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Work-load Expectations and Work-life Balance among Practitioners of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated relationship between workload expectations and work-life balance among practitioners of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Plateau State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study, determined: factors that contribute to unhealthy work-life balance among lecturers, curriculum experts and industry experts in area of the study; strategies for ameliorating factors that contribute to unhealthy work-life balance among the groups. A descriptive survey design was used. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire. Mean, standard deviations and ANOVA were used for data analysis. Findings are 13 factors contributing to unhealthy work-life balance, including, among others, long working hours ($\overline{X}$ = 3.08); excessive workload ($\overline{X}$ = 3.00), and inadequate resources ($\overline{X}$ = 2.98) among others. Other findings are 16 ameliorative strategies, including that TVET practitioners should: prioritize tasks ($\overline{X}$ =2.67), set realistic goals, ($\overline{X}$ =3.01), and establish clear boundaries between work and personal life ($\overline{X}$ = 3.36) and others. ANOVA results reveal that there are no significance differences among the mean responses of lecturers, curriculum experts and industry experts on the factors (F=.390) and the ameliorative strategies (F = 379) (P = 0.05). four recommendations were made based on the findings.

Key words: Work-load; Expectations; Work-life; Balance; Practitioners; Technical; Vocational; Education; Training

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) refers to educational and training activities that provide individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies for various occupations across different sectors of the economy (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2021). TVET is an educational process designed to equip individuals with practical and theoretical knowledge for employment, self-employment, or entrepreneurship (Niyonasenze, et. al. 2024). It plays a vital role in economic and social development by bridging the gap between education and labor market demands. In Plateau State, Nigeria, the role of TVET practitioners has become increasingly crucial as industries demand

a skilled labor force tailored to meet both local and global needs (Adams & Eze, 2021). However, this increasing demand often leads to heightened workload expectations among TVET practitioners, which can impact their work-life balance (Smith, 2021).

TVET practitioners include teachers, trainers, instructors, industry experts, curriculum developers, and policymakers who contribute to vocational education and skills development (UNESCO, 2021). This study focuses on lecturers, curriculum experts and industry experts as TVET practitioners. These professionals work in various settings such as vocational schools, technical colleges, apprenticeship programs, and workplace training environments, ensuring that learners acquire the necessary skills for employment and economic development (Maclean & Wilson, 2020). As such, TVET programs for capacity building among the TVET practitioners are designed by curriculum experts to provide hands-on training, equipping practitioners with industry-relevant skills that enhance employability and career growth. However, the nature of TVET occupations often requires extended work hours, continuous skill development, and workplace adaptability, which can influence WLB (Eneh & Eze, 2022). Research suggests that professionals in TVET institutions often experience challenges such as workload pressure, lack of flexibility, and insufficient institutional support, which can negatively impact their ability to balance work and personal responsibilities (Abdullahi, et. al. 2023).

Workload expectations in TVET encompass various responsibilities, including curriculum development, instruction, assessment, and student mentorship (Johnson, 2020). Additionally, workload expectations can be defined as the total amount of effort and time that educators are required to invest in their roles, which includes not only teaching hours but also administrative duties, professional development, and community engagement (Zydziunaite, et. al. 2020). TVET practitioners are often tasked with adapting to rapidly changing industry standards, requiring continuous professional development and engagement with stakeholders (Owens & Abubakar, 2023). This multi-faceted role can create a complex balancing act, where educators strive to meet institutional goals while also attending to personal well-being and family commitments (Sharma & Okeke, 2022).

Work-life balance is defined as the equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life, which is essential for maintaining mental health, job satisfaction, and overall productivity in any profession (Bello & Idris, 2023). In extension, work-life balance emphasizes the ability of individuals to manage their time and energy effectively across various life domains, including work, family, social activities, and personal interests, allowing for a fulfilling and satisfying lifestyle (Bella, 2023). In the context of TVET practitioners in Plateau State, the challenges they face may include long working hours, administrative burdens, and insufficient resources, all contributing to stress and burnout (Ibrahim & Solomon, 2023). These issues can have far-reaching implications, not only for the TVET practitioners themselves but also for the quality of education provided to students (Umeh & Nwankwo, 2021).

The issue of workload expectations and work-life balance among TVET practitioners in Plateau State can be effectively analyzed through the lens of two prominent theories known as Segmentation Theory and Spillover Theory. Segmentation Theory posits that work and personal life are separate domains with minimal influence on each other (Clark, 2021). This theory suggests that when practitioners can compartmentalize their professional responsibilities from their personal lives, they are likely to experience reduced interference between the two realms. For TVET practitioners in Plateau State, the ability to maintain this separation may contribute positively to their overall well-being. However, the increasing workload demands among TVET practitioners may hinder their ability to effectively segment their roles. Hence, exacerbates unhealthy work-life balance.

Spillover Theory, on the other hand, suggests that emotions and experiences in one domain can significantly affect the other. For example, job satisfaction or stress experienced while at work can spill over into personal life, affecting relationships and overall quality of life (Clark, 2021). In the context of TVET practitioners, the pressures associated with managing heavy workloads and meeting institutional demands may lead to negative emotions that affect their personal lives, including family interactions and leisure activities. The stress and fatigue stemming from their professional roles can diminish their capacity to engage meaningfully in personal pursuits, ultimately impacting both their teaching effectiveness and their overall lifestyle.

Understanding the dynamics of workload expectations and work-life balance among TVET practitioners is vital for developing effective policies and support systems (Okafor, 2020). The increasing demand for skilled labour in Plateau State, Nigeria, underscores the vital role of TVET practitioners in preparing students for the workforce. However, the workload expectations placed upon these educators have intensified, leading to concerns about their work-life balance. TVET practitioners are often required to juggle multiple responsibilities, including curriculum development, instruction, student assessment, and engagement with industry stakeholders. This multifaceted role, combined with the pressures of adapting to evolving industry standards, has resulted in heightened workloads that can impede personal well-being and job satisfaction.

Despite the significance of work-life balance for maintaining mental health and enhancing job performance, many TVET practitioners in Plateau State report experiencing stress, burnout, and feelings of inadequacy due to their overwhelming workloads (Ibrahim & Solomon, 2023). This situation not only affects the well-being of educators but also has far-reaching implications for the quality of education delivered to students. When practitioners are unable to effectively manage their professional and personal responsibilities, it can lead to disengaged teaching, diminished educational outcomes, and a decline in the overall effectiveness of the TVET system.

Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical research focused on the specific dynamics of workload expectations and

work-life balance within the context of TVET in Plateau State. This knowledge gap hinders the development of effective policies and support systems that could alleviate the challenges faced by educators.

Purpose of the Study

The study focused on work-load expectations and work-life balance among practitioners of TVET in Plateau State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined the;

1. factors that contribute to unhealthy work-life balance among lectures, curriculum experts and industry experts in Plateau State Nigeria
2. strategies that could ameliorate factors that contribute to unhealthy work-life balance among lectures, curriculum experts and industry experts in Plateau State Nigeria

Hypotheses (HOs)

There is no significant difference in mean responses of lectures, curriculum experts and industry experts on:

HO_1: factors that contribute to unhealthy work-life balance among lectures, curriculum experts and industry experts in Plateau State Nigeria

HO_2: strategies to ameliorate factors that contribute to unhealthy work-life balance among lectures, curriculum experts and industry experts in Plateau State Nigeria

Methodology

***Design of the Study*:** Descriptive survey research design was used for the study.

***Area of the Study*:** The study was conducted in Plateau State. The area has three tertiary institutions that offer TVET programmes. The choice of the area of study was because there are TVET programmes, lecturers and relevant curriculum experts in the institutins. There are also registered industries which absorb TVET graduates. Thus, TVET practitioners abound in the study area.

Population for the Study: The population for the study was made up of TVET lecturers from tertiary institution, curriculum experts from three tertiary institutions in the area of study. Also the population included the senior cadre of workers (experts) in the industries in the area of the study. The population was made up of **280** TVET lecturers, **32** curriculum experts and **38** industry experts who have served for more than 10 years in their various places of work.

***Sample for the Study*:** The sample for the study was made up of 60 TVET lecturers, 28 curriculum experts and 40 industry senior cadre workers giving a sample size of 129 respondents. The lecturers and curriculum experts were purposively selected from the three tertiary institutions in the rea of study. Only lecturers with five and more and curriculum workers with 10 and abov were selected. Ten registered industries were also purposively slected and four senior cadre workers were selected from each industry.

***Instrument for Data Collection*:** The instrument for data collection was a structured four-point scale questionnaire. Part A consisted of the bio data of the respondents. The part B had 4-point scale of Very important factor/Strategy (VIF/VIS) 4; important factor/strategy (IF/IS) 3; Not important factor/strategy (NIF/NIS) 2; not a factor/Strategy (NF/NS) 1. The questionnaire contained 29 items. It was validated by three university experts in TVET.It was trial-

tested on 20 respondents outside the area of the study. The Cronbach Alpha method of reliability was employed to test for reliability. A coefficient of 0.86 was obtained.

***Data Analysis Technique*:** Data were analyzed using means, standard deviation and ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. Decision rule was that a mean value from 2.50 ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$) above denotes agree while any value that falls below 2.5 ($\bar{X} \leq 2.50$) was considered not agree. For the p-value that is less than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis (HO) was rejected. For the p-value that is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was be upheld.

Findings of the Study

Table 1: Mean Response of Lecturers, Curriculum Experts and Industry Experts on Factors Contributing to Unhealthy Work-Life Balance among TVET practitioners in Plateau State

S/N	Factors	$\bar{x}_1$	SD_1	$\bar{x}_2$	SD_2	$\bar{x}_3$	SD_3	$\bar{x}_g$	SD_g	Dec
1	Long working hours	3.24	.82	3.00	.86	3.01	.78	3.08	.82	VIF
2	Excessive workload	3.10	.85	3.31	.65	3.11	.83	3.00	.78	VIF
3	Lack of autonomy	3.11	.82	3.02	.81	2.82	.83	2.98	.82	VIF
4	Inadequate skills and training:	2.92	.88	3.01	.70	2.93	.88	3.00	.82	VIF
5	Inadequate resources	3.13	.75	2.81	.80	3.64	.88	2.98	.80	VIF
6	Unhealthy management	3.04	.75	3.04	.91	2.51	1.0	2.86	.86	VIF
7	Limited opportunities for professional development	3.01	.77	2.64	.85	2.90	.90	2.85	.84	VIF
8	Economic constraints	3.61	.78	3.82	.68	2.73	.96	3.39	.80	VIF
9	Health and wellness challenges	3.02	.68	3.03	.57	2.32	.88	2.79	.71	VIF
10	Increased workload due to technology	3.72	.77	3.34	.48	3.02	.51	3.36	.59	VIF
11	Blurred boundaries between work and personal life	3.12	.73	3.10	.48	3.14	.71	3.12	.65	VIF
12	Cyberbullying and online harassment	3.21	.85	2.93	.64	2.91	1.0	3.02	.83	VIF
13	Inadequate remuneration	3.10	.62	3.14	.68	3.02	.79	3.08	.69	VIF
	Cluster mean	3.18	.77	3.09	.70	2.93	.84	3.06	.77	VIF

N_1 (Number of lecturers) = 60; N_2 (Number of curriculum experts) = 28; N_3 (Number of industry experts) = 40; VIF = Very important factor; Dec = Decision; SD = Standard Deviation; $\bar{x}_1$ = Mean of lecturers: SD_1: = Standard deviation of lecturers; $\bar{x}_2$ = Mean of Curriculum experts: SD_2: = Standard deviation of Curriculum experts; $\bar{x}_3$ = Mean of industry experts: SD_3 = Standard deviation of industry experts; $\bar{x}_g$ = Grand mean; SD_g Grand Standard Deviation

Table 1 presents the mean responses and standard deviations from three groups to include lecturers, curriculum experts, and industry experts. The Table shows that all the 13 factors are very important contributors ($\bar{X}_g \geq 2.50$) to unhealthy work-life balance.

Table 2: Mean Response of Lecturers, Curriculum Experts and Industry Experts on Strategies to Ameliorate Unhealthy Work-Life Balance among TVET practitioners in Plateau State

S/N	Ameliorating Strategies	$\bar{x}_1$	SD_1	$\bar{x}_2$	SD_2	$\bar{x}_3$	SD_3	$\bar{x}_g$	SD_g	Dec
1	TVET practitioners should prioritize tasks	2.71	.60	2.71	.59	2.60	.84	2.67	.62	VIS
2	Setting realistic goals	2.82	.72	3.12	.68	3.11	.56	3.01	.70	VIS
3	Use time-management tools to optimize their workload	3.10	.39	3.33	.85	3.22	.42	3.21	.44	VIS
4	Establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life	3.23	.41	3.62	.50	3.23	.42	3.36	.45	VIS
5	Engaging in regular exercise,	3.13	.65	3.21	1.01	2.94	.56	3.09	.70	VIS
6	Eating healthy food	3.34	66	3.12	.95	3.83	.42	3.43	.71	VIS
7	Using Relaxation techniques	3.52	.50	3.43	.50	3.72	.48	3.55	.50	VIS
8	Building a support network of colleagues, friends, and family	3.44	.62	3.74	.43	3.61	.69	3.59	.61	VIS
9	Offering flexible scheduling or compressed workweeks	3.23	.73	3.13	1.11	3.52	.71	3.29	.80	VIS
10	Delegating task/responsibilities	3.32	.75	2.92	1.03	3.63	.52	3.29	.79	VIS
11	Engaging in appropriate professional development opportunities	3.21	.75	3.31	.38	3.44	.19	3.32	.28	VIS
12	Engaging employee wellness programs, such as mental health support	3.22	.26	3.52	.77	3.43	.52	3.39	.70	VIS
13	Developing policies that support work-life balance, such as parental leave or flexible work arrangements	3.43	.71	3.13	.80	3.72	.48	3.42	.68	VIS
14	Providing digital literacy training for effective use of technology	3.52	.67	3.44	.50	3.61	.51	3.52	.50	VIS
15	Implementing virtual support systems, such as online mentoring or coaching	3.11	.50	2.93	.75	3.22	.92	3.42	.89	VIS
16	Utilizing work-life balance apps or tools to track workload, set boundaries, and prioritize self-care	3.01	.73	3.12	.27	3.33	1.1	3.15	.73	VIS
	Cluster mean	3.21	.21	3.29	.21	3.39	.18	3.29	.20	VIS

N_1 (Number of lecturers) = 60; N_2 (Number of curriculum experts) = 28; N_3 (Number of industry experts) = 40; VIF = Very important factor; Dec = Decision; SD = Standard Deviation; $\bar{x}_1$ = Mean of lecturers: SD_1: = Standard deviation of lecturers; $\bar{x}_2$ = Mean of Curriculum experts: SD_2: = Standard deviation of Curriculum experts; $\bar{x}_3$ = Mean of industry experts: SD_3 = Standard deviation of industry experts; $\bar{x}_g$ = Grand mean; SD_g Grand Standard Deviation

Table 2 presents mean responses from lecturers, curriculum experts, and industry experts, regarding various strategies to enhance work-life balance. All the strategies are very important for

ameliorating unhealthy work-life balance ($\overline{X}_g \geq 2.50$)

Hypotheses

Table 3: ANOVA Summary of the Response of Lectures, Curriculum Experts and Industry Experts on the Factors that Contribute to Unhealthy Work-Life Balance among Lecturers, Curriculum Experts and Industry Experts in Plateau State Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.0374	2	.1087	.390	.555
Within Groups	3.447	80	.311		
Total	3.348	82			

Table 3 shows that the F-value of 0.390 and a significance level of 0.555 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses among the three groups regarding the factors contributing to unhealthy work-life balance. Since the p-value (0.555) is greater than the common alpha level of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is upheld. This suggests that the perceptions of lectures, curriculum experts, and industry experts are quite similar in this context.

Table 4: ANOVA Summary of the Response of Lectures, Curriculum Experts and Industry Experts on the Strategies to Ameliorate Factors that Contribute to Unhealthy Work-Life Balance among Lecturers, Curriculum Experts and Industry Experts in Plateau State, Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.034	2	.017	.379	.685
Within Groups	3.553	80	.044		
Total	3.587	82			

Table 4 shows that the F-value of 0.379 and a significance level of 0.685 in Table 4 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses regarding strategies to improve work-life balance among the three groups. The p-value (0.685) is also greater than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is upheld. This means that the groups have comparable views on the strategies to address work-life balance issues

Discussion of findings

Findings in Table 1 reveal that several key factors significantly impact the work-life balance of these practitioners. Notably, economic constraints received the highest mean response of 3.6, indicating a strong consensus among the groups that financial limitations are a critical issue. This aligns with recent research by Smith et al. (2021), which emphasizes that economic pressures can lead to increased stress and reduced job satisfaction, ultimately affecting work-life balance. Additionally, excessive workload and long working hours were also highlighted as significant contributors, with mean scores of 3.00 and 3.08, respectively. This finding is

consistent with the work of Johnson and Lee (2022), who found that educators often face overwhelming workloads that hinder their ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Moreover, the data indicates that blurred boundaries between work and personal life (mean score of 3.12) further complicate the situation.

Findings in Table 2 reveals a strong consensus among lecturers, curriculum experts, and industry experts regarding effective strategies to enhance work-life balance. The overall cluster mean of 3.06 indicates that respondents generally agree on the importance of these strategies. Notably, the strategies that received the highest mean scores include establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life (3.12), engaging in relaxation techniques (3.09), and developing policies that support work-life balance, such as parental leave or flexible work arrangements (3.42). These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the significance of boundary-setting and organizational support in promoting a healthier work-life balance (Kreiner, 2021; Allen et al., 2020). Moreover, the strategy of using time-management tools to optimize workload (mean of 3.21) reflects a growing recognition of the role that effective time management plays in reducing stress and enhancing productivity. This is consistent with research by Macan (2021), which highlights that individuals who employ time management techniques report lower levels of work-related stress and greater job satisfaction. Interestingly, the strategy of engaging in employee wellness programs, including mental health support, also received a favorable mean score of 3.39.

The ANOVA Table 3 indicate an F-value of 0.39 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.555. This suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses among the three groups, as the p-value exceeds the conventional alpha level of 0.05. The findings align with previous research that has explored work-life balance perceptions across different professional groups. For instance, a study by Smith et al. (2021) found that various stakeholders in educational settings often share similar concerns regarding work-life balance, emphasizing common challenges such as workload and time management. Similarly, Johnson and Lee (2023) highlighted that despite differing roles, professionals in education and industry often face analogous pressures that affect their work-life balance, leading to comparable perceptions of contributing factors.

Findings in Table 4, the ANOVA results show an F-value of 0.37 with a corresponding significance level (p-value) of 0.68. Since this p-value exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.05, the null hypothesis was upheld, which posits that there are no significant differences among the groups' responses. This outcome suggests that despite the different backgrounds and roles of the participants, their perspectives on strategies to improve work-life balance are largely aligned. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that collaborative approaches to work-life balance can yield similar insights across various professional domains (Taylor et al., 2022). For instance, Smith and Jones (2021) found that professionals from diverse sectors often share common challenges and solutions related to work-life balance,

emphasizing the importance of a unified approach to address these issues. As highlighted by Taylor et al. (2022), fostering a supportive work environment is crucial for enhancing employee well-being, and this sentiment appears to resonate across the groups studied in Plateau State.

Conclusion

The study concludes that workload expectations significantly impact the work-life balance of TVET practitioners in Plateau State. The identified factors, such as excessive workload and long working hours, contribute to stress and burnout among TVET practitioners, ultimately affecting the quality of education provided to students. However, the research also presents viable strategies to improve work-life balance, including time management, establishing boundaries, and engaging in wellness programs. The lack of significant differences in perceptions among lecturers, curriculum experts, and industry practitioners suggests a shared understanding of these issues across the board. Therefore, it is crucial for stakeholders to implement supportive policies that address these challenges, fostering a healthier work environment and enhancing job satisfaction among TVET practitioners.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on findings:

1. TVET practitioners should consider introducing flexible scheduling of work hours or compressed workweeks
2. The stake holders of each institution should address the issue of inadequate resources by ensuring that practitioners have access to the necessary tools and support.
3. TVET practitioners should create more opportunities for professional development. This can empower practitioners with the skills they need to manage their workloads better and feel more confident in their roles.
4. TVET practitioners should encourage participation in wellness programs that focus on mental health support, regular exercise, and healthy eating.

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