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Work-life balance and employee well-being: The moderating effect of employee engagement among millennials in front-line service companies

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Abstract: The human factor of production is a significant player in increased organizational productivity. Due to the contemporary competitive work environment, the millennial in front-line jobs is faced with demanding work activities, resulting in challenges to their psychological well-being. Therefore, exploring the connectedness between work-life balance, employee engagement and psychological well-being of the millennial becomes imperative. Research was conducted, using an ex-post facto research design, among 320 purposively selected front-line millennial employees, with a mean age of 32 years. The instrument administered in a Google Form survey contained a 44-item self-report questionnaire, comprising work-life balance, employee engagement with components as vigor, dedication and absorption, and employee well-being. Data analyzed revealed that work-life balance significantly predicted employee well-being, accounting for 25% variance. The dimensions of employee engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption) collectively accounted for 7% variance in employee well-being. The study establishes the fact that to enhance the psychological well-being of Millennials in front-line jobs, organizational management should design the work structures to allow for work-life balance, which will as well increase their work engagement. They can encourage employees to find meaning and purpose in their work (dedication), provide opportunities for skill development and autonomy (vigor), and create an environment that allows employees to fully immerse themselves in their tasks (absorption). These could be implemented through organizational development strategies and work design. However, future research should target additional variables, replicate the study in different contexts and among another population of employees, employ longitudinal data collection methods, and increase sample sizes. Furthermore, measures should be taken to minimize the impact of social desirability and enhance the generalizability of the research.

Keywords: work-life balance employee engagement; self-dedication; vigor; absorption; moderating; and frontline

1. Introduction

In recent times in Nigeria, there has been an upsurge in frontline services, especially in the areas of banking, telecommunication, fintech, hospitality, and general service-oriented jobs. Frontline jobs are service-oriented jobs that involve the provision of services to customers directly, through face-to-face contact with customers. The front-line service personnel are therefore those who form the public face of the organization and play a vital role in shaping customer experiences. The nature of front-line jobs attracts millennials and has thus increased their numbers on the job.

Millennials refer to the individuals born between 1981 and 1996, and in 2025, they would be between 29–43 years old. This set of people makes up a significant portion of the current workforce, as they have taken over the major front-line service sector. The nature of the front-line job demands positive dispositions of the employees, hence, employee well-being is critical for the front-line jobs due to the direct contact expected with customers (Ehigie et al., 2015).

Employee well-being is the overall health and happiness of employees, which includes physical, mental, and emotional health. Employee well-being is a key issue for organizations and has been linked to increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, retention, and higher job satisfaction (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Employee psychological well-being is a central concern for hospitality establishments as it impacts talent retention (Walbeek and Hajal, 2022). It is reported that organizations with high levels of employee well-being have 30% lower customer turnover rates than companies with low levels of employee well-being (University of Michigan Ross School of Business, 2016). A significant positive correlation was established between employee well-being and business profitability (Krekel et al., 2019). In particular, employees who have positive mental health have higher job performance (Lu et al., 2022). Thus, psychological well-being is significantly related to organizational effectiveness (Hejase et al., 2024). On this note, it becomes imperative for the human resource professionals to identify what variables could enhance or hinder employee psychological well-being, especially among millennial employees. The well-being of front-line service employees is essential for providing excellent customer service. Companies that focus on employee well-being are likely to gain customer satisfaction and retention (Ehigie, 2000).

By the 2017 Deloitte report, millennials value flexibility, meaningful work, and work-life balance over traditional benefits such as salaries and promotions and millennial are more likely to switch jobs if their current employer does not offer a work-life balance that suits their needs. For the millennial, work-life balance means integration and flexibility at work. It is more than just balancing professional and personal time. It is about blending a job with life; not separating them. The Millennials are remote workers, have flexible hours, and pick projects they enjoy (Brown, 2023). Therefore, it is critical for organizations to understand the impact of work-life balance on the well-being of millennials in the workplace.

Work-life balance is an important issue for modern organizations as they aim to enhance employee well-being and satisfaction, hence, gaining significant attention in human resource management. Work-life balance, in this context, refers to the extent to which a millennial perceives a balance between the demands and challenges of their work and the demands and challenges of their personal life, without compromising either domain (Greenhaus et al., 2006). It is believed that work-life balance could determine the well-being of employees in an organization, hence it is an important human resource management variable for a healthy employee well-being.

When employees feel that they have control over their work schedules and that they have access to flexible time off, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated in their work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Employee engagement is the level of involvement and enthusiasm that employees have for their work. It is a measure of how much employees care about their jobs and how much they are willing to go the

extra mile to help their company succeed. Engaged employees derive a sense of meaning and purpose from their work, resulting in higher level of psychological well-being (Bakker and Leiter, 2010). Engaged employees also tend to experience lower levels of stress and burnout, as their deep involvement and positive experiences act as protective factors against the negative impacts of work-related demands (Saks, 2006).

1.1. Statement of the problem

The Nigerian service sector is a significant contributor to the country's economy, and it employs a large number of millennials in front-line service roles. These employees face unique challenges in managing their well-being, due to the demanding nature of the work. Adegbite and Akinlabi (2021) are of the view that organizations can foster a workplace culture that supports the well-being of millennials by acknowledging their unique needs and values. Contemporary work environments have experienced notable changes, placing increasing pressure on employees, particularly millennials. Thus, balancing work and personal lives has become a struggle for many employees, leading to adverse effects on their work engagement and well-being, resulting in lower productivity and performance levels (Akhtar and Janssen, 2020).

Existing studies have predominantly concentrated on individual factors, personal characteristics, economic factors, and general aspects of work-life balance, neglecting the potential moderation provided by employee engagement. While there has been significant amount of research conducted on work-life balance, employee engagement, and employee well-being as separate constructs, there is paucity of studies investigating the role of employee engagement as a moderating factor in the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being, especially among millennials in front-line service companies. On this note, Thilagavathy and Geetha (2021) called for more research on work-life balance and employee well-being in developing nations. By understanding how employee engagement can moderate the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being, organizations can develop strategies to improve the well-being of their employees and ultimately enhance their performance and productivity (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2011). By considering moderation in this connection, the present study contributes to the understanding of how the study variables are related, thus enriching theoretical frameworks and practical applications. Some other studies that examined the relationship between employee engagement and employee well-being primarily focused on the adolescent and student populations (Gómez-López et al., 2022), but the present research is valuable in extending understanding of the relationship to the context of millennials in the workplace.

1.2. Research questions

The following research questions are raised:

- 1) Would work-life balance positively predict employee well-being among millennials in frontline service companies?
- 2) Would employee engagement positively predict employee well-being among millennials in frontline service companies?

- 3) Would employee engagement moderate the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being among millennials in frontline service companies?

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical review

Some theories are presented to show the relationship among employee work-life balance, work engagement, and psychological well-being.

2.1.1. The self-determination theory (SDT)

The self-determination theory (SDT) explains the importance of psychological needs and intrinsic motivation in human behavior and well-being. It posits that individuals have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2000). When employees feel they are supported in satisfying these needs, they are more likely to experience greater well-being (Deci and Ryan, 2015). The theory explains the link between work-life balance and well-being. SDT suggests that when millennials have the autonomy to balance their work and personal commitments, feel competent in managing their responsibilities, and have positive relationships in their life affairs, their overall well-being is enhanced (Ryan et al., 2016).

2.1.2. The social exchange theory (SET)

The social exchange theory highlights the reciprocity that occurs in the relationship between individuals and their organisations, and how it results in desirable outcomes like good psychological well-being. SET is based on the idea that social behavior is the result of an exchange process, whose purpose it is to maximize benefits and minimize costs. According to this theory, individuals consider potential rewards and risks of social relationships (Cook and Rice, 2006). The theory explains that all human relationships are shaped by a subjective reward-cost analysis and the comparison of alternatives. Someone who gives much will expect to get at least the same amount back from others, and in return, persons that received a lot from others will be under pressure to give much back to them. People will terminate or abandon a relationship as soon as the costs incurred in the relationship outweighs the benefits.

The inferences drawn from the theory are that employees form positive dispositions, like good psychological well-being, when they feel that the rewards they receive from their jobs and workplace outweigh what they invest (the costs) on the job (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Conversely, employees will form negative dispositions, like poor psychological well-being, when they feel that the costs of their job and workplace outweigh the rewards. The cost expressed in this context is work-life imbalance. SET posits that millennial working in front line service companies could experience poor psychological well-being when they perceive incongruence in their perceived work-life balance. In other words, the millennial experiences poor psychological well-being when there is an imbalance in work-life experience.

The relationship between employee engagement and well-being is multifaceted and also implied in this theory. Engaged employees are more likely to experience positive emotions, higher levels of motivation, and a sense of fulfillment, which

contribute to enhancing their overall well-being. They derive a sense of meaning and purpose from their work, resulting in a higher level of psychological well-being (Bakker and Leiter, 2010). Engaged employees also tend to experience lower levels of stress and burnout, as their deep involvement and positive experiences act as protective factors against the negative impacts of work-related demands (Saks, 2006). Engaged employees are more likely to engage in proactive health behaviors, experience higher levels of vitality, and report fewer physical health complaints (Bakker and Leiter, 2010). By the SET, when millennials perceive support, recognition, and fair treatment from their organizations, they are more likely to be engaged in their work.

2.1.3. The spillover theory

The spillover theory provides valuable insights into the understanding of work-life conflict, particularly regarding its impact on millennials' well-being (Bakker and Demerouti, 2013). According to this theory, experiences and emotional states originating from one domain of life can extend into other domains, thereby influencing an individual's overall well-being. Negative moods, emotions, and the interconnections between home and work can disrupt balance and hinder psychological well-being, as negative emotions from one domain (work or home) spill over into the other. Thus, millennials who experience imbalance in work-life could spill over this experience to their psychological well-being.

Within the realm of work-life balance research, a considerable body of literature has focused on the phenomenon of positive and negative spillover. Positive spillover denotes the notion that positive experiences in one domain led to fulfillment and achievement in another domain (Vijayakumar and Janakiram, 2017). In contrast, negative spillover suggests that negative experiences in work-life balance could negatively impact work engagement and psychological well-being.

Spillover is also classified as vertical and horizontal. Horizontal spillover refers to the influence one domain has on its neighboring domain, such as the impact of work-life balance on employee engagement. On the other hand, vertical spillover is characterized by the hierarchical organization of life domains, where satisfaction or dissatisfaction in a subordinate domain spill over into a superordinate domain, with life as the most superordinate domain (Sirgy et al., 2001); hence, millennial psychological well-being could be affected by vertical spillover. The segmentation model posits that work and non-work domains remain distinct without influencing each other, whereas the spillover model suggests potential positive or negative influences between domains (Bello and Tanko, 2020; Sen and Hooja, 2018).

2.1.4. Human relations theory

The human relations theory is a management model that explains improving employee satisfaction and productivity by improving social factors in the workplace. The well-being of employees plays a crucial role in shaping an organization's economic outcomes (Krekel et al., 2019). Diminished levels of employee well-being are linked to reduced productivity, increased rates of absenteeism, and elevated turnover. Analysing 339 independent research papers encompassing 1,882,131 individuals and the performance of 82,248 businesses, the study significantly supports the Human Relations Theory, affirming that elevated employee well-being corresponds to superior organizational performance (Krekel et al., 2019).

2.2. Empirical review of literature

2.2.1. Employee work-life balance and well-being

Work-life balance is a crucial aspect of individuals' lives, involving the ability to achieve harmony between work-related obligations and personal pursuits. It encompasses managing the allocation of time and effort between work and non-work activities to attain an overall sense of equilibrium (Saraswati and Lie, 2020). The Pricewaterhouse Coopers' (PwC) 2019 millennial survey conducted among 19,000 millennials in 42 countries found that millennials are more likely than previous generations to value flexibility, meaningful work, and work-life balance and are willing to take a pay cut in exchange for more flexibility. In the developing countries, such as Nigeria, there is a growing concern about the ability of millennials to balance their work and personal lives (Adegbite and Adegbite, 2021). There is therefore the need to research how work-life balance and employee engagement could influence millennial well-being at the workplace.

Okeya et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction among Nigerian bank employees. The findings revealed that employees who reported a higher level of work-life balance experienced greater job satisfaction and overall well-being. However, the study focused on a broad range of employees, but the present study focuses on the millennial workers, covering the service industry but restricted to those on the front line.

The existing body of literature on work-life balance primarily focuses on the developed nations. It is important to recognize the influence of national culture, organizational culture, and their interplay with work-life balance on employee psychological well-being (Adnan et al., 2021; Stankevičienė et al., 2021). But Thilagavathy and Geetha (2021) reveals a critical research gap regarding the relationship between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being within developing countries. Thus, Adisa and Osibanjo (2017) in their empirical study on the influence of work-life balance on employee well-being among Nigerian nurses, found that nurses who reported a higher level of work-life balance experienced improved well-being in various dimensions, including physical, emotional, and psychological aspects. Though the research was conducted among service-oriented employees in the health sector, it is limited in scope.

Furthermore, Aziz and Adewale (2016) discovered a positive relationship between work-life balance and psychological well-being among Nigerian academics. Academic professionals who reported a higher level of work-life balance also experienced improved psychological well-being. This research has limitations of being restricted among service providers in the educational sector. It is possible that different results could be obtained with other service jobs.

Allen et al. (2000) found that work-to-family conflict is associated with negative outcomes such as increased stress, decreased job and life satisfaction, and poorer mental and physical health, while Greenhaus et al. (2006) found that individuals who experience work-family enrichment have higher levels of job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Thus, extensive research has established a positive association between work-life balance and job satisfaction (Pathak et al., 2019); linked to subjective well-

being (Cannas et al., 2019), improved social relationships and reduced depression (Nadinloyi et al., 2013).

Additionally, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) (2022) in their Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement Report demonstrated that 71% of employees who feel they have a good work-life balance are satisfied with their jobs, compared to 57% of employees who feel they do not have good work-life balance. These findings suggest that work-life balance plays a pivotal role in cultivating job satisfaction, leading to heightened levels of psychological well-being. These findings have the credit of not reflecting general well-being but psychological well-being. Kurtuluş et al. (2023) found that work-life balance is positively related to psychological well-being, and psychological well-being had a mediating effect on the relationship between social support and work-life balance.

Furthermore, in some other studies, work-life balance and employee psychological well-being served as mediators and moderators for each other. For instance, work-life balance acted as a mediator in the relationship between workplace culture and employee psychological well-being (Stankevičienė et al., 2021), while employee psychological well-being mediated the link between work-life balance and job performance (Haider et al., 2018). These findings underscore the intricate interplay between work-life balance and employee psychological well-being, wherein each construct exerts influence on and is influenced by the other in a complex manner. This present study also contributes to a deeper understanding of the networks surrounding work-life balance and employee well-being, particularly employee engagement, emphasizing their vital role within organizational settings.

2.2.2. Employee engagement and well-being

Employee engagement happens when employees are interested, positive, and even excited about their work and they work to do their best and it goes beyond motivation and simple job satisfaction (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014; CIPD, 2018). Employee engagement is worth pursuing, not as an end in itself, but as a means to improve working life and business performance (Purcell, 2013).

According to HBR Store (2019), companies with high levels of employee engagement have 50% higher customer satisfaction rates than companies with low levels of employee engagement. This implies that employee engagement is a key driver of business performance, and that companies with engaged employees are more likely to be profitable, have higher productivity, and have lower turnover. It is opined that millennial employees are more likely to be engaged when their work aligns with their personal values and when they have a sense of purpose (Yeoh and Wong, 2017). Employee engagement and workplace well-being were shown to be linked, according to the study by Prakash and Kashyap (2023). According to the findings, if an employee is mentally well and fulfilled, they are totally involved in their work. A study by Adekoya et al. (2019) revealed a positive association between employee engagement and employee well-being among Nigerian millennial. Disengaged employees are more likely to be absent from work, make mistakes, have accidents, steal from their organization and sabotage their organization's success. Thus, research on employee engagement is paramount, especially among the millennials.

Employee engagement has been found to positively influence various dimensions of well-being, such as physical health, mental health, and overall life satisfaction (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2011). The reason provided is that engaged employees are more likely to engage in proactive health behaviors, experience higher levels of vitality, and report fewer physical health complaints. They also tend to have a more positive outlook on life, greater job satisfaction, and stronger social connections, all of which contribute to their overall well-being (Bakker and Leiter, 2010). Thus, understanding the relationship between employee engagement and well-being is crucial for organizations seeking to enhance the quality of work life for their employees.

By fostering employee engagement, organizations can positively impact the well-being of their employees, leading to benefits such as increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and improved organizational performance (Bakker and Leiter, 2010). Several studies have found a positive relationship between employee engagement and well-being among academics (Adeyemo and Owolabi, 2018), nurses (Adisa and Osibanjo, 2017), but there are limited studies in other general service industries and among the millennials in Nigeria. The present study therefore sets out to explore these.

2.3. Research hypotheses

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are tested in the research.

- 1) Work-life balance would positively predict employee well-being.
- 2) Employee engagement would positively predict employee well-being.
- 3) Employee engagement would moderate the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being.

3. Methods

3.1. Design

This study employed an ex-post facto design, also known as “after-the-effect,” because the variables of interest, which are work-life balance, work engagement and psychological well-being, had already occurred by nature prior to the commencement of the study. The data needed for the study were collected in order to draw inferences among these variables.

3.2. Participants

The participants consisted of three hundred and twenty (320) millennials working in front-line service companies in a major city in Nigeria. The average age of the participants was 32 years, with 51.3% ($n = 164$) male and 48.8% ($n = 154$) female. A significant proportion, 73.3% ($n = 244$) reported being single, 21.6% ($n = 69$) were married, while 2.2% ($n = 7$) indicated being either separated or divorced.

3.3. Inclusion/exclusion criteria

The participants in this study are only millennials, persons between 29–43 years old, working in front-line service companies in Nigeria. They must be of Nigerian nationality, indicate willingness to participate in the study, and understand the English language.

3.4. Instrument

The data for the study were gathered through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section contained items on socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, religion and nature of organization.

The second section contained Hayman's (2005) version of the Work-Life Balance Self-Assessment scale. It consists of 15 items that assess different aspects of work-life balance, such as time allocation, satisfaction with work and personal life, and the ability to manage multiple roles. The items are measured on Likert type scale, with response options ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD). Examples of items include: "My job gives me energy to pursue personal activities," "I am in a better mood at work because of my personal life," "My job makes my personal life difficult." The Cronbach alpha of the scale is 0.92, and for the present study, the obtained value is 0.937, indicating high reliability and consistency among the scale items.

The third section of the questionnaire contained the General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12) developed by Goldberg (1972). The scale is designed to measure the wellbeing of respondents. It is a 12-item questionnaire that measures psychological distress and identifies symptoms of mental distress. These items are measured on Likert type scale with response categories as; "not at all", "no more than usual", "rather more than usual", and "much more than usual". The scale developer reported a Cronbach alpha of $\alpha = 0.88$. This study reported a local reliability of $\alpha = 0.69$. Examples of the scale items are: "Have you recently been able to concentrate on whatever you're doing?" "Have you recently lost much sleep over worry?" "Have you recently felt that you're playing a useful part in things?"

The fourth section of the instrument has the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Coelho et al., 2023). The scale measures work engagement, described as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. It is intended to measure the hypothesized 'opposite' of burnout. Originally, 20 self-constructed items were simultaneously formulated in Spanish and English to reflect three underlying dimensions, including "Vigor" (VI) (9 items; e.g., 'When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work', 'At my work, I feel bursting with energy', 'At my job, I feel strong and vigorous'); "Dedication" (DE) (8 items; e.g., 'I'm enthusiastic about my job', 'I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose', 'When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work); and "Absorption" (AB) (7 items; e.g., 'When I'm working, I forget everything around me', 'Time flies when I'm working', 'When I am working, I forget everything else around me').

The engagement items were administered by the author to 314 undergraduates and 619 employees. Internal consistencies were computed for the three subscales and

scale refinement processes led to the deletion of 7 items and the final 17-item engagement measure, with a version each for students and employees. The resultant 17 items scale has VI (6 items), DE (5 items), and AB (6 items). The subscales were found to be internally consistent but relatively strongly correlated (PsycTests Database Record (c) 2020 APA, all rights reserved).

The 17-item scale has response categories that include never, almost never, rarely, sometimes, often, very often, and always. The scores range from 0 to 6. The Cronbach alpha for the scale $\alpha = 0.90$. For the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculated is $\alpha = 0.92$, indicating high reliability and consistency among the scale items.

3.5. Procedure

Employing a purposive sampling technique, millennials employed in front-line service companies in a city in Nigeria were the target. To collect data for the study, a well-designed Google Forms survey was adopted, and administered using the hybrid structure. The survey was distributed among potential participants through popular social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram; both individual profiles and group pages. These were utilized to reach a wide range of individuals who met the study's inclusion criteria. This dissemination strategy aimed to maximize survey accessibility and facilitate the involvement of participants from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Additionally, to ensure a comprehensive representation of the target population, a paper-and-pencil survey was administered by two trained research assistants to frontline service company employees in the city. This hybrid approach, combining online and offline survey administration, helped broaden the reach and participation of individuals, resulting in the collection of 320 completed questionnaires. As a control measure, respondents for the offline survey were asked if they had responded to the same questionnaire online. Those who responded that they have were excluded from the offline data collection process.

3.6. Ethical considerations

A proposal for the research was developed and submitted to the Research Ethical Committee of the Faculty of the Social Sciences of the University. After due processing with considerable suggestions made, the proposal passed the test for execution. Participants were duly informed of the age range for qualification to participate in the study, and they must be front-line service providers. Participation was voluntary and participants were encouraged to discontinue with the research if peradventure they felt uncomfortable responding to the items in the questionnaire.

3.7. Statistical analyses

The collected data were checked for its adequacy and analyzed, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Hypothesis one was tested using linear regression, hypothesis two was tested using standard multiple regression analysis, and hypothesis three was tested using hierarchical regression.

4. Results

4.1. Intercorrelation results

To show the relationships that exist among work-life balance, employee engagement, and employee psychological well-being, among millennial in front-line service companies, a zero-order correlation analysis was conducted and the results are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Summary of zero-order correlation showing the relationship among employee engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption), work-life balance and employee well-being.

	X	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Employee well-being	7.93	4.49	-					
2. Vigor	22.74	6.23	0.06	-				
3. Dedication	20.50	6.32	0.20**	0.77**	-			
4. Absorption	21.38	6.23	0.18**	0.82**	0.82**	-		
5. Employee engagement	64.63	17.52	0.16**	0.93**	0.93**	0.94**	-	
6. Work-life balance	34.85	8.69	0.50**	0.30**	-0.06	0.02	0.09	-

* $P < 0.05$ level, ** $P < 0.01$ level.

The results from **Table 1** shows that the three components of employee engagement are significantly inter-correlated. Vigor is positively correlated with dedication ($r = 0.77$; $p < 0.01$) and absorption ($r = 0.82$; $p < 0.01$), and dedication is also positively correlated with absorption ($r = 0.82$; $p < 0.01$). These results show that the more vigor a millennial employee displays at work, the more dedicated and absorbed the person is at work. Similarly, the more dedicated a millennial employee is at work, the more absorbed the person is. The high level of positive intercorrelations among these three components of employee engagement indicate that the three components actually measure the same psychological construct, which is employee engagement. These coefficients indicate the internal consistency of the employee engagement scale. Furthermore, the results showed that vigor ($r = 0.93$; $p < 0.01$), dedication ($r = 0.93$; $p < 0.01$), and absorption ($r = 0.94$; $p < 0.01$) are positively correlated with employee engagement. The internal consistency of employee engagement is further enhanced as each component of the employee engagement scale is positively correlated with the composite score of employee engagement.

Employee well-being is positively correlated with dedication ($r = 0.20$; $p < 0.01$), absorption ($r = 0.18$; $p < 0.01$), overall employee engagement ($r = 0.16$; $p < 0.01$), and work-life balance ($r = 0.50$; $p < 0.01$) but not significantly correlated with vigor ($r = 0.06$; $p > 0.05$). It is implied that the more dedicated, absorbed, and engaged at work a millennial is the higher their psychological well-being, but being vigorous is not significantly related to psychological well-being. Also, the more balanced they are on work-life the higher is their psychological well-being. Further observations of the correlation results show that while work-life balance correlated significantly with vigor ($r = 0.30$; $p < 0.01$), it did not correlate significantly with dedication ($r = -0.06$; $p > 0.05$), absorption ($r = 0.02$; $p > 0.05$), and general employee engagement ($r = 0.09$;

$p > 0.01$). The results show that experiencing work-life balance produces more vigor at work, but does not translate to work dedication, work absorption, or general work engagement. These results to some extent show the level of independence of the predictor variables, hence the orthogonality of the predictor variables.

4.2. Hypotheses testing

The first hypothesis stated that work-life balance would significantly predict the psychological well-being of millennial front-line employees. The results are presented in **Table 2**, where it is revealed that work-life balance is a significant predictor of employee well-being [$F(1, 318) = 105.63$; $R = 50$, $R^2 = 0.25$; $p < 0.01$]. Work-life balance accounted for 25% of the observed variance in employee well-being of millennial front-line employees. The hypothesis stated was confirmed and therefore accepted.

Table 2. Linear regression of employee well-being on work-life balance.

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Work-life balance	0.50	10.28	<0.01	0.50	0.25	105.63	<0.01

In the second hypothesis, it was stated that employee engagement would significantly predict employee well-being. This was tested using standard multiple regression analysis and the results are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Summary of standard multiple regression of employee well-being on employee engagement dimensions (vigor, dedication, and absorption).

Predictors	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Vigor	-0.33	-3.36	<0.01				
Dedication	0.26	2.55	<0.05	0.27	0.07	8.32	<0.01
Absorption	0.24	2.20	<0.05				

Results from **Table 3** reveals that the dimensions of employee engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption) are significant joint predictors of employee well-being [$R = 27$; $R^2 = 0.07$; $F(3, 316) = 8.32$; $p < 0.01$]. Employee engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption) collectively accounted for about 7% of the observable variance in employee well-being among millennial front-line employees. In the same vein, all the dimensions vigor ($\beta = -33$; $t = -3.36$; $p < 0.01$), dedication ($\beta = 26$; $t = 2.55$; $p < 0.05$) and absorption ($\beta = 24$; $t = 2.20$; $p < 0.05$) were independent predictors of employee well-being. The direction of the influence shows that the higher the vigor of employees ($\beta = -33$), the lower the employee well-being. However, the higher the dedication ($\beta = 26$) and absorption ($\beta = 24$), the higher the employee well-being. The hypothesis stated was confirmed and therefore accepted. In the correlation analysis, vigor was not significantly correlated with employee well-being, but in the multiple regression analysis it significantly predicted well-being negatively. This implies that dedication and absorption are suppressor variables for vigor, hence vigor did not correlate significantly with employee well-being but predicted significantly in the

multiple regression analysis, where the influences of the other predictor variables (dedication and absorption) were statistically controlled.

In the third hypothesis, it was stated that employee engagement would moderate the significant relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being. This was tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis and the results are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Summary of hierarchical multiple regression analysis of the moderating role of employee engagement in the relationship between work-life balance, employee well-being and demographic variables.

Model	Predictors	β	t	p	R	R^2	R^2 Chan.	F	p
Model 1	Age	-0.09	-1.47	>0.05	0.21	0.04	0.04	4.77	<0.05
	Gender	-0.15	-2.53	<0.05					
	Educational qualification	0.03	0.47	>0.05					
Model 2	Age	-0.01	-0.09	>0.05	0.52	0.27	0.23	28.48	<0.01
	Gender	-0.09	-1.71	>0.05					
	Educational qualification	0.07	1.38	>0.05					
	Work-life balance	0.49	9.77	<0.01					
Model 3a	Age	0.05	0.91	>0.05	0.54	0.30	0.03	26.29	<0.01
	Gender	-0.12	-2.28	<0.05					
VIGOR	Educational qualification	0.02	0.46	>0.05	0.19	3.63	<0.05		
	Work-life balance	0.46	9.38	<0.01					
	Vigor * Work-life bal.	0.19	3.63	<0.05					
Model 3b	Age	0.02	0.41	>0.05	0.52	0.27	0.01	23.43	<0.01
	Gender	-0.11	-2.03	<0.05					
DEDICA	Educational qualification	0.04	0.83	>0.05	0.09	1.62	>0.05		
	Work-life balance	0.50	9.92	<0.01					
	Dedic * Work-life bal.	0.09	1.62	>0.05					
Model 3c	Age	0.05	0.91	>0.05	0.53	0.28	0.02	24.73	<0.01
	Gender	-0.12	-2.27	<0.05					
ABSORP	Educational qualification	0.02	0.45	>0.05	0.15	2.72	<0.05		
	Work-life balance	0.50	10.02	<0.01					
	Absorpt. * Work-life bal.	0.15	2.72	<0.05					

The result from **Table 4** shows that in model 1 the influence of the demographic variable on the dependent variable (employee well-being) was analyzed. Model 1 reveals that the demographic factors (age, gender and educational qualification) jointly predicted employee well-being significantly [$R = 0.21$; $R^2 = 0.04$; $F(3, 316) = 4.77$; $p < 0.05$]. The demographic factors jointly accounted for 4% of the observable variance in employee well-being. However, only gender ($\beta = -0.15$; $t = -2.53$; $p < 0.05$) independently contributed to the prediction of employee well-being among millennial front-line employees, and the female participants were of better well-being.

In model 2, when the work-life balance was added to the demographic factors, all the variables jointly predicted employee well-being significantly [$R = 0.52$; $R^2 = 0.27$; $F(4, 315) = 28.48$; $p < 0.01$], accounting for 27% of the observable variance in

employee well-being. However, only work-life balance ($\beta = 0.49$; $t = 9.77$; $p < 0.01$) independently predicted employee well-being significantly, among the millennial front-line employees. The addition of work-life balance contributed about 23% change in employee well-being and was significant ($\Delta R^2 = 23$; $p < 0.01$).

In model 3a, the moderation effect of work engagement in the prediction of employee well-being by work-life balance was examined. When moderated by vigor dimension of employee engagement, demographic variables, work-life balance and the moderated work-life balance jointly predicted employee well-being significantly [$R = 0.54$; $R^2 = 30$; $F(5, 314) = 26.29$; $p < 0.01$]. The variables jointly accounted for 30% of the observable variance in employee well-being. However, only gender ($\beta = -0.12$; $t = -2.28$; $p < 0.05$), work-life balance ($\beta = 0.46$; $t = 9.38$; $p < 0.01$), and the moderated work-life balance ($\beta = 0.19$; $t = 3.63$; $p < 0.05$) independently predicted employee well-being significantly, among millennial front-line employees. Further, vigor was a significant moderator as it contributed to about a 3% change in the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being ($\Delta R = 0.03$; $p < 0.01$).

In model 3b, when the dedication dimension of employee engagement was the moderator, demographic variables, work-life balance and the moderated work-life balance jointly predicted employee well-being significantly [$R = 0.52$; $R^2 = 27$; $F(5, 314) = 23.43$; $p < 0.01$]. The variables jointly accounted for 27% of the observable variance in employee well-being. However, only gender ($\beta = -0.11$; $t = -2.03$; $p < 0.05$), and work-life balance ($\beta = 0.50$; $t = 9.92$; $p < 0.01$) independently predicted employee well-being. Dedication was not a significant moderator despite contributing about a 1% change in the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being ($\Delta R = 0.01$; $p > 0.05$).

In model 3c, when the absorption dimension of employee engagement was the moderator, demographic variables, work-life balance and the moderated work-life balance jointly predicted employee well-being significantly [$R = 0.53$; $R^2 = 0.28$; $F(5, 314) = 24.73$; $p < 0.01$]. The variables jointly accounted for 28% of the observed variance in employee well-being. However, only gender ($\beta = -0.12$; $t = -2.27$; $p < 0.05$), work-life balance ($\beta = 0.50$; $t = 10.02$; $p < 0.01$) and moderated work-life balance ($\beta = 0.15$; $t = 2.72$; $p < 0.05$) independently predicted employee well-being significantly. Absorption was a significant moderator as it contributed to about a 2% change in the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being ($\Delta R^2 = 0.02$; $p < 0.05$).

5. Discussion

The study investigated the influence of work-life balance, work engagement, and the moderating role of employee engagement in work-life balance on employee well-being among millennials in front-line service companies in a city in Nigeria. A total of three research hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis one stated that work-life balance will positively predict employee well-being among millennials in Nigeria. This was tested using linear regression analysis, and it was discovered that work-life balance is a significant positive predictor of employee well-being. The hypothesis is accepted signifying that when millennials are able to achieve a balance between their work and

personal life, it has positive impact on their overall well-being. This finding supports the discovery of Aziz and Adewale (2016) that a positive relationship exists between work-life balance and psychological well-being among Nigerian academics, and among nurses (Adisa and Osibanjo, 2017). The present findings also support the positive association between work-life balance and job satisfaction reported by Pathak et al. (2019), and the positive association between work-life balance and subjective well-being reported by Cannas et al. (2019).

The findings on the positive relationship and predictive ability of work-life balance on employee psychological well-being suggest that maintaining a harmonious balance between work and personal life is associated with enhanced mental well-being among millennials in front-line service jobs in Nigeria. Going by the self-determination theory, when employees feel supported on the job in satisfying their needs, they are more likely to experience greater well-being, in terms of intrinsic motivation and engagement (Deci and Ryan, 2000). For instance, where the Millennial employees enjoy work-life balance, they will be self-determined for work engagement and the consequent experience of good psychological well-being. It is very likely also that as the Millennial employees enjoy work-life balance, they reciprocate the gesture from the organization with high job engagement, while they are further reciprocated with good psychological well-being, according to the social exchange theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). It is evident from the present study, going by the work-life balance theory that, when an employee is able to balance the demand from work and family, there is significant reduction in the stress experienced and subsequently, increased well-being (Kossek et al., 2014). Going by the spillover theory also, drawing the line between work and family duties helps to maintain a balanced work-life where the workload is not spilled over to the home; this invariably improves psychological well-being.

In the study by Allen et al. (2000), work-to-family conflict is associated with negative outcomes such as increased stress, decreased job and life satisfaction, and poorer mental and physical health. When the Millennials experience work-life imbalance, negative experiences could ensue, leading to reduced well-being. The present result falls in line with Kossek et al.'s (2014) assertion that high levels of work-family conflict negatively impact both job and life satisfaction. Stressing further, the availability and use of work-family policies, such as flexible work schedules and childcare support, can buffer the negative effects of work-family conflict on well-being, improve social relationships, and reduce depression (Nadinloyi et al., 2013).

Hypothesis two stated that employee engagement (vigor, dedication and absorption) will significantly predict employee well-being. It was discovered that when these components were combined and tested independently, all the dimensions predicted employee well-being, significantly. This finding underscores the importance of fostering high levels of employee engagement within organizations, as it has a positive impact on the overall well-being of employees. The identification of all three dimensions of employee engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption) as significant predictors of employee well-being suggests that each dimension contributes uniquely to the well-being of employees. Vigor represents high levels of energy and enthusiasm at work, dedication reflects a strong sense of significance and pride in one's job, and absorption signifies being fully immersed and engrossed in work activities. When

employees exhibit these dimensions of engagement, they experience higher levels of well-being.

The findings from the results on employee work engagement are in support of Prakash and Kashyap (2023), who investigated the relationship between employee engagement and employee well-being among Nigerian millennials and found a positive association. The result from the present study also supports the results of the positive correlation between employee engagement and workplace well-being (Prakash and Kashyap, 2023). It can be said that engaged millennials experience a stronger sense of purpose in their work, perceiving their contributions as meaningful and impactful. This sense of purpose further contributes to their overall well-being. According to the findings, if an employee is mentally well and fulfilled, they are totally involved in their work. A similar finding was recorded in Adeyemi and Owolabi's (2018) research on the relationship between employee engagement and employee well-being in the Nigerian banking sector.

Similar to the work engagement theory and from the results of the positive correlation between work engagement and well-being obtained in the present study, the finding that an engaged employee is productive because their well-being is directly or indirectly catered for is supported. Kickul (2000) presented those psychological factors such as employee well-being benefits more when there is intentional work engagement from the employees. By the positive spillover theory, there is a spillover of their work engagement to the psychological well-being they enjoy.

Hypothesis three stated that employee engagement will significantly moderate the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being among millennials in front-line jobs in service organizations in Nigeria. It was discovered that vigor and absorption were significant moderators of the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being, and both were positive moderators. This finding suggests that the type and level of employee engagement influence how work-life balance affects employee well-being. The confirmation of the hypothesis indicates that when millennials have high levels of vigor and absorption, their well-being is more positively impacted with high levels of work-life balance. In other words, when employees are highly engaged and enthusiastic about their work (vigor) and fully absorbed in their tasks (absorption), they are more likely to experience good psychological well-being when they effectively balance their work and personal life.

The findings from the present research emphasize the importance of fostering work-life balance practices among the millennials in front-line jobs and highlight the potential benefits of achieving a balance between work and personal life for enhanced overall well-being. This finding is in support of Salanova et al.'s (2011) discovery of the moderating effect of employee engagement in the relationship between work-life balance and organizational commitment. They found that engaged employees who reported better work-life balance displayed higher levels of organizational commitment. Similarly, it could be inferred from the present study that millennial work engagement strengthens the connection between work-life balance and their psychological well-being, but vigor and absorption are the aspects of work engagement that are of emphasis in this context.

The findings by Shuck and Reio (2014) on the moderating role of employee engagement in the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being

are supported in the present study. They found that engaged employees who perceived a greater degree of work-life balance experienced lower levels of stress and higher levels of satisfaction with life. It is implied, therefore, that millennial employee engagement amplifies the positive effects of their work-life balance on well-being outcomes

6. Conclusions

The present study investigated the moderating role of employee engagement in work-life balance predicting employee well-being among millennials in front-line service companies in Nigeria. It is concluded from this study that the higher the work-life balance of millennial front-line employees, the higher their well-being. In other words, how much millennial employees are able to balance their work and family life contributes positively to their overall well-being. Findings from this study also show that when Millennials are dedicated to their job, they enjoy higher levels of well-being. Similarly, the higher the absorption of millennial front-line employees, the higher their well-being. This study also concludes that employee engagement dimensions (vigor, dedication and absorption) are significant joint and independent predictors of employee well-being. While vigor had a negative influence on employee well-being, absorption and dedication had a positive influence. Finally, when moderated by vigor and absorption, there was a further positive relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being. In other words, employee engagement further boosted the relationship between work-life balance and well-being in the positive direction.

7. Human resources implications of findings

It is discovered that there exists a significant and positive relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being among millennials working as frontline employees in Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that organizations ensure that millennials' rights to annual leave as well as other holidays are not taken for granted. As they could be considered young and agile, they would use such opportunities to pursue other benefits for life. Also, concerns should be shown, especially when a millennial is perceived to be due for personal leave; such leave could be utilized for self-development in studies or professional growth.

From the results of the three work engagement factors predicting psychological well-being positively, it is suggestive that managers should be mindful of the individual dimensions of employee engagement. By understanding the specific aspects of engagement that contribute to employee well-being, managers can tailor their approaches to supporting employees accordingly. For example, they can encourage employees to find meaning and purpose in their work (dedication), provide opportunities for skill development and autonomy (vigor), and create an environment that allows employees to fully immerse themselves in their tasks (absorption). These could be implemented through organizational development strategies and work design.

The discovery that dedication and absorption are positive correlates of employee well-being of millennial frontline employees shows that the more dedicated and absorbed employees are, the higher their well-being. It is therefore recommended that

organizations lay more emphasis on the importance of self-dedication to work, among the millennials. Organizations should prioritize strategies and interventions aimed at enhancing employee engagement. This could involve creating a positive work environment, providing opportunities for growth and development, fostering supportive relationships, and recognizing and rewarding employees for their contributions. By promoting employee engagement, organizations can foster a work culture that promotes well-being and positive outcomes for employees. For instance, rewards can be attached to the dedication of employees. Reinforcing such behavior will further contribute to increased dedication, subsequently leading to the enhancement of their psychological well-being. Being absorbed in work can also be rewarded by the organization such that it will be counted and seen as a positive organizational behavior. While such behavior will not only contribute to further increases in the well-being of millennial employees, it will also indirectly contribute to increased productivity and performance of the employees.

The findings from the present research emphasize the need for ongoing measurement and assessment of employee engagement and well-being within organizations. Regularly monitoring and evaluating employee engagement levels can help identify areas for improvement and guide targeted interventions to enhance well-being. By prioritizing employee engagement and well-being, organizations can create a positive work environment that attracts, retains, and motivates the millennials in the front-line jobs.

In addition, it was found that work engagement moderated the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being. This stresses the importance of work engagement. It is therefore recommended that management should invest more time in ensuring reinforcing behaviors that encourage engagement with work among employees. These findings highlight the importance of considering employee engagement as a key factor when developing work-life balance interventions and policies. Organizations should aim to create a work-life balance culture that not only focuses on providing flexibility and support but also emphasizes and promotes employee engagement. Organizations should recognize the significance of employee engagement in the work-life balance and well-being relationship. By fostering a work environment that encourages and supports employee engagement, organizations can enhance the positive effects of work-life balance on employee well-being. This can be achieved through strategies such as providing autonomy, opportunities for growth and development, and creating a positive and supportive work culture.

Besides, managers should focus on cultivating and nurturing employee engagement, particularly in terms of vigor and absorption. By promoting a sense of energy, enthusiasm, and absorption in work tasks, managers can enhance the positive impact of work-life balance on employee well-being. This can be done through effective communication, recognition of employee efforts, and creating a work environment that encourages and supports engagement.

8. Limitations and recommendation for further studies

It is recognized that a single study cannot comprehensively examine all psychological variables contributing to employee well-being among millennials

employed as frontline service personnel. Therefore, it is recommended that future research explore additional psychosocial predictors of employee well-being among Millennials. Another limitation stems from the study's narrow focus on a specific research site, namely millennials in a city in Nigeria. This restricted focus may limit the generalizability of the findings to others. To enhance the generalizability, other researchers are advised to replicate the research in diverse contexts.

Furthermore, this study assessed the respondents at a single point in time, acknowledging that the variables examined are dynamic and subject to change as circumstances evolve. To overcome this limitation, adopting a longitudinal data collection method would be beneficial in capturing the dynamic nature of these variables over time. The sample size utilized in this study was relatively small, which may impact the representativeness of the findings. Addressing this issue, future studies should employ larger sample sizes to enhance the generalizability of the results to a broader population.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the study encountered limitations due to the social desirability effect. Some respondents likely expressed curiosity regarding the study's nature, potentially leading to responses that align with social norms and desirability. It is recommended that more studies should be carried out on other factors that could contribute to the well-being of millennials. This will further contribute to increased productivity and overall performance of organizations.

Conclusively, recognizing and addressing these limitations will contribute to strengthening the study's findings and advancing knowledge in the field. Future research should aim to explore additional variables, replicate the study in different contexts, employ longitudinal data collection methods, increase sample sizes, and conduct confirmatory factor analysis for comprehensive validation. Furthermore, measures should be taken to minimize the impact of social desirability and enhance the generalizability of the research.

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