SELF AWARENESS AND EMPLOYEE WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF INDIGENOUS OIL AND GAS FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between self-awareness and employee work life balance of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured administered questionnaire. The population for the study was 6410 employees of ten (10) indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. The sample size of 377 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between self-awareness and employee work life balance (flexible work schedule and telecommunicating). The study recommended that employees should increase methods for self-awareness to further increase employee work life balancing in the oil and gas industry and there is need for employees and managers to harmonize their inter-relationship and manage self-awareness for better employee work life balancing.

Key Words: *Work-life Balance, Self Awareness*

INTRODUCTION

In today's society, workplace pressures continue to mount globally. Work target demands, family pressure and the pressure to balance the two have taken a toll on most employees' health and well-being (Parus, 2010). The reality of modern life is that the quality of work Life (QWL) has continued to deteriorate as people continue to focus on work more than ever. It is the fact from researches that on an average, employees in the developed countries spend 14 to 15 hours a day on work against the accepted norms 8 to 9 hours and most distressing is that the trend is on the rise. Burn out; stress leading to health hazards is the natural off shoot (Srivastava & Kanpur, 2014).

Until the beginning of the twenty-first century, work life balance did not get much attention and was perceived as less challenging as compared to the current perception because of two reasons. First, most organizations limit itself to a male full time worker. Second, it was a trend that women were involved in more unpaid work such as nurturing, caring, and domestic work (Crompton, 1999). These sort of fixed gender roles were viewed moreover as a solution to balance work and life, that is work to be the responsibility of a man, whereas family caring be the responsibility of a woman. This notion changed drastically when the number of women workers and dual- earner couples increased in various employment sectors (Lambert, Hogan & Barton (2001). According to Shah (2014) work and family roles for the men and the women has become flexible which has naturally influenced the way they balanced work and family. The increase of women employees has changed the traditional work-life balance pattern mentioned above by Crompton (1999). Men participated more in the family responsibilities and shouldered higher domestic and child rearing responsibilities (Thomas & Gangster, 1995).

According to Baral and Bhargava (2010) work-life imbalance is often correlated with tensions, stress, job dissatisfaction and anxiety. On the contrary, a well-balanced integration of personal and professional life is seen as both a private and organizational purpose which catalyzes the employees' effectiveness (Hyman & Summers, 2007). The examination of work-related variables within the work-life balance theory approaches issues like work schedule flexibility, task variety, autonomy and complexity, the number of worked hours (Nordenmark, Vinberg, & Strandh). They further pointed out that working longer hours is linked to a greater work-life imbalance and that the power to act autonomously is positively correlated with work-life balance.

Work life balance is a very important phenomenon that is of great concern to various employees in both private and public sector. It goes beyond prioritizing the work role and one's personal life. It also affects the social, psychological, economical and mental wellbeing of the individual. All these is been reflected in the output of the individual, which affects his or her performance in the work place on the long run. Work life balance has implication on employee attitudes, behaviours, wellbeing as well as organizational effectiveness (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeanx and Brindley, 2005). The competition for market leadership in the banking sector, may lead to bank managers giving their employees excessive work load in order to meet up with their target. Employees try their best to be retained in the organization by putting in more time at work which may be at detriment of their personal life. All these may affect the upbringing of children, lead to broken and unhappy homes and poor social life. This situation necessitates that employees require a crucial competency in handling such imbalance which makes self-awareness crucial.

Self-awareness is a crucial competency associated with work place emotional intelligence. According to Yeung (2009) the first step to becoming emotionally intelligent is to become as self-aware as possible. Emotional intelligence is a recent construct and was made popular and brought to the domain of business by Goleman (1998), who argues that it could be more effective for the management of business affairs than our cognitive ideas. Ever

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since Goleman made his celebrated publications, many researchers have emerged in the field. For instance, Freedman and Everret (2004) have observed that emotional intelligence is emerging as a critical factor for sustaining high performance.

Self-awareness consists of emotional abilities that enable us to be more effective and form outstanding relationships in the work place. Self - awareness is the ability for one to recognize his or her emotions and their effects. Studies suggest that people who are aware of their emotions are more effective in their jobs. They recognize and understand their moods, emotions and needs and can perceive and anticipate how their actions affect others. People with great certainty about their feelings manage their lives well and are able to direct their positive feelings towards accomplishing tasks. Self -awareness competencies include emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence. Emotional self-awareness is the first component of self-awareness. This reflects the importance of recognizing one's own feelings and how they affect one's performance. Accurate self-Assessment involves knowing one's inner resources, abilities and limits. People with this competency are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, reflective, learning from experience, open to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning and self-development. Self-

confidence involves a strong sense of one's worth and capabilities. According to Goleman, (1998), people with this competence present themselves with self-assurance, have presence, can voice views that are unpopular and go out on a limb for what is right, are decisive, able to make sound decisions under pressures. People with self-confidence typically see themselves as efficacious, able to take on challenges and to master new jobs or skills. They believe themselves to be catalysts, movers and initiators, and feel that their abilities stack up favourably in comparison to others.

Furthermore, there have been a considerable number of studies on work life balance among developed countries on almost all aspects of work life balance. The same however, cannot be said of the developing economies. In Nigeria, the interest in work life balance is growing but most of the earlier studies were on the banking industry and educational sectors. Again most, studies seem to focus on the female workforce, individuals with children or single-parent families, rather than on all employees. Consequently, there is little research on the effect of self-awareness on work life balancing. From the above problems and knowledge gaps this study examined self-awareness and employee work life balance of indigenous oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt.
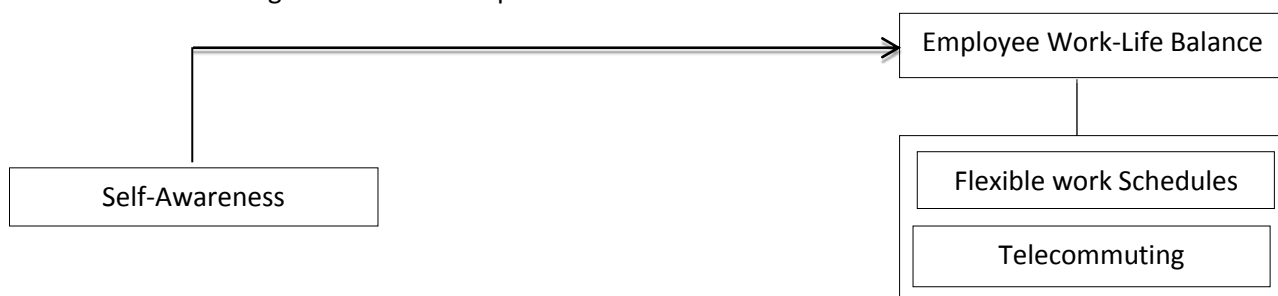

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of self-awareness and employee work life balance
Source: Research Desk, (2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Emotional Intelligence Ability-Based Model
This theory was formulated by Mayer and Salovey in 1997. Emotional Intelligence Ability-Based Model

is based on four different abilities which are 'perception, assimilation understanding and regulation of emotions. In other words, perceiving emotions accurately while appraising and expressing emotions is one of the ability according

to this theory. Accessing or generating feelings when they facilitate thought is ability. Understanding emotion and emotional knowledge is the next ability; in addition, regulating emotions to encourage emotional and intellectual growth is the other ability that Emotional Intelligence cover according to this model. The ability of perception consists of both perceiving emotions of the self and of the others. The ability of assimilation formed by generating, using and feeling emotions to lead into feelings or to use them in other cognitive processes, the ability of understanding formed by understanding emotional information, how emotions associate and shift across time, and the ability to escalate emotional meanings The last one, the ability of regulation consists of being open to feelings; in addition, monitoring and regulating one's and other's emotions to help understanding and personal growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

Emotional Competencies Model

Emotional Competencies Model has been developed as one of theoretical approaches for the term Emotional Intelligence. The competencies of this model focused on the workplace. Goleman (2005) firstly suggested that Emotional Intelligence includes five crucial elements, which are knowing one's emotions and handling emotions; in addition, encouraging oneself and distinguishing emotions in others, and handling relationships (Goleman, 2005). After these suggestions, he stated a theory of performance in organizations depend on a model of Emotional Intelligence. This model is formed to found the efficiency and personal consequences in the workplace and in organizational fields (Goleman, 1998). The model presents four essential dimensions. These dimensions are 'Self-Awareness', 'Social Awareness 'Self-Management', and 'Relationship Management'. These four dimensions subdivided into 20 competencies as well. Self-Awareness comprises 'Accurate self-assessment', 'Emotional self-awareness' and 'Self-confidence'. Social Awareness comprises 'Service orientation' 'Empathy' and 'Organizational awareness'. Self-Management comprises 'Self-control',

'Conscientiousness', 'Trustworthiness', 'Adaptability', 'Initiative' and 'Achievement drive'. Relationship Management comprises 'Developing others', 'Communication', 'Influence', 'Conflict management', 'Change catalyst', 'Leadership', 'Teamwork' and 'Building bonds' and 'collaboration'. These emotional competencies according to Golemans's model represent the Emotional Intelligence of a person and the dimensions of this model make the person more active in his or her work life (Goleman, 2001).

Self-Awareness

Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012) mentioned that Self-awareness knows one's internal state, preference, resources and intuition. It is not automatic to have the ability to recognize our personal moods and reactions when in the spot light, privately and still be able to remain conscious afterward whether in teams or individually (Goleman *et al*, 2002). Self-awareness also involves having a realistic assessment of one's abilities. People who have this strength are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, open to candid feedback from others, and willing to learn from past experiences. This courage comes from certainty, through self-awareness, about our capabilities, values and goals as cited by (Fatt, 2002). Self-aware people have the "ability to accurately perceive own emotions and stay aware of them as they happen. This includes keeping on top of how one tends to respond to specific situations and people" as quoted in Cheok and O'Higgins (2011:152).

Self-awareness is way beyond simply having adequate knowledge about ourselves but rather extends to being in position to interpret this knowledge for the purpose of learning more about ourselves (Dirette, 2010). Dirette (2010) posits that self-awareness is broken down into four levels of Arousal and attention, Sensory and motor, Cognitive and lastly Psychosocial. To them at the arousal and attention, attention to ideas developed or any arousal is either very slow or poor due to our inability to pay attention or respond with close concentration as a result of distractions

surrounding us. The sensory and motor stage is where we are able to explain our sense of feeling such as movement, fatigue, satisfaction and even more advanced skills of processing our perceptions due to our developed competence to pay attention, comprehend and memorize. The cognitive stage requires attention, comprehension and memory are key for people in this stage to function and abstract reasoning, conceptualization and problem solving are necessary to comprehend the more abstract nature of these abilities. At this level, the information provided at the lower levels is integrated to form a model that integrates knowledge with skills Lastly, the psychosocial stage of self-awareness involves constantly recognize the world as it is in relation to our abilities and is the stage where we are able to observe and rate our performances against other work colleagues. "Self-awareness is enhanced through a good therapeutic alliance, brain education and participation in familiar occupations, with process-focused feedback and compensatory strategy training" (Dirette, 2010: 311).

Concept of Employee Work-Life Balance

Employee work-life balance has become the subject of wide disciplines ranging from psychology to sociology, from management of human resources to organizational behavior. The reason for such interest is due to the fact that almost everyone has a problem ofemployee work-life balance. According to Clarke, Koch and Hill (2004), employee work-life balance is generally associated with equilibrium between the amount of time and effort somebody devotes to work and personal activities, in order to maintain an overall sense of harmony in life. To understand employee work-life balance, it is important to be aware of the different demands upon us and our personal resources- our time and our energy- that we can deploy to address them. Research has indicated that those workers who have some form of control over their working environment tend to suffer less stress-related ill-health, with clear implications for the concept of employee work-life balance

Flexible Work Schedule

Flexible schedules allow employees to vary their arrival and departure times from work, or choose the days that they work. Employees value flexible schedules as a way to balance work, and non-work responsibilities. Flexible schedules are helpful for workers who are raising families, attending graduate school, commuting long distances, traveling, or balancing multiple jobs. Flexible schedules can sometimes make it difficult to connect with co-workers - especially if those coworkers also work non-traditional hours. Unless everyone on the team is on the same page, this can lead to less collaboration, more time working off the clock, and greater stress, employer value flexible, scheduling as a method for recruiting and retaining employees and for increasing job satisfaction and productivity. A flexible schedule also helps build trust between employees and their managers, as employees are often expected to manage their own schedules (with their employers supervision) and take ownership of getting the job done even, while on an irregular schedule.

Telecommunicating

It is becoming more and more common for people to do at least some of their regular work from home instead of going into the office. This type of arrangement is often called telework' or 'telecommunicating' and can be advantageous for employees by allowing them to organize their work day around their personal and family needs; to decrease work- related expenses; and to work in a less stressful and disruptive environment. It may also help to accommodate employees who, because of particular disabilities, are unable to leave home, the fact that employees who telework can use this added flexibility to capitalize on their personal peak productivity periods can also favorable influence a company's bottom line. Despite these benefits and the attention that telecommunicating has attracted in the media, very few collective agreements contain telework provisions. The paucity of telework clauses is partly due to the fact that not all occupations are amenable to such an arrangement.

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Moreover, employers may be concerned by the initial implementation costs, potential legal liabilities, and difficulties in supervising and appraising the performance of teleworkers. Trade-Unions may disapprove of work-at-home clauses if they perceive them as leading to greater isolation of employees, reduced job security and promotion opportunities, and diminished health and safety protection (Naktiyok and Iscan, 2003).

Self-Awareness and Employee Work Life Balance

It has been argued that understanding one's emotions is the most essential of the emotional intelligence dimensions. Having high self-awareness allows people to know their strengths and weaknesses, values, and motives. People with high self -awareness can accurately measure their own moods, feelings and understand how their moods affect others; are open to feedback from others on how to continuously improve; and are able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures. They are able to show a sense of humor. According to Goleman (1998), a manager with good self-awareness would recognize factors such as whether he or she was liked, or was exerting the right amount of pressure on organizational members.

According to Yeung (2009), once we become aware of our emotions, strengths and weaknesses, we can begin to think about how to manage and apply them to help us achieve our goals. Goleman (1998) has argued that self-awareness serves as an inner barometer, gauging whether what we are doing (or about to do) is indeed, worthwhile. Feelings give the essential reading. If there is a discrepancy between action and value, the result will be uneasiness in the form of guilt or shame; deep doubts or nagging second thoughts, queasiness or remorse, and the like, such uneasiness acts as an emotional drag, stirring feelings that can hinder or sabotage our effort. Indeed, Yeung (2009) argued that if emotional intelligence were a journey, then self-awareness would be the skill of map reading. It tells you where you are at the moment, the current mood or emotion you may be experiencing. And it shows you where you want to get to a goal, or perhaps an emotion or mood that may help you to achieve your goal.

Yeung (2009) further argued that successful people are usually no cleverer than we are. What they are better at is self-motivation when they feel despondent. They feel worried and afraid but decide to do it anyway. When they lack confidence, they find ways to summon up courage, they get embarrassed and angry too, but they hide it and get on with the task at hand. The awareness of how our emotions affect what we are doing is the fundamental emotional competence. Emotional awareness starts with the realization of our feelings which is present in all of us and with recognition of how these emotions shape what we see, think and do, and how the awareness will affect those we are dealing with. A person excelling in this competence is aware of his emotion at any given movement – often recognizing how those emotions feel physically. He can articulate those feelings, as well as demonstrate social appropriateness in expressing them. People who are unable to know their feelings are at a tremendous disadvantage. In a sense they are emotionally illiterates, obviously to a realm of reality that is crucial for success in life as a whole, let alone work (Goleman, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured administered questionnaire. The population for the study was 6410 employees of ten (10) indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. The sample size of 377 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Test of Hypotheses

This section uses Spearman's rho correlation to test the relationship between the independent variable organizational policies and the dependent variable corporate performance. Correlation ranges from zero (0) to one (1) and also zero (0) to minus (-1).

Zero correlation means that there is no relationship, minus means a negative correlation while any correlation greater than zero to 1 is positive relation.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and flexible work schedule of indigenous Oil and Gas firms in Port Harcourt

Table 1: Correlations for self-awareness and flexible work schedules

			Self-Awareness	Flexible Work
Spearman's rho	Self-Awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.726[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	288	288
	Flexible Work	Correlation Coefficient	.726[**]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	288	288
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: Research survey, 2019

Table 1 showed the Spearman's correlation coefficient; rho = 0.726** and the probability Value *(PV)* = 0.000 < 0.05 (level of significance). This was to show that there is a significant positive relationship between self-awareness and flexible work schedule in Nigeria oil and gas industry. We therefore rejected the Null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and flexible work schedule in the Oil and Gas industry in Nigeria

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and telecommunicating of indigenous Oil and Gas firms in Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Correlations

			Self-Awareness	Telecommunicating
Spearman's rho	Self-Awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.805[**]
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	288	288
	Telecommunicating	Correlation Coefficient	.805[**]	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	288	288
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: Research survey, 2019

Table 2 showed the Spearman's correlation coefficient; rho = 0.805** and the probability Value *(PV)* = 0.000 < 0.05 (level of significance). This was to show that there is a strong positive relationship between between self-awareness and telecommunicating in the Oil and Gas industry in Nigeria. We therefore rejected the Null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationshipbetween self-awareness and telecommunicating in the Oil and Gas industry in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Question one which examined the relationship between self-awareness and flexible work schedule of selected oil and gas firms and question two

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which examine the relationship between self-awareness and telecommunicating found 72.6 percent and 80.5 percent correlation coefficient between the dimensions and measures of the variables, this revealed that there is positive and significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variables. In hypothesis one, the study test the relationship between self-awareness and flexible work schedule. The findings of the study reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is significant relationship between self-awareness and flexible workschedule of the oil and gas firms as the probability shows .000 which is less than the critical value of 0.05. This finding confirmed the a-priori expectation of the result and validates the resource base theory. The findings confirmed the findings of Carmeli and Josman (2016) on a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work outcomes,Côté and Miners (2016) that using cognitive intelligence tests alone to predict job performance involves risk, because employees with low cognitive intelligence can perform effectively if they have high.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that self-awareness significantly influences flexible work schedule and telecommunicating in Nigeria' indigenous oil and gas industry. The study equally recommended that employees should increase methods adopted for self-awareness to further increase employee work life balancing in the oil and gas industry and there is need for employees and managers to harmonize their inter-relationship and manage self-awareness for better employee work life balancing.

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