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Impact of work–life policies on organizational commitment of construction professionals: role of work–life balance

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between work–life policies (WLPs) and organizational commitment, and determines if work–life balance (WLB) mediates in the relationship as it concerns female construction professionals in the Nigerian construction industry. The study adopted a quantitative research method to obtain data from 120 women professionals in the Nigerian construction industry. The paper presents a conceptual model to formulate hypotheses which were tested using PLS-SEM path analysis. The findings indicate that WLB enhances positive organizational commitment, because it partially mediates the relationship between WLPs and organizational commitment. The contribution of this study is that it affords managers and employees the opportunity to understand the significance of providing WLPs that will enable employees to balance their work and family responsibilities, which in turn increases organizational commitment. This research, the first of its kind, focused on the work–life balance of female construction professionals in the Nigerian construction industry, and the findings have implications for both practitioners and academics.

KEYWORDS

Career development; organizational commitment; path analysis; work–life balance; work–life policies

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the role and potential in work place of both women and men, have changed considerably across the globe. These changes are as a result of globalization, as well as a shift in the significance of work relative to family and leisure time (Lingard and Francis 2004). This has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of people joining the workforce, indicating improved levels of education and changes in societal attitudes. However, handling work and family duties can be very challenging for a workforce, especially in the case of dual income families. According to Lingard and Francis (2004), evidence abounds in the literature that to further their careers, women are often confronted with the choice of either delaying or foregoing child-bearing. For instance, Guillaume and Pochic (2009) reported that most women who achieved substantial career progression in the engineering field were usually single, sterile, or divorced, principally foregoing familial duties in favour of career development.

Therefore, a better understanding of the implications and effects of WLB is essential for both workers and company owners. This will assist employees to strive towards resolving the dilemma of achieving a balance between the work domain and family responsibilities (Burke et al. 2011). A balance between work-related duties and non-work-related responsibilities has become a global concern as noted by Mohd Noor et al. (2009). In fact, WLB has been described as one of the most significant business issues of the 21st century by Harrington and Ladge (2009). There have been a plethora number of studies on WLB that focused on the construction industry, most of them were applicable to conditions in Western countries, like the US (Malone and Issa 2013, 2014), Australia (Lingard et al., 2010;

Lingard et al. 2015) and New Zealand (Morrison and Thurnell 2012). There are significant differences between the socio-cultural and economic contexts of Africa and those of the West (Adisa 2016).

However, in spite of the volume of studies on WLB for the developed world, the subject is yet to attract serious attention in Africa, particularly in the Nigerian construction industry (Oyewobi et al. 2019). Nigerian construction jobs form part of a class economic activities in which women are known to be impaired in their efforts to further a successful career, and the issue of balancing work life and home responsibilities forms a substantial part of this barrier (Jimoh et al. 2016).

WLB has not been exhaustively discussed in construction management literature when compared to the mainstream of management research, where it has dominated public discourse over the past five decades. The theory of WLB, which includes ‘work–life conflict’ and ‘work–life enrichment’, has been defined in various ways in the literature. For example, Greenblatt (2002) defined WLB as the elimination of unacceptable levels of conflict between work and non-work responsibilities. Greenhaus et al. (2003) provided a more comprehensive definition of WLB, which they described as the level at which an individual is both engaged and satisfied with work and family responsibilities; this definition does consider that balance can either be positive or negative. This study by Greenhaus et al. (2003) thus aligns with a *spill-over* model which suggests that one environment can positively or negatively influence the other one (O’Driscoll 1996). In recent years however, many research efforts have focused on the relationship between work and family life experiences of people in employment. This focus is due to concern about increasing work pressures and profound changes in traditional family roles and arrangements, which are apparent in most developed nations

(Lobel et al. 1999). In response to these growing pressures which have continued unabated as a result of shifting societal norms, and which are becoming more challenging, the concept of WLB has evolved to help spouses in obtaining a balance in between work and family spheres (Lewis et al. 2007; Families and Work Institute 2008). An example of social change is the movement away from the traditional role of a male breadwinner, towards dual-income families where both spouses work and contribute to the financial commitments; dual-income families have become the norm (Eby et al. 2005; Brough et al. 2008; Families and Work Institute 2008).

These evolving changes in family responsibilities, as well as the inherent pressure exerted by working conditions, are not limited to a specific industry, the experience cut across industries. However, the extent to which these experiences affect the WLB of employees working in the construction sector is not known. Although Lingard et al. (2015) reported that the level of risk of work stress associated with excessive workloads, time constraints and deadlines within the construction industry is very high, the findings may be country specific because the work and family environment differs from one country to the other. For instance, the condition of the Australian construction industry would not be the same as what is applicable Nigeria. Lingard et al. (2015) give credence to the assertion of Leung et al. (2008) by stating that below-optimal performance of construction project managers could be linked to work stress. However, the extent to which the WLB experience of construction industry employees affects their commitment and performance, has not been given much attention, especially considering various Work-Life-Policies (WLP) of the an organization. In Australia, studies identified that there is a problem regarding the work-life experience of construction employees (Lingard and Francis 2004; Lingard et al., 2010). In fact, Lingard et al. (2010) reported that the level of interference with family life due to work-related time constraints and stress is higher among Australian construction workers than among other occupational groups. In general terms, the EOC (Equal Opportunities Commission) (1990) adduced this interference to a lack of flexibility in the working hours of many organizations, which adversely affects the ability of employees in the construction industry to strike a balance between their professional and family responsibilities. For instance, Kirk-Walker (1994) posited that very few construction organizations have policies that give employees flexible working hours, childcare facilities, career-break programmes, or that make provision for part-time work. It could be noted that most of these studies examined WLB without paying much attention to its impact on organizational commitment. This paper therefore provides empirical evidence of the role of WLB in the relationship between WLPs and organizational commitment of female construction professionals in the Nigerian construction industry.

Literature review

Theoretical background, hypotheses and conceptual model

In spite of the attention given to the concept of work-life balance as a subject of study and discussion among academics and industry practitioners, as well as the growing popularity of WLB in organizations around the globe (Kersley et al. 2005; Lingard et al. 2015), the organizational effects of this concept have not been well studied within the construction industry. The need to integrate such research within the construction sector stems

from the obvious changes in economic patterns, the shifts in demography, technological advances, the changing socio-political structures within the population, as well as the increased influx of women into the workforce (Guest 2002), all of which have continued to impact on both the nature of employment and its relationship to life outside work (Aryee et al. 2005). The social exchange theory was proposed by Blau (1964) to explore the relationship between WLB and organizational commitment; this theory hypothesized that workers who experienced a high degree of WLB are likely to be more committed than those workers who experience a low degree. Moreover, this theory is supported by the findings of Siegal et al. (2005), who established that higher levels of work-life balance are associated with increased organizational commitment, and that elevated levels of procedural equality will interact with other factors to further increase organizational commitment. Consistent with earlier advanced theoretical underpinning research (Blau 1964; O'Driscoll 1996), it is therefore, conceptualized that WLB is linked to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Cegarra-Leiva et al. 2012). This means that in a work sphere, a high level of WLB will often result in improved performance and less absenteeism of employees, while in the family sphere it will enhance an employee's well-being and family fulfilment. This is given credence by the general agreement amongst scholars that a balance between work and family roles is highly treasured by most employees (Kossek et al. 2014); it is also agreed that universally, WLB has a beneficial effect on both the well-being and work productivity, as well as the organizational commitment of employees (Lyness and Judiesch 2014).

The relationship between WLB and organizational commitment

This study focuses on organizational commitment which drives and enhances an employee's desire to stay within an organization and contribute to its performance improvement (Meyer et al. 1989). When an employee is effectively committed to an organization, emotional attachment is invoked and this increases the employee's belief in the norms, the work environment and the values of the organization; this leads to an improvement in the organizational performance (Allen and Meyer 1996; Glazer and Kruse 2008). Different contradictory relationships between WLB and organizational commitment have been reported in the literature. For example, Kossek and Ozeki (1998) and Burke and Greenglass (1999) argued that employees with high levels of work-life balance tend to reflect lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment when their job attitude is assessed. Also, in research conducted to examine the WLB experienced by IT professionals, Messersmith (2007) found that work-life balance is negatively linked to organizational commitment. On the other hand, Casper et al. (2002) reported that no negative relationship exists between work-to-life conflict and affective commitment; they examined the impact of WLB (encompassing work-to-life and life-to-work conflict resolution) on both affective and continuance commitment using a sample of employed mothers in the United States. This finding of Casper et al. is in line with that of Sakthivel and Jayakrishnan (2012), who asserted that WLB and organizational commitment are positively related and who concluded that a balance between work and family life is an indicator of organizational commitment among nursing professionals. The finding of Kim (2014) also affirmed that affective commitment improves when employees' experience work-life balance. Furthermore, in a study conducted amongst female workers within the Australian

construction industry, Lingard and Lin (2004) reported that significant predictors of organizational commitment include the opportunity for career progression and a conducive work environment (these are features of work-life policies), while family variables such as number of children or dependent children, did not show any relationship. However, to date, the relationship between work-life balance and organizational commitment is inconclusive. A few studies have reported that a negative relationship exists between work-life balance and affective commitment, while other studies have reported that no significant relationship exists between them (O'Driscoll et al. 1992). In a study conducted in Spain, Mas-Machuca et al. (2016) also reported that employee WLB is positively related to job satisfaction and job commitment. Based on the preceding background sketch, this study therefore hypothesized that:

H1: WLB will positively impact employees' organizational commitment.

The relationship between WLB, WLPs and organizational commitment

Yasbek (2004) stated that WLPs can impact organizational performance in a number of ways. The main benefits are that it can: improve recruitment and retention rates; reduce absenteeism and sick leave usage; reduce worker stress and improve employee satisfaction and loyalty. According to Toohey and Whittaker (1993), the absence of clear WLPs in many organizations has made it particularly difficult for women who desire employment in the construction industry, but who also have family commitments which must be met, often concurrently. In many instances, they are frequently faced with the choice of either following a career, or raising a family; women who opt to temporarily take leave to have a family may experience stunted growth in their career advancement (Loosemore et al. 2003). Ng et al. (2005) viewed work-family balance as one of easiest ways to manage work stress experienced by construction professionals as a result of interference between work and family. Against this background, this paper therefore examines the concept of WLB experience within the construction industry and its impact on organizational commitment. In the context of the construction sector, some studies have examined the impact of WLB on firms or employees, but many research studies viewed it from the perspective of stress (Ng et al. 2005; Leung et al. 2008; Lingard et al., 2010).

Loosemore et al. (2003) stated that there are convincing reasons why the construction industry needs to focus more on the effects of the sector's requirements on the quality of the family life experiences of employees. They contended that both male and female employees experience the spill-over effects of family-to-work as postulated by Barnett (1994), whereby individual experiences in the home domain impact on performance in the work domain. The spill-over effect is not unidirectional because family events impact on attitude in the workplace, which has repercussions for organizational performance. For example, Adams et al. (1996) posited that interference of work with family life is capable of reducing the job satisfaction and family life fulfilment of an employee. A plethora of research projects has also established that employees who benefit from the work-life initiative and family-supportive practices experience higher levels of commitment to the organization (Orthner and Pittman 1986; Grover and Crooker 1995). This is supported by Dex and Smith (2002), who argued that the application of family-friendly work policies and practices has the potential to improve organizational effectiveness, self-confidence and productivity. In a similar

studies (Sahibzada et al. 2005; Kopelman et al. 2006; Breaugh and Frye 2007) it was stated that support in the form of WLPs is associated with increased job satisfaction and a higher level of organizational commitment by employees.

In fact, Loosemore et al. (2003) pointed out that there is a stream of evidence which indicates that WLB initiatives appear to be a more effective means of promoting employees' self-confidence and nurturing a sense of commitment to the organization, than increased monetary incentives. This assertion supported the observation made by Perry-Smith and Blum (2000), that WLPs such as flexible working hours or the availability of childcare services, offer greater returns by increasing employees' commitment to the organization, which in turn yields beneficial outcomes for both the individual and the organization. Furthermore, in the study of an Australian construction project, Lingard et al. (2007) found that a shortened work period improved employees' WLB and led to the completion of the project below the budgeted cost and six months ahead of schedule. Hypothetically, WLPs give employees a sense of belonging and the reassurance that the organization they work for is concerned about their well-being and family-related needs. Social exchange theory (Blau 1964), as well as the organizational support theory (Eisenberger et al. 1986), established that when employees experience that their employer is being supportive or embarks on family-friendly policies, their attitude towards the organization improves. This improved attitude will enhance employee involvement and resourcefulness because the employee feels an increased obligation to reciprocate the organization's incentives (Lambert 2000).

H2: WLB will positively relate to WLPs (supportive policies).

H3: WLPs will positively relate to organizational commitment.

Casper and Harris (2008) found that among women, the establishment of WLB is positively related to organizational commitment when this balance is mediated by organizational policies. These findings by Casper and Harris (2008) are aligned to the proposition by Allen (2001) which states that the presence of WLB in an organization mediates the relationship between WLPs, and both affective commitment and job satisfaction. Research has also shown that the relationship between WLB interventions and employment outcomes is indirect when mediated by work-family enrichment (Baral and Bhargava 2010). It was however, empirically established that WLPs such as job autonomy, a supportive work-family culture and supervisor support, are positively related to some measures of work-to-family enrichment (Voydanoff 2004; Aryee et al. 2005; Gordon et al. 2007). Also, a stream of evidence has shown that WLB is linked to organizational commitment (e.g., Lingard et al. 2007; Kim 2014). The indication that there exists an indirect relationship between WLPs and organizational commitment, shows that WLB is a potential mediator of the relationship between WLPs and organizational commitment. This is supported by Cegarra-Leiva et al. (2012) who inferred that a work-life balance culture' mediates the relationship between work-life programmes and organizational performance, because work-life balance culture is seen as a precursor to work-life programmes-organizational outcomes relationship. Premised on these assertions, this study's hypothesis states that:

H4: WLB will mediate the relationship between WLPs and organizational commitment.

The conceptual model that indicates the hypothesized paths of the study is illustrated in Figure 1. The current research aims

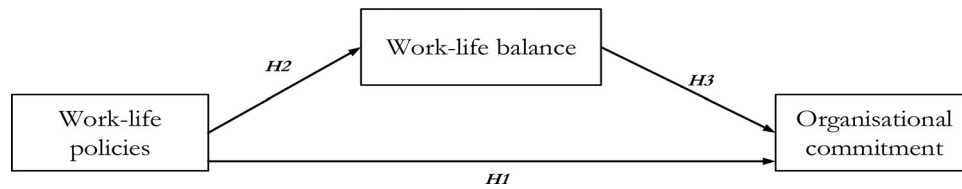


Figure 1. Conceptual model showing hypothesized paths.

to establish the relationship between the constructs depicted in the model and to test the hypothesized paths: that WLB will positively relate to organizational commitment; that WLB will positively relate to WLPs; that WLPs will positively relate to organizational commitment, and; that the relationship between WLPs and organizational commitment will be mediated by WLB.

Research methods

To achieve the aim of this study, a cross-sectional quantitative survey approach was adopted. Items included in the survey questionnaire were derived from an extensive review of the relevant literature, both within and outside the construction management field. Self-administered questionnaires were delivered to participants active within the Nigerian construction industry, specifically from Abuja and Minna. The study employed purposive sampling techniques because the population of female professionals working in the construction sector in the study area could not be ascertained; hence female members of the population who were easily accessible and available, were approached to provide relevant information for the study. The respondents for the study were identified within each of the organizations using a snowball sampling technique. To determine the appropriate sample size, N , required to make the findings meaningful, the approach employed by Ojedokun et al. (2015) was adopted. The unbiased estimating technique employed which suggests a sample size of $N > 50 + 8m$, where m is the number of independent variables involved in the study (Krosnick 1999). In this study WLB and WLPs are the two independent variables; thus the minimum sample size appropriate for this research, is 66. However, based on the number of identified respondents in the study area, 133 self-administered questionnaires were sent out, and 120 questionnaires considered suitable for the analysis were returned. This represented a response of approximately 92%.

Because the study was undertaken in the context of the Nigerian construction industry and the existing scales have been compiled for a distinctly different background, the scales were adapted to suit this study. To ensure that the adapted scales would be understood by the respondents, a pilot study was conducted amongst five female lecturers who undertake research and additionally practice as consultants within the construction industry. The pilot study participants were not involved in the main survey; they helped to assess the comprehensiveness of the questions and to remove potential ambiguities that the target participants might have found difficult to interpret or understand. Following the pilot study, a suitably amended, final version of the questionnaires was sent out.

Measures

The measures used for the constructs in this study were adapted from various research studies (Lingard and Francis 2004; Norton 2009; Lingard et al., 2010; TriCom 2010). The sources consulted

for the measures further assisted in enhancing the validity of the adapted measures by converting and extending the results from earlier research work on WLB in developed countries, to the context of the Nigerian construction sector. WLB was measured using a 15-item scale adapted from Lingard et al. (2007), Lingard et al. (2010) and TriCom (2010). This was used to assess the level of employee's work-life balance within their organizations in the last five years. Organizational commitment was measured using an Organizational Commitment Questionnaire with a 13-item scale adapted from Mowday and Richard (1979), Cook and Wall (1980), and Norton (2009). WLPs were assessed using a 42-item scale sourced from Hudson Resourcing (2005) and TriCom (2010). To effectively measure these construct items that evaluated work-life infrastructure and culture, the following were included: leave benefits, flexible work arrangements, as well as employees support schemes. These items were assessed based on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'.

Analysis and results

The data obtained were analysed using the partial least-square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method, a path analytic technique that gives an overall test of model fit and an evaluation of model parameters (Byrne 2010). PLS is a structural equation modelling instrument that generates loadings and weights between items and constructs; it also estimates standardized regression coefficients for the paths connecting the constructs (Croteau and Bergeron 2001). Some of the benefits of using PLS are that it uses a least-square estimation procedure which offers the flexibility required to represent both formative and reflective latent constructs, and that no basic assumptions about data distribution are required (Podsakoff et al. 2006; Esposito Vinzi et al. 2010). PLS-SEM analysis was conducted using software called SmartPLS 3.2.6, which was also adopted by Ringle et al. (2015).

Measurement model assessment

Firstly, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the items used for measuring each of the three latent variables included in this study to determine the best indicator for an individual construct; these variables were (WLB, WLPs) and organizational commitment. Although the scales used are well established and were adapted from past subject literature with an explicit theoretical underpinning (Memon et al. 2017), the CFA was employed because of the need to identify those items that actually explain the constructs. Four indicators were retained for the work-life balance construct, four indicators were retained for WLPs, and two indicators were retained for organizational commitment (see Tables 1–3). Next, the reliability and validity of reflective measurement models were assessed. In the course of evaluating the reliability of the indicators, three indicators were retained for each of WLB and WLPs, while two indicators from

Table 1. Rotated factor analysis of WLB.

Coding	WLB measures	Components				Communalities (h)
		1	2	3	4	
Self and family support (SLFP)						
WLB6	I have external support I need (e.g. family, friends etc.)	0.68				0.57
WLB9	I spend sufficient time with the important people in my life (e.g. family, friends etc.)	0.70				0.78
WLB10	I am fully present and enjoy the time spent when I am with the important people in my life (e.g. family outings, gathering with friends etc.)	0.87				0.79
WLB11	All in all, I am satisfied with the relationship I have with the important people in my life (e.g. family, friends etc.)	0.84				0.75
WLB12	I have an area of focus outside of myself that brings me peace (e.g. Spiritual practice, community development etc.)	0.79				0.71
WLB13	I am able to extend my help to people around me when they need it	0.88				0.83
WLB14	I have a sense of control over important things in my life	0.90				0.87
WLB15	I can effectively manage both my work responsibilities and personal aspirations (e.g. personal life goals, family planning).	0.86				0.83
Work and life influence (WLIF)						
WLB2	While I am at home I am free of worry about work matters		0.62			0.60
WLB3	While I am at work I am free of worry about my day-day personal matters		0.54			0.66
WLB7	I am satisfied with my life outside of work		0.72			0.63
Self-satisfaction (SLSF)						
WLB8	I have enough time to pursue my own interests and hobbies			0.83		0.89
WLB1	I feel well physically			-0.72		0.60
Job satisfaction (JBSF)						
WLB4	I am satisfied with my job				0.90	0.83
	Eigenvalue	6.504	1.703	1.556	1.035	
	% Explained variance	43.360	11.352	10.374	6.902	
% Total explained variance: 71.88						
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy:						0.74
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity						1316.99
						df
						105
						Sig.
						0.00

the initial model were retained for organizational commitment because they showed loadings that were above a threshold of 0.70 (see Tables 4 and 5). Other indicators having loadings below 0.70 were removed because of the likely unfavourable effects they might have on convergent validity, as well as on the reliability of

the construct measures (Sarstedt et al. 2014). The average variance extracted (AVE) for this model met the minimum threshold of 0.50 for the reflective latent variables (Hair et al. 2012), thus showing convergent validity for all constructs included in the model (see Table 4). To assess the internal consistency reliability of the constructs, the composite reliabilities (CR) for all the reflectively measured constructs ranged from 0.83 to 0.92, exceeding the minimum requirement of 0.70 (Sarstedt et al. 2014). Moreover, Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion for discriminant validity suggests that the square root of AVE of each construct should be higher than the correlations among the latent variables. All the values were greater than each of the inter-construct correlations, and all indicator loadings were greater than their respective cross-loadings, which gave a further indication that discriminant validity was achieved. Table 5 indicates the AVE values on the diagonal and the squared inter-construct correlations off the diagonal.

Structural model assessment

This section assesses the structural model results after the reliability and validity of the construct measures had been established. To interpret the path coefficients in accordance to Sarstedt et al. (2014), the collinearity statistic of the structural model was examined. This model was based on the assertion of Mooi and Sarstedt (2011), who posited that the assessment of the path coefficients is centred on ordinary least squares regressions. This is reiterated by Hair et al. (2014) who stated that the results of such an assessment may be prejudiced if collinearity is present. Consequently, a test for collinearity carried out and it was found that the variance inflation factor (VIF) of the analyses was 1.566, which is less than 10 and also, the tolerance level is less than 1. This showed that there was no multicollinearity that could negatively affect the structural model results (Sarstedt et al. 2014). Subsequently the predictive power of the endogenous variables was examined (see Figure 2 and Table 6) which shows that the R^2 is 0.866 for the organizational commitment endogenous latent variable. This indicates that the two latent variables (WLB and WLPs) strongly explain 86.6% of the variance in the organizational commitment of the employees. However, work-life policies explain only 36.1% of the variance in WLB (Figure 3).

To assess the structural model's predictive significance for each of the endogenous latent variables, blindfolding was employed. The blindfolding procedure was run using the default setting, whereby an omission distance of seven yielded cross-validated redundancy values for both endogenous latent variables. These variables are well above zero (Work-life balance: 0.293; Organizational commitment: 0.624), confirming the model's predictive importance. Finally, in assessing the structural model, the internal model path coefficient sizes and significance were evaluated. This was achieved by running the bootstrapping procedure (120 cases, 5000 samples, no sign changes option), which showed that three hypothesized structural paths are significant ($p \leq 0.05$), based on the total effect as shown in Table 7. The results in Table 7 underscore the essential role and the need to have work-life policies for employees. With path coefficients of 0.549 and 0.601 for work life and non-work life at the organizations, it indicates the contribution of WLPs in stimulating WLB and improving organizational commitment. Furthermore, work-life policies have a significant effect on organizational commitment; with a path coefficient of 0.49 however, the effect is moderate. This may be as a result of the unavailability of most of these policies within the organizations from which the

Table 2. Rotated factor analysis of organizational commitment.

Coding	Organizational commitment measure	Components		Communalities (h)
		1	2	
	Self-assessment (SLFA)			
OC5	This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	0.90		0.85
OC6	I really care about the fate of this organization.	0.91		0.83
OC7	I sometimes feel like leaving this employment for good.	0.63		0.49
OC10	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	0.65		0.64
OC11	There's is too much to gain by sticking with this organization indefinitely.	0.83		0.70
OC12	I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.	0.78		0.72
OC13	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.	0.74		0.56
OC8	I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	0.61		0.68
OC1	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	0.56		0.57
	Committed to the organization (ORCM)			
OC2	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.		0.87	0.80
OC3	This organization deserves my loyalty		0.75	0.62
	Eigenvalue	6.670	1.610	
	% Explained variance	51.307	12.384	
	% Total explained variance	63.64		
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy			0.82
	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		1167.49
			df	78
			Sig.	0.00

respondents were drawn. Further examination of the model indicates that WLPs have a stronger direct effect on organizational commitment than WLB (0.549 versus 0.490). However, when the indirect effect of WLPs on organizational commitment was considered through the mediator WLB, the path coefficient was found to be 0.844. This finding is supported by de Sivatte et al. (2015) who found that for work-life programmes to mediate in the relationship between work-life culture and outcome, the relationship must be direct. The resultant total effect is given by the following equation (see Sarstedt et al. 2014):

$$\text{Total effect} = \text{direct effect} + \text{indirect effect}$$

$$\text{Total effect} = 0.549 + 0.601 \times 0.49 = 0.844$$

However, the result shows that the total effect is much higher than the direct effect of WLB on organizational commitment (0.490); this emphasizes the significant role of WLB in driving organizational commitment. This gives support to the hypothesis, *H4*, that WLB mediates the relationship between WLPs and organizational commitment. However, to assess whether the level of mediation is partial or total, the approach used by Sarstedt et al. (2014) was followed, where the variance accounted for (VAF) was calculated using the formula:

$$\text{VAF} = \frac{\text{indirect effect}}{\text{total effect}} = \frac{0.295}{0.844} = 0.350$$

If $\text{VAF} > 80\%$ – it is full mediation; if $20\% \leq \text{VAF} \leq 80\%$ – partial mediation, and; if $\text{VAF} < 20\%$ – there is no mediation.

The results of this final analysis step yielded a VAF value of 0.35; this shows that if the rule of thumb is applied, work-life

balance partially mediates the relationship between WLP and organizational commitment (Hair, Jr. et al. 2014).

Discussion of findings

This study argued that the impact of work-life policies available to female professionals might be indirect, in line with previous approaches used by Grover and Crooker (1995), which established that the benefits of WLB include an understanding of organizational support for employees, which in turn raises commitment. Although the relationship appears to be complex, the analysis indicated that WLB has a strongly positive relationship with organizational commitment, as was postulated in *H1*. This finding affirms a similar assertion by Kossek and Ozeki (1998), who reported that organizational commitment is linked to work-to-family conflict. This is premised on the fact that many previous research papers, such as Carlson et al. (2009), defined work-life balance as concerning the level of work-life conflict. Contrary to the finding in this paper, Brandt et al. (1998) reported a negative relationship between an ambiguous work role and organizational commitment. However, findings from the research of Muse et al. (2008) and Casper et al. (2011) underscored the results obtained that work-life balance has a positive effect on employees' affective commitment to their organizations.

In examining the hypothesis that stated that WLB will positively relate to WLP (supportive policies), it was found that a positive and strong relationship between WLP and WLB exists. This argument is in line with Lingard et al. (2007), who found that availability of WLB in the construction industry is capable

Table 3. Rotated factor analysis work–life policies.

coding	WLPs measures	Component				Communalities
		1	2	3	4	
	Support scheme (SPSC)					
WL20	Study/Exam leave	0.52				0.64
WL21	Renewal/Career Break	0.60				0.55
WL23	Program for emergency care of ill dependents	0.55				0.51
WL24	Childcare programmes during school vacation	0.58				0.60
WL25	Care arrangements/subsidies, e.g. On-site child care Centre, family/lactation room	0.82				0.72
WL26	Family information and referral service	0.88				0.83
WL27	Family life education programmes	0.83				0.85
WL31	Family relocation/orientation program	0.85				0.80
WL32	Medical and insurance coverage for family members	0.71				0.83
WL33	Financial assistance scheme (scholarship/bursaries)	0.68				0.67
WL34	Time-saving services	0.71				0.70
WL35	Re-entry scheme	0.82				0.74
WL36	Phased retirement	0.84				0.76
WL37	Sabbatical leave	0.62				0.61
WL39	Life skill programmes	0.78				0.65
WL40	Subsidized exercise for fitness Centre	0.74				0.73
WL41	Relocation assistance	0.77				0.77
WL42	Work and family resource kit or library	0.76				0.76
	Flexible work arrangement (FLWA)					
WL5	Alternative work schedules, e.g. Compressed work week		0.70			0.56
WL6	Permanent part-time		0.71			0.78
WL7	Flexi-hours		0.85			0.80
WL8	Flexi-place		0.81			0.68
WL10	Work-at-home programmes		0.73			0.58
WL11	Part-time work		0.71			0.52
WL12	Shorter work days for parents		0.73			0.68
WL13	Job sharing		0.67			0.52
WL16	Paternity leave		0.72			0.75
WL17	Family care leave (childcare/eldercare sick leave)		0.76			0.74
WL18	Bereavement leave		0.84			0.78
	Work benefit (WKBF)					
WL15	Marriage leave			0.70		0.56
WL19	Emergency leave/Unrecorded time off for family/personal matters			0.66		0.66

(continued)

Table 3. Continued.

coding	WLPs measures	Component				Communalities
		1	2	3	4	
WL1	Has your organization initiated or developed a strategic plan to help employees harmonize work and family/personal life commitments?			0.70		0.67
WL30	Health & wellness program			0.70		0.73
	Work-life infrastructure (WLST)					
WL28	Social activities for singles				−0.73	0.71
WL29	Social activities that include family members, eg. Family Day				−0.58	0.73
WL2	Has your organization created a Work-Life task force or committee?				0.55	0.55
WL3	Has your organization offered training to managers on how to help employees harmonize work and family/personal life commitments?				0.62	0.61
WL4	Has your organization conducted an employee needs assessment on work and family/personal life needs?				0.70	0.71
	Eigenvalue	11.63		8.124.11	3.69	
	% Explained variance	27.68		19.349.79	8.79	
	% Total explained variance: 65.596					
	KMO and Bartlett's test					
	Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.			0.67		
	Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7454.25			
		df	861			
		Sig.	0.00			

of shortening the completion period and lowering the estimated budget of construction projects in Australia. In fact, Porter and Ayman (2010) argued that the presence of WLPs reduces the interference and stress between the work and family responsibilities of employees. Studies such as Knudsen (2009) and Wood et al. (2010) observed that for most women, the demand of work-related issues frequently interfere with their family roles, producing negative influences such as declining feelings of achievement amongst others. The focus of this study is on female construction professionals, and the findings from the proposition are in consonance with those of Beham and Drobnic (2010) who observed that family-friendly policies that balance work and family life, are significant and would bring about commitment.

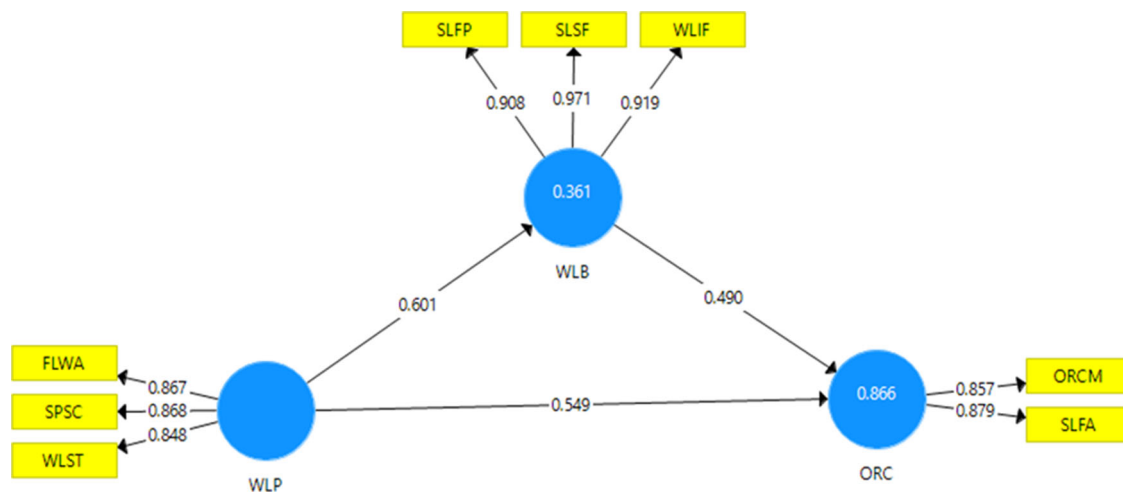
Table 4. Results summary for reflective outer models.

Latent Variable	Indicators	Loadings	Indicator reliability (i.e., loadings 2)	Composite reliability	AVE	Cronbach's alpha
Commitment	Self-assessment	0.879	0.773	0.859	0.753	0.673
	Commitment to organization	0.857	0.735			
Policies	Flexible work arrangement	0.867	0.752	0.896	0.741	0.826
	Support scheme	0.868	0.753			
	Work life infrastructures	0.848	0.719			
Work-life balance	Self and family support	0.908	0.825	0.953	0.871	0.926
	Work and life influence	0.919	0.845			
	Self-satisfaction	0.971	0.943			

Table 5. Discriminant validity of constructs.

Latent variable	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Organizational commitment	Work-life balance	Work-life policies
Organisational commitment	0.753	0.868		
Work-life balance	0.871	0.820	0.933	
Work-life policies	0.741	0.844	0.601	0.861

Note. Diagonals represent the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) while the other entries represent the correlations.

**Figure 2.** Structural model with path coefficient and R^2 values.**Table 6.** R^2 , communality, and redundancy.

Latent Variable	Indicators	R-Square	Communality	Redundancy	P-Values
Organizational Commitment	Self-assessment	0.866	0.252	0.624	0.000
	Commitment to organization				
Work life balance policies	Flexible work arrangement	0.000	0.445	0.000	
	Support scheme				
	Work life infrastructures				
Work life balance	Self and family support	0.361	0.640	0.293	0.000
	Work and life influence				
	Self-satisfaction				

In establishing whether WLPs relate positively to organizational commitment, the study showed that although WLPs exhibit a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment, the effect is weak. This may be as a result of the unavailability, or uncommitted implementation of most of these family-friendly policies within the organizations. The results of the study reported in this paper are consistent with the findings of previous research, such as that of Haar and Spell (2004), who reiterated that a culture of family-support work is linked to affective commitment, and the results also support the assertion of Choo et al. (2016) who posited that the availability of policies with flexible work hours are predictors of an employee's organizational commitment.

Based on the data collected however, the available policies showed that WLB mediates the relationship between WLPs and

organizational commitment corroborating (H_4). The findings from the data analysed in this study, offer support to hypothesis H_1 which stated that WLB is positively and significantly linked to WLPs. This finding is line with the result of Baral and Bhargava (2010), who contended that the relationship between WLB interventions and job outcomes is mediated by work-family enrichment, and it also agrees with Allen (2001) and Cegarra-Leiva et al. (2012) who stated that balanced work and family life gives rise to increased job satisfaction and increased organizational commitment.

Conclusion

This study has been able to contribute to the existing literature on WLB in the construction management field, by exploring the

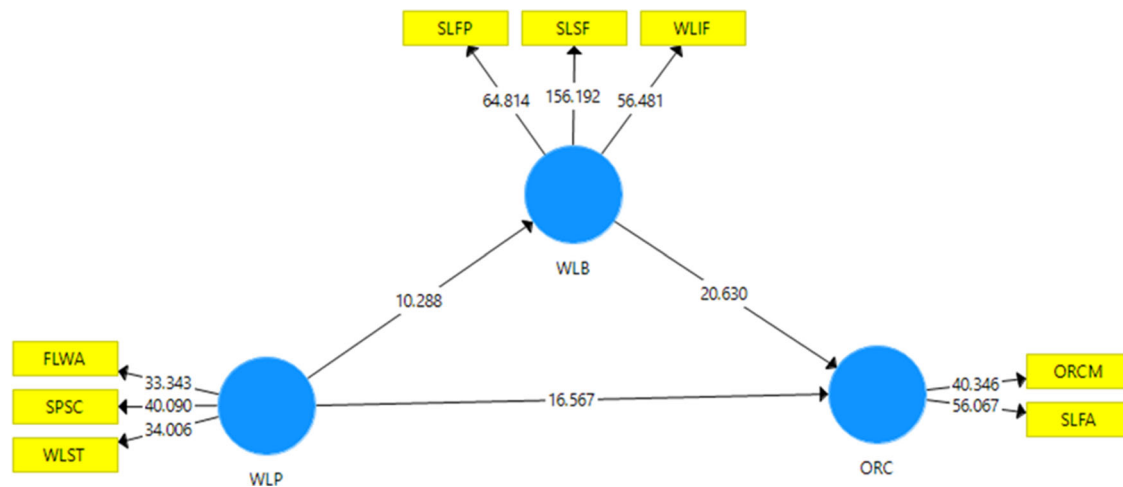


Figure 3. Structural model with bootstrapping values.

Table 7. Path coefficients and hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	T Statistics	P-Value	Supported
H1	Work-life balance will positively relate to organizational commitment.	0.490	20.630	0.000	Yes
H2	Work-life balance is positively related to work life policies	0.601	10.288	0.002	Yes
H3	Work-life policies is positively related to organizational commitment	0.549	16.567	0.007	Yes
H4	Work-life balance will mediate in the relationship between work-life policies and organizational commitment	0.844	NA	NA	Yes

Note. NA – not available.

mediating role of work-life balance in the relationship between WLP and organizational commitment. In a testable model, this paper illustrated the relationships between three different constructs, namely WLB, WLP and organizational commitment. Four hypothesized statements were postulated to corroborate the relationship as revealed in the literature. Based on these findings, the authors therefore argue that the availability of family-friendly policies, mediated by WLB will enhance the organizational commitment of female professional employees in the industry. Using the SEM-PLS technique, this study found that work-life balance suggestively predicted WLPs and organizational commitment. The results also indicate that improvement in WLB was positively linked to both WLPs and organizational commitment, that the establishment of an organizational philosophy which enhances WLB through family-friendly policies is a recipe for organizational commitment, and that WLB is significantly related to WLPs, indicating that organizational commitment improves only when employees perceived a balance between work life and non-work life.

In summary, the findings of this study indicated that the institution of family-friendly policies in construction organizations would lead to improved organizational commitment of female employees, which in turn will make organizations successful in other spheres. The findings of this study will provide valuable awareness for industry practitioners, stakeholders, academics, owners of construction organizations, and policy-makers in the construction sector. The study established that a more pro-active WLPs intervention is essentially required to guarantee an employee-friendly work environment and to promote the use of more family-friendly policies in places of work. Despite the justification given for examining the influence of WLB on female construction professionals, which has limited the generalization of the findings presented here, a consideration of the impact of WLB on both genders would undoubtedly yield a better and more generalized results. This is one of the limitations of this

paper which should be considered in future research. Another limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data used. It is thus suggested that a longitudinal design with a larger sample size should be employed, when testing the hypotheses developed in a future research.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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