WORK LIFE INTEGRATION AND TEAM MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between work-life integration and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the investigation. A correctional research design was adopted. The population consisted of 8,201 teachers across 396 public senior secondary schools, from which a proportionate sample of 410 public senior secondary schools, from which a proportionate sample of 410 teachers was drawn. Data were collected using a self-developed instrument title work-life integration and Team Management Questionnaire. The internal consistency of the instrument, assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielded reliability coefficients of 0.82 for work-life integration and 0.81 for team management. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions, while Z-ratio statistics tested the hypotheses at the 0.05 level significance. The study was motivated by increasing concerns regarding teacher burnout, declining morale, poor teamwork, heavy workloads, inadequate communication and difficulties integrating professional and personal responsibilities. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between collaboration and teacher productivity. The study concluded that effective work-life integration and team management-characterized by collaboration, communication, division of labour, social support, dedication and management of domestic responsibilities enhance teacher productivity. It was recommend that teachers strengthen collaboration with colleagues and key stakeholders to improve productivity in public senior secondary schools.

Keywords: Work-life, Integration, Team Management, Public Secondary Schools

Introduction

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that enable individuals to develop intellectually socially and emotionally. Receiving good education is the lifeline by which many youths can lift themselves out of poverty. Education is also seen as a primary means of social mobility, national cohesion, socio-economic development and pre-requisite for human capital development (Kumi 5 & Chiuri, 2015) World Bank (2021) opined that education is a human right which acts as powerful driver of development and it is one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability the world over.   It is a life long journey that begins from cradle till death. Education shapes a persons' life, thinking, communication and interaction with the wide-world.   Beyond the classroom, it promotes equality by providing opportunities for every to reach their potential regardless of status or background. A well educated population drives innovation, strengthens economies and fosters peace and understanding among communities. Work life integration refers to the deliberate and balanced blending of an individual's professional and personal responsibilities in a manner that promotes harmony, productivity and well-being. It recognizes that employees including teachers and administrators are not solving defined by their jobs but also by their roles in family, community and personal development. Abioro et al (2018) saw work-life integration as aggregate time an individual uses to carry out   his work in comparison with the aggregate time spent with relations and other individual's management. To attain equilibrium between work and personal life, every organization should have a mechanism of maintaining optimum corporation between job productivity and personal lives by employees. Sequel to this, Adebayo (2016) defined work-life integration as the relationship between world that an individual is being paid for and the lives individuals live outside of their paid employment. In the context of this research, work life integration refers to developing time to family and productive career. Unlike the traditional concept of work-life balance which assumes a clear separation between work and personal life, work-life integration focuses on creating synergy between the two spheres. It involves designing systems and routines that allow individuals to meet professional expectations while fulfilling personal and family obligations without conflict or stress. For teachers, achieving work life integration means being able to perform teaching tasks efficiently while also having sufficient time for rest, family interaction and self-care. All these can be achieved through practices such as proper lesson planning, delegation of responsibilities, team work and administrative support. Technological advancement has also influenced the way individuals integrate work and personal life. With the availability of digital tools, teachers can prepare lesson notes, grade assignment and communicate with students or colleagues remotely. Work life integration enhances job satisfaction and reduces turnover among others. Work life integration is a modern and essential approach to managing professional and personal life. For school administrators and teachers work-life integration can be achieved through successful teamwork,

flexibility leadership and institutional policies that prioritize teacher well-being. In other to achieve work-life integration, there is a need for teamwork amongst the teacher. Team work means working together with others to achieve a common goal. It helps people share ideas, skills and strength for better results. Team work builds trust and improves communication among members. When everyone co-operates, tasks are completed faster and more effectively. Team work creates unity and makes success easier to achieve. According to Babalola in Oyede (2011). In educational sector especially for teachers productivity, one would mean better performance from teachers leading to school leavers or graduates who are morally, spiritually, physically and mentally able to fit into the society as well as the labour market. Team work is necessary for school personnel since it is multi-dimensional construct that is characterized by a set of flexible and adaptive behavior, cognition and attitude that interact changing internal and external environment (Duel, 2010). Teamwork is necessary for school personnel since it is a multidimensional construct that is characterized by a set of flexible and adaptive behavior, cognition, and attitude that interact to achieve mutual goals and adaptation that interact to changing internal and external environments (Duel, 2010). Consistently, teamwork consists of knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) that are exhibited in order to support team members, and team goal accomplishments (Duel, 2010).The significant relationship between teamwork and goal accomplishments has an ultimate impact towards school effectiveness (Duel, 2010). Teamwork is necessary for the productivity of systems. Teamwork is an important component of effective and efficient leadership. It refers to a process where work is performed by a team to achieve a common goal. Within the context of the school environment, teamwork plays a key role in the effort to improve outcomes as it influences the level of motivation and capacity of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment (Dugang, 2020).

Research suggests that teamwork can be likened to two kinds of substance that play an important role in modern life. Firstly, it is the glue that keeps the team together and a bond that promotes strength, unity, reliability and support. Secondly, teamwork is the lubricant that makes the team work. It enables smoother movement towards targets, assists forward momentum, and helps teams to overcome obstacles, Hence, learning about the importance of teamwork is one of the stepping stones one needs to be successful in both career and personal life. According to Dugang (2020), educational leaders and school administrators are engaged in massive quest for continuing professional development for their personnel in ensuring competence in the education profession. The personnel are to plan, craft and propose school -based trainings to support continuing professional development and growth. Grayson (2012) notes that the first scholarly study of teamwork took place in the 1950s under the direction of psychologists who examined how humans relate to themselves and others. This group also looked at how work influences team interactions and the actions team members take to tap into the talents and skills of other members in order to solve a task or problem at work. Other studies explored the changes that occurred in teams over time

and how teams have integrated technology in the completion of tasks. Most scholars (Grayson, 2012; Greenwood, 2012) see a team as a group of individuals who come together to work cooperatively on a task in order to achieve a common goal, while teamwork refers to the activities of a group of individuals which can include effective communication and interaction among the team members to promote knowledge sharing, understanding of each other on a personal level helping others in achieving a level of perfection, building a sense of unity in the team and working towards the achievement of common goals. As Medwell (2009) observes, teamwork is when individual experts gather as a work group and set goals, communicate, cooperate and make decisions together, combining their knowledge and abilities to compile work plans that will enable them to accomplish their goals. Communication is at the heart of successful team management. Managers must encourage open dialogue, active listening, and constructive feedback. This helps to prevent misunderstandings and resolve conflicts quickly. Motivation also plays a vital role, as team members perform better when they feel inspired and recognized for their efforts. Furthermore, setting clear goals and monitoring progress ensures that everyone remains focused and accountable. In today's dynamic work environment, team management goes beyond giving instructions; it requires emotional intelligence, flexibility, and the ability to adapt to diverse personalities and work styles. When properly managed, a team becomes more innovative, efficient, and goal-oriented, leading to the overall success of the organization.

Teachers in contemporary time face challenges in the process of pursuing their careers. Some these challenges include lack of communication and collaboration. These problems have prompted the researcher to embark on this study is to investigate work-life integration and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between communication and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

30. Is to investigate the relationship between communication and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.
31. To find out the relationship between collaboration and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

The following research questions guided this study.

3. What is the relationship between communication and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State?

4. What is the relationship between collaboration and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State?

Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to work life integration and team management in public senior secondary school in Imo State. In terms of content it covers communication, team management as they relate to teachers productivity in public secondary school.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Work-life Integration

Work-life integration as a concept is a term used for the idea that you need time for both work and other aspects of life, whether those are family-related or personal interests. Work-life integration is about helping staff to maintain healthy, rewarding lifestyles that will in turn lead to improvements in productivity and productivity. Strategies to achieve integration differs between organizations, partly depending on their functions, the types of work roles they offer, and their workforce profile (Prebble, 2011). The issues related to work-family or work-life began to rise in the horizon of academia around 1965 as stated in Rapoport cited in Lewis and Cooper, 2011). Unlike the traditional roles of women as caregivers, troops of women started joining the paid workforce. This development gave rise to the growing number of single parents as well as the dual-earners (Ansari, 2011; Musura et al., 2013). Moreover, the work place was no more restricted to a physical location.

Work-life integration refers to the state of equilibrium where a person equally prioritizes the demands of one's career and the demands of one's personal life. Some of the common reasons that lead to a poor work-life integration include increased responsibilities at work, working longer hours, increased responsibilities at home and having children, amongst others (Sanfilippo, 2020). All these developments are creating a growing interest in workers' achieving work-life integration (Humphreys et al., 2011; Guest, 2013; Webber et al., 2010). The concept of Work-Life Integration originates from the Western world where it has been researched at length during the past four decades. Naithani (2010) explained how Work-Life Integration has evolved over the past four decades. He divided the time periods into eight phases during which the Work-Life Integration (WLI) theory has travelled till its present state. Earlier on, the whole family was involved in the struggle of survival. Then there was this era of pre-industrialization, when workplaces got

separated from family life. Later, during the industrial revolution the segregation of work and family was strengthened.

During this time men dominated the workforce. In the next stage, division of labour encouraged the separation of work and family to another level. As humanity progressed, the male dominated workplace began to depend largely on technology. Due to the fact that technology played a major role at the workplace, the domination of men began to fall, which facilitated the introduction of WLI facilities. Considerable growth in the women workforce globally pushed a further growth of the WLI programmes (Gurney, 2010; Naithani, 2010).

Greenhaus et al. (2013) defined WLI as "the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role". According to Clark (2015) WLI is described as 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with minimum role conflict'. Similarly Kirchmeyer (2011) expressed his view on WLI as 'achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains, and to do so requires personal resources.

Due to the fact that women were becoming part of the progress story of organizations, the WLI practices were depicted as family-friendly working practices (Scheibl et al, 2013). In recent times, the more frequently used term is WLI because its range is wider and covers beyond the spheres of family-friendly issues. Employees, both parents and non-parents are taken care of through flexible working arrangements. The term WLI is more desirable in the human resources discussion because it values the human needs and experiences. (Jones et al, 2013). As stated earlier, WLI is an inadequately understood concept in the literature and there is no one definition which can be classified as universal. In the past this concept of WLB was discussed as work-family balance in its narrow sense. It was viewed as the absence of conflict between work and family or the compatibility of two domains of life (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2011).

Some authors proposed that WLI is a result of injustice in the social setup such as inequality in the treatment of women. So it addressed the issue of unfairness (Roper et al., 2013; Dean, 2017). Meanwhile other writers are also of the view that WLI emerged to address the challenges faced by businesses to enhance productivity and increase productivity by dealing with the well-being of employees. Organizations felt it as their social responsibility to be more conscious of workers' health and other family issues (Beauregard & Henry, 2015). Unlike work-family balance, the concept of work life integration (WLI) is broader in its sense and concerns about many issues of an employee's personal life. The previous concepts were more concerned about the workers with families and mothers.

Communication Management

Communication is very important in the accomplishment of educational goals. It is referred to as the life-wire of any educational institution, and are very pertinent in the actualization of objectives. It can defined as the transmission of a message that involves the shared understanding between the contexts in which the communication takes place. In addition, teacher communication skills are important for a teacher in delivery of education to students. Communication involves listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. For effective teaching, a teacher needs to be highly skilled in all these areas. Teachers with good communication always make things easier and understandable.

Effective communication skills are really important for a teacher in transmitting of education, classroom management and interaction with students in the class. A teacher has to teach the students having different thinking approaches. To teach in accordance with the ability and capability of the students, a teacher needs to adopt such skills of communication which motivate the student toward their learning process (Sng Bee, 2012). Good communication skills of teachers are the basic need of academics success of students, and professional success of life. Teachers communicate more instructions orally in classroom to students. A teacher with poor communication skills may cause failure of students to learn and promote their academics. Students need to understand that what is right, and what is wrong totally depends upon the communication skills of teachers which he/she adopts in class-room (Khan, 2017).

Good communication skills minimize the potential of unkind feeling during the process of teaching. For learning, the learner must be attentive toward their teacher during the lecture. Khan (2017) recommended that teachers communicate in clear and understandable manner. Communication is a dynamic process which needs courage to face the other and convey his/her massage in effective way. Communication process is successful when we deliver the messages in clear and understandable ways. Effective communication needs to convey and accept his/her message in all kind of situation and circumstances. Good communication is considered a strong tool for effectiveness in the teaching profession. As variety of skills are needed for good teaching and teachers. A study conducted by Ehindero and Ajibade, (2017) indicated that for effective teaching, teachers require good communication skills such as good communication, good classroom management, updating knowledge and maintaining personality. No one can teach effectively except having these basics skills of teaching.

Collaboration Management

Collaboration is a process in which entities share information, resources, and responsibilities to jointly plan, implement, and evaluate a program of activities to achieve a common goal. This concept is derived from the Latin collaborare meaning "to work together" and can be seen as a process of shared creation, thus a process through which a group of entities enhance the capabilities of each other. It implies sharing risks, resources, responsibilities, and rewards, which if desired by the group can also give to an outside observer the image of a joint identity. Collaboration involves mutual productivity of participants to solve a problem together, which implies mutual trust and thus takes time, effort, and dedication. A collaboration process happens, for instance, in concurrent engineering, when a team of experts jointly develops a new product. From this example, it can be noticed that although some coordination is needed, collaboration, due to its joint creation facet, involves seeking divergent insights and spontaneity and not simply a structured harmony.

Collaboration is the process to work together and create value, sharing the same platform, having common goal, learning and building consensus and the individuals or organizations create relationship (Rosen, 2007). Relationship is built basing on trust and commitment. It is operated in organization in truly collaborative mode to gain mutual benefits or achieve a uniform purpose. The essence of collaboration is that all team members realize the importance of sharing information and understand the culture of collaboration. To achieve this goal, an effective team should pay attention to commit a common goal and focus on implementation, which bases on communication-connection, accountability, and solution focus. That not only needs team member change mindset but also behavior. Getting everyone in the team to share a common goal and really work together is not simply comes from the stressing of collaboration or a positive manager, but a combination of intangible factors that keep the whole team has a long-lasting and effective work collaboration culture (Falcion, 2011).

The principle of schools collaborating to improve is one that has seen growing interest in recent years, as the limitations of top-down reform efforts and individual school improvement have become apparent. The former tend to be insufficiently adapted to context and therefore often show patchy results, while the latter lack scale and impact on the broader environment or system. Collaboration and networking are seen as having specific advantages for school improvement, which include allowing schools to pool resources and improve the provision of professional development, allowing schools to plug 'structural gaps' in their own expertise and skills (Muijs, West & Ainscow, 2010), and allowing them to develop mutual support mechanisms and overcome an overly inward-looking approach. Collaboration in and between schools also allows them to take ownership of the change process, which is often a problem in large-scale reform efforts (Muis, 2010). In recent years,

education systems have therefore invested significant resources in developing collaborative approaches to school improvement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The design for this study was correlational design. The design is appropriate for this study because the researcher is interested in finding out the correlation between work-life integration and team management in public senior secondary school in Imo State.

The population for this study consisted of the 8201 teachers in 396 public senior secondary schools in the 27 Local Government Areas of Imo State. (Source: Imo State Education Board Report, 2024, Owerri). The sample size for this study was 410 respondents representing 5% of the entire. The instruments used for data collection in this study was one self-structured questionnaire titled "Work-life Integration Questionnaire (WIQ). The instruments will have 100 items, structured on a four points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The face and content validities of the instruments were determined by three experts from Department of Educational Management and Administration and Two experts from test and measurement, faculty of education. This was done by presenting copies of the instrument to them with the aim and objectives of the study, research questions, and hypotheses of the study. They were requested to assess the suitability of the language, the comprehensiveness, adequacy and relevance of the items in addressing the research questions. Their comments, suggestions and corrections were represented in the final production of the instruments before administration.

A sample of 30 teachers who are not be part of the sample for this study were randomly drawn for the reliability test from secondary schools in Imo State. The data generated from the responses of teachers for trial testing were used to estimate the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach method with reliability indexes of work-life integration. The questionnaire was administered directly to the respondents by the researcher with the help of two research assistants. The research assistants were briefed on how to administer the questionnaire to the respondents and were retrieved on the spot and agreed date to reduce attrition rate. Out 410 copies of the questionnaire administered, 393 copies were properly filled and retrieved which represented 96% success.

Methods of Data Analysis

The research questions were answered using Pearson product moment correlation (r) statistics, while z-ratio was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The statistical package of the social science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data gotten from the field.

Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

There is no significant relationship between communication and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 1: Transformed z-ratio on the Relationship between Communication and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State

Variable	$\sum$	$\sum^2$	n	df	$\sum XY$	r	z-cal	z-crit.	Decision
Communication (X)	10031	1006							
			393	391	2071	0.79	12.31	1.96	Sig.
									Rejected H_0
Teachers' productivity (Y)	10324	1065							

Source: Researcher's Field Result, 2025

]Result from Table 1 reveals that a high positive relationship exists between communication and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State. To establish the significance of the relationship, a transformed z-value was computed and an index of 12.31 was obtained. This was compared to the critical z-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with a degree of freedom of 391, indicating that there is a significant positive relationship between communication and teachers' team management (calculated z = 12.31< critical z = 1.96 at p < 0.05 and df = 391). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between communication and team management is rejected. This implies that the relationship is positive, strong and any improvement in communication tends to be accompanied by team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

There is no significant relationship between collaboration and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 2: Transformed z-ratio on the Relationship between Collaboration and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State

Variable	∑	∑²	n	df	∑XY	r	z-cal.	z-crit.	Decision
Collaboration (X)	21241	4511							
			393	391	5576	0.74	8.32	1.96	Sig.
									Rejected H_0
Teachers' productivity (Y)	10324	1065							

Source: Researcher's Field Result, 2025

Result from Table 2 reveals that a high positive relationship exists between collaboration and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State. To establish the significance of the relationship, a transformed z-value was computed and an index of 8.32 was obtained. This was compared to the critical z-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with a degree of freedom of 391, indicating that there is a significant positive relationship between collaboration and team management (calculated z = 8.32< critical z = 1.96 at p < 0.05 and df = 391). Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between collaboration and team management is rejected. This implies that the relationship is positive, strong and any effective collaboration tends to be accompanied by improvement in team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are presented as shown below:

Communication and team management

The study revealed that there is high and positive relationship between communication and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between communication and team management is rejected. This finding was in agreement with the finding of study conducted by Ehindero and Ajibade, (2017) that effective communication skills are really important for a teacher in transmitting of education, classroom

management and interaction with students in the class. A teacher has to teach the students having different thinking approaches. To teach in accordance with the ability and capability of the students, a teacher needs to adopt such skills of communication which motivate the student toward their learning process (Sng Bee, 2012).

Good communication skills of teachers are the basic need of academics success of students, and professional success of life. Teachers communicate more instructions orally in classroom to students. A teacher with poor communication skills may cause failure of students to learn and promote their academics. Students need to understand that what is right, and what is wrong totally depends upon the communication skills of teachers which he/she adopts in class-room (Khan, 2017).

According to Obilor (2020), effective communication skills are really important for a teacher in the transmitting of education, classroom management and interaction with pupils in the class. Good communication skills of teacher are the basic need of academic success of pupils, and their professional success in life. Fundamental to teacher and pupil success is the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students, parents and colleagues. Teachers must have good communication skills to help their pupils achieve academic success. Without good communication skills, teachers disable the teaching-learning process as well as their own career mobility (Obilor, 2020). Teachers with poor communication skills may cause poor academic productivity of pupils and lead to unstable professional life after school. Good communication minimizes the potential of unkind feeling during the process of teaching and learning. For a teacher, it is very pertinent to have good communication skills to create good classroom environment for effective teacher-student interaction to promote effective learning by pupils and acquisition of desired professional goals.

Collaboration and teachers' productivity

The study revealed that there is a high and positive relationship between collaboration and team management in public senior secondary schools in Imo State. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between collaboration and team management is rejected. This finding is in agreement with Prenger (2017) who believed that Teacher collaboration is an important aspect of teachers' professional lives, as a means to continuously reflect on and improve the practice of teaching. In collaboration, teachers can, for example, share knowledge, critically reflect on teaching practices, provide collegial support or peer feedback, and collectively design teaching methods (Raes, & Kyndt, 2015). Teacher collaboration in secondary schools can form a fruitful context for teacher professional learning. Several conceptions of teacher collaboration exist which relate to the content of teachers' conversations and the division of roles and responsibilities they adopt.

Teacher collaboration can be understood as joint interaction in all activities of a group that are needed to perform a shared task (Vangrieken, 2015). Influencing factors of teacher collaboration that are frequently addressed include for example teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, the structure that is adopted in teacher meetings, and norms of autonomy and facilitation in school (Prenger, 2017). According to Vangrieken (2015), most facilitating factors of teacher collaboration relate to the process of working together such as task emphasis and interdependence.

Conclusion

In line with the findings from this study, it was concluded that work-life integration and team management such as communication and collaboration were the major components of work-life integration and team management and they have positive relationship with teachers' productivity in public Senior secondary schools in Imo State. Finally, there is a significant relationship between work-life integration, team management (communication and collaboration) in public Senior secondary schools in Imo State.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should improve in the use of communication to sustain teachers' productivity in public senior secondary schools.
2. Teachers should effectively collaborate with each other and stakeholders to ensure teachers' productivity in public senior secondary schools.

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