



Research Paper

Exploring the impacts and benefits of quality work-life programs in manufacturing companies in Nigeria

Eguonor J. Oleabhielle

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Nigeria
Email: eoleabhielle@biu.edu.ng

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the impacts and benefits of Quality Work-Life Programs (QWLFP) within manufacturing companies in Benin City, Nigeria, focusing specifically on employees' job attitudes, satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The working conditions prevalent in Benin's firms are often suboptimal, as employees contend with extended hours, health hazards, and insufficient support for personal life issues. Grounded in the Work-Life Balance Theory, the research employs a qualitative methodology, incorporating in-depth interviews (IDIs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) to capture participants' experiences thoroughly. The analysis is centered on two prominent organizations: the Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC) and the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC), both of which have implemented QWLFPs. A purposive sampling method was employed to conduct sixteen in-depth interviews, comprising thirteen employees and three Trade Union officials. Additionally, three key informant interviews were held with Human Resource Managers from these organizations, thus ensuring a comprehensive and diverse representation. The key findings reveal that QWLFPs have a positive impact on employees' health, safety, and professional development, with notable advantages including access to healthcare, wellness programs, and career training. However, the study also identified challenges such as limited benefits for contract workers, time constraints, and technological inadequacies. Participants stressed the significance of employee involvement in organizational decision-making and the necessity for flexible work arrangements, although specific sectors, like oil and gas, face notable constraints. Furthermore, the study underscores the disparity in benefits afforded to permanent versus contract employees, with the latter group frequently excluded from specific QWLFP components. From a managerial perspective, QWLFPs are regarded as essential for improving productivity and employee well-being, although implementation challenges, such as inadequate technological support for training initiatives, were acknowledged. Union representatives expressed concerns regarding the limited range of benefits available to contract staff and the challenges associated with negotiations with management concerning policy enhancements. The study accentuates the multifaceted nature of QWLFPs and their critical role in fostering a supportive work environment. The study advocates for a comprehensive integration of occupational health, employee recognition, and wellness initiatives, alongside the enhancement of technological infrastructure to ensure equity for contract employees and to strengthen the role of unions in policy advocacy and negotiation.

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1 | INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance has emerged as a critical component of human resource management, receiving substantial attention in recent years. Organizations strive to remain competitive by enabling employees to effectively reconcile their professional obligations with personal lives. This balance is particularly essential in sectors such as manufacturing, where elevated work demands frequently lead to physical and mental stress, contributing to burnout and diminished job satisfaction. Employees with specialized skills often possess greater autonomy in their roles, which can enhance their overall job fulfillment (Adeniyi, 2024). The establishment of high-quality work-life programs (WLWP) has surfaced as a viable solution to improve employee well-being while also advancing organizational performance. Work-life programs encompass a range of initiatives aimed at assisting employees in managing work responsibilities alongside personal commitments. Such programs may include flexible working hours, remote work opportunities, paid leave, childcare assistance, wellness initiatives, and mental health resources. The implementation of these programs is increasingly prevalent on a global scale; however, their execution in manufacturing sectors, particularly within developing economies such as Nigeria, presents notable challenges. Benin City, the capital of Edo State, serves as a central hub for manufacturing industries, including textiles and food processing, thereby making a significant contribution to Nigeria's economy. Despite this, the working conditions prevalent in these industries are often suboptimal, as employees contend with extended hours, health hazards, and insufficient support for personal life issues. The introduction of quality work-life programs in the manufacturing sector of Benin City has the potential to yield substantial benefits, including enhanced employee satisfaction, reduced turnover, increased productivity, and improved organizational performance (Greenhaus & Allen, 2021).

Employees who successfully attain a favorable work-life balance are typically characterized by elevated levels of engagement, commitment, and

motivation, which translate into improved work quality, decreased absenteeism, and a more positive organizational culture (Kossek & Ozeki, 2022). For manufacturers in Benin City, these advantages could effectively mitigate common challenges such as low morale and high turnover rates by fostering an environment that prioritizes both employee well-being and productivity. Despite the acknowledged advantages of work-life programs, their ramifications for manufacturing companies in Benin City remain insufficiently explored. This research seeks to examine how quality work-life programs affect employee satisfaction, productivity, retention, and organizational performance within manufacturing firms in Benin City. Furthermore, the study aims to identify obstacles associated with the implementation of these programs as well as barriers to the creation of effective work-life policies in the region.

The significance of this research resides in its provision of empirical evidence regarding the efficacy of work-life programs in a sector and region that has not been extensively studied. The insights derived from this research will prove valuable to policymakers, business leaders, and human resource managers in formulating strategies to enhance work-life balance and promote positive organizational outcomes. This study seeks to contribute to future research and policy development concerning work-life balance in Nigeria's manufacturing sector, as well as in other developing economies facing comparable challenges. By examining the relationship between work-life programs and organizational performance within manufacturing companies in Benin City, this research aims to enhance the broader discourse on sustainable human resource management practices. The findings of this study are anticipated to provide valuable recommendations for policymakers and business leaders in formulating work-life policies that advance employee welfare and foster long-term growth in manufacturing enterprises, both within Benin City and more broadly. The concept of work-life balance has emerged as a vital element in organizational management, particularly among manufacturing companies where the demands of work can be both physically and mentally exhausting. In Nigeria, and specifically in Benin City,

manufacturing firms encounter significant challenges relating to employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of work-life balance, the implementation of associated programs remains inconsistent, and their effectiveness within the Nigerian context has not been rigorously studied. Existing research indicates that work-life initiatives, such as flexible working hours and wellness programs, can enhance employee morale, retention rates, and job performance across various global contexts (Ojo & Olusanya, 2023). Nevertheless, the impact of these initiatives within the manufacturing sector in Benin City has not yet been elucidated.

The existing research gap concerning the advantages of work-life balance initiatives in this local context presents an opportunity for further investigation. Manufacturing firms in Benin City, typically characterized by rigid structures and extended hours, stand to gain substantially from customized work-life balance programs designed to enhance employee job satisfaction and productivity. Although these programs are generally perceived as effective tools for alleviating stress and mitigating burnout, their effects on organizational outcomes, including retention, performance, and competitiveness within Nigeria's manufacturing sector, have yet to be comprehensively explored (Emmanuel & Onu, 2024). This study intends to address this research gap by investigating the benefits and challenges of implementing quality work-life programs in manufacturing companies in Benin City, Nigeria. A thorough understanding of the effects of these programs on employee well-being and organizational performance will yield valuable insights for enhancing management practices and supporting sustainable growth in the sector. Furthermore, the research will contribute to the global discourse on work-life balance by presenting empirical data from a developing economy where cultural and infrastructural factors significantly influence workplace policies. The primary focus of this study is to assess how quality work-life balance programs affect employee performance, well-being, and retention within manufacturing companies in Benin City. Previous studies addressing quality work-life balance programs (WLPs) have primarily concentrated on their impacts across various sectors, placing a strong emphasis on employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational commitment. Evidence suggests that WLPs, which include flexible work arrangements, health benefits, and opportunities for professional development, positively influence employee motivation and decrease turnover rates, particularly in Western contexts (Baltes et al., 2002).

However, there is a notable scarcity of research examining the influence of these programs within the manufacturing sector of developing countries, such as Nigeria. The majority of available studies have predominantly focused on larger urban centers or sectors distinct from manufacturing (Fapohunda, 2014). This study seeks to bridge this research gap by exploring the specific benefits and challenges associated with implementing WLPs in manufacturing companies located in Benin City, a region characterized by unique socio-economic conditions (Akinwale, 2018). The research will assess how these programs affect employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational performance within this under-explored context, providing valuable insights for businesses operating in similar regions. The findings will facilitate the development of more effective human resource policies and strategies, thereby enhancing work-life balance and promoting sustainable growth within Nigeria's manufacturing sector.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

The importance of Work-Life Balance (WLB) and Work-Life Programs (WLPs) for organizational success has gained significant attention in recent years, especially in sectors such as manufacturing. The manufacturing industry, known for its demanding schedules and high-stress environments, can greatly benefit from the implementation of WLPs. These programs are crucial for improving employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity. This literature review examines existing research on WLPs within the context of manufacturing companies in Benin City, Nigeria, and assesses their role in enhancing working conditions, employee well-being, and overall organizational performance.

2.1 | The Concept of Work-Life Balance

WLB refers to the equilibrium individuals seek between their professional obligations and personal lives. Effectively managing time and energy across work, family, health, and leisure is essential for achieving this balance. Research shows that employees with a favorable WLB report higher job satisfaction, reduced stress, and increased productivity (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Organizations have increasingly recognized the significance of WLB, leading to the creation of various WLPs, which may include flexible working hours, remote work options, paid family leave, childcare assistance, and wellness initiatives (Kossek & Ozeki, 2022). Studies indicate that these programs boost morale, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). However, the effectiveness of these programs can vary based on industry characteristics and cultural factors.

2.2 | Work-Life Programs in the Manufacturing Sector

The manufacturing sector in Nigeria, particularly in urban centers like Benin City, faces challenges such as demanding work schedules, high labor intensity, and significant physical requirements. Despite these obstacles, WLPs can offer substantial benefits to organizations within this industry. One of the primary advantages is improved employee retention. Manufacturing employees often experience burnout due to long hours and physically demanding tasks. Organizations that provide flexible work arrangements and health-oriented programs report lower turnover rates. A study by Akinyele, Akinwale & Oladipo (2023) found that employees with access to health insurance and flexible hours were more likely to remain with their employers for a longer duration. Additionally, wellness programs, such as stress management workshops, help increase productivity by reducing absenteeism and workplace injuries (Hassan, 2020). As competition within the Nigerian manufacturing sector becomes more intense, firms investing in employee well-being are better positioned to improve operational efficiency and profitability.

The Benefits of Quality Work-Life Programs in Nigerian Manufacturing Companies

The implementation of effective work-life programs (WLPs) offers several benefits to both employees and employers in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. These benefits can be categorized into three main areas: enhanced employee well-being, improved organizational performance, and positive socio-economic outcomes.

1. **Enhanced Employee Well-being:** One of the primary benefits of WLPs is the improvement of employees' mental and physical health. Manufacturing workers in Benin City often face physical strain and hazardous working conditions. Programs such as health insurance, fitness activities, and counseling services can alleviate these burdens. Isah (2022) found that introducing health and wellness programs significantly reduced stress levels, resulting in better performance at work.

2. **Improved Organizational Performance:** WLPs also contribute to a more satisfied, committed, and productive workforce. Employees who feel supported in balancing their personal and professional responsibilities are more likely to excel in their roles. Research by Adegoke and Oyebanji (2021) indicated that manufacturing companies offering flexible working hours and on-site daycare services saw increased output and reduced absenteeism, which translated into greater organizational success.

3. **Positive Socio-Economic Outcomes:** The adoption of WLPs can yield broader societal benefits, particularly in Nigeria, where challenges such as unemployment, poverty, and gender inequality persist. WLPs can aid social progress by empowering women through parental leave and childcare services, enabling them to balance their professional and familial roles. Additionally, flexible work options can assist workers with disabilities or other personal challenges, promoting inclusivity and social equity.

Challenges in Implementing Work-Life Programs in Nigerian Manufacturing Companies

Despite the clear benefits, several challenges hinder the implementation of WLPs in Nigerian manufacturing companies, especially in Benin City. A major obstacle is the cost associated with these programs, which can be prohibitive for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Moreover, there is often a lack of awareness regarding the long-term advantages of WLPs, which impedes their adoption. Cultural factors also play a significant role; in Nigerian society, employees are frequently expected to prioritize work over personal life. As a result, employees may be reluctant to utilize flexible work options for fear of being perceived as less committed to their roles (Adeniyi, 2024).

2.3 | The Way Forward

To address these challenges, Nigerian manufacturing companies can implement several strategic initiatives. Government support, such as tax incentives or subsidies for companies that adopt work-life balance policies, could help alleviate the initial costs associated with these programs. Additionally, organizational leaders should work towards cultivating a cultural shift that emphasizes employee well-being and work-life balance as essential components of organizational success. This can be achieved through leadership development programs that highlight the value of employee welfare. Furthermore, companies should regularly assess the needs of their workforce and tailor WLPs accordingly through ongoing feedback and research. The integration of quality WLPs in Nigerian manufacturing companies, particularly in Benin City, holds significant potential to enhance employee satisfaction, wellness, and organizational performance. While challenges such as financial constraints and cultural resistance exist, the benefits of these programs, including increased productivity, improved employee retention, and enhanced organizational success, far outweigh these obstacles. For the manufacturing sector in Nigeria to fully realize the

potential of WLPs, a collaborative effort involving both employers and policymakers is necessary to foster a healthier and more productive workforce.

2.4 | Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Work-Life Balance (WLB) Theory, which underscores the significance of effectively balancing professional responsibilities with personal life. The theory asserts that well-structured work-life initiatives can enhance employee well-being, productivity, and organizational commitment. This research specifically explores the effects of these programs within the Nigerian manufacturing sector, focusing on Benin City, with the aim of assessing their impact on employees and organizations alike. WLB Theory highlights the intricate relationship between work and personal life, advocating for strategies that mitigate stress and promote life satisfaction. In Nigeria, the manufacturing sector faces challenges such as extended working hours, high job demands, and insufficient work-life balance policies. This study examines whether work-life programs, such as flexible work arrangements and wellness initiatives, can effectively alleviate stress and burnout in this context. Furthermore, this research contributes to the evolution of WLB Theory by providing empirical evidence from a developing country, where the issue of work-life balance has been relatively overlooked. The findings seek to offer valuable insights into how WLB strategies can be tailored for application in emerging economies, considering local cultural and economic conditions to enhance both employee well-being and organizational success.

3 | MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study employed a qualitative research method to explore the impact of Quality of Work Life Programs (QWLFP) in manufacturing companies in Benin City, Nigeria, using descriptive and exploratory approaches. Sixteen in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with employees, trade union officials, and key informant interviews (KIIs) with Human Resource Managers in the study organizations; the Nigerian Bottling Company Ltd. (NBC) and the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC). A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants directly involved in QWLFPs. Semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, and qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis to identify themes and patterns in participants' experiences and challenges associated with QWLFP implementation. Ethical guidelines, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly followed, and validity was ensured through expert evaluation of the interview guides.

4 | DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section presents insights on the paper from participants across several key dimensions. Occupational health and safety emerged as crucial factors, underscoring employees' emphasis on a secure workplace that enhances productivity and mitigates risks. The perspectives regarding health care and wellness highlight the importance of accessible medical benefits, which are directly linked to improved job satisfaction. Furthermore, the identification of training and skill development opportunities as essential components for fostering career growth is noteworthy. Flexible working hours and long-service awards were viewed as key elements in promoting work-life balance and enhancing employee loyalty. The interplay between employee involvement and job satisfaction reveals that participatory decision-making significantly boosts morale and organizational cohesion. Additionally, the correlation between health care, wellness, and job satisfaction emphasizes the strategic relevance of comprehensive well-being initiatives. This study also delves into how QWLP affects organizational commitment, particularly at NBC, while recognizing the challenges presented by inadequate technological infrastructure that can hinder program implementation. By synthesizing these varied perspectives, the research advances a distinct understanding of QWLP's transformative potential in improving both employee and organizational outcomes.

Participants' Perspectives on Occupational Health and Safety

One participant from an in-depth interview (IDI) affirmed that Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) has been a fundamental organizational practice within his institution. According to him:

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is a fundamental aspect that necessitates the participation of all employees, as it is essential for fostering a safe work environment. In the context of manufacturing companies in Benin City, Nigeria, a significant insight emerged regarding the perception of OHS as a mandatory and inclusive practice across organizations. A participant from NPDC underscored that OHS is not only integral to their organizational culture but is also regarded as a collective responsibility, with every employee expected to actively engage in health and safety initiatives. (IDI/Male/Permanent Staff/NPDC/July, 2024).

This perspective highlights a growing recognition of the necessity to involve all members of the organization in the maintenance of workplace safety standards. Within this framework, OHS is understood not merely as a managerial obligation but as an essential component of the daily activities of employees. Such an approach is critical for cultivating a safety-conscious organizational atmosphere. Furthermore, the active involvement of all workers in OHS initiatives may yield improved safety outcomes and contribute to a healthier work culture that is consistent with contemporary safety management practices.

Participants' Perspectives on Health Care and Wellness

The findings from a Key Informant Interview (KII) with a participant regarding the health and wellness program within their organization are summarized as follows:

The organization maintains a comprehensive health care and wellness program, which includes an on-site clinic staffed by a physician and nursing personnel, along with an ambulance and driver available on-site. A Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) manages the health programs, allowing employees to select any hospital of their choice for services under the HMO plan, applicable to both themselves and their dependents. Employees aged 40 years and older are entitled to an annual comprehensive medical examination. Furthermore, the organization organizes periodic health training sessions and presentations, featuring external experts who share valuable insights with the staff. The program also provides free testing services, such as HIV screenings, and supports initiatives like the World Blood Bank. (KII/Male/HR Manager/NBC/July, 2024). The findings derived from a Key Informant Interview (KII) participant concerning the healthcare and wellness program within a manufacturing organization illustrate a comprehensive approach to enhancing employee health. The organization provides an on-site clinic, which is staffed with physicians and nurses, as well as an ambulance for emergency transportation. Employees are afforded the flexibility to enroll with any hospital of their choosing under the Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) program, which extends coverage to their dependents.

Participants' Perspectives on Training and Skill Development

A participant from a Key Informant Interview (KII) remarked:

Our training and development programs are structured and rigorous. We engage our employees in a variety of training sessions, and our objective is not merely to fulfill a training requirement. We train our staff to enhance their performance, recognizing that the knowledge they acquire represents a significant personal asset. Upon leaving the organization, employees take this knowledge with them, which cannot be taken away. Consequently, this creates a mutually beneficial situation for both the company and the individual. (KII/Male/Regional Training Manager/NBC/July, 2024). This statement highlights the dual advantages of training and skill development initiatives in manufacturing companies, reflecting a strategic commitment to employee growth. The participant emphasizes that training is not a formality; rather, it constitutes a critical mechanism for improving employee performance. The finding corroborates the standpoint of Adeniyi & Omolawal, (2024), who aver that on-job training bolsters loyalty of employees in workplace in the contemporary epoch. The knowledge gained during these sessions is retained by employees, thereby becoming a valuable asset throughout their careers. This perspective aligns with recent research on the significance of skill development, indicating that continuous training enhances employee competencies while fostering organizational growth and retention (Aluko & Ibrahim, 2023). Furthermore, the notion of "mutually beneficial" outcomes underscores the value of these programs, whereby both employees and organizations benefit from skill acquisition, leading to a more competent workforce and lower turnover rates.

Participants' Perspectives on Flexible Working Hours

Conversely, a participant from Nigeria Petroleum Development Company (NPDC) expressed a differing viewpoint regarding flexible working hours. He stated:

I am uncertain that flexible working hours are applicable within the oil and gas sector, as some of us are field workers and are required to be physically present at the oil fields. Therefore, a flexible working hour program may not necessarily be relevant in this context. (IDI/Male/Branch Union Vice Chairman, NUPENG/NPDC/July, 2024). This participant presents a perspective that challenges the feasibility of flexible working hours in certain industries. He underscores the specific demands placed upon field workers, who must be onsite at oil fields, suggesting that the inherent rigidity of these roles does not accommodate flexible scheduling. This viewpoint highlights the industry-specific constraints that affect the implementation of flexible working hour programs, particularly in sectors such as oil and gas. While flexible work arrangements are often considered advantageous for enhancing work-life balance, the participant's commentary emphasizes the limitations of such programs in contexts that necessitate a physical presence, such as those in manufacturing and extractive industries (Brown & Jackson, 2022).

Participants' Perspectives on Long-Service Awards

A participant in a Key Informant Interview (KII) provided valuable insights regarding the recognition of employee tenure within their manufacturing facility that go thus:

The organization employs a structured recognition program that identifies key milestones in an employee's career, specifically at five, ten, fifteen, and twenty years of service. Employees receive acknowledgment every five years, which typically includes plaques, approximately ten cases of company products (beverages), and cash incentives that are contingent upon the employee's level within the organization. For instance, certain employees may receive N75,000, depending on their respective positions. (KII/Female/HR Manager/NBC/July, 2023). This systematic approach is designed to promote employee loyalty and incentivize long-term commitment. Research indicates that effectively implemented recognition programs have a significant positive impact on employee morale, motivation, and retention (Ali et al., 2023; Okafor & Ajala, 2022). Ultimately, long-service awards play a crucial role in fostering a positive organizational culture and enhancing employee satisfaction, which, in turn, contributes to the overall performance of the organization (Dike, 2023).

Employee Involvement and Job Satisfaction

A participant in a Key Informant Interview (KII) expressed a valuable perspective:

We believe that one effective way to motivate our employees is to actively involve them in their work. We encourage them to provide suggestions to management on advancing the business. This engagement is fundamental to our approach. (KII/Male/HR Manager/NPDC/July, 2023). Employee involvement is widely recognized as a significant driver of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, particularly in the manufacturing sector. The statement from the KII participant highlights a constructive strategy aimed at enhancing employee motivation through active engagement, a concept supported by recent research that demonstrates a positive correlation between employee involvement and job satisfaction (Jiang et al., 2023). By facilitating employee participation in decision-making processes, organizations can cultivate a sense of ownership and value, ultimately leading to increased motivation and job satisfaction (Smith & Jones, 2022). This aligns with the findings of Oviawe & Olorundare (2024), who argue that engaging employees in organizational processes enriches their work experience and contributes positively to productivity and performance in manufacturing companies in Nigeria. Thus, such initiatives are vital for not only enhancing employee morale but also for improving the overall effectiveness of work-life balance programs in this context.

Health Care, Wellness, and Job Satisfaction

An In-Depth Interview (IDI) participant shared a constructive experience:

Recently, I had an illness that required hospitalization, and I was pleased to find that the organization covered my medical expenses. Previously, I faced significant out-of-pocket costs, which added financial stress. This new approach has greatly improved my health at work and at home, extending that benefit to my family as well. Additionally, my entitlement to 25 days of paid leave, along with the flexibility to choose when to take it, enables me to relax and recharge. I truly appreciate the facilities available, and I am confident that the program positively impacts my work-life balance. I believe many of my colleagues feel similarly. (IDI/Male/Contract Staff/NBC/July, 2023). This participant's experience illustrates the constructive impact of comprehensive work-life programs, particularly in healthcare, wellness, and job satisfaction, for employees in manufacturing companies. Access to employer-sponsored healthcare alleviates financial burdens and enhances overall well-being. The participant noted significant improvements in both their professional and personal lives due to the organization's health coverage. Furthermore, the provision of paid leave, combined with flexible scheduling, fosters relaxation and is instrumental in enhancing overall job satisfaction. These advantages emphasize the importance of well-structured work-life programs, which recent studies have linked to improved employee health, satisfaction, and productivity (Akinmoladun et al., 2023; Khuong & Tien, 2022). Consequently, thoughtfully designed policies can have a transformative effect on both personal and professional aspects of employees' lives, yielding benefits for the individuals themselves as well as the organization as a whole.

The Influence of Quality of Work-Life Programs (QWLFP) on Organizational Commitment at NBC

The findings from an in-depth interview (IDI) with a participant reveal a significant correlation between Quality of Work-Life Programs (QWLFP) and organizational commitment at NBC. The participant indicated thus:

My level of commitment is very high. I arise early and arrive at work before 8 a.m. every day. Additionally, when the job necessitates, I remain after regular business hours to ensure that all tasks are completed, whether

by filling in for an absent colleague or resolving outstanding assignments. Frequently, I also attend work on weekends when required. Therefore, I would assess my commitment as very high. (IDI/Male/Contract Staff/NBC/July, 2023). This participant's conduct suggests that the QWLFP offered by NBC may enhance employee dedication, cultivating a sense of responsibility and accountability. Prior research substantiates this assumption, indicating that supportive work environments characterized by positive QWLFP are integral to motivating employees to exceed their basic job requirements (Jha & Saha, 2023). Furthermore, other studies highlight that such programs contribute to a stronger organizational attachment, resulting in increased productivity and employee retention (Kumari & Jain, 2022). The commitment exhibited by this participant underscores the potential advantages of well-structured work-life initiatives in strengthening organizational loyalty and performance.

Challenges Related to Inadequate Technological Infrastructure

A key informant interview (KII) participant disclosed the following:

In certain aspects of QWLFP, inadequate technological infrastructure remains a concern. Although our organization possesses several systems and some automated processes, numerous tasks are still conducted manually, which could be more efficient if further automation were implemented. For instance, our training programs are still carried out manually, requiring extensive human engagement. There is certainly potential for improvement in this area. (KII/Male/Regional Training Manager/NBC/July, 2023). Inadequate technological infrastructure represents a critical challenge in the implementation of Quality Work-Life and Family Programs (QWLFP) within manufacturing companies in Benin City, Nigeria. According to the KII participant, despite the existence of various infrastructures and certain automated processes, many tasks continue to be performed manually, which could be streamlined through enhanced automation (KII/Male/Regional Training Manager/NBC/July 2023). This issue is particularly pronounced in training programs, where manual execution demands significant human resources. The insights provided by the participant highlight a broader concern within the manufacturing sector, where technological advancements, such as automation, are often underutilized, thereby limiting efficiency and the overall effectiveness of work-life programs (Adeyemi & Agboola, 2022). There is an urgent need for investment in automation and technological infrastructure to enhance operational efficiency and improve employee satisfaction within these programs.

5 | THEORETICAL DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This paper conducts a comprehensive analysis of how various dimensions of Work-Life Balance (WLB) are influenced by the implementation of Quality Work-Life Programs (QWLFP) within manufacturing companies. The research is framed within the broader context of WLB theory, which underscores the necessity of balancing professional responsibilities with personal life. WLB theory has evolved to incorporate the diverse impacts of workplace policies, cultural norms, and organizational practices on employees' abilities to effectively manage their work and personal well-being. The findings from this study provide significant insights into how QWLFP initiatives, including occupational health and safety, healthcare and wellness programs, professional development, and flexible working arrangements, affect employees' overall work-life integration. The data indicates both the positive outcomes and challenges associated with these programs, demonstrating that while some employees experience improved well-being and job satisfaction, others encounter obstacles that inhibit their ability to fully benefit from these initiatives. These findings are consistent with WLB theory's assertion that achieving a balanced work environment requires a robust organizational commitment to policies that address both employees' needs and organizational objectives. The examination of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) reveals that employee involvement in safety measures cultivates a culture of well-being, which is fundamental to WLB theory. OHS, viewed as a shared responsibility, transcends mere regulatory compliance, emphasizing the importance of collective initiatives aimed at creating a secure work environment. Participants highlight that OHS is an integral aspect of their organizational culture, supporting the notion that workplace health initiatives contribute to reducing stress and enhancing life satisfaction. By aligning work practices with health and safety standards, organizations foster a sense of security among employees, which in turn positively influences their work-life balance by mitigating stressors that may extend into their personal lives.

Healthcare and wellness programs are imperative for effective employee health management and align with WLB theory by improving overall quality of life both in the workplace and at home. Participants express enthusiasm regarding the availability of on-site clinics, health maintenance organization (HMO) coverage, and medical examinations, emphasizing the critical role of employer-sponsored healthcare in alleviating financial and physical stress. WLB theory posits that when organizations actively support employee health and well-being, they facilitate a more harmonious balance

between work and personal responsibilities. Accessing healthcare services without financial strain enhances employees' peace of mind and productivity, rendering such programs essential for promoting favorable work-life integration. Furthermore, the importance of training and professional development, as articulated by participants, represents a crucial factor in enhancing WLB. The correlation between skill enhancement and job satisfaction illustrates a mutually beneficial relationship between employees and employers, which is a central principle of WLB theory.

Training programs facilitate personal growth and career advancement, thereby enhancing employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. These initiatives also contribute to job security and professional fulfillment, which are vital for employees' effective work-life integration. Participants acknowledge training as a valuable asset for both current job performance and future career opportunities, in alignment with WLB theory's emphasis on the holistic advantages of work-life practices that nurture both personal and professional development. Finally, flexibility in work hours constitutes fundamental elements of WLB, enabling employees to more effectively balance work commitments with personal life. However, the study identifies a significant limitation regarding flexible work arrangements in certain industries, such as oil and gas. Participants noted that flexible working hours are not practical for field workers due to the physical presence required at job sites, which presents a considerable challenge to the implementation of WLB strategies. This limitation underscores an important aspect of WLB theory: the contextual nature of work-life balance. In sectors where physical presence is mandatory, WLB strategies must adapt to these constraints by providing alternative support mechanisms, such as more generous paid leave or additional compensatory benefits.

Consequently, the feasibility of flexible work arrangements is contingent upon the specific requirements of each industry and workforce. The interrelationship between long-service awards, employee involvement, and job satisfaction underscores the critical role that recognition and employee engagement play in achieving a work-life balance. Reflections from participants regarding long-service awards indicate that such recognition programs can significantly enhance job satisfaction, cultivate loyalty, and contribute to work-life satisfaction by acknowledging employees for their contributions and tenure. Furthermore, the emphasis on employee involvement in decision-making, as articulated by the Human Resources manager at NPDC, aligns with the tenets of work-life balance (WLB) theory, which posits that an inclusive workplace fosters improved integration when employees perceive their voices as valued. The study also identifies challenges associated with technological infrastructure, particularly the lingering reliance on manual processes in training and other facets of Quality Work-Life Programs (QWLFP). This finding highlights a pertinent issue in the contemporary implementation of work-life programs: the dual role of technology in either promoting or impeding work-life balance. Insufficient technological infrastructure restricts the potential for automation, which can streamline processes and enhance efficiency. From the standpoint of WLB theory, such limitations obstruct the establishment of a flexible and supportive work environment. As technological advancements become increasingly pivotal to workplace operations, inadequate infrastructure emerges as a significant barrier to realizing the full efficacy of work-life programs. Thus, the enhancement of technological capacity is essential for improving WLB outcomes.

This paper situates the findings within the framework of WLB theory, illustrating that QWLFP in manufacturing enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria, exert a substantial influence on employees' work-life balance. The findings reveal that, while numerous programs yield positive outcomes, industry-specific constraints and technological challenges exert a considerable impact on the success of these initiatives. This study emphasizes the necessity for organizations to customize their work-life programs to align with the specific needs of their employees and to address infrastructural limitations to optimize the impact of these programs on both employee well-being and organizational performance. Ultimately, this research contributes to the evolving discourse on the significance of work-life balance as a crucial factor in enhancing both personal and professional quality of life within the workplace.

6 | CONCLUSION

The findings of this study emphasize the diverse impacts and benefits of Quality Work-Life Programs (QWLFP) in manufacturing companies located in Benin City, Nigeria. The adoption of comprehensive initiatives, such as occupational health and safety measures, healthcare and wellness programs, and skill development opportunities, has significantly enhanced employee well-being and fostered organizational commitment. Employees have reported increased job satisfaction, improved health outcomes, and heightened motivation, particularly through structured recognition systems and targeted training programs. Nonetheless, challenges persist, particularly regarding the limited benefits available to contract workers, inadequate technological infrastructure, and specific role constraints that restrict the

implementation of flexible working hours. These findings suggest that although QWLFP can produce positive outcomes, their effectiveness is influenced by industry-specific factors and the readiness of the organization.

6.1 | Recommendation

Building on the study's insights, it is recommended that manufacturing companies in Benin City customize their QWLFP to address the distinct needs of various employee groups while also considering the constraints of their operational environments. To enhance employee engagement and satisfaction, it is vital to expand benefits to include contract workers and improve technological infrastructure to automate manual processes, especially in training and administrative tasks. Furthermore, companies should explore sector-specific adjustments to flexible working hours, in the same token ensuring that roles requiring physical presence are balanced with remote work options where feasible. By investing in technology and offering inclusive, flexible benefits, organizations will not only cultivate greater loyalty among employees but also enhance productivity, thereby creating a more supportive and sustainable work environment for all.

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