

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND EMOTIONAL AVAILABILITY AS CORRELATES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF MALE SECONDARY SCHOOLS TEACHERS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the correlation among work–life balance, emotional availability, and psychological well-being among male secondary school teachers in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. These were with a view to improve the psychological wellbeing of male teachers in secondary schools. The study adopted a correlational research design that targeted a population of male secondary school teachers. A sample of 105 male participants was selected using purposive random sampling technique .A valid questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Work-life Balance, Emotional Availability and Well-being of Male Teachers” (QWBEAWMT) was used to elicit data for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyse the data. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between work-life balance ($r = .52, p < .01$) emotional availability ($r = .58, p < .01$) and psychological well-being among male. The result also showed that work-life balance and emotional availability jointly influence the psychological well-being of male teachers, explaining 46% of the variance. The study recommends improved compensation, to enhance welfare, reduce burnout, and promote a healthier educational environment for male teachers.

Keywords: Work–life balance, Psychological well-being, Male teachers, Secondary schools

Introduction

The significance of psychological health and emotional control in the workplace has received more emphasis in recent years, especially in occupations like teaching that require a lot of emotional work. Since teachers must constantly control their own emotions while simultaneously attending to the emotional demand of students, parents, and coworkers, teaching is not only intellectually challenging but emotionally difficult as well (Nwoko et al., 2023). These challenges worsen when personal obligations are disrupted by work-related stressors, creating an imbalance between work and life roles.

The ability to successfully manage the conflicting demands of professional and personal commitments is known as work-life balance, and it is one of the most important challenges observed to be facing teachers today, especially male teachers who are expected to play other crucial roles in life, at home and other social gathering. Work-life balance is considered essential in sustaining long-term mental and emotional well-being. Unbalanced work-life has been linked to higher rates of burnout, stress, decreased job satisfaction, and decreased productivity (Epelle et al., 2025; Kinman and Wray, 2018). The inability to separate or manage work-related stress can have negative impact on a male teacher's family life, personal identity, and mental health, because male teachers are often expected by the society to provide for their families financially and emotionally (Ihua-Jonathan and Dike, 2024;

Ugwoke et al., 2018).

In Nigeria, systemic issues such as overpopulated classrooms, lack of resources for teachers, low pay, and administrative workloads seem to further compound these stressors. In Nigerian schools, teachers are frequently asked to carry out their responsibilities without sufficient institutional support (Fadare et al., 2024; Okeke and Dlamini, 2013). Due to these circumstances, teachers find it more difficult to separate work-related stress, which leads to emotional breakdown and spilling into their personal lives. The idea of emotional availability becomes important at this point.

Emotional availability is described as people's capability to be emotionally engaged, responsive, and present in social interactions (Biringen et al., 2014; Kush et al., 2022). Emotional availability has a bearing on teachers' interactions with students as well as their interpersonal relationships and general well-being. Teachers who are emotionally available were found to report more meaningful connections, greater resilience, and improved coping strategies in high-stress situations (Epelle et al., 2025). Martínez-Monteaquedo (2019) also found that teachers who have unresolved work-life conflict and emotional detachment may experience burnout, anxiety, depression, and decreased job performance. However, only few research has taken into account the intersecting role of work-life balance and emotional availability, particularly among male teachers.

Literature highlighted factors that affect male's emotional availability and wellbeing. Cultural norms in most part of Nigeria often discouraged male from freely expressing their feelings or seeking psychological stress relief, which might limit their emotional availability and lower their general well-being (Ihua-Jonathan and Dike, 2024). Also, the expectations placed on male teachers to balance their professional duties with their role as primary family providers further complicate their ability to maintain work-life balance. These gendered pressures can contribute to increased emotional exhaustion, decreased emotional availability, and lower job satisfaction (Ogunyemi, 2020).

In light of the foregoing, this study aims to investigate the relationship among work-life balance, emotional availability, and psychological well-being of male teachers, in light of the growing mental health issues all over the world. The study intends to contribute to policies that support teacher health and educational quality, influence gender-sensitive interventions, and offer a more nuanced understanding of the emotional difficulties faced by male teachers by examining these interconnected dimensions.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, teaching has been marked by high levels of psychological strain, emotional exhaustion, and occupational stress, conditions that are further aggravated by poor working environments, inadequate support systems, and increasing societal and administrative demands (Nwoko et al., 2023; Fadare et al., 2024); male secondary school teachers are particularly vulnerable as they strive to balance professional responsibilities with traditional expectations of leadership and provision within their homes and communities, yet little is known about how they manage work and personal life, sustain emotional resilience under pressure, and how these factors collectively influence their psychological well-being. Although existing research in Nigeria has examined teachers' job satisfaction, burnout, and work stress (Martínez-Monteaquedo, 2019), most studies treat these variables in isolation, rarely exploring their interconnections.

Furthermore, as much of the literature on work-life balance in Nigerian education has centered on female teachers due to assumptions that women experience higher role conflict (Ojo et al., 2021), male teachers' experiences are often overlooked, despite facing distinct pressures in patriarchal settings that associate masculinity with emotional restraint and unrelenting work ethic (Ihua-Jonathan and Dike, 2024), often compelling them to overwork, suppress emotions, or avoid seeking psychological help,

which exacerbates chronic stress and deteriorating mental health. Despite these realities, there remains limited empirical evidence addressing how male teachers in Osun State hence this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the relationship among work-life balance, emotional availability, and wellbeing among male secondary school teachers. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the correlation between work-life balance and psychological well-being of male teachers in the study area.
2. investigate the correlation between male teachers' emotional availability and their psychological well-being in the study area and
3. assess the joint influence of work-life and emotional availability on psychological well-being of male teachers in the study area.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and psychological well-being of male teachers in the study area.
2. There is no significant relationship between male teachers' emotional availability and their psychological well-being in the study area.
3. There is no joint influence of work-life balance and emotional availability on psychological well-being of male teachers in the study area.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design, the population of this study comprised all male secondary school teachers in Ile-Ife, Osun State. The sample size for this study is 105 male teachers from selected secondary school in Ile-Ife. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure balanced representation from urban, semi-urban, and rural school locations within the town. All male teachers in the selected schools were purposively selected for the study.

The instrument for the study is a structured, questionnaire titled Questionnaire on Work-life Balance, Emotional Availability and Psychological well-being of Male Teachers (QWBEAWMT). The questionnaire is divided into five sections: Section A: Demographic Information which captured characteristics or the respondents such as age, gender, marital status, number of children, year of teaching experience. Section B contains 15-items Work-Life Balance Scale adapted from Hayman (2005). Section C comprised 10 items Emotional Availability Scale, adapted from Teacher Emotions scale (TES) by Borsa et al. (2012). These items were carefully selected due to their relevance to the purpose of this study. The scales used a 4-point Likert scale rated from 1 -4, Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Section D consisted of 11 items Teacher Psychological well-being Scale (TPWBS) adapted from Rebolo & Constantino (2020). The items were rated using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Very dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Satisfied, and Very satisfied.

The questionnaire was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability test which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the correlation among the variables at a 0.05 significance level.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between work-life balance and psychological well-being of male teachers in Ile-Ife.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of Work-life Balance and Psychological well-being

		TOTC	TOTB
TOTC	Pearson Correlation	1	0.52**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	105	105
TOTB	Pearson Correlation	0.52**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	105	105

** . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

** Note: TOTB = Total of Work-life Balance

TOTC = Total of Psychological well-being

Table 1 revealed that there was a significant correlation between work-life balance and psychological well-being of male teachers ($r = .52, p < .01$). This implies that as teachers experience better balance between professional and personal responsibilities, their overall psychological well-being improves.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between male teachers’ emotional availability and their psychological well-being in Ile-Ife.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of Emotional Availability and Psychological well-being

		TOTC	TOTD
TOTC	Pearson Correlation	1	0.58**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	105	105
TOTD	Pearson Correlation	0.58**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	105	105

** . Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

** Note: TOTB = Total of Emotional Availability

TOTC = Total of Psychological well-being

Table 2 revealed a strong positive correlation between emotional availability and psychological well-being ($r = .58, p < .01$). This suggests that teachers who are emotionally engaged and able to express themselves positively in their professional roles experience enhanced psychological well-being.

Hypothesis Three: There is no joint influence of work-life balance, emotional availability on psychological well-being of male teachers in Ile-Ife.

Table 3: Model Summary for Regression Analysis

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
1	0.68	0.46	.45	3.82

Table 3b: ANOVA for Regression Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1276.54	2	638.27	43.47	.000
Residual	1505.46	102	14.76		
Total	2782.00	104			

Table 3b: Coefficients of Regression

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	23.45	2.11	—	11.12	.000
Work-life Balance	0.34	0.08	.34	4.01	.000
Emotional Availability	0.41	0.09	.41	4.82	.000

Dependent Variable: Psychological well-being.

***H*₀ is rejected**

Table 3 revealed that work-life balance and emotional availability jointly influence the psychological well-being of male teachers, explaining 46% of the variance. Both variables made significant independent contributions ($\beta = .34, p < .001$ for work-life balance; $\beta = .41, p < .001$ for emotional availability). This finding suggests that while each factor individually influences psychological well-being, their combined effect is even more substantial.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed significant relationship among work-life balance, emotional availability, and psychological well-being of male secondary school teachers in Ile-Ife, Osun State. Research hypothesis one revealed a significant relationship between work-life balance and psychological well-being of male teachers. This finding is consistent with recent evidence that maintaining work–life balance promotes satisfaction and lowers stress levels among teachers (Ojo et al., 2021; Whowha & Olusa, 2023). The findings further confirm Nwoko et al. (2023) and Fadare et al. (2024) that the emotionally demanding nature of teaching often leads to role strain and work–family conflict.

The findings of hypothesis two showed a strong positive correlation between emotional availability and psychological well-being, this finding mirrors the findings of Oberle et al. (2020) and Braun et al. (2018), who reported that reduction in emotional availability affects classroom relationships. This echoes the observation of Kim et al. (2022), who argued that teachers who effectively regulate and communicate their emotions achieve better mental health outcomes and manage student conduct more successfully and Jennings and Greenberg (2009) submitted that, “emotionally available teachers are better equipped to foster supportive environments that benefit both themselves and their students” (p. 493).

The result of hypothesis three revealed a joint influence of work–life balance and emotional availability on psychological well-being. This depicts that when teachers successfully manage their professional and personal roles, they experience enhanced emotional presence and overall psychological satisfaction. This resonates with Ojo et al. (2021), who reported that emotional intelligence significantly improves work–life balance and reduces job stress. Likewise, Ademola et al. (2021) also

reported that improved work–life correlates positively with job performance and satisfaction.

Conclusion

The study concluded that male teacher’s psychological wellbeing relates with their work–life balance and emotional availability

Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Government and stakeholders in education should prioritize male teacher welfare, facilitate institutional transformation and cultural reorientation, improve compensation, provide better facilities, and reduce their workloads to enhancing psychological well-being of male teachers'
2. Stakeholders such as minister, commissioners, permanent secretaries in education, tutor general and school counsellors should organise mentorship programs, counselling services to support male teachers' resilience and emotional availability.
3. Government and Non -Governmental Organization should advocate for prevention of rigid gender stereotypes that prevent men from expressing emotions or seeking help.

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