES

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study examined work-life balance, work alienation dimensions as predictors of work engagement, and the moderating role of workplace spirituality of bank employees. The problem of having a lower level of work-life balance and feelings of work alienation dimensions have left bank employees with lower levels of work engagement. Workplace spirituality was introduced to strengthen the work-life balance to boost the work engagement of bank employees. Workplace spirituality was also introduced to weaken the alienation feelings of bank employees as an attempt to boost their work engagement. The participants were 443 bank employees drawn from 34 commercial banks located in the three commercial cities of Asaba, Sapele and Warri. The ages of participants ranged from 25-42 years, mean age of 31.72 and a standard deviation of 5.40. The participant's ranks were Assistant Banking Officers, Banking Officers, Senior Banking Officers and Assistant Managers. Only professional bank employees participated in the study and the educational qualifications of the participants were Ph.D., M.Sc. and B.Sc. The study adopted a cross-sectional correlational design using Pearson r moment correlation and hierarchical linear regression analysis to test the hypotheses managed by SPSS version 23. Analysis of the beta coefficient showed that Work-life balance predicted work engagement at, $\beta= .25, p<.01$, therefore the first hypothesis was accepted. The Powerlessness dimension of work alienation predicted employee engagement at $\beta= .18, p<.01$, and the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation on employee work engagement behaviour at, $\beta= -.22, p<.01$. In contrast, the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation predicted work engagement at, $\beta= .14, p<.01$, therefore the second hypothesis and its sub-dimensions were also accepted. The moderation result revealed that workplace spirituality did not moderate the relationship between work-life balance and work engagement at, $\beta= -.01, p>.01$. The third hypothesis was thus rejected. Workplace spirituality did not moderate the relationship between the work alienation dimensions and work engagement at, $\beta= .01, p>.01$, therefore the fourth hypothesis and its sub-dimensions were rejected. The findings imply that the presence of work-life balance will increase the work engagement of bank employees therefore, the higher the work-life balance, the higher the work engagement of bank employees. Also, work alienation dimensions will hinder the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State, therefore, the higher the work alienation dimensions the lower the work engagement of bank employees. It is recommended that the banking sector creates policies targeted at strengthening the work-life balance of bank employees and policies that reduce the presence of work alienation dimensions of powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement in driving up the work engagement behaviour of bank employees. The findings of this study have revealed an intriguing relationship between work-life balance, work alienation dimensions and work engagement of bank employees in Delta State, in that when work-life balance increases, work engagement increases and when the powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement dimensions of alienation increase work engagement decreases and vice-versa. Understanding this relationship will guide the policies governing the organisational culture of banks in Delta State in implementing and enforcing policies geared towards a balanced work-life and significantly reduced feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness and self-estrangement dimensions of alienation.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Employees remain critical within organisations, particularly in the modern business environment. They constitute the lifeblood of every organisation, which has piqued the interest of both corporations and academics in pinpointing and comprehending the elements that influence employees' productive output. Such output is contingent on the work engagement behaviour of employees (Ule et al., 2020). An unengaged workforce poses the risk of organisations failing to achieve their objectives. Therefore, to enhance productivity, many organisations—especially commercial banks—allocate substantial capital to the training and retraining of employees, as an attempt to enhance the work engagement of employees in ensuring alignment with market trends and organisational pertinence (Puspitasari & Darwin, 2021; Ferdous et al., 2020).

The banking system adheres to a bureaucratic administrative framework. This encompasses defined jurisdictions for activity distribution, adherence to rules and regulations by subordinates, remuneration for work, potential permanency post-probation, and hierarchical structures that oversee formal planning and decision-making with departmental divisions. The hierarchy within commercial banks extends from the executive assistant at the entry level to the managing director or chief executive officer at the apex. This study focuses on the middle echelons of the bank's hierarchy, namely Assistant Banking Officers, Banking Officers, Senior Banking Officers, and Assistant Managers.

Work-life balance is advantageous for individuals as well as organisations, such as commercial banks. It is correlated with higher job involvement and increased organisational productivity, while its absence can detrimentally affect an employee's mental, physiological, and psychological health (Wood et al., 2020). Extended working hours and job exhaustion may lead to dissatisfaction and a decreased sense of value in one's work among bank employees (Nwagbara, 2020). However, work-life balance is not the sole determinant of work engagement in banking employees. Tension from failing to harmonize professional and personal demands may foster a sense of disconnection, culminating in workplace alienation.

Alienation, whether job-related or otherwise, can be structural, induced, or stem from personal perceptions (Vrendenburgh, 2022). Work alienation manifests as discomfort that leads to self-exclusion from relationships and active participation in the workplace. It denotes a psychological disconnection from work environment relationships (Muttar et al., 2020). Alienated employees often disengage, contributing less and performing below the required

standards as they do not perceive themselves as integral to the organisation's functions (Vrendenburgh, 2022; Muttar et al., 2020; Ajisafe & Obafemi, 2019). They exhibit reduced participation in collective activities, evidencing a lack of integration and distance within the work setting.

Workplace spirituality is the quest for personal fulfilment and the search for purpose and meaning in life, which is translated into acts of kindness in the professional realm (Krishnani, 2023). A key aspect of workplace spirituality is the desire to improve the lives of others within the work setting, thereby fostering psychological well-being among bank employees. The essence of spirituality at work is underpinned by concepts of meaning, transcendence, and community (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2021).

Employees who experience transcendence at work achieve a state of interconnectedness with their co-workers, culminating in experiences of bliss, absoluteness, and mental well-being (Krishnani, 2023). Workplace spirituality is the alignment of an individual's values, meanings, and purposes with the values and practices of their organisation and work environment (Tantua & Osuamkpe, 2020). It promotes the harmonization of personal and organisational goals and fosters a supportive atmosphere conducive to employee development (Palmer et al., 2020). The incorporation of workplace spirituality within organisations is intended to cultivate a culture of communal support and collective well-being (Ule et al., 2020). Spirituality in the workplace transcends religious connotations and does not advocate for the conversion to any specific belief system (Sulastini et al., 2023). Rather, it is concerned with the individual's values, beliefs, attitudes, and life philosophies that drive their behaviour and actions (Rahman et al., 2022).

In the context of this study on work engagement, workplace spirituality has the potential to enhance the work engagement behaviour of employees in commercial banks. Employees who perceive a balance between their work and personal lives may experience heightened work engagement due to the positive influences of co-worker goodwill and the manifestation of workplace spirituality. Moreover, employees who feel alienated may find that the introduction of workplace spirituality mitigates their feelings of disconnection, leading to increased engagement by countering the influence of alienation. This study posits that work-life balance and dimensions of work alienation may be predictors of work engagement behaviour and that the interplay among these variables could be moderated by the presence of workplace spirituality among bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria.

The anticipated outcomes of this research aim to bridge gaps in the existing literature and enhance organisational understanding of how work-life balance, feelings of work alienation, and the role of workplace spirituality interact to influence the work engagement behaviour of bank

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employees in Delta State. The insights derived could inform strategies to bolster employee engagement and well-being in the banking sector.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Will work-life balance predict work engagement among bank employees in Delta State?

2a. Will the powerlessness dimension of work alienation predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State?

2b. Will the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State?

2c. Will the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State?

3. Will workplace spirituality moderate the relationship between work-life balance and work engagement among bank employees in Delta State?

4a. Will workplace spirituality moderate the relationship between the powerlessness dimension of work alienation and work engagement among bank employees in Delta State?

4b. Will workplace spirituality moderate the relationship between the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation and work engagement among bank employees in Delta State?

4c. Will workplace spirituality moderate the relationship between the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation and work engagement of bank employees in Delta State?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between work-life balance, dimensions of work alienation, work engagement, and the moderating role of workplace spirituality among bank employees in Delta State. Specifically, this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Ascertain the influence of work-life balance on work engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

2a. Determine the influence of the powerlessness dimension of work alienation on work engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

2b. Determine the influence of the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation on work engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

2c. Determine the influence of the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation on work engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

3. Ascertain the moderating role of workplace spirituality in the relationship between work-life balance and work engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

4a. Examine the moderating role of workplace spirituality in the relationship between the powerlessness dimension of work alienation and work engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

4b. Examine the moderating role of workplace spirituality in the relationship between the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation and work engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

4c. Examine the moderating role of workplace spirituality in the relationship between the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation and work engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study.

1. Work-life balance will predict work engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

2a. The powerlessness dimension of alienation will predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

2b. The Meaninglessness dimension of alienation will predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

2c. The self-estrangement dimension of alienation will predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

3. Workplace Spirituality will moderate the relationship between Work-life balance and work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

4a. Workplace spirituality will moderate the relationship between the powerlessness dimension of alienation and work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

4b. Workplace spirituality will moderate the relationship between the meaninglessness dimension of alienation and the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

4c. Workplace spirituality will moderate the relationship between the self-estrangement dimension of alienation and work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

Empirical Review

The empirical studies of this research provide insight into the anticipated dynamics between the variables of interest. Here are synopses of some pertinent studies:

Work-Life Balance and Employee Work Engagement

Sheyindemi et al. (2023) explored the influence of work-life balance on the work engagement of paramilitary personnel in Nigeria. Their primary goal was to investigate how work-life balance affects the engagement levels of these personnel. They adopted a quantitative research methodology, using questionnaires for data collection, and employed a sample size of 400 respondents, determined using Taro Yamane's formula. Their analysis utilized Pearson Moment Correlation and regression, processed via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The study found a significant relationship between work-life balance and the engagement levels of the paramilitary personnel, indicating that work-life equilibrium notably affects their dedication to their roles. This research aligns with the present study by offering foundational insights into the correlation between work-life balance and employee engagement.

Opoku et al. (2023) investigated the impact of human resource policies on work-life balance within the higher educational system, with employee engagement as a mediator. Their study centred on how HR policies influence work-life balance, specifically among staff of the College of Distance Education (CODE) in Ghana. With data from 232 staff members, they utilized Structural Equation Modelling for analysis. The findings revealed that employee engagement partially mediates the relationship between HR policies and work-life balance, suggesting that well-crafted organisational policies significantly contribute to work-life balance. These findings enrich the literature and provide a framework pertinent to the current study's more nuanced model.

Work Alienation Dimensions and Employee Work Engagement

Alyas (2020) researched the relationship between work engagement, work alienation, and the work performance of healthcare professionals. The study aimed to identify correlations between work engagement and the reduction of job demands in healthcare settings, as well as to examine connections between work commitment, the frustration of unmet expectations, and the impact on behaviour. Employing a quantitative correlational research design, the study surveyed 142 employees at the Children's Hospital and ICH Lahore, using adapted questionnaires on work alienation, work engagement, and work performance. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 21. The majority of respondents, aged 25 to 35, exhibited a positive attitude towards work engagement and an inverse relationship with work alienation. The findings indicated that employees at the children's hospital are well-informed about the significance of work engagement and alienation concerning work performance metrics. Alyas's research provides foundational insights for the present study.

Using validated questionnaires, researchers Jung et al. (2021) investigated the effects of workplace loneliness on work engagement and organisational commitment, moderating the role of leader-member exchange and coworker exchange. Data for the study were gathered in 2018 from employees working in the food and beverage departments of deluxe hotels situated in Seoul. A deluxe hotel was defined as a five-star establishment with at least 200 rooms. The human resources/personnel of 10 hotels approved the survey, selected through the convenience sampling method. Employees participated voluntarily and anonymously, assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Out of 400 distributed questionnaires, 311 were returned and 292 were deemed suitable for the final analysis. Employee engagement was measured with 5 items on a 7-point scale. Organisational commitment was gauged using five items developed by Allen and Meyer (1990), and Mayer and Schoorman (1992). The English-written questionnaire was translated into Korean through reverse translation by a bilingual researcher in 2002. Statistical analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) programs. Demographic, reliability, and correlation analyses were performed on the measurement items. Confirmatory factor analysis, assessment of composite construct reliability (CCR), and calculation of average variance extracted (AVE) were utilized to verify the hypotheses through structural equation modelling and multi-group analysis. Additionally, to ascertain the mediating effect of work engagement, bootstrapping and the Aroian version of the Sobel test was employed. The study uncovered that workplace loneliness diminished work engagement, which, inversely, fostered organisational commitment. The study also found the negative impact of workplace loneliness on work engagement to be moderated by coworker exchange, confirming the significance of maintaining positive social exchange relationships to mitigate loneliness.

Workplace Spirituality and Work-Life Balance

In an insightful study, Farahani et al. (2023) sought to evaluate the levels and interrelations of workplace spirituality (WPS), compassion satisfaction (CS), burnout (BO), and secondary traumatic stress (STS) among Iranian nurses, and discern the impact of WPS elements on these factors, taking into account demographic variables. In this descriptive, cross-sectional, and correlational research, 295 nurses were chosen through proportionate stratified sampling from five hospitals allied with the Arak University of Medical Sciences, from June to December 2022. Utilizing the ProQOL-5 for data gathering and SPSS24 for analysis, they discovered that the mean scores of WPS, CS, BO, and STS were 63.27, 36.55, 27.31, and 29.58, respectively. The rates of moderate CS, BO, and STS reported by nurses were 76.3%, 80%, and 86.1%, respectively. Notably, a negative relationship between CS and both BO and STS was observed,

whereas a direct correlation was found between BO and STS. Nurses with elevated WPS levels reported higher CS and reduced BO scores. The regression analysis revealed that the WPS components and control variables explained 42.7%, 34%, and 8.6% of the variance in CS, BO, and STS, respectively. Higher scores in 'meaningful work' corresponded with increased CS and decreased BO and STS, indicating the potential of workplace spirituality in improving nurses' professional quality of life.

Continuing the exploration of workplace spirituality, William and Hunsaker (2023) scrutinized the effect of spiritual leadership on multiple facets of work-life balance, alongside how spiritual well-being, life satisfaction, and Confucian values mediate these relationships within a South Korean setting. Their findings proposed that spiritual leadership was instrumental in fostering a work-life balance encompassing family, leisure, and personal growth. This relationship was further nuanced by the presence of Confucian values. The study also highlighted the sequential mediating role of spiritual well-being and life satisfaction, suggesting that the introduction of spiritual leadership practices could significantly promote a life-friendly work environment. They recommended a dual strategy of policies and practices to align with both organisational and personal values, thereby addressing employees' aspirations for well-being and life satisfaction.

Workplace Spirituality and Work Alienation Dimensions

Iqbal et al. (2022) conducted a study on spiritual leadership and work alienation, analyzing mechanisms and constraints. The researchers posited a negative association between spiritual leadership and work alienation, proposing service employee social capital as a mediator in the relationship between spiritual leadership and work alienation. Additionally, they considered political skill as a moderating factor for both the direct association between spiritual leadership and social capital and the indirect association between spiritual leadership and work alienation. Survey data collected from 283 employees within the service sector corroborated the proposed hypotheses. The findings suggest that despite the common occurrence of work alienation in service organisations and its potential to lead to various detrimental outcomes, managers can mitigate employees' feelings of alienation by fostering a spiritually supportive environment.

Lata and Chaudhary (2020) investigated the concept of workplace spirituality and its relation to experienced incivility at work. Employing the frameworks of conservation of resources theory and cognitive appraisal theory, they explored the connection between workplace spirituality and the incivility reported by supervisors and colleagues. The researchers also examined the moderating role of the dark triad personality traits on this relationship. Data from two distinct samples — one from the banking industry (N = 225) and the other from the information technology (IT) industry (N = 220) — lent support to their hypotheses. In both

samples, a significant negative correlation was found between workplace spirituality and incivility from supervisors and colleagues. However, only psychopathy was found to moderate the relationship between workplace spirituality and supervisor incivility in the banking industry sample. In contrast, in the IT industry sample, all three dark triad traits significantly moderated the relationship with colleague incivility. These findings underscore the role of workplace spirituality in shaping employees' perceptions of uncivil behaviour from superiors and peers, thus supporting the cognitive appraisal theory. The study makes a valuable contribution to theory, research, and practice by highlighting workplace spirituality as a potential remedy for the escalating issue of incivility in the workplace.

Workplace Spirituality and Employee Work Engagement

Meily et al. (2021) undertook a study to delineate the relationship between workplace spirituality and the engagement of lecturers in Indonesian universities, positing professional commitment as a mediating factor. Surveying 322 lecturers from both state and private institutions, the researchers utilized a combination of validity, reliability checks, simple regression, and path analysis to scrutinize the data. The outcomes indicated a substantial direct effect of workplace spirituality on employee engagement, demonstrated by a β value of 0.836 and an R-square of 70%. Additionally, the data elucidated that professional commitment served to mediate the connection between workplace spirituality and employee engagement, with respective β and R-square values of 0.162 and 72.3%. These findings highlight the pivotal role of workplace spirituality and professional commitment in bolstering the performance of academics.

In a related vein, Rajput et al. (2020) assessed the extent to which workplace spirituality influences employee engagement, and whether this relationship is affected by gender. Through a quantitative cross-sectional descriptive study drawing responses from 115 faculty members in Haryana, India, analytical methods including correlation, regression, and the t-test were deployed. The research partially substantiated the link between workplace spirituality and employee engagement, particularly through the significant dimensions of meaningful work and inner life. A notable gender disparity emerged, with male employees showing greater enhancement in engagement due to workplace spirituality than their female counterparts, suggesting that these spiritual dimensions could be leveraged to augment workplace engagement universally.

Method

The methodology chapter details the participants, instruments, procedures, design, and statistical approaches utilized in the study.

Participants

The study was conducted in the cities of Asaba, Warri, and Sapele, strategically chosen due to their dense population of banks, providing a robust sample of employees. A total of 443 bank employees from these commercial hubs in Delta State participated. The gender distribution included 217 (49.0%) males and 226 (51.0%) females. The age of participants ranged from 25 to 42 years, with a mean age of 31.72 years and a standard deviation of 5.40. Regarding marital status, 175 (39.5%) of the participants were married, 129 (29.1%) were single, 46 (10.4%) were divorced, 47 (10.6%) were separated, and 46 (10.4%) were widowed. Educational qualifications among the participants varied, with 6 (1.4%) holding doctoral degrees (PhD), 92 (20.8%) holding Master's degrees (M.Sc.), and 345 (77.9%) holding Bachelor's degrees (B.Sc.). All participants were professional bank employees, with contract staff being excluded from the study. In terms of job rank, 176 (39.72%) were assistant banking officers, 89 (20.09%) were banking officers, 98 (22.12%) were senior banking officers, and 80 (18.05%) were assistant managers. The study deliberately omitted the lowest and highest cadres of the banking hierarchy, focusing on the middle cadre with the rationale that these employees, having over 5 years of service, would provide a richer insight into the variables of interest such as work-life balance, work alienation dimensions, and work engagement. The breakdown of work experience among participants was as follows: 309 (69.8%) had 1-7 years of experience, 88 (19.9%) had 8-15 years, and 46 (10.4%) had 16-20 years or more. The distribution of participants across banks was as follows: Zenith Bank Plc 75 (16.9%), United Bank for Africa Plc 57 (12.8%), Guaranty Trust Bank 44 (9.9%), Access Bank 30 (6.8%), with smaller proportions from other banks, up to 34 different banking institutions. The study also collected data on ethnic affiliation: 218 (49.2%) were Igbo, 86 (19.2%) were Yoruba, 47 (10.6%) were Hausa, and 92 (20.8%) were from other ethnic groups. In terms of religious affiliation, the majority were Christian 269 (60.7%), followed by Islam 61 (13.8%), and other religions 113 (25.5%). Participants from the three cities were as follows: Asaba 218 (49.2%), Warri 135 (30.5%), and Sapele 90 (20.3%). The convenience sampling technique was employed, with participation open to professional bank employees willing to engage in the study.

Instruments

For data collection, the study employed four distinct instruments. These included the Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2003), the Work-Life Balance Scale by Dex & Bond (2005), the Work Alienation Scale by Mottaz (1981), and the Workplace Spirituality Inventory by Petchsawang & Duchon (2009).

Work Engagement Scale

Work engagement was gauged using the 17-item Work Engagement Scale (WES) formulated by Schaufeli et al. (2003). This instrument measures three facets of work engagement: vigour, dedication, and absorption. Responses are captured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 corresponds to 'fully disagree' and 5 to 'fully agree'. Illustrative items from the scale include statements like "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" for vigour, "My work inspires me" for dedication, and "When I am working, I forget everything else around me" for absorption. The scoring range for the scale is between 17 and 85, with higher scores indicative of greater work engagement and lower scores suggesting disengagement. The scale's internal consistency is robust, with an alpha coefficient of 0.85 as reported by the authors. It has been validated across diverse cultural and occupational contexts, with various samples supporting its three-factor structure and the close interrelation between these factors (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The WES has been adapted into more than 20 shortened forms, comprising 9 items each (Schaufeli et al., 2006), and these versions have consistently shown high internal consistency, with coefficients ranging from 0.88 to 0.96 (Byrne et al., 2016). In Nigeria, Ugwu (2013) adapted the Work Engagement Scale and validated it for local samples, achieving unanimous agreement among experts on the scale's content and face validity. Ugwu's study also confirmed the scale's reliability with a coefficient of 0.85 and supported the three-factor structure as an adequate representation of work engagement within the Nigerian context.

For this current study, a pilot test was conducted to verify the scale's appropriateness, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70, thus attesting to its reliability. The scale underwent further validation by eight (8) experts' four (4) industrial/organisational psychologists and four (4) bank employees to ensure its face and content validity. Additionally, a pilot study was carried out where the scale was administered alongside the 9-item version of the WES by Schaufeli et al. (2006) to assess concurrent validity. This comparison yielded a concurrent validity of 0.71, substantiating the scale's utility for measuring work engagement in this research.

Work-Life Balance Scale

The measure of work-life balance was facilitated by the Work-Life Balance Scale (WLBS), a 10-item instrument devised by Dex & Bond (2005). The WLBS utilizes a 5-point Likert scale for responses, with the options ranging from 'fully disagree' (1) to 'fully agree' (5). Representative items on the scale include statements such as "Finding time for hobbies, leisure activities, or to maintain friendships and extended family relationships is difficult," "My family are missing out on my input," and "Relaxing and forgetting about work issues is hard to do." The scale's scoring spans from 10 to 50, where higher scores indicate a greater imbalance in work-life. The authors have established an internal consistency of .82 for this scale. It also

demonstrated sound divergent validity, with an average correlation with other scales of r = 0.25, as opposed to an average inter-correlation between climate scales of 0.41 (Parkes & Langford, 2008). The WLBS has been validated across diverse demographics, showing reliability in predicting employees' work-life balance irrespective of age, gender, job position, and working hours (Kim, 2014). In a Nigerian context, Ayam and Darlane (2019) adapted the WLBS to assess the work-life balance of bank employees in the South-South region of Nigeria, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .75, indicating the scale's reliability. Tatham (2006) suggests that a coefficient below 0.6 denotes marginally low internal consistency, while a value of 0.60 or above indicates satisfactory internal consistency reliability. This standard affirms the WLBS's appropriateness for measuring work-life balance among Nigerian employees.

A pilot study was conducted to ensure the WLBS's suitability for the sample, with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient resulting in a reliability score of .76. The scale underwent scrutiny by eight (8) experts' four (4) industrial/organisational psychologists and four (4) bank employees to confirm its face and content validity. Additionally, to determine its concurrent validity, the WLBS was administered alongside a 4-item work-life balance scale in a pilot study. The concurrent validity of the scale was found to be 0.89, reflecting strong concurrent validity and endorsing its use in this study.

Work Alienation Scale (WAS)

The dimensions of work alienation were assessed using the Work Alienation Scale (WAS), a 19-item scale developed by Mottaz (1981). This scale is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with options ranging from 'fully disagree' (1) to 'fully agree' (5). The dimension of powerlessness is captured through 4 items, including statements like "my daily activities are largely determined by others" and "I am not able to make changes regarding my job activities". The meaninglessness dimension is represented by 6 items, with examples such as "sometimes I am not sure I completely understand the purpose of what I am doing" and "I understand how my work role fits into the overall operation of this organisation". The self-estrangement dimension comprises 9 items, one of which is "I do not feel a sense of accomplishment in the type of work I do". Scores on the scale range from 19 to 95, where a higher score reflects higher levels of the social alienation dimensions among employees. Mottaz reported a reliability score of 0.834 for the overall scale, with coefficients of 0.85 for powerlessness, 0.75 for meaninglessness, and 0.70 for self-estrangement. Subsequent studies have corroborated the scale's reliability. Ucanok (2000) adapted the WAS for Turkish employees and found similar reliability figures: 0.85 for powerlessness, 0.70 for meaninglessness, and 0.71 for self-estrangement. Ozer et al. (2017) reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75 for the overall scale, with powerlessness scoring 0.77 and meaninglessness scoring 0.85. Mohamed and Shaheen (2022) applied the scale to nursing staff,

establishing face and content validity and obtaining a reliability coefficient of 0.76 for workplace alienation, attesting to the scale's consistent reliability.

In the current study, a pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 for the overall WAS. The powerlessness dimension recorded a high reliability of 0.92, meaninglessness was 0.79, and self-estrangement was 0.88, affirming the reliability of the scale. The validity of the scale relative to other variables was also strong, with a significant correlation with a greater sense of coherence ($r= 0.42$, $p < 0.001$). The WAS was reviewed by eight (8) experts' four (4) industrial/organisational psychologists and four (4) bank employees to ensure its face and content validity. Furthermore, the WAS and an alternative version by Nair and Vohra (2009), which amalgamates various work alienation scales, were administered concurrently. Analysis using SPSS demonstrated a correlation of 0.83, indicating strong concurrent validity.

Workplace Spirituality Scale

The Workplace Spirituality Scale, developed by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009), is a comprehensive 22-item measure used to assess the extent to which individuals find their ultimate purpose in life through their work, establish strong connections with co-workers and others involved with their work, and experience alignment between their core beliefs and the values of their organisation. The participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with options ranging from 'fully disagree' (1) to 'fully agree' (5). Examples of items from this scale include: "I can easily put myself in other people's shoes" (compassion), "I experience joy in my work" (meaningful work), "At times, I experience an energy or vitality at work that is difficult to describe" (transcendence), and "It seems I am working automatically without much awareness of what I'm doing" (mindfulness). The scoring range of the scale is from 22 to 110, where higher scores denote greater levels of workplace spirituality and lower scores reflect lesser degrees.

The scale's developers reported an internal consistency of .89 for the overall scale, with .60, .85, .70, and .85 for the compassion, meaningful work, transcendence, and mindfulness dimensions, respectively. Alam and Chaudhary (2021) applied the scale within the Pakistani context and confirmed its face validity with a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Similarly, Ajala (2013) utilized the scale to investigate the impact of workplace spirituality on employee wellbeing in the Nigerian industrial sector, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 and confirming its face validity, indicative of its adaptability to the Nigerian milieu.

In the current study, the scale's suitability was determined through a pilot test which yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .72, verifying the instrument's reliability. The scale was assessed by eight (8) experts' four (4) industrial/organisational psychologists and four (4) bank employees to ensure face and content validity. To establish concurrent validity, the scale was administered alongside the original 37-item version by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009).

Analysis using SPSS showed a strong correlation of 0.79 between the two scales, indicating strong concurrent validity and supporting the scale's use in this research.

Procedure

Pilot Study

For the pilot study, 60 commercial bank employees were selected from Agbor within the Delta South Senatorial District, and these individuals did not participate in the main study. The distribution of participants was as follows: 23 from Zenith Bank, 19 from Fidelity Bank, and 18 from Access Bank. Both Instrument "A" and Instrument "B" were administered to each participant concurrently to establish the concurrent validity of the scales. The pilot sample was chosen to mirror the characteristics of the main study's population, consisting of professional bank employees from the middle ranks of the banking hierarchy – Assistant Banking Officer, Banking Officer, Senior Banking Officer, and Assistant Manager. This cadre was targeted based on the assumption that their tenure of more than five years would provide a deeper insight into variables such as work-life balance, work alienation dimensions, and work engagement. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select the city for the pilot study, and a convenience sampling method was used to choose participants

Main Study

For the main study, 443 commercial bank employees from the local government areas of Warri, Asaba, and Sapele in the three senatorial districts of Delta State were sampled. To manage the large sample size, five members of the National Youth Corps were recruited as research assistants. These assistants, delegated from the University of Delta, Agbor's human resources department, were trained to understand the study's objectives and administer the instruments independently. Before the sampling began, it was established that the Delta State commercial bank employee population consisted of 816 professional staff, excluding contract and hired personnel. Using the sample size formula by Yamane (1967), a minimum of 408 responses was needed to achieve a 95% confidence interval. Banks were selected via simple random sampling, giving each branch an equal opportunity to be chosen. The sampling strategy was guided by convenience, focusing on employees willing to participate and excluding contract and hired staff. Participants were drawn from various divisions such as cash/teller, customer service, funds and transfer, and marketing, represented ranks from Assistant Banking Officer up to Assistant Manager. The research team encountered cooperative behaviour from the participants, who were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and the freedom to withdraw at any time The data collection phase spanned 14 days, extended in some districts due to logistical

considerations. Out of 500 distributed questionnaires, 464 were retrieved, and following the exclusion of 21 invalid responses, 443 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis.

Design and Statistics

The study was a cross-sectional survey as data was collected using copies of questionnaires given to participants. The study adopted a correlational design. To ascertain the relationships between the variables under investigation, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was utilized. Furthermore, Hierarchical Linear Regression was employed to examine the prediction of the variables and the moderating influence within the relationships. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software, version 23.

RESULTS

The analysis of the data in the study was presented in this chapter. All statistics were managed with SPSS v23 for this study.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Zero Order Correlation Matrix of the Predictors and Moderator variables.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Work-Life Balance	.25**	1.00							
powerlessness	.30**	.29**	1.00						
3. Meaninglessness	-.06	.50**	.12**	1.00					
4. Self-estrangement	.30**	.31**	.44**	.04	1.00				
5. Work-S. _WLB	-.02	-.02	.05	.05	-.03	1.00			
6. Work-S._PLN	-.02	.05	-.06	.04	-.08**	.27**	1.00		
7. Work-S. _MLN	.01	.04	.04	.01	.07	.49**	.09**	1.00	
8. Work-S. _SE	-.06	-.03	-.08	.07	-.20	.28**	.43**	-.02	1.00

Significant at p<. 01.

Key: WLB means Work-Life Balance, PLN means the Powerlessness dimension of work alienation, MLN means the Meaninglessness dimension of work alienation and SE means Self-Estrangement dimensions of work alienation.

Table 1 presents the correlation coefficients indicating the relationships between the study variables and work engagement. The results are as follows: Work-Life Balance (WLB) was significantly correlated with work engagement (r = .25, p < .01). The Powerlessness dimension of work alienation (PLN) showed a significant correlation with work engagement (r = .30, p < .01). The Meaninglessness dimension of work alienation (MLN) had a non-significant

correlation with work engagement (r = -.06, p > .01). The Self-Estrangement dimension of work alienation (SE) was significantly correlated with work engagement (r = .30, p < .01).

The interaction between Work-Life Balance (WLB) and Workplace Spirituality showed no significant correlation with work engagement (r = -.02, p > .01). Workplace Spirituality did not exhibit a significant correlation with the Powerlessness dimension of alienation (PLN) concerning the work engagement of bank employees (r = .02, p > .01). There was no significant correlation between Workplace Spirituality and the Meaninglessness dimension of alienation (MLN) concerning work engagement behaviour of bank employees (r = .01, p > .01). Workplace Spirituality was not significantly correlated with the Self-Estrangement dimension of work alienation (SE) in terms of employee work engagement of bank employees (r = -.06, p > .01).

These findings highlight the complex nature of the relationships between work-life balance, dimensions of work alienation, workplace spirituality, and employee engagement.

Table 2: Moderated analysis of Work-life balance, Work Alienation Dimensions, Work Engagement and Workplace Spirituality

Variables	R^2	ΔR^2	df1(df2, df3)	F	SE	β	T
Model 1	.065	.063	1(442)	30.49	10.38		
Work-Life Balance						.25**	5.52
Model 2	.177	.170	4(438)	23.62	9.77		
Work-Life Balance						.27**	5.00
Powerlessness						.18**	3.72
Meaninglessness						-.22**	-4.40
Self-estrangement						.14**	2.80
Model 3	.178	.163	8(434)	11.73	9.81		
Work-Life Balance						.27**	4.93
Powerlessness						.18**	3.69
meaninglessness						-.22**	-4.36
Self-estrangement						.14**	2.77
Work-Spirituality _WLB						-.01	-.15
Work-Spirituality _PLN						.01	.05
Work-Spirituality _MLN						-.01	-.22
Work-Spirituality _SE						.01	.13

Key: WLB means Work-Life Balance, PLN means the Powerlessness dimension of work alienation, MLN means the Meaninglessness dimension of work alienation and SE means Self-Estrangement dimensions of work alienation.

Table 2 covers the analysis for hypotheses 1,2,3,4. The hierarchical linear regression model 1, showed that work-life balance accounted for 06.3% of the work engagement, with R2 = .065, adjusted R2=.063, = 30.49, p<.01. That shows that the overall model 1 has a significant contribution to work engagement among bankers in Delta State at 06.3%. Work-life balance predicted work engagement at, β= .25, t= 5.52, p<.01.

The model 2 result, showed that work-life balance, and work alienation dimensions (powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement) accounted for 17.7% of the work engagement, with R^2 = .177, adjusted R^2=.170, = 23.62, p<.01. That shows that the overall model 2 has a significant contribution to work engagement among bankers in Delta State at 17.7%.

Work-life balance predicted work engagement at, β= .25, t= 5.52, p<.01. The Powerlessness dimension of work alienation at, β= .18, t= 3.72, and the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation t$β$= .14, t= 2.80, p<.01 predicted work engagement, while the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation at, $β$= -.22, t= -4.40, p<.01.

The model 3 result, showed that work-life balance, work alienation dimensions (powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement), and workplace spirituality accounted for 17.8% of the work engagement, with R^2 = .178, adjusted R^2=.163, = 11.73, p<.01. That reveals that the overall model 3 has a significant contribution to work engagement among bankers in Delta State at 17.8%.

Work-life balance predicted work engagement at, β= .27, t= 4.93, p<.01. The Powerlessness dimension of work alienation at, $β$= .18, t= 3.69, and the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation t$β$= .14, t= 2.77, p<.01 predicted work engagement, while the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation at, β= -.22, t= -4.36, p<.01.

The moderation result revealed that workplace spirituality did not moderate interaction between work-life balance and work engagement at, $β$= -.01, t= -.15, p>.01. Workplace spirituality did not also moderate interaction between the powerlessness dimension of work alienation and work engagement at, $β$= .01, t= .05, p>.01. More so, workplace spirituality had no significant moderating influence on the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation and work engagement at, β= -.01, t= -.22, p>.01. Further, workplace spirituality had no moderating influence on the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation and work engagement at, β= .01, t= .13, p>.01.

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Summary of Findings

1. Work-life balance predicted the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

2a. The powerlessness dimension of alienation predicted the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

2b. The meaninglessness dimension of alienation did not predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

2c. The self-estrangement dimension of alienation predicted the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

3. Workplace Spirituality did not moderate the relationship between work-life balance and work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

4a. Workplace spirituality did not moderate the relationship between the powerlessness dimension of alienation and work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

4b. Workplace spirituality did not moderate the relationship between the meaninglessness dimension of alienation and the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

4c. Workplace spirituality did not moderate the relationship between the self-estrangement dimension of alienation and the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State.

$p<.01$. The Powerlessness dimension of work alienation at, $\beta = .18$, $t = 3.69$, and the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation $t\beta = .14$, $t = 2.77$, $p<.01$ predicted work engagement, while the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation at, $\beta = -.22$, $t = -4.36$, $p<.01$.

The moderation result revealed that workplace spirituality did not moderate interaction between work-life balance and work engagement at, $\beta = -.01$, $t = -.15$, $p>.01$. Workplace spirituality did not also moderate interaction between the powerlessness dimension of work alienation and work engagement at, $\beta = .01$, $t = .05$, $p>.01$. More so, workplace spirituality had no significant moderating influence on the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation and work engagement at, $\beta = -.01$, $t = -.22$, $p>.01$. Further, workplace spirituality had no moderating influence on the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation and work engagement at, $\beta = .01$, $t = .13$, $p>.01$.

Discussion

The study delved into how work-life balance and dimensions of work alienation impact the work engagement behaviour of bank employees in Delta State, with a specific focus on the

potential moderating role of workplace spirituality. It tested four hypotheses, with two being supported by the data and two not, as outlined below.

Hypothesis 1 posited that work-life balance would significantly predict the work engagement behaviour of bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was confirmed, revealing that an effective work-life balance positively influences employee engagement. The study uncovered that a higher work-life balance corresponds to greater work engagement, suggesting that imbalances in this area could lead to a decline in organisational productivity and distort employee lifestyles.

This is corroborated by the research of Puspitasari and Darwin (2021), which highlighted that imbalances between work and personal life domains yield negative outcomes for organisations. Similarly, Xian et al. (2021) found that managing work-life conflicts enhances job satisfaction regardless of parental status.

Hypothesis 2a, which postulated that the powerlessness dimension of work alienation would predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria, was corroborated by the data. The analysis indicated that feelings of powerlessness are inversely related to work engagement. Employees who feel used or lack control over their job outcomes tend to exhibit lower levels of engagement with their work. This phenomenon of powerlessness, where employees sense that they are merely tools for their employer's objectives with little influence over job outcomes, was found to have a significant dampening influence on work engagement. Alyas (2020) also observed that productivity and engagement tend to wane as feelings of powerlessness rise, resonating with the results of Hypothesis 2a.

Hypothesis 2b posited that the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation would predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State, and this hypothesis was not validated. The findings suggest that employees who lack a sense of meaning or purpose in their jobs, or who believe their jobs do not align with their life goals, are likely to exhibit higher work engagement in their job tasks. Consequently, an increase in feelings of meaninglessness is associated with increased work engagement, whereas a decrease in the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation can reduce work engagement among bank workers in Delta State, Nigeria. Negating these findings, Kartal (2018) identified a significant negative relationship between the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation and employee work engagement behaviour, noting that higher levels of perceived meaninglessness can diminish employee performance.

Hypothesis 2c states that the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation will predict the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State. This was accepted. From this finding, managers of banks must strive to create an environment where employees find meaning and

purpose in their work. This way, they do not need to feel that their contribution to the total production is insignificant. This can be achieved by aligning individual roles and tasks with the mission and values of the organisation (goals), providing opportunities for learning and career growth, and contributions. When bank employees feel or perceive their work as meaningful, they are more likely to be engaged in their work and committed to the organisation. The finding is supported by the findings of Benevene, (2020) that provided evidence that the self-estrangement dimension of alienation in the place of work is based on the perception of the employee of their social interactions and interconnectedness with co-workers and the organisation in the workplace. The findings of Benevene, (2020) revealed that social relations in the workplace fuel the self-estrangement dimension of alienation and lead to lower production output in the workplace. Similarly, Jung et al. (2021) found that workplace loneliness decreased the work engagement of employees and the negative influence of loneliness was significantly moderated by co-worker exchange and employee maintenance of positive social exchange relationships with co-workers.

The third (3) hypothesis proposed that workplace spirituality would moderate the relationship between work-life balance and employee work engagement among bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria. However, this hypothesis was not supported by the findings (see Table 2 for details). The expectation that the friendliness and goodwill intrinsic to workplace spirituality would strengthen the connection between work-life balance and work engagement was not statistically corroborated. A potential explanation for this discrepancy could be the absence of spiritual organisational policies within the banking environment, which may inhibit the manifestation of spirituality among workers. The extent to which work-life balance positively influences employee engagement is likely contingent on the spiritual orientation of the leadership and the prevailing organisational culture.

The findings of Hypothesis 4a, which suggested that workplace spirituality would moderate the relationship between the powerlessness dimension of work alienation and the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State, were not supported by the data (refer to Table 3). This indicates that the introduction of workplace spirituality did not positively connect to the work engagement behaviour of bank employees experiencing feelings of powerlessness—that is, the sense of being utilized for purposes beyond their own and thus unable to meaningfully contribute to job outcomes. Contrasting results are seen in the literature. Iqbal et al. (2021) identified that employee social capital mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and work alienation, suggesting that social capital may indirectly influence the link between spirituality and the powerlessness dimension of work alienation.

The findings from Hypothesis 4b, proposing that workplace spirituality would moderate the relationship between the meaninglessness dimension of work alienation and the work engagement of bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria, were not substantiated by the data. The analysis revealed no significant moderating effect of workplace spirituality on the relationship between the perceived lack of meaning in work and the engagement levels of bank employees. This suggests that the presence of workplace spirituality in the bank setting does not significantly alter the impact of feelings of meaninglessness on an employee's engagement with their work. The literature offers varied perspectives.

Hypothesis 4c, which posited that workplace spirituality would moderate the relationship between the self-estrangement dimension of work alienation and work engagement of bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria, was not supported, (refer to Table 2). The anticipated moderating influence of workplace spirituality—where a positive and supportive work environment could potentially mitigate the negative impact of self-estrangement on work engagement—did not manifest in significant levels within the data. This finding contrasts with the results of Adnan et al. (2020), who identified that workplace spirituality, especially when driven by ethical leadership, enhances both employee engagement and overall organisational performance.

The study's findings have several implications that span theoretical understanding, practical applications, and policy formulation.

Recommendations

Turning to the recommendations derived from the findings, they encompass several key operational and policy-oriented strategies. To begin with, the study underscores the imperative for the implementation of proactive labour laws, particularly within the domain of the organised private sector. The commercial banking sector, a substantial employer within this sphere, would greatly benefit from legislation that actively manages work-life balance. Such legal frameworks would serve not only to augment employee engagement but also to contribute to broader national development objectives.

Moreover, the escalating global and national unemployment rates, especially within Nigeria, have precipitated a trend where employees are compelled to work beyond their contractual hours without commensurate remuneration. This practice detrimentally impacts work-life balance and exacerbates feelings of workplace alienation. Banking institutions must formulate and enforce organisational policies that delineate clear boundaries regarding work durations. By doing so, banks will not only comply with ethical labour standards but will also potentially curtail the adverse effects of extended working hours on employee morale and productivity.

The study further advocates for an exploration into additional moderating variables that could influence the interplay between work-life balance and the various facets of work alienation, namely powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement. Investigating the potential moderating influence of flexible work arrangements, job meaningfulness, and employee autonomy could uncover novel motivational mechanisms that bolster positive workplace behaviour.

Lastly, there is a practical imperative to refine the quality of the working environment within Delta State's commercial banks. The adoption of culturally progressive practices could render these banks as exemplars within the Nigerian private sector. Enhancing the work-life quality within these institutions is anticipated to yield dividends in terms of both employee welfare and the overarching efficacy of the banking sector. This holistic betterment of the working environment is pivotal, as it directly pertains to the well-being of the workforce and, by extension, the operational success of the banking industry.

Conclusion

This investigation delved into the prediction of employee work engagement by examining work-life balance and dimensions of work alienation, considering the moderating influence of workplace spirituality within the banking sector in Delta State, Nigeria. A significant finding from this research is the stark revelation of the strain bank employees endure, grappling to reconcile the demands of their personal and professional lives. Such strain detrimentally influences their ability to engage fully with their work roles, potentially leading to a diminished sense of well-being as they strive to meet the exigencies of their banking careers.

The research underscores the necessity for organisational and leadership intervention through the formulation of policies that bolster work-life balance. Adopting measures such as flexible work schedules, job rotation, compensated overtime, and platforms that facilitate the integration of family with work can markedly enhance employees' ability to harmonize their professional and personal lives, thus augmenting their work output.

Furthermore, the study highlights the alienation that employees often feel when their jobs do not afford them the autonomy or influence to contribute meaningfully to pivotal organisational decisions. Such alienation can manifest in feelings of disconnection, purposelessness, and insignificance, fostering a negative disposition towards work, colleagues, and the organisation at large.

The research posits that by fostering an inclusive environment, implementing a robust reward system, and promoting collaboration and teamwork, banking organisations can effectively mitigate the adverse influence of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-estrangement. These strategic organisational modifications can significantly elevate employee

work engagement levels, thereby catalyzing organisational profitability, employee retention, and overall productivity. The insights gained from this study serve as a clarion call for banks to pivot towards more human-centric operational paradigms, ensuring that the well-being of employees is interwoven with the fabric of organisational success.

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