

EFFECT OF WORK LIFE BALANCE ON STAFF PERFORMANCE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA, FCT, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The rising pressure linked to academic responsibilities, administrative demands and employee welfare challenges in Nigerian public universities had raised concerns about staff productivity and service delivery efficiency hence the need to examine how work-life balance influenced staff performance in the University of Abuja, FCT, Nigeria. The main purpose of the study was to find out the effect of work life balance on staff performance in the University of Abuja, the study specifically examined flexible work arrangement and workload management as the dimensions of work life balance and employee productivity and service delivery efficiency as the dimensions of staff performance. The study used a cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 2452 academic and non-academic staff of the University of Abuja. A sample size of 402 respondents was obtained using the Krejcie and Morgan statistical table with a margin of safety of 20%. The stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation of the academic and non-academic staff cadres. Data were collected through primary data by using a structured questionnaire and data analysis was performed using regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 27). The findings revealed that flexible work arrangement had significant positive effect on employee productivity and workload management had significant influence on service delivery efficiency in University of Abuja. The study concluded that the supportive work structures and balanced workload systems were important in enhancing staff effectiveness and institutional performance. The study recommended that the university management should improve flexible work policies and effective workload management practices to improve productivity and service delivery efficiency among staff.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Flexible Work Arrangement, Workload Management, Employee Productivity, Service Delivery Efficiency.

INTRODUCTION

The nature of work has changed dramatically over the last decade, and perhaps nowhere has this been more evident than in the debates surrounding work-life balance. Workers in universities, companies and public institutions are increasingly required to maintain high levels of productivity while simultaneously juggling personal responsibilities, emotional wellbeing and social obligations. These realities have only been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting organisational expectations and making flexible work arrangements the norm. In many parts of the world today,

organisations understand that employee effectiveness is not only driven by technical competence or supervision but also the extent to which employees can maintain a balance between work demands and personal life (Bloom et al., 2024). In particular, academic and non-academic staff in institutions of higher education are usually confronted with demanding schedules involving teaching, administrative duties, research commitments, student interaction, and institutional service delivery. The pressures have slowly transformed work-life balance from a welfare issue to a strategic issue for the organisation,

directly related to institutional performance and sustainability.

Work-life balance is a broad term that describes the ability of employees to successfully manage the competing demands of professional responsibilities and personal and family obligations without undue conflict between the two domains. Contemporary organisational discourse increasingly frames it as a mechanism for improving employee wellbeing, commitment and long-term performance outcomes. In practice, employees who feel supportive and balanced working conditions are more likely to be motivated, productive and psychologically engaged in their duties (Anakpo et al., 2023; Abubakar & Daniel, 2016). This study specifically focuses on the dimensions of work-life balance as flexible work arrangement and workload management. Flexible work arrangement is organisational practice that provides employees with some control over when, where or how work is done. Such arrangements could include changed schedules, hybrid work systems, or autonomy of how work gets done. Within university contexts, flexibility may be particularly pertinent where staff combine lectures, supervision, administrative meetings and research activities within limited timeframes. Hybrid and flexible work models can improve employee retention and satisfaction without necessarily sacrificing performance outcomes, argued Bloom et al. (2024). Workload management is also about the distribution and control of work to prevent overburden, exhaustion or ineffectiveness. Academic staff in Nigerian universities are often confronted with overcrowded classrooms, administrative bottlenecks and increasing institutional responsibilities, conditions that may affect both effectiveness and morale. Where workloads are consistently high, the quality and speed of service delivery may gradually deteriorate.

The performance of staff in tertiary institutions is not just limited to the narrow notion of doing assigned duties. Staff performance in the context of the University of Abuja can be viewed as the ability of employees to deliver quality services and remain efficient to contribute effectively to the attainment of institutional goals. Universities operate through the synchronised operation of academic and non-academic staff. Disruptions in the efficacy

of employees often affect the quality of teaching, administrative responsiveness, student satisfaction, and institutional reputation. The study considers staff performance as aspects of employee productivity and service delivery efficiency. Employee productivity is a measure of the efficiency with which staff produce the expected outputs with the available time and resources. In academic institutions, it may mean lecturing, research, administration, efficiency and timely execution of responsibilities. On the other hand, service delivery efficiency refers to the timeliness, responsiveness, and quality of services provided to students, staff, and other stakeholders. Delays in processing records, responding to students' concerns or managing institutional operations may be indicators of weaknesses in organisational performance structures.

The University of Abuja, the nexus between work-life balance and staff performance is growing more relevant in a setting of increasing enrolment, administrative complexity and performance expectations. Staff with reasonable workloads and a moderate amount of flexibility may be more committed and more effective in their execution of institutional responsibilities. But the relationship may not always be clear cut. For example, flexibility could increase autonomy for some employees while generating coordination challenges for others. Similarly, workload pressures can sometimes generate efficiencies in the short term but fatigue and lower performance in the long term. The extent to which work-life balance shapes productivity and service efficiency in a university system where employees are expected to juggle academic commitments, administrative duties and personal responsibilities simultaneously is an issue that deserves careful empirical attention.

Statement of Problem

Universities are ideally expected to create an environment in which employees can work effectively in conditions that support professional commitment, wellbeing and institutional productivity. Work-life balance is increasingly recognised as a strategic tool in contemporary higher education systems for sustaining staff motivation, improving service delivery and increasing organisational

efficiency. Organisations that promote flexible work arrangements and reasonable workloads tend to have higher employee engagement, lower stress levels, and better productivity outcomes (Bloom et al., 2024). Universities expect both academic and non-academic staff to perform many responsibilities at the same time, from teaching and research to administration and student support services. In such context, it became necessary to have a good balance between work demands and personal life to have a consistent performance of the staff and the institution.

But in the University of Abuja, growing administrative demands, increasing student enrolment and periodic industrial tensions seemed to have increased concerns about staff performance and working conditions. In 2024 the institution was the subject of prolonged industrial disputes with both academic and non-academic staff over welfare, salaries and governance processes. The University of Abuja Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) went on an 82-day strike while non-academic staff protested over withheld salaries and poor welfare conditions, disrupting academic and administrative operations at the institution. Management insisted that academic activities continued during the disputes, but the situation nevertheless highlighted underlying pressures relating to workload, staff welfare and organisational stability. In essence, heavy workload, long work pressure and little flexibility can lead to a decrease in employee productivity and a decrease in service delivery efficiency, especially in the case of public universities where resources and staffing structures are often stretched.

Empirically, prior studies have predominantly addressed flexible work arrangements, remote work systems, and employee productivity in corporate organisations and private sector institutions outside the Nigerian university environment (Anakpo et al., 2023; Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2024). Other studies investigated workload management from the viewpoints of logistics, healthcare and technology, with little attention paid to higher educational institutions in Nigeria. Importantly, few recent studies have simultaneously linked flexible work arrangement and workload management with employee productivity and service delivery efficiency in the context of a federal university

such as the University of Abuja. This created a contextual and empirical gap that necessitated the need to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and staff performance in the University of Abuja, FCT, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the effect of flexible work arrangement on employee productivity in the University of Abuja?
- ii. How does workload management affect service delivery efficiency in the University of Abuja?

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of work-life balance on staff performance in the University of Abuja. The specific objectives were to:

- i. examine the effect of flexible work arrangement on employee productivity in the University of Abuja.
- ii. determine the effect of workload management on service delivery efficiency in the University of Abuja.

Statement of Hypotheses

The study tested the following null hypotheses:

- H₀₁:** Flexible work arrangement has no significant effect on employee productivity in the University of Abuja.
- H₀₂:** Workload management has no significant effect on service delivery efficiency in the University of Abuja.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is a core topic in the field of organizational and human resources research. It is commonly defined as the extent to which employees can coordinate work demands with their needs related to family, social life, and personal well-being, without conflicts arising between these different life domains. Today,

this issue has evolved from a mere employee welfare concern into a core strategic topic tied to productivity, employee loyalty, and organizational sustainability. Existing research has verified its value across multiple dimensions: Çivilidağ and Durmaz (2024) define work-life balance as a state of functional harmony between work and non-work activities, which can reduce stress and boost work effectiveness; Anakpo et al. (2023) propose that a balanced work system can maintain employees' physical and mental health and professional loyalty, and

is well-suited for high-workload contexts; Onyekwelu et al. (2022) confirm that employees who achieve work-life balance outperform their peers in both loyalty and job performance. The contradictions surrounding this issue are particularly prominent in higher education institutions. Academic and non-academic staff at the University of Abuja must juggle teaching, research, supervision, administrative tasks, and personal life commitments, while also addressing challenges including long working hours, large student enrollments, institutional bureaucracy, and intense pressure to deliver services. Work-life imbalance can trigger negative outcomes such as fatigue, low morale, and reduced efficiency. Improvements to organizational effectiveness rely not only on technical resources, but also on institutional arrangements that support employees in balancing their work and personal roles.

Flexible Work Arrangement

Flexible work arrangement is one of the most apparent dimensions of work-life balance in contemporary organisations. Generally speaking, the concept is about organisational practices that offer employees some degree of flexibility relating to their work schedules, work locations, or the methods by which they perform their duties. Such arrangements may include hybrid working, working from home, compressed workweeks, flexible working hours, or autonomy over the performance of tasks. Following the upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic, including educational organisations, work structures have become more widely accepted as flexible across institutions worldwide. Bloom et al. (2024) argued that flexible and hybrid work systems improved employee retention and satisfaction,

while maintaining performance levels. From another perspective, flexible work arrangements provide employees with opportunities to attend to personal obligations without necessarily compromising organisational responsibilities. Flexible working arrangements can be a significant element of staff productivity – especially in the university context where academic work rarely fits neatly into a rigid operational framework. Lecturers for instance, frequently divide their time between lecturing, research, supervision, conferences and administrative duties. Admin staff operate in an environment where there is a constant demand for responsiveness and efficiency. Where there is flexibility, employees may also experience lower stress levels and increased autonomy in organising their work. Based on Firdausi and Indiyati (2025) work structure flexibility positively affected employee productivity through better work-life balance. However, there are sometimes concerns about coordination problems, less supervision and the potential for abuse of flexible systems, especially in public institutions where monitoring mechanisms may already be weak. This implies that although flexibility may be conducive to performance, its effectiveness is often dependent on organisational structure, accountability systems and institutional culture.

Workload Management

Workload management is the process of distributing and controlling tasks so that employees are able to perform well without undue physical or psychological stress. The idea is not just about the amount of work assigned to employees, but also the pace, complexity, timing and emotional demands that come with responsibilities. Workload imbalance has become an increasing concern in many organisations. Overload can lead to burnout, stress, lack of concentration and reduced job satisfaction. Workload management has been defined as an organisational mechanism to ensure that employee responsibilities are reasonable, coordinated and aligned with available resources and capabilities (Kristinawati & Ghalib, 2025). In practical terms, employees who are constantly overworked may not be able to sustain productivity and service quality over the long-term.

The workload challenges in Nigerian public universities are usually as a result of staff shortages, increased student enrolment, administrative bottlenecks and limited institutional resources. The academic staff may have to juggle teaching, supervision, marking, research publication and committee work at the same time. Non-academic staff often have to deal with high volumes of administrative work within tight deadlines. As noted by Paputungan et al. (2025), workload pressure could have direct impacts on service performance and employee wellbeing where balancing mechanisms are weak. In fact, moderate levels of workload can at times promote efficiency and concentration; but prolonged workload saturation tends to have the opposite effect. In practice, responsiveness, precision and service efficiency may gradually decline as employees become overwhelmed by institutional demands. This reality has made workload management to be more relevant in the staff performance discourse in tertiary institutions.

Staff Performance

Staff performance is generally referred to as the degree to which employees carry out their assigned responsibilities effectively in a manner that promotes organisational goals and operational efficiency. The literature frequently discusses performance in organisations not just in terms of the quantity of output but also in terms of quality, responsiveness, commitment and consistency. Modern institutions are increasingly using multidimensional indicators of performance that take into account both behavioural and operational results. Febriana and Mujib (2024) defined staff performance as the ability of employees to utilise the organization's skills, motivation, and support to accomplish the expected results. Performance in universities in particular is a mix of academic delivery, administrative effectiveness, research engagement and quality interaction with stakeholders.

The performance of staff in tertiary institutions has consequences beyond internal organisational outcomes. Universities depend on human capital for the delivery of educational services, the maintenance of institutional reputation and the support of student development. The staff performance at the University of Abuja may affect the delivery of lectures, administrative coordination, student

support services and the overall efficiency of institutional operations. Bernard (2025) states that the effectiveness of the employee is frequently mirrored by the wider organisational climate the employee works within, for example the welfare conditions, flexibility and workload structures. In the case of staff under excessive stress or poor working conditions the organisational efficiency may gradually decline in spite of the professional competence of employees. As a result, the understanding of the determinants of staff performance has remained a major concern of organisational and educational research .

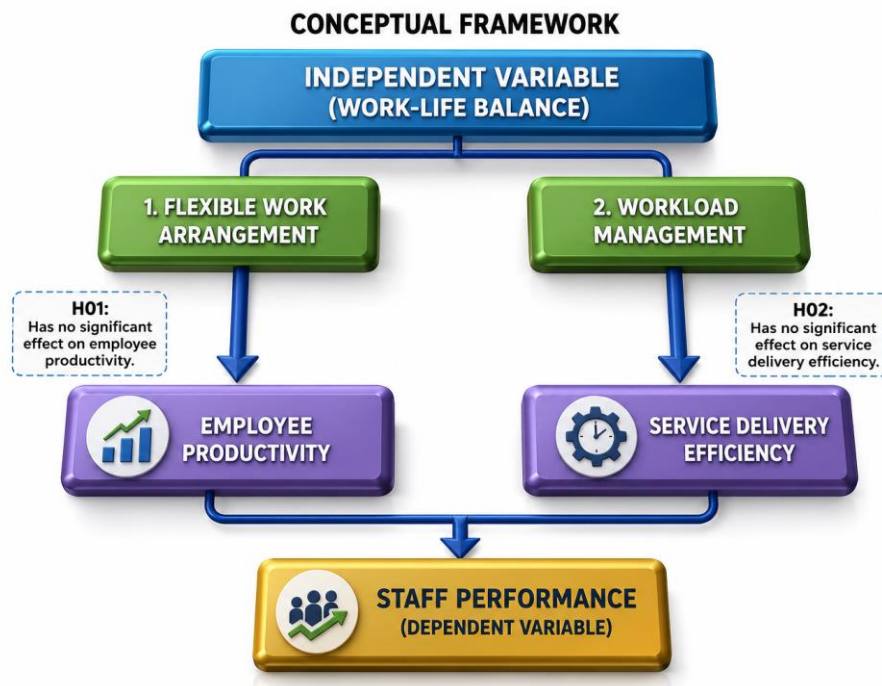
Employee Productivity

Employee productivity means the capability of employees to produce expected outputs efficiently within available time and organisational resource. The concept is usually associated with the quantity and quality of work performed, the punctuality of the performance of tasks as well as the extent to which the employees are helping the organisation to achieve its goals. In today's organisations productivity is increasingly linked not only to technical competence but also to employee wellbeing, motivation and work environment. M.K and Brett (2025) stated that supportive work structures and balanced organisational systems tend to improve employee's concentration and efficiency. Thus, improving productivity outcomes. In the context of universities, productivity can be demonstrated by timely delivery of lectures, completion of administrative duties, publication of research outputs, responsiveness to institutional demands and supervision of students. Productivity of non-academic staff may also be reflected in accurate record keeping, responsiveness to enquiries, and efficiency in administrative functions. According to Enkatesh and Sandra (2024), organisational systems that reduce unnecessary stress and promote supportive work conditions make employees more productive. However, the productivity in public universities may be sometimes limited by infrastructural constraints, load and bureaucratic delay . This means that employee productivity cannot be studied without reference to the broader institutional environment of the work place.

Service Delivery Efficiency

Service delivery efficiency is the ability of employees and institutions to provide timely, accurate and satisfactory services to stakeholders with minimal delays or operational waste. The efficiency of service in higher educational institutions is not only customer service in the traditional sense but also administrative responsiveness, academic coordination, communication effectiveness and operational reliability. The effectiveness of an institution is often evaluated based on how fast and well it provides services to students, staff and external stakeholders. Working conditions, workload balance and organisational support systems significantly affect service efficiency (Papatungan et al., 2025).

In the University of Abuja, service delivery efficiency could be the timely processing of academic records, responsiveness to students' concerns, effective communication and smooth coordination of institutional processes. Stakeholder perceptions of institutional quality can be negatively affected by delays in documentation and registration procedures or exam management or staff responsiveness. Interestingly, employee wellbeing is often associated with service efficiency in universities as exhausted or overburdened staff may struggle to maintain accuracy and responsiveness all the time. This is why conversations about institutional effectiveness are increasingly including workload management, flexibility, and employee welfare rather than focusing solely on technical infrastructure or administrative procedures.



The conceptual framework illustrates the hypothesised relationship between work-life balance and staff performance in the University of Abuja. Work-life balance is represented by two dimensions, namely flexible work arrangement and workload management, while staff performance is measured using employee productivity and service delivery efficiency. The framework proposes that flexible work arrangement influences employee productivity,

whereas workload management affects service delivery efficiency. The directional arrows indicate the expected causal relationships, while the hypotheses (H01 and H02) provide the basis for empirically testing whether these relationships are statistically significant among academic and non-academic staff of the University of Abuja.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study was the Work-Life Border Theory developed by Clark (2000). The theory described how people constantly negotiate and manage the boundaries between work and personal life in an attempt to achieve balance and minimise conflict between the two domains. Work and family, Clark suggested, are two distinct but connected domains, each with its own set of expectations, cultures and responsibilities. The theory suggests that employees perform better when organisational structures support flexibility and allow transitions between these domains. The theory was created ages ago, but it is still very important in today's discussions about organisations. This is because the lines between work life and personal life are getting less and less clear, especially now that lots of people are working in hybrid or flexible ways.

The central premise of the theory was that employees can achieve balance when organisations create supportive structures that reduce role conflict and facilitate flexibility in handling work and personal responsibilities. The theory also suggested that rigid systems of organisation and excessive workload pressures could increase stress, decrease wellbeing and reduce effectiveness on the part of employees. The theory is strong because it can be applied in practice in a range of organisational settings such as universities, where employees are often expected to balance their work commitments with family and social responsibilities. The theory also provides a useful explanation of how flexibility and workload conditions may influence employee productivity and service efficiency.

While the theory is relevant, it has been criticised for being too focused on individual boundary management and not paying enough attention to structural issues such as economic, institutional, and resource conditions that can hinder employees from achieving balance. Critics also argued that the theory might not fully capture the realities of high demanding work environments where employees have little control over organisational expectations. However, the theory was still suitable for this study as it provided a useful framework for understanding how flexible work arrangement and workload management could influence staff performance outcomes such as employee

productivity and service delivery efficiency in the University of Abuja, FCT, Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Çivilidağ and Durmaz (2024) investigated the relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee performance to integrate recent evidence on the impact of workplace flexibility on organisational outcomes across various sectors globally. The study was done as a mini review, using a qualitative review design, in an international context. The study population was published empirical studies on flexible work arrangements and employee performance. Purposive sampling was used to select the relevant peer-reviewed journal articles from academic databases. Secondary data were collected through document analysis. The interpretation was done through thematic content analysis. The findings indicated that properly administered flexible work arrangements generally enhanced employee satisfaction, motivation, commitment and productivity. The study suggested that organisations should build policies of structured flexibility into workplace systems to improve employee performance and retention. However, the authors recognised that the review was heavily reliant on secondary evidence and was not directly empirically tested across specific institutional contexts, thereby limiting generalisability to specific sectors and regions.

Anakpo et al. (2023) studied the effect of work-from-home practices on employee performance and productivity with a special focus on the post-pandemic work environment in various countries. The study employed a systematic review design, in which published articles related to remote work and productivity were reviewed. The population was scholarly literature indexed in major academic databases, and relevant peer-reviewed publications were identified through purposive sampling. Secondary data were extracted from journal articles and analysed systematically by thematic synthesis. Results showed that work-from-home arrangements positively influenced employee productivity, work-life balance and job satisfaction when there was sufficient technological support and flexible structures in the organisation. The study recommended that organisations should develop effective remote

work frameworks that support communication, accountability and employee wellbeing. However, the authors found that the findings were limited by differences in organisational culture, infrastructure and employee roles in different countries.

Maity and Lee (2025) evaluated the impact of flexible, remote and hybrid work arrangements on productivity of small and medium enterprises in several developed and emerging economies. The study utilised a systematic literature review approach and drew on secondary data sourced from peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and industry reports. The study population was scholarly publications on remote work systems and SME productivity and purposive sampling was used to select studies that met the inclusion criteria. We analysed the data using narrative synthesis and comparative thematic analysis. The findings showed that hybrid work systems increased employee productivity, operational flexibility and organisational resilience. However, the productivity results differed across industries and technological capabilities. The authors recommended that SMEs should adopt flexible work models supported by digital infrastructure and employee training. The study was limited by the secondary data used and the uneven representation of developing countries across the reviewed studies. Onyekwelu et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between flexible work arrangements and workplace productivity in Nigeria with the aim of determining the influence of workplace flexibility on employee output. The research design used in this study was survey research design in Nigeria. The sample population consisted of employees of selected organisations and a systematic sampling procedure was employed to select the respondents. Primary data were collected through questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The results showed that flexible work arrangements increased employee productivity and workplace commitment by reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction. The study recommended that organisations in Nigeria should institutionalise flexible work practices to sustain employee effectiveness and organisational growth. However, the study's focus was restricted to selected organisations,

which limited the ability to make broader national generalisations.

Agbanu et al., (2023) examined the influence of flexible work arrangements on productivity of sales representatives in book publishing firms in Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey research design in the Nigerian publishing sector. The population was sales representatives in selected book publishing firms and the study sample was selected using random sampling techniques. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and analysed through correlation and regression techniques. The findings showed that flexible work arrangements had a positive effect on the productivity, responsiveness and commitment to organisational targets of sales representatives. To increase employee efficiency, the researchers suggested that publishing companies should implement flexible scheduling and remote operational support. But the study also conceded that the focus on publishing firms made it hard to generalise findings to other sectors.

Firdausi and Indiyati (2025) studied the effect of flexible work arrangements on employee productivity with work-life balance as a mediating variable. This research was conducted on employees in Indonesia with quantitative research design. The population was organisational employees in selected firms and purposive sampling techniques were used to select respondents relevant to the study objectives. The primary data were collected by means of questionnaires and analysed by means of structural equation modelling. Results showed that flexible working arrangements had direct positive effects on employee productivity and indirect positive effects through improved work-life balance. The study suggested organisations to reinforce work-life balance initiatives with flexible work systems to sustain productivity. This study is limited by its focus on one national context and its reliance on self-reported responses.

Bernard (2025) examined the link between remote work and the productivity of employees in Nigerian commercial banks. The study aimed to determine the effects of flexible work arrangements on banking activities and employee output. The study was carried out using a survey research design on selected commercial banks in Nigeria. The population

was the employees of the banks. The selection of the respondents was done using stratified sampling techniques. Primary data gathered through questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The results indicated a positive impact of remote work practices on employee productivity, reduced workplace stress and improved operational efficiency when the digital infrastructure was adequate. The research suggested that Nigerian banks should implement well-rounded policies on remote work that are supported by investments in technology and employee monitoring systems. However, the author admitted that the study was limited to the banking sector and may not necessarily reflect the situation in public institutions and universities.

Lyu et al. (2025) studied workload-aware order assignment for last-mile delivery systems aiming to enhance workload distribution and operational performance in logistics operations. The study was carried out in the field of logistics and mobile computing with a research design of computational modelling. The population consisted of delivery operations and workload allocation systems in selected logistics networks and operational data were sampled using algorithmic simulation methods. Secondary and simulation data were analysed using mathematical optimisation models and workload allocation algorithms. The findings showed that effective workload balancing led to higher operational efficiency, a reduction in delays, and improved service responsiveness. The study recommends that organisations should implement intelligent workload management systems to improve efficiency and minimise employee overload. However, the study was limited in that it was focused on technology, which reduced the direct relevance of the study to non-technical organisational settings such as universities.

Vanheusden et al. (2021) studied the effectiveness of workload balancing measures in order picking operations, specifically in terms of operational productivity and employee efficiency in warehouses. The paper employed the experimental research design in European industrial operations. The population was warehouse operations and employees involved in order-picking activities. Operational simulation and purposive sampling methods

were used to evaluate workload balancing measures. Data were collected from operational records and simulation experiments and analysed using quantitative model techniques. The results showed that balanced workloads improved operational performance, lowered worker fatigue and increased task efficiency. The study recommended that organisations should install structured workload balancing systems to enhance employee productivity and operational reliability. The limitation of the study was its industrial setting, which could be very different from educational institutions. Liu et al. (2017) studied multi-task scheduling based on workload in cloud manufacturing systems to improve the operational efficiency through effective workload allocation. The study was carried out as a computational and experimental study on cloud manufacturing in China. The population consisted of cloud manufacturing tasks. Operational data were generated by scheduling systems and simulation modelling techniques. The data were analysed using scheduling algorithms and optimisation techniques. The results showed that workload based scheduling improved operational efficiency, task coordination and system productivity. The study recommends the deployment of intelligent workload allocation mechanisms in complex operational environments. However, the limitation of the study is that it was technological and manufacturing focused which limited its direct application to human-centred institutional settings such as universities.

Kristinawati and Ghalib (2025) researched the strategic management of workload in digital business organisations. The study's objective was to know the impact of workload allocation on organisational effectiveness and employee wellbeing. The study adopted a qualitative research design in digital business firms. The sample was composed of managers and employees of selected digital enterprises. Purposive sampling was applied to select respondents with managerial and operational experience. Primary data were collected via interviews and organisational documents and analysed using thematic analysis. The results showed that proper workload management improved employee performance, reduced stress and enhanced organisational sustainability. The study recommended that organisations should put in place realistic

workload structures and employee support mechanisms to sustain productivity. The authors point out that wider statistical generalisation is limited by the qualitative nature of the study. Jaeker and Tucker (2017) studied the adverse effects of workload saturation on efficiency and patient severity in US healthcare organisations. The research design employed is a longitudinal quantitative research design for healthcare operational systems. The population was hospital workers and patient-care operations, and the main data source was operational records. Data analysis was carried out using econometric and statistical modelling techniques. The results showed that workload saturation, due to excessive work, reduced the efficiency of employees and negatively impacted the results of services, especially in high-pressure situations. The study recommended that healthcare institutions should control workload intensity to ensure operational quality and effectiveness of employees. The study was limited because it focused on healthcare settings, and these may not fully reflect the situation in educational settings.

Niu et al. (2019) investigated workload allocation mechanisms for edge computing-based power internet systems to reduce service delays, seeking to improve service delivery efficiency through balanced workload allocation. The study adopted a computational modelling research design in the Chinese technological and engineering sector. The population comprised edge computing systems and workload distribution networks. Operational datasets were generated from simulation models. The data were analysed using system modelling techniques and optimisation algorithms. Results showed that an equitable workload allocation substantially decreased service delays and improved operational efficiency. The study suggested that intelligent workload management systems should be integrated into operational networks to enhance service quality. However, the study was hampered by technological orientation and limited direct relevance to social and organisational institutions such as universities.

Literature Gaps

While there is a growing body of literature on work-life balance and employee performance,

there were a number of conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps in the existing studies. Most previous studies have conceptually focused heavily on flexible work arrangements, remote work systems and general employee productivity, with limited attention given to workload management as a critical dimension of work-life balance influencing service delivery efficiency (Anakpo et al., 2023; Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2024). From a context point of view, many previous studies were conducted in private organisations, manufacturing companies, logistics operations, healthcare institutions, digital enterprises and commercial banks in non-Nigerian public university settings (Lyu et al., 2025; Kristinawati & Ghalib, 2025). Consequently, there was still a lack of empirical evidence on the influence of work-life balance dimensions such as flexible work arrangement and workload management on staff performance outcomes in the federal universities in Nigeria, particularly the University of Abuja. Methodologically, the reviewed studies employed systematic reviews, simulation models, qualitative approaches or technology-based analytical frameworks with little use of direct survey evidence from educational institutions. Again, most of the studies focused on employee productivity and paid little attention to service delivery efficiency as an important indicator of performance in tertiary institutions. Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by empirically investigating the effect of flexible work arrangement and workload management on employee productivity and service delivery efficiency within the University of Abuja, FCT, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design because the study sought to obtain data from respondents at a single point in time in order to examine the relationship between work-life balance and staff performance in the University of Abuja, FCT, Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to gather quantifiable data from a relatively large population efficiently while also allowing for the testing of relationships between the study variables using statistical techniques. The population of the study comprised all academic

and non-academic staff of the University of Abuja. The population was drawn from various faculties, departments, and administrative units across the institution. According to the Human Resource Office of the University of Abuja (2024), the total workforce stood at 2,452 employees, consisting of 654 academic staff and 1,798 non-academic staff. Academic staff included lecturers, senior lecturers, heads of

departments, and professors engaged in teaching, research, and academic administration, while non-academic staff comprised administrative, technical, and support personnel such as registry officers, finance staff, laboratory technicians, librarians, and maintenance workers who were essential to the smooth running of university operations.

Table 1 Population of the Study

Staff Category	Population
Academic Staff	654
Non-Academic Staff	1,798
Total	2,452

Source: Human Resource Office, University of Abuja (2024)

The sample size for the study was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) statistical table. For a population of 2,452 employees, the recommended sample size was 335 respondents. However, a 20% margin of safety was added to address possible issues relating to non-response, incomplete questionnaires, and respondent attrition. The calculation was expressed as follows:

$$20\% \times 335 = 67$$

$$335 + 67 = 402$$

Thus, the final sample size for the study stood at 402 respondents. The addition of the 20% margin of safety was justified because survey studies within large institutions often experienced delays, refusal to participate, and improperly completed instruments, which could reduce the usable response rate. The study employed a stratified sampling technique because the population consisted of distinct categories of employees with varying responsibilities and organisational experiences. The use of stratification ensured that both academic and non-academic staff were proportionately represented in the study, thereby improving representativeness and reducing sampling bias. Primary data were used for the study, while the method of data collection was the use of a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale. The validity of the research instrument was established through content validity to

ensure that the questionnaire adequately measured the constructs of work-life balance and staff performance. The draft questionnaire was subjected to expert review by a panel of three specialists, comprising two senior lecturers in Business Administration with expertise in Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation/Research Methodology. The experts assessed the instrument for clarity, relevance, appropriateness, comprehensiveness, and alignment with the study objectives, research questions, hypotheses, and operational definitions of the variables. Their evaluations were quantified using the Content Validity Index (CVI). The instrument attained a Scale Content Validity Index (S-CVI) of 0.92, which exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.80 for social science research, indicating excellent content validity. Based on the experts' observations, minor revisions were made before the pilot study, including rewording ambiguous statements for clarity, eliminating repetitive items, simplifying technical expressions, and restructuring some questionnaire items to improve logical sequencing and respondents' understanding. These modifications enhanced the instrument's clarity, relevance, and overall suitability for the main study. Reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to measure the internal consistency of the instrument.

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Flexible Work Arrangement	5	0.812
Workload Management	5	0.847
Employee Productivity	5	0.826
Service Delivery Efficiency	5	0.801
Overall Reliability	20	0.822

Source: Pilot Study Result (2026)

The reliability coefficients exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70 recommended for social science research, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study. Data collected were analysed using regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 27). The regression models for the hypotheses were specified as:

$$SDE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WLM + \mu$$

Where:

EP = Employee Productivity

SDE = Service Delivery Efficiency

FWA = Flexible Work Arrangement

WLM = Workload Management

β_0 = Constant Term

β_1 = Regression Coefficient

μ = Error Term

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table3: Administered Questionnaire

	Number	Percentage
Questionnaire Distributed	363	90.3%
Returned Questionnaire	39	9.7%
Unreturned Questionnaire	402	100.0%

Source: Field Survey, (2026)

Table 3 presented the response rate of the administered questionnaires used for the study. The table revealed that a total of 406 questionnaires were distributed to respondents across the University of Abuja, out of which 363 questionnaires representing 90.3% were successfully returned and found usable for analysis, while 39 questionnaires representing 9.7% were not returned. The high response rate obtained suggested that the respondents showed considerable interest and willingness to

participate in the study, thereby increasing the reliability and credibility of the data collected. The returned questionnaires were considered sufficiently representative of the study population and adequate for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing. Furthermore, the low rate of unreturned questionnaires reduced the likelihood of response bias and enhanced the generalisability of the findings to the broader population of academic and non-academic staff within the University of Abuja.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Flexible work arrangement has no significant effect on employee productivity in the University of Abuja.

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FWA + \mu \dots \dots \dots 1$$

Table 4 **Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.762 ^a	.580	.579	.34525

a. Predictors: (Constant), FWA

Source: SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 4 presents the summary of the model for the effect of flexible work arrangement on employee productivity in the University of Abuja. The result showed that the correlation coefficient (R) value was 0.762. This indicated a strong positive relationship between flexible work arrangement and employee's productivity. The value of the coefficient of determination (R Square) was 0.580 which means that 58.0% of the variation in employee productivity was

explained by flexible work arrangement and the remaining 42.0% was due to other factors that are outside the model. The value of Adjusted R Square of 0.579 further confirmed the stability and explanatory power of the model. The standard error of estimate of 0.34525 suggests a relatively low level of prediction error. The finding suggested that flexible work arrangement significantly.

Table 5 **ANOVA^a**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	262.165	1	262.165	1576.350	.000 ^b
	Residual	60.038	361	.166		
	Total	322.203	362			

a. Dependent Variable: EP

b. Predictors: (Constant), FWA

Source: SPSS Output Version 27.0

The results shown in Table 5 indicate that the F-statistic is 1576.350, and the significance p-value is 0.000, which is lower than the common significance level of 0.05. The model has good goodness of fit, a significant association exists

between the variables, and the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding can provide reliable empirical support for the practical advancement of flexible staffing practices in colleges and universities.

Table 6 **Coefficients^a**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.236	.070		3.367	.001
	FWA	.917	.023	.902	39.703	.000

a. Dependent Variable: EP

Source: SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 6 presents the core regression analysis results on the impact of flexible work arrangements on employee productivity at the University of Abuja. The regression coefficient β of the core explanatory variable is 0.917, with a corresponding t-value of 39.703 and p-value of 0.000; this result is statistically significant at the 5% significance level. Its standardized beta coefficient reaches 0.902, indicating an

extremely strong positive impact. The constant term of 0.236 shows that a baseline level of productivity still exists when no flexible work arrangement is implemented. On this basis, it can be inferred that rolling out the flexible work policy at this university can significantly improve employee productivity and work effectiveness.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Workload management has no significant effect on service delivery efficiency in the University of Abuja.

$$SDE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WLM + \mu \dots \dots \dots 2$$

Table 7 **Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.818 ^a	.670	.668	.30380

a. Predictors: (Constant), WLM

Source: SPSS Output Version 27.0

This study utilised the regression model summary data presented in Table 7, focusing on the faculty and staff of the University of Abuja as research subjects. It statistically models the primary variables, with workload management as the independent variable and service delivery efficiency as the dependent variable. Both variables exhibit a R value of 0.818, signifying a robust positive association. The R² score is 0.670, indicating that 67% of the variation in

the dependent variable is elucidated by the independent variable. The modified R² is 0.668, indicating that the model possesses sufficient statistical reliability. The Standard inaccuracy of the Estimate = 0.30380, indicating a minimal degree of prediction inaccuracy. The study ultimately indicates that good task management is essential for considerably enhancing the university's service delivery efficiency.

Table 8 **ANOVA^a**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	265.185	1	265.185	1662.785	.000 ^b
	Residual	57.573	361	.159		
	Total	322.758	362			

a. Dependent Variable: SDE

b. Predictors: (Constant), WLM

Source: SPSS Output Version 27.0

This study presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results shown in Table 8, which are used to verify the regression model developed to test the impact of workload management on service delivery efficiency. The model's core F-statistic is 1662.785, with a significance level of 0.000 that falls below the widely adopted academic threshold of 0.05. This confirms the model is statistically significant, and that

workload management has a significant impact on service delivery efficiency at the University of Abuja. Accordingly, we reject the null hypothesis that no significant association exists between the two variables. Reasonable workload regulation can improve the service delivery efficiency and quality of university faculty and staff.

Table 9 Coefficients^a

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.230	.068		3.369	.001
	WLM	.929	.023	.906	40.777	.000

a. Dependent Variable: SDE

Source: SPSS Output Version 27.0

Table 9 presents the regression coefficient result on the effect of workload management on efficiency of service delivery. The result showed that workload management had a positive regression coefficient value ($\beta = 0.929$), meaning that the better the workload management, the better the service delivery efficiency. The t-value of 40.777 and significance value of 0.000 further confirmed that the relationship was statistically significant at 5 % significance level. The standardised beta coefficient of 0.906 indicated that workload management had a very strong positive influence on the service delivery efficiency. The constant value of 0.230 showed that the efficiency of service delivery would be at a very low level even if there were no workload management practices. The finding indicated that the application of effective techniques in workload distribution and management could significantly improve operational responsiveness and quality of services in the University of Abuja.

Discussion of Findings

The findings related to hypothesis one indicated that flexible work arrangements have a significant positive impact on employee productivity at the University of Abuja. The

regression analysis demonstrated a strong positive correlation between the variables, with a probability value below 0.05, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that increased flexibility in work structure, scheduling, and task management positively influences staff productivity within the institution. These results are consistent with Clark's (2000) Work-Life Border Theory, which asserts that employees perform better when organizations offer supportive systems that help balance work duties with personal and social commitments. According to the theory, flexibility reduces role conflict and psychological stress, thereby enhancing motivation, focus, and performance. In the context of the University of Abuja, the findings imply that employees who are afforded some flexibility in managing their work responsibilities tend to complete tasks more efficiently and maintain higher productivity levels within the university. Empirical evidence supports the findings of Çivilidağ and Durmaz (2024), Anakpo et al. (2023), Maity and Lee (2025), Onyekwelu et al. (2022), Agbanu et al. (2023), Firdausi and Indiyati (2025), and Bernard (2025), all of whom reported that flexible work arrangements have a positive impact on employee productivity, motivation, commitment, and operational efficiency across

various organizational contexts. For example, Onyekwelu et al. (2022) observed that workplace flexibility enhanced productivity among Nigerian employees by reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction, while Firdausi and Indiyati (2025) demonstrated that flexible work systems boosted productivity through improved work-life balance. Likewise, Bernard (2025) found that remote work positively influenced employee productivity in Nigerian commercial banks. However, some findings from Maity and Lee (2025) partially contradicted this study, as they argued that productivity outcomes under flexible work arrangements varied by industry and were heavily dependent on technological infrastructure and organizational capacity. This suggests that although flexibility generally enhances productivity, the institutional context and operational systems can moderate the strength of this relationship.

The findings related to hypothesis two demonstrated that workload management had a significant positive impact on service delivery efficiency at the University of Abuja. The results showed that effective regulation and distribution of workload notably enhanced employees' responsiveness, efficiency, and the quality of service provided within the institution. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, as the significance value was below the acceptable threshold of 0.05. This finding implies that balanced workload structures enable employees to perform more effectively by minimizing excessive pressure, fatigue, and operational inefficiencies. Additionally, the results align with the principles of the Work-Life Border Theory, which suggests that employees achieve better effectiveness when organizational systems reduce role overload and promote healthier interactions between work demands and personal well-being. Practically, manageable workloads appear to improve employees' ability to deliver services efficiently within the university setting. The findings aligned with the empirical results reported by Lyu et al. (2025), Vanheusden et al. (2021), Kristinawati and Ghalib (2025), Jaeker and Tucker (2017), and Niu et al. (2019), all of whom demonstrated that effective workload management enhances operational efficiency, responsiveness, and service quality. Vanheusden et al. (2021) showed that workload balancing improved

worker efficiency and reduced fatigue in operational systems, while Kristinawati and Ghalib (2025) found that strategic workload management boosted employee performance and organizational sustainability. Likewise, Niu et al. (2019) noted that balanced workload allocation minimized service delays and improved operational efficiency. The results of Jaeker and Tucker (2017) further supported this study by indicating that workload saturation negatively impacted efficiency and service outcomes in healthcare settings. However, the findings of Liu et al. (2017) presented a slight contrast, as their focus was primarily on technological workload scheduling systems within cloud manufacturing environments rather than on human-centered institutional contexts. This suggests that while workload management generally improves efficiency, the operational conditions in educational institutions differ from technologically automated systems, where workload distribution follows algorithmic processes instead of human behavioural dynamics.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that work-life balance has a significant effect on the performance of staff in University of Abuja, FCT, Nigeria. The results specifically proved that flexible work arrangement positively affected employee productivity by allowing employees to manage their work duties more effectively, while workload management significantly improved the efficiency of service delivery by ensuring equitable distribution of work and relieving work pressure. The study therefore recommended that the provision of supportive work structures and manageable workloads are critical factors in improving staff effectiveness, operational efficiency and overall institutional performance within the University of Abuja.

Recommendations

1. The University of Abuja management should institutionalise flexible work arrangements such as adjustable work schedules, hybrid work systems and task autonomy where appropriate to improve employee productivity in

order to enhance staff commitment and efficiency.

2. University authorities should develop effective policies to manage workload through equitable distribution of work, recruiting more staff where needed and continuous monitoring of employee workload to improve the efficiency of service delivery and reduce stress and fatigue among employees.

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