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Permeability of work-life balance on Lecturers turnover intentions in Ghana a multicentre study

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Abstract. The permeability of work-life balance (WLB) is causing employee turnover, affecting personal and professional lives. The study aims to investigate the impact of WLB on lecturers' turnover intentions in Ghana. The study was underpinned by WLB theory and job embeddedness theory. An interpretive paradigm using an exploratory design with semi-structured interviews was adopted to seek the views of 16 participants on the permeability of WLB and lecturers' turnover intentions in Ghana. The participants in the study were lecturers from public universities in Ghana. It was revealed that the factors contributing to WLB among lecturers were a heavy workload and long working hours, stress caused by work, inadequate institutional support, the utilisation of technology and connectivity, a lack of boundaries, and expectations and demands from institutions, on the issue of how WLB influences lecturers' turnover intentions. It was reported that it impacts individual well-being and the inability to pursue personal interests outside of work. However, the study also revealed strategies and interventions to mitigate WLB and promote job satisfaction among lecturers based on training and professional development, implementing flexible work arrangements, establishing realistic job demands and clear workload expectations, work-life policies and guidelines, and collaboration and teamwork.

Keywords. Lecturers, Universities, Work-Life Balance, Turnover, Ghana, Intentions\

Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) has recently received much attention in organisational behaviour and human resource management (Ahn & Chaoyu, 2019; Sepahvand & Khodashahri, 2021; Rashid, 2021). Employees' well-being and contentment at work depend on finding an acceptable balance between their personal and professional lives. However, properly regulating the boundaries between work and personal life is difficult for many professions, including the academic field (Amponsah-Tawiah, Dartey-Baah, & Asiedu, 2017; Liu, Zhu, Wu, & Mao, 2019). In recent times, lecturers have had a significant impact on the educational environment and the advancement of Ghana's economy in the context of higher education (Kakar, Muhammad, & Haider, 2022; Kusi, Codjoe, & Bampo, 2018). However, they frequently face

heavy workloads, such as teaching responsibilities, research commitments, office work, and community service commitments. The permeability between work and personal life can cause work-life conflicts, which is a cause for concern (Kusi et al., 2018; Odoom, Aborampah, Adu, & Sulemana, 2020).

The degree to which elements relating to the workplace seep into personal life and vice versa is referred to as the permeability of work-life. It illustrates lecturers' difficulties in juggling work demands with personal obligations, including caring for their families, engaging in hobbies, and taking care of themselves (Kusi et al., 2018; Kwabena, Asare, & Ayensu, 2019). When the lines between job and personal life are blurred, lecturers may feel more stressed, exhausted, and less satisfied with both aspects of their lives (Kakar, Mansor, & Saufi, 2019). Conversely, turnover intentions refer to lecturers' thoughts and plans to leave their present position or company. The high turnover rates among teachers may negatively impact the stability and quality of Ghana's higher education institutions (Ahn & Chaoyu, 2019; Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2019). Developing successful measures to improve lecturers' retention and job satisfaction requires an understanding of the factors influencing lecturers' intentions to leave, notably the importance of work-life permeability (WLP) (Boateng, Boateng, Ofori, & Abdulai, 2021; Zahra, Khan, Imran, Aman, & Ali, 2018).

The permeability of WLB has raised serious issues in Ghana's higher education industry since it could affect lecturers' inclinations to leave their positions. Lecturers are subject to various job pressures, such as teaching, research, administrative responsibilities, and community involvement, some of which may impact their personal lives. The permeability of work and home life might cause conflicts, which harms lecturers' health and job happiness (Boamah, Hamadi, Havaei, Smith, & Webb, 2022; Kusi et al., 2018). However, the association between WLB and turnover intentions among teachers in Ghana has only received a limited amount of research. It is still unknown how lecturers' intentions to quit their current employment or organisation are impacted by the permeability of WLB (Ahmad, Aidara, Nawi, Permarupan, Zainol, & Kakar, 2023; Boamah et al., 2022).

It will take more investigation to pinpoint the root causes of WLB and their specific effects on turnover intentions. The problem that this study aims to address is a requirement to appreciate the relationship between WLB and turnover intentions among lecturers in Ghana's higher education sector. Institutions of higher learning, decision-makers in government, and human resource managers must all comprehend the connection between WLB and intentions to leave their positions. It can assist in guiding the creation of plans and initiatives to boost organisational support, promote WLB, and ultimately lessen lecturers' intent to leave their positions. By addressing this issue, the study hopes to improve educational institutions' stability and quality and the general well-being and job satisfaction of professors in Ghana's higher education system.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of the study was based on WLB theory and the job embeddedness theory.

Work-Life Balance Theory

This theory looks at how work and personal life interact and balance one another. It implies that individual work to create a condition of balance and happiness in both areas, and that when there is an imbalance or conflict, it can have a detrimental impact on things like stress levels, job satisfaction, and inclinations to quit one's job. This theory strongly emphasises the significance of comprehending how the work-life interface influences employees' attitudes and

behaviours. For instance, a single parent worker might find it challenging to multitask work and personal responsibilities. If their employer permits remote work or flexible working hours, it may be easier for them to manage their personal lives while continuing to be productive at work. However, if the employer does not provide these accommodations, the worker might feel stressed out and burned out, ultimately affecting their job satisfaction and likelihood of staying with the business.

Theory of Job Embeddedness

Job Embedded Theoretical work focuses on the variables that affect a worker's sense of attachment to and relationship with their employer. It suggests that three factors—(i.e. links, fit, and sacrifice) help people become ingrained in their employment. Links are people's connections and relationships inside their personal and professional networks (Hopson, Petri & Kufera, 2018). Fit is the relationship between a person's professional aspirations and their innermost beliefs and identities. The investments and losses a person would incur if they left their work or organisation are referred to as sacrifices. According to the notion of job embedding, lower turnover intentions are correlated with higher degrees of embedding.

The two theories can be integrated when examining the permeability of work-life and lecturers' intents to leave the profession in Ghana.

Work-Life Balance and Intentions to Turnover

It is anticipated that the permeability of work-life boundaries, such as excessive work demands invading personal time or personal obligations influencing work, will directly affect lecturers' intents to leave their positions (Lee, Yang & Li, 2017; Zhang, Li & Gamble, 2022). For instance, lecturers may suffer higher levels of stress, decreased job satisfaction, and a higher propensity to consider quitting their current position when there is a lack of WLB or increasing conflict between work and personal life.

Work-Life Interface and Job Embeddedness

The degree of job embedding among lecturers may also be influenced by the permeability of work-life balance. Lecturers' level of job embeddedness may decline if they feel their personal and professional lives don't mesh well together, have bad relationships with their co-workers' lecturers or management (links), or feel they have given up a lot for their jobs. Higher turnover intentions may result from lower job embedding. For instance, a lecturer with young children might feel their work-life balance is inadequate if they are required to attend evening events or work long hours, which would lower their level of embeddedness in their position. They might then look for alternative employment opportunities as a result, which would increase their intention to leave. Additionally, lecturers may experience lower job embeddedness and higher job disengagement if they feel they have sacrificed a lot for their job, such as giving up time with friends and family or pursuing interests outside of work.

Job Embeddedness as a Mediator

The work-life interaction and turnover intentions can be moderated by job embeddedness. It is anticipated that the degree of job embedding among lecturers will serve as a partial mediating factor between the influence of work-life permeability on turnover intentions (Heba, El-Gazar, Shymaa, & Mohamed, 2022). Higher degrees of job embeddedness among academics may mitigate the detrimental impacts of the work-life interface on turnover intentions, increasing the likelihood that they will stay in their current position despite difficulties with their personal lives. The relationship between the work-life interface, job embeddedness, and turnover intentions among lecturers in Ghana can be understood using the theoretical framework provided. It emphasises the significance of considering organisational

issues and the WLB when analysing turnover intentions and provides insights into potential interventions and methods to support lecturer retention and wellbeing.

Methods

Study design and population

An interpretive paradigm using exploratory design with semi-structured interviews was adopted to elucidate the views of sixteen (16) lecturers on how the permeability of work-life and influences lecturers' turnover intentions in Ghana. The participants for the study were lecturers from College of Education in University of Cape Coast (UCC) and Faculty of Education lecturers at University of Education, Winneba (UEW) in Ghana. This study was conducted among lecturers in these universities in 2023. These universities were chosen because they are leading universities running all courses from the regular, sandwich, distance, and evening school. These universities are also supervising over 25 Colleges of Education in Ghana. Sixteen (16) lecturers were selected from these universities for face-to-face interviews.

Study tool and data collection

Data were gathered using an interview guide created after a thorough literature search to identify any gaps in the field of study. The interview guide was improved through a pilot study. Participants in the pilot study were not included in the main study's data collection. Prompts and probes were added to the interview guide's questions to elicit more information from the participants. All of the participants who were recruited to participate in the study were accepted upon being approached face-to-face. There were no dropouts from the study. The participants in these semi-structured in-depth interviews represented both sexes equally. Each interview lasted between 50 and 60 minutes, which allowed for building rapport and an open exchange of experiences. The interviews took place in 2023 in February and May. After getting their permission, the interviews were audio recorded with a digital audio recorder.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data was manually coded and examined by the authors. It was essential to improve intercoder reliability because various coders were involved. As a result, intercoder reliability, or repeatability between coders, concerned with whether multiple coders would code the same data in the same way, increased trustworthiness (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The coding procedure and results were examined by three impartial moderators who are skilled in qualitative research. No significant diversions were noticed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data saturation was reached at the 16th interview.

Trustworthiness of the study

The authors upheld the trustworthiness of the study proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1989). These were based on credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. The credibility was ensured when the interviewers had the necessary training, skills, and expertise to conduct the interviews. Again, a regular debriefing session was done, and the interview guide was pretested before data collection. Interviews were also performed in convenient locations suggested and approved by the interviewer and participants. The researcher(s) used various techniques to guarantee the participants' candour when providing information (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). This was ensured by requesting honesty from the participants and rewording questions to elicit the same or comparable answers. Again, probes and iterative questioning were employed, and early acquaintance with the participants was developed throughout the project's initial phase. Dependability was assured by creating a thorough draft of the study

protocol, keeping meticulous records of all data collection procedures, and ensuring the coding was accurate and double-checked by all authors. Confirmability was provided through co-coding and discussion of themes. Transferability was achieved through the authors' detailed description of the study's methodology. The research design, setting, and use of the purposive sampling technique to choose participants who met the inclusion criteria have all been described in detail (Shenton, 2004).

Ethical considerations

All routine social research protocols were faithfully followed. These included—but were not restricted to—voluntary involvement, informed permission, anonymity, confidentiality, and the freedom to leave the study at any time without suffering repercussions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The interviews took place in private locations such as the lecturer's office and home. The researchers obtain ethical clearance from all the universities before that data collection process began.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of participants

The socio-demographic characteristics of the 16 participants are presented in Table 1. The participants were selected equally male (50%) and female (50%). About 31.25% of them had aged above 50 years and were within the professor and senior lecturer ranks. The majority (81.25%) were married. All the participants have children and were supervising students. About (87.5%) of the participants asserted that they were teaching class sizes of above 200 students.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of participants

Variables	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	8	50.0
Female	8	50.0
Age		
50 and above	5	31.25
40-49	6	37.5
30-39	5	31.25
Rank		
Senior lecturer	7	43.75
Lecturer	5	31.25
Associate professor	2	12.5
Junior lecturer	1	6.25
Professor	1	6.25
Year of experience		
5-10	8	50.00
Less 5	6	37.5
Above 10	2	12.5
Marital status		
Married	13	81.25
Single	1	6.25
Separated/ Divorced/Widowed	2	12.5
Number of children		

5	3	18.75
4	5	31.25
3	6	37.5
2	1	6.25
1	1	6.25
Number of students supervising		
Above 10	12	75.00
5-9	3	18.75
Below 5	1	6.25
Highest class-size teaching		
Above 200	14	87.5
Below 200	2	12.5

Source: Field data (2023).

Factors contributing to WLB among lecturers in Ghana

The elements that contribute to work-life permeability among lecturers in Ghana can vary depending on the circumstances of lecturers as well as the organisational contexts in which they work. Nevertheless, the following are some examples of variables that are prevalent among lecturers in Ghana and contribute to work-life permeability:

Heavy workload and long working hours

The participants shared their experiences on how WLB affect their duties as lecturers.

.....“I experience excessive workload because I am teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students, marking and supervising students’ research work. When it happens, I become stressed, it sometimes creates tension between me and my family because I hardly had time to attend social activities”. (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Male, 43 years)

“Due to the large class size, I am teaching, I am always burdened and stressed. The most annoying part is when dealing with students who refused to take instructions. Some refuse to take part in quizzes or submit assignment when expected to. Upon all this workload experienced in school, most distance and sandwich students also call to worry you on phone to seek guidance in private matters of concern to them”. (UEW, Associate Professor, Male, 55 years)

“Well, my job schedule has become more involving... (Joggle shoulders) I guess I could have time to spend with my family and involve in private activities but handling this large class becomes stressful. The moment you arrive on campus there is always something unique to do. Some include teaching, marking, research work supervision couple with bad condition of service. All these causes a lot of challenge with my work-life balances. (UEW, Lecturer, Female, 38 years)

These participants were of the view that the heavy workload that lecturers typically have to deal with includes a significant amount of teaching, research, and administrative tasks. As a result, they have little time and energy left over for their personal interests and relationship (UEW, Lecturer, Female, 37 years).

The issue of excessive workload among lecturers are normally because they must juggle a variety of duties, such as supervising research projects, grading assignments, and teaching both undergraduate and graduate students. Even though these tasks are crucial to the academic process, they can be stressful, especially if there is little time for rest or relaxation and deadlines are close. The stress of this workload can frequently spill over into other aspects of

life, causing tension and conflict in interpersonal relationship. (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Male, 40 Years)

On this theme, a participant asserted that *“to satisfy the needs of their jobs, lecturers frequently labour beyond the standard working hours. This can cut into their personal time and interfere with their ability to participate in recreational activities”*. (UCC, Professor, Male, 58 Years)

UEW, Assistant Lecturer, Male, 34 years added,

.....”The duties of lecturers which include preparing lessons, grading assignments, performing research, attending meetings, and completing administrative responsibilities, can leave lecturers feeling overwhelmed and absorbed by their work. This affects how lecturers balance job and family lifestyle”.

“Lecturers frequently must deal with heavy workloads, which might include teaching responsibilities, research commitments, administrative responsibilities, and other professional obligations. Because of the demanding nature of their profession, they may have to put in longer hours, which cuts into their personal time and makes it more difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance”. (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Male, 40 Years)

Stress caused by work.

These participants share their story:

Lecturers frequently face stress brought on by their jobs because of a variety of causes, including the need to fulfil deadlines, deal with student problems, balance academic pressures, and keep research output high. Because this stress might seep into their home lives, it can be difficult for them to separate from their professional life. (UEW, Snr Lecturer, Female, 47 Years)

The nature of lecturing and working conditions makes me more stressful. I become more stressed when you need to publish, teach, and also involve in administrative duties. Aside that too being an opinion leader in my community there are other responsibilities that I need to embark and other religious activities too. Combining these duties with family pressure make it difficult to work as a lecturer. (UCC, Associate Professor, Female, 51 years)

Inadequate Institutional Support

UCC, Associate Professor, Female, 51 years added,

....” Inadequate institutional support, such as restricted resources, insufficient staffing, or lack of flexibility in work arrangements, can contribute to the difficulties in separating one's professional life and home life. This can make it more challenging to achieve a healthy work-life balance”.

UCC, Lecturer, female, 38 years asserted that,

“Inadequate Support and Resources create pressure between work and life on lecturers which can result to insufficient personnel, restricted access to administrative support, and insufficient policies regarding work-life balance. As a result, it can be difficult for lecturers to effectively manage both their professional and personal duties”.

Utilisation of technology and connectivity

Some of the participants express their view on how technology contributes to WLB among lecturers.

These participants asserted that,

“The increased use of technology, such as emails, mobile devices, and online platforms, might make it difficult for lecturers to disengage from their work and focus on the material they are presenting. The distinctions between work time and personal time might

become blurry when continuous accessibility and demands for rapid replies are present”.
(UCC, Snr Lecturer, Female, 45 years)

The growing reliance on technology for the purposes of education, research, and communication can contribute to the porousness of the work-life boundary. It's possible that lecturer feel they need to be continually available and attentive to their students and co-workers, which can make it difficult for them to detach from work while they're on their own time. (UEW, Lecturer, Male, 41 years)

Lack of boundaries

One key aspect that contributes to work-life permeability is the blurring of boundaries between one's personal life and one's professional life. It may be difficult for lecturers to compartmentalise their work-related activities and duties from their personal lives. Consequently, they may experience higher levels of stress and have less time available for their personal relationships and activities. (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Male, 47 years)

The cultural norms and expectations that exist within Ghanaian culture can also influence the degree to which teachers are able to successfully balance their personal and professional lives. Traditional gender roles, cultural expectations regarding dedication to work, and the emphasis put on academic achievements can all contribute to a lecturer having the sensation that they are forced to prioritise their job above their personal lives. (UEW, Snr Lecturer, Female, 48 Years)

Individual characteristics, such as personal drive and job objectives, can be a contributor to the degree to which one's work life and personal life are able to coexist. Lecturers who are deeply devoted to their jobs or who have lofty professional aspirations may willingly invest more time and effort, so blurring the lines between their personal lives and their professional responsibilities. (UEW, Snr Lecturer, Male, 44 Years)

Expectations and demands from institutions.

This participant shares her story on how expectations and demands from their institution contribute to this permeability.

The expectations and demands that are placed on lecturers by their respective institutions and management can be a factor in the porousness of the work-life boundary. These expectations may include participation on administrative committees, reaching research and publishing goals, and taking part in professional development events. To meet these expectations, additional time and effort are frequently required, which disrupts personal life. (UCC, Associate Professor, Male, 46 years)

Influence of WLP on lecturers' turnover intentions in Ghana

WLP can be a crucial factor in determining whether academics in Ghana intend to leave their jobs. It is possible for lecturers to have high levels of WLP, which means that the boundaries between their personal lives and professional lives are either unclear or non-existent. This can result in increased job unhappiness and stress, which, in turn, can influence the lecturers' intents to quit their current employment. The following are some of the ways in which the WLB of lecturers can influence their intentions towards turnover:

Impact on Individual Well-Being

One participant commented that,

When the borders between work and personal life are porous, it can be difficult for lecturers to participate in activities that promote self-care and to keep their general well-being intact. This can have adverse effects on both their physical and emotional health, further contributing to their desire to quit their current professions and look for a better work-life balance elsewhere. (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Male, 40 Years)

Inability to Pursue Personal Interests Outside of Work

On participants view about how WLP influence lecturers' turnover intentions. This participant asserted:

Lecturers who experience high levels of work-life permeability may find it difficult to pursue personal interests, hobbies, and objectives outside of work. This can lead to a lack of personal fulfilment. Additionally, it may lead to a drop in productivity and job satisfaction. People who are unable to keep their personal and professional lives separate may become burnt out and exhausted. This could have detrimental effects on both the lecturer and the students. Burnt-out lecturers might be less invested in their lessons, which would lower the calibre of education they provide to their students. (UCC, Associate Professor, Female, 51 years)

.... "It is possible that a feeling of stagnation and a lack of personal fulfilment could result from an individual's incapacity to engage in meaningful activities outside of their job duties due to the influence of work-life balance on turnover intentions. This, in turn, can contribute to their purpose to seek new chances that offer a better balance between the demands of their home life and the demands of their professional life". (UEW, Snr Lecturer, Female, 48 Years)

Work-life permeability frequently leads to increasing work demands and longer working hours, which leaves lecturers with little time for personal interests and rest. This can end in burnout and dissatisfaction with their jobs. Because of this, lecturers may have feelings of being overwhelmed and unable to maintain a healthy work-life balance, which can contribute to burnout and job discontent. After a period, the build-up of stress and dissatisfaction at work might lead to the desire to look for new chances in a different line of work. (UCC, Professor, Male, 58 Years)

Work-related factors affecting WLP among lecturers in Ghana

The connection between work-related issues and the degree to which they can maintain a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives can be intricate and multi-faceted. There are several elements that can affect the degree to which work-related factors contribute to the permeability of the work-life boundary.

Demands of the Job

"When lecturers are burdened with an excessive amount of job obligations and responsibilities, it can be difficult for them to strike a healthy balance between their personal and professional life. The greater the amount of work that needs to be done, the greater the likelihood that work will seep into their personal time, which will lead to an elevated level of work-life permeability". (UEW, Associate Professor, Male, 55 years)

It may affect certain demands of the job, such as strict deadlines, long working hours, and continual availability, might be a contributor to the porous boundary between work and life. When there are too many expectations placed on a lecturer's employment, it might be difficult for them to detach themselves from their work and make time for their personal lives and relationships. The greater the number of pressures associated with a profession, the greater the probability that work and life may overlap. (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Female, 45 years)

This participant concluded:

"Work-life permeability can be affected by factors such as flexibility in work arrangements, such as the availability of flexible working hours or the choice to perform work from a remote location. There may be less of a blurring between work and personal life if lecturers are allowed the flexibility to rearrange their work hours to make room for other commitments in their lives. On the other hand, having little flexibility might lead to having strict

work structures, which can make it more difficult to strike a healthy balance between work and personal life". (UEW, Snr Lecturer, Male, 44 Years)

Assistance from organisations

"The degree to which an organisation aids are one of the most important factors to consider when dealing with the balance between work and personal life. Work-related factors can have a detrimental impact on work-life balance; however, the consequences of these factors can be mitigated by supportive organisational policies and practises, such as policies that are family-friendly, wellness programmes, and resources for work-life balance. When lecturers feel that their institutions provide sufficient support, they are more likely to be able to successfully negotiate the demands of their employment and keep clear boundaries between their personal and professional lives". (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Male, 47 years)

Personal factors affecting WLP among lecturers in Ghana

To strike a healthy balance between their personal lives and their professional responsibilities can be considerably impacted by the connection that exists between the two. Individuals' experiences and views of the degree to which their work and personal lives intertwine are significantly influenced by elements that are unique to them.

Personal Values

"A lecturer's personal values, such as the significance they place on family, personal well-being, and leisure activities, can have an impact on the degree to which he or she prioritises work-life balance and makes efforts to achieve it. Lecturers who place a higher priority on their own personal values are more likely to prioritise setting boundaries and making conscious attempts to restrict the amount of time that they spend at work intruding into their personal lives, which ultimately results in a reduction in the amount of work-life permeability". (UEW, Snr Lecturer, Female, 47 Years)

Strategies for coping

"The coping strategies that professors use to manage the stress and demands associated to their profession might influence the lecturers' capacity to maintain a healthy work-life balance. It is possible for lecturers to negotiate the rigours of their employment while maintaining a healthy work-life balance by employing effective coping methods such as time management, setting boundaries, and seeking social support. Lecturers who have effective coping mechanisms are in a better position to reduce the amount of their work that seeps into their personal lives". (UEW, Lecturer, Male, 41 years)

Relationships with Family and Friends

"Another strategy is that the quality and character of personal relationships, including those with family, friends, and significant others, can have an impact on how well one is able to balance their personal and professional lives. The emotional support, understanding, and encouragement that lecturers need to prioritise their personal life can be provided by strong support networks and healthy interpersonal interactions. On the other hand, work and personal life may become more intertwined when relationships are strained or when there is a lack of support". (UEW, Lecturer, Female, 38 years)

..... "Also, it is possible for individual characteristics, cultural norms, and contextual elements that are unique to the Ghanaian environment to influence the dynamic interaction that exists between personal factors and the work-life permeability of an individual's life. It is essential to keep in mind that personal elements combine with other aspects, such as those connected to work and organisational support, to form the degree to which lecturers can successfully balance their professional and personal lives. (UCC, Lecturer, Female, 35 Years)

Strategies and interventions to mitigate WLP and promote job satisfaction among lecturers in Ghana

There are several techniques and interventions that may be put into place to improve job satisfaction among lecturers in Ghana and reduce the amount of overlap between work and personal life. From the participants assertions most of them concluded on implementing flexible work arrangements, training and professional development, culture of supportive organisation, employee assistance programmes and

work-life policies and guidelines.

Training and professional development

This participant expressed his opinion on the strategies and interventions to mitigate work-life balance and promote job satisfaction among lecturers.

“The provision of training and professional development programmes with an emphasis on time management, stress management, and finding a healthy balance between work and personal life. Give the lecturers the skills and methods they need to effectively manage their time, prioritise their responsibilities, and keep a good balance between their personal and professional lives”. (UEW, Junior Lecturer, Male, 34 years)

Culture of supportive organisation

“When we cultivate a culture of support within our organisation that places value on a healthy work-life balance. Encourage open communication and establish forums in which lecturers can discuss their problems and make recommendations for the integration of work and personal life. Encourage an environment in which co-workers look out for one another and treat each other with respect”. (UEW, Lecturer, Female, 37 years)

Implementing flexible work arrangements

“It is important to implement flexible work arrangements such as flexible scheduling, the opportunity to work remotely, or shorter workweeks. This gives lecturers the ability to have more control over their work schedules and to better match the duties of their personal lives with those of their professional lives”. (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Male, 43 years)

Establishing realistic job demands and clear workload expectations.

“It is important to establish both realistic job requirements and clear workload expectations. It is important to provide lecturers with clear rules and resources to help them efficiently manage their workload. This can help minimise stress caused by work and create a better balance between work and personal life”. (UCC, Lecturer, Female, 38 years)

Employee assistance programmes

“Management of institutions should establish employee assistance programmes that offer academics the resources and help they need to overcome personal difficulties and keep their well-being in general in good shape. Counselling services, wellness efforts, and referral systems to outside resources are all examples of possible components of these programmes”. (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Male, 43 years)

Work-Life policies and guidelines

“Create and disseminate work-life policies and guidelines that address work-life balance head-on and provide assistance to lecturers in juggling their personal and professional lives. Make certain that these policies are easily available, that they have clear definitions, and that they are properly applied”. (UEW, Associate Professor, Male, 55 years)

Collaboration and teamwork

It is important to encourage collaboration and teamwork among professors. It is important to cultivate a culture of teamwork in which lecturers may rely on one another for assistance to lessen the individual workloads. (UEW, Junior Lecturer, Male, 34 years)

Support for technology and infrastructure

“Management of institutions should ensure that lecturers have access to the appropriate technological resources and infrastructure in order to make it easier for them to engage in online teaching and remote work. Make sure that the systems and tools are easy to use, dependable, and available so that instructors may efficiently manage their work duties regardless of where they are physically located”. (UCC, Associate Professor, Female, 51 years)

Recognition and rewards

“It is important to recognise and appreciate the contributions and accomplishments of the lecturers. Acknowledge the efforts that they are making to preserve a healthy work-life balance and present them with rewards that will drive them to continue functioning at their best”. (UEW, Snr Lecturer, Male, 44 Years)

Conduct regular evaluations and solicit comments.

“It is important to conduct regular evaluations and to ask professors for comments regarding the work-life balance and job satisfaction they experience. Make use of this feedback to identify areas for improvement and execute adjustments that are necessary to provide improved assistance for lecturers in attaining work-life integration”. (UCC, Snr Lecturer, Female, 45 years).

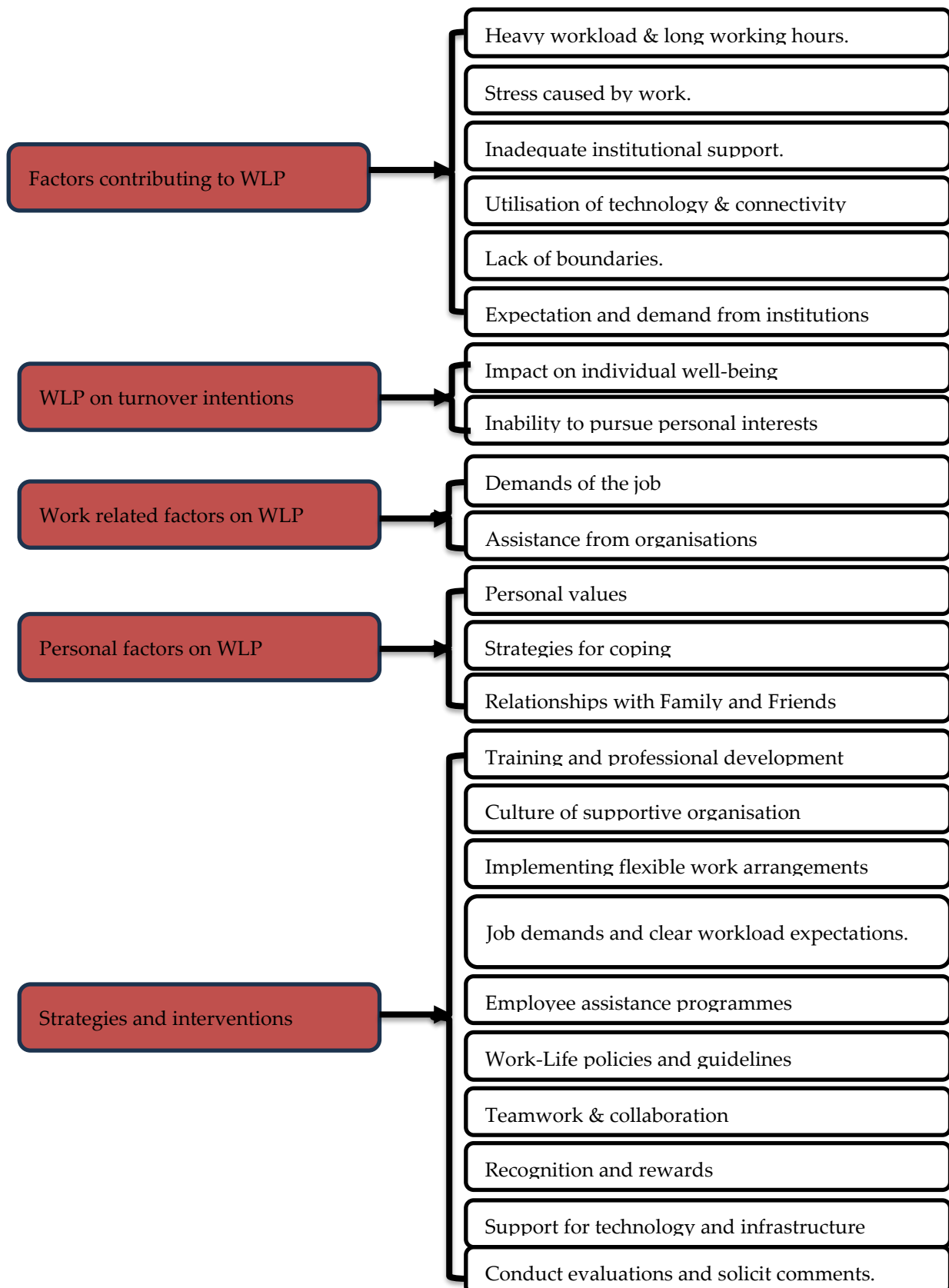


Figure 1: Summary of themes and sub-themes from the data

Discussions

The qualitative study was to investigating the impact of WLB on lecturers' turnover intentions in Ghana. It was revealed that most lecturers' workload and long working hours made them think of quitting their job. The authors concluded that lecturers' experiences at different levels of WLP are due to the supervision, making, teaching, and administrative activities they perform in their duties. Whereas some lecturers have been successful in managing their various obligations and maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life, others may experience considerable difficulties in doing so, which could result in a higher level of WLP. As Amponsah-Tawiah et al. (2017) argued, heavy workloads and time constraints may make lecturers more permeable to WLB. A higher level of work-life permeability may result from lecturers struggling to draw boundaries between their professional and personal lives due to severe workloads and lengthy workdays. WLP among lecturers may be impacted by the availability of flexible work schedules. By more efficiently balancing their professional and personal lives, lecturers may be able to lessen the degree of WLP (Boateng et al., 2021).

Other factors that were contributing to the WLP among lecturers that were highlighted in the study were inadequate institutional support, expected demand from the institution, and stress caused by work. The authors are of the view that institutions can support the retention and wellbeing of lecturers in the higher education sector by fostering a positive work environment and putting into place procedures and policies that support work-life balance. Aryee et al. (2019) asserted that a supportive organisational culture that prioritises work-life balance and supports employee wellbeing can make a significant difference in establishing a better balance. Xiaoming (2014) also concluded that organisations that encourage work-life balance through resources, policies, and initiatives have a beneficial impact on their employees' sense of balance. In the same vein, Liu, Zhu, Wu, and Mao (2019) asserted that having supportive relationships with co-workers, managers, and family members can be very helpful in finding WLB. The aid and understanding that supportive networks can offer can help lecturers balance their career and personal obligations (Odoom et al., 2020).

The impact of WLP on turnover intentions influenced lecturers' well-being and their ability to pursue personal interests. The effect of WLP on lecturers' intentions to leave their jobs can be influenced when interest is lost in doing the job or doing one job for a long time. Therefore, superiors' ability to minimise turnover intentions helps foster job satisfaction and retention in higher education. Prasetio et al. (2018) concluded that loss of interest in jobs increases the turnover intention of workers.

The participants reported that work-related factors on WLP come from the demands of the job and a lack of assistance from organisations. The authors therefore assert that to reduce WLP on lecturers, it is important to promote awareness of personal values and how they relate to work-life balance, as well as foster a supportive and inclusive work environment, which can all help to improve the well-being of lecturers in Ghana's higher education sector. Boateng et al. (2021) explained that employers should institute a healthcare policy to reduce the work-life continuum. Less WLP and better general well-being may be experienced by lecturers who prioritise self-care, have healthy lifestyles, and effectively manage stress.

The participants identified several strategies and interventions used to improve WLB that also reduce turnover intentions among lecturers. It was revealed that training and professional development helps build the capacity of employees to get acquainted with the day-to-day activities in their institution, which helps reduce turnover. Providing lecturers with training and education on work-life balance can improve their awareness of and ability to manage the permeability between work and personal life. Time management, stress

management, and successful work-life integration methods can be the topics of workshops and seminars to help lecturers have rudimentary knowledge on how to keep themselves (Odoom et al., 2020).

Other participants were of the view that teamwork, collaboration, and instituting work-life policies and guidelines in the organisation help make work flexible and well organised. Boateng et al. (2021) discovered that lecturers' ability to manage their work and personal lives is improved by flexible work arrangements such as flexible scheduling, telecommuting, and reduced work hours. However, these agreements give instructors more time control and can support them in juggling their work and personal commitments.

Addressing WLP among lecturers has the potential to lower turnover intentions and provide a number of favourable results. Institutions can improve the job satisfaction, retention, productivity, and general wellbeing of lecturers by promoting a culture that emphasises work-life integration and creating a supportive work environment. Odoom et al. (2020) also highlighted that the presence of a supportive organisational culture might impact the permeability of the work-life continuum. Lower levels of WLP can be attributed to organisations that prioritise work-life balance and offer resources and help academics manage their job and personal obligations.

Finally, participants posit that institutions can create a recognition and rewards system for lecturers to increase their job satisfaction by providing flexible work arrangements, managing workloads effectively, encouraging communication and collaboration, offering wellness programmes and support services, and creating a cultural shift with leadership support. Parental leave, childcare assistance, and family-friendly programmes are a few examples of these policies that may be tailored to the needs of lecturers to help reduce turnover rates (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2017). A strong intervention to enable lecturers to manage work and personal life demands more efficiently is needed to reduce the detrimental effects on WLP (Kwabena et al., 2019). Kwabena et al. (2019) asserted that organisations can foster open communication, acknowledge attempts to achieve WLB, and offer resources for employee support to help reduce turnover intentions.

Practical and policy implications

- Institutions should give work-life initiatives top priority if they want to help academics overcome their difficulties. This can involve supporting flexible work schedules, offering tools for time management, and fostering a positive workplace culture that values balancing work and personal life.
- Institutions should concentrate on giving lecturers sufficient organisational support. This can be accomplished by ensuring acceptable workloads, providing chances for professional growth, and establishing an encouraging and inclusive workplace atmosphere.
- Fostering solid collegial ties among lecturers might lessen the permeability of the boundaries between work and life and lessen turnover intentions. Within the institution, encouraging cooperation, teamwork, and peer support can foster a sense of community and support.
- To help lecturers navigate the difficulties of WLP, materials and training in coping mechanisms should be made available. For their mental and emotional well-being, this can include counselling services, time management training, and stress management strategies.

- It may be advantageous to establish mentorship programmes in which seasoned instructors offer advice and assistance to inexperienced or struggling lecturers. Mentorship can aid in overcoming obstacles related to work-life balance, improving job satisfaction, and lowering intentions to quit.

Theoretical implications

- The role conflicts that occur between the realms of work and the WLB theory emphasises personal life. Due to the permeability of the work-life balance among Ghanaian lecturers, there may be role conflicts in which obligations from the workplace conflict with those from the home. Achieving good work-life balance can increase a lecturer's job happiness and lessen their desire to leave their position.
- The theory of WLB emphasises the idea of resource drain and recuperation. Demands from the workplace that interfere with personal time can drain people's resources, including time, energy, and mental health. The permeability of the WLB among Ghanaian lecturers may result in resource drain, which could result in burnout and discontent. Conversely, lecturers' personal resources are refilled and their intent to quit is decreased when they can leave their jobs and participate in worthwhile recovery activities.
- The theory of job embeddedness emphasises the idea of "links" that people form between their personal and professional lives. Links are the connections and bonds that people have with their co-workers, managers, and the organisation as a whole. High work-life permeability can weaken a lecturer's connections in both areas. The likelihood of lecturers leaving their position might be decreased if the workplace is encouraging and promotes good relationships. On the other hand, if WLP strains these connections and has a detrimental effect on their social networks or support systems, it may increase their inclinations to leave.
- The relevance of a person's fit with their job and organisation is highlighted by the job embeddedness idea. Lecturers are more likely to feel ingrained in their work when they believe that their personal life values, ambitions, and duties align well with the requirements of their position and the organisation. This fit may be hampered by WLP if it leads to disputes or imbalances, in which case lecturers may have weaker job embedding and higher turnover intentions. By offering resources and encouragement for work-life integration, organisations can encourage a better match and strengthen the embedding of academics in their jobs.
- The perceived sacrifices lecturers associate with leaving their current post can vary depending on how flexible their WLB is. Lecturers may have more robust job embedding and fewer turnover intentions if they believe leaving their position would cause significant personal or professional losses. Conversely, if lecturers find it difficult to maintain a balance due to work-life permeability and believe leaving would involve fewer sacrifices, this could lead to an increase in turnover intentions.
- According to the theory of job embeddedness, job happiness has an impact on how attached people are to their employer and institution. If it interferes with lecturers' ability to take care of their personal needs and obligations, work-life permeability may have an adverse effect on job satisfaction. Lecturers' job satisfaction may increase if work-life permeability enables them to strike a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives. This may lessen their likelihood of considering leaving their position.

Work-life permeability may increase turnover intentions, though, if it causes unhappiness and unfulfilled demands.

Strength and limitation

First, the authors' deeper comprehension of the variables that impact the work-life balance on lecturers' turnover intentions in Ghana was made possible using a qualitative approach. Again, the experiences gained from the field would help change policy and practice of career guidance of students. However, some participants failed to acknowledge the interview, and that caused the delay of the study.

Conclusions

It was revealed that workload and long working hours were causing stress and burnout for the lecturers, which was leading to staff turnover and intentions to leave their jobs. Due to this, WLP has made lecturers struggle to draw boundaries between their professional and personal lives due to heavy workloads and long working hours. On the issue of the relationship between personal and work output factors in WLP, it was concluded that personal values, strategies for coping with stress, and relationships with family and friends would be affected if the lecturers were not able to manage them well. However, the participants were of the view that when their institutions institute policies on training and professional development, support staff with technology and infrastructure, and help in teamwork and collaboration, it could reduce the challenge of work-life balance.

Data availability: The data will be provided by the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Ethics statement

The study obtained ethical approval from all the two (2) universities in Ghana before data collection. The approve ethical number for UCC was UCCIRB/CES/2022/015 and UEW was UEWEA/2023/0034

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Abbreviations

UCC- University of Cape Coast

UEW- University of Education, Winneba

WLB- Work-Life Balance

WLP- Work-Life Permeability

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