

## **WORK AND LEISURE IN AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

Work and Leisure are concepts understood differently by different class of people thus needs a clarification in an organizational perspective. This paper attempts to take a critical look at both concept and comes to a conclusion that, Work in an organization is paid employment and thus time sold by an individual in compensation for money or something of that sort. While Leisure is withdrawal from work either within the workplace or moving away from the work place for some sort of private activity whether productive or not. In addition, employees in organizations should seek better ways of managing work challenges rather than misusing Internet enabled Computers and Cable News enabled Television Sets meant to facilitate access to both local and international information while in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Work, Leisure, Contemporary, Organisation

### **Introduction**

For over three decades now, individual's quest to work in either private or public organizations has increased desperately in Nigeria. The reasons are not far-fetched and include the high number of men and women graduating yearly from the Nation's Institutions of Higher Learning and scouting for white-collar jobs, the economic down turn resulting from domestic structural and institutional imbalances, the contagion effect from the global economic downturn, the uncertainty associated with the local business environment, especially, availability of credit to start new businesses or expand existing businesses, the direct negative impact from bad governance, etc.

The above factors have resulted to a high level of unemployment in the Country. To address the issue of unemployment and pursue the goal of work for all, successive governments had initiated various policies and programmes, stepped up campaign over the years calling on all citizens to work and work harder for a living. Government intentions of putting in place policy measures and the necessary instruments are aimed at ensuring the enabling environment exists for investors to set up new businesses and further attract foreign investible funds. The ultimate goal of government is employment generation and raising the standard of living for all citizenry, directly or indirectly. The question whether governments at all levels are committed to their policies and campaigns or not is for all individuals to seek answers, especially in Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this paper, the paper is divided

into four interconnected sections. The next section examines the concept of work and leisure as used in the work environment. The third section presents the materials and methods for the study and the final section presents the concluding remarks.

## **Conceptualisation of Work and Leisure**

### **Meaning of Work**

The New Webster Dictionary of the English Language defines work as the "mental and physical activity undertaken to achieve a purpose and involving the expenditure of effort or purpose for which one expend such efforts". To an Economist, "work is a major factor of production consisting of manual and material exertion for which wages, salaries and professional fees are received". To Firth, "work is an income producing activity or is a purposeful activity entailing expenditure or energy at some sacrifice of pleasure or leisure". To Kuper and Kuper, "work is any physical and mental activities, which transform natural material into more useful form, improve human knowledge and understanding of the World, provide or distribute goods and services to others". To Marshall, "work is the supply of physical, mental and emotional efforts to produce goods or services for own consumption or consumption of others". Marshall went further to classify work into three classes and include

- i. Economic Activity or Paid Employment
- ii. Unpaid Domestic Work or Work during Leisure
- iii. Volunteer Community Services

On Marshall's classification, it is interesting to question whether there exists boundary between the identified classifications of work. The answer is simply a matter of concept based on the individual and organizational thinking bothered on purpose of work, mission, ethics, religion, culture and history. To Armstrong, "Work is an emotional exertion of effort and the application of knowledge and skill to achieve a purpose". Work is an interesting exercise because at some point, the said knowledge and skills are acquired while on the job.

A critical review of the above definitions of work suggests that, work is a value creation but productive process. This goes further to underscore the argument that, people work not only because they want to earn a living but also because in the midst of earning a living, work brings other satisfaction such as doing something worthwhile, a sense of achievement, prestige, recognition, the opportunity to use and develop abilities, exercise power and expand relationships.

In any organization, the nature of work carried out by an employee or member and what he or she feels about it is governed by the contract establishing the employment relationship. Employment relationship is that relationship that exists between the employees and the employer in the work contract.

## **Nature of work**

Work is a universal concept but means different thing to different people. To those holding public trust, that is, those in governance, the people need to work and work harder for a living. To the young school leaver, the graduate applicant, and the unemployed, work is what they are desperately seeking for to enable them earn a living. To the homemaker or house-wife, she works hard every day to keep the house in order by ensuring food is available for all, the house is tidy and controlling the children at home. Equally, to the self-employed, he or she works very hard to make ends meet by ensuring that his/her business secures the much-needed jobs/contracts to be in business in order to earn a living. To the peasant farmers who are out in the fields farming daily, to ensure their farms are given the much-needed attention so that crops would bring forth good yield/ harvest with which they will sell to meet other necessities in life, they are equally working hard and harder. To the children, who are out daily hawking in the streets to ensure they contribute to help their parents in the provision of food and other necessities, they are equally working hard.

However, to the concept of this paper, work means paid employment in an organization, whether private or public and the type of work an employee does influences the amount of time and energy the individual would expend at work. Work is the application of knowledge and skill to achieve a purpose for which men and women receive salaries and wages. The above meaning of work reminds us of the fact that once an individual is employed in an organization, it means, for a reward in form of wages and salaries, the employee had surrendered some hours of his or her available time for what he or she is paid for. To this end, an employee is having a contractual obligation to make available him/her-self for the purpose of the employment contract 24/7 days. No doubt, people work not only as a means of providing a living for themselves but also as a means of satisfying the needs and wants of others. This perhaps informed Johnnie (2000) to argue that, "the modern day worker also assumes work as productive and that one of works greatest asset is the provision of economic value for goods and services provided". Work on the premises of this argument is a transformation process with which people convert goods or services from one form to another, and in each process or stage, there is value added which attempt to meet the needs of others for which an exchange in one form or the other would take place.

Work no doubt comes with some degree of respect no matter the behaviour exhibited on the job. This thinking about work goes further to exonerate the position of the Protestants who see work as any conscious and purposeful activity, which with satisfaction serves the material and spiritual needs of the individual and the community the worker serves. In this view, work links people in common affairs and put men and women in contact with nature in an effort to earn a living. The second part of work as a means of contact with nature should not be viewed as too religious in an industrial world

characterized by information explosion, facilitated by information and communication technology. In contemporary organizations, most people are actually hiring out their services. To this end, an employee is paid wages or salary for rendering a service - involved in the production of goods and services. Such an employee to purchase other necessities in life uses the wages or salaries earned. It is interesting to state that, the Clergy are not insulated from this thinking about work. It is the same reason we have all as individuals struggled to secure paid employment, firstly, to raise our standard of living; secondly, to gain respect; thirdly, to satisfy the needs of others, and above all, to serve other people and do what we consider right in the sight of God.

In another perspective, work is a serious part of an individual's everyday life. Work is praiseworthy even though it is not always enjoyable. Work contributes something others are willing to pay for in satisfaction of a given need. This underscores the fact why people sell their time to another – the employer who uses it to produce goods or services, goods or services for own consumption or those sold to a target audience. Therefore, what one does in a sold time, is work. On the other hand, time not sold which one has is private and leisure centered no matter what one does with it. This position goes further to support the rationale why employers pay employees extra monies in form of overtime or extra duty allowance when an employee is called up to put more hours in work than expected in every workday or attend work in a work free day.

Work is a unique opportunity for human experience. Work puts men and women in rapport with material, tools as well as other men and women. Through work, men and women acquires social status, gain respect, exhibit knowledge and skill, and contribute to the development of the community and the world in general. This fact about work is undisputable. Organizations employ people for different purposes whether private or public. As organizations employ people, responsibility assignments is carried out intended to occupy paid time, hours the organization firmly believes would be used for its activities. The zeal at which an individual perform his/her work differs from one person to person. Usually, some individuals are more engrossed to their work than others are to the extent that they may not consider sold time. These are the category of workers/employees those that enjoy their work no matter the nature of work, thus, they do not cost their work in terms of sold time and what they do. In the same vein, rational manager know how to reward such individuals. Most times, other employees not rewarded alongside with these hardworking individuals considers management decision to be bias, while in reality, it is far from truth.

The observed difference in zeal toward work perhaps informed Santyana (1959) to list three motives to work and include (i) Want, (ii) Ambition and (iii) Love of Occupation

Under the Want motive, "people desire to work is to enable them satisfy their basic needs". This fact suggests that people would take up a job just to earn money for a living. It is not a material fact whether the job fits them or not. These categories of workers are of the likelihood to move out of an organization as soon as they secure what they consider better opportunity. The bottom-line is that, the want to work and ability to work are two different things.

Under the Ambition motive, people desire to work is to enable them achieve set target in life. Ambition is one's set goal, which an individual is determined to achieve in the near future. To this end, an individual would do all that is humanly possible within his/her reach to go ahead and may explore all possible means to accomplish a set target goal. This motive suggests that, once an individual gains employment in any organization, the individual would predict where he or she would be in the organization within a specified time and works assiduously toward the attainment of such a fit. At some instance, ambition dictates to an individual how to use up his/her private or leisure time for the advancement of the individual's course. On the premises of this, private time is used for the improvement of knowledge and skill, formally or informally at the individual's own cost and until this step is boldly taken, the individual may not achieve his/her ambition.

The third motive is the love of occupation and perhaps the noblest of all work motives. The love of occupation motive suggests that peoples' choice of a particular profession or career is because of their desire to be identified with that profession or career even though predetermined by several factors. The choice of a career is also dictated by several factors, which include (i) family background, (ii) the desire to be recognized, (iii) passion for the profession, (iv) economic gains, (v) the role of career guidance counselors, etc. However, very few people can agree that they work because of their love for a particular profession or occupation. The love for a profession or occupation may or may not exist in some organizations because job assignment will peg job description, especially at the lowers in the organization. This means no matter the experience attained by the employee, management would not permit such an individual to undertake some task that are challenging independently, thereby making their job to be mostly routine, less of creativity and innovation. The Medical profession and the Banking industry are glaring examples.

Work under the three motives of work is primarily tied to earning a living with attendant secondary benefits. The desire of an individual to accept a particular job, set targets to achieve, or pursue a given profession or occupation is to earn better wages, gain respect and recognition by way of contributions to the well-being of the society.

### **Work in a Modern Organization**

Work in the context of this paper is any paid employment with which individuals earn their living. The desire to earn a living compels one to enter

into an employment relationship, a relationship that enables one to sell his/her time for a reward called salaries and wages. The quest to enter employment relationship propels individuals to find job in different work environment intended to earn a living. Because businesses/organizations are set up for the provision of different goods and services intended to meet the needs and wants of many, there also exist variations in the situations and environment people stay to carry out their jobs. It is based on the forgoing observed variations that perhaps informed Dubin (1974) to list some features of work, which includes

- Work role separate from family role
- Submission to autocratic authority
- Strict discipline and regimentation
- Narrow description
- Interpersonal relationship
- Layoffs

Work role is separate from family life. This attribute of work suggests that work life is sharply distinct from family life in orientation, content, time and distance. Thus, an employee or people must be ready to learn and accept the new orientation, content and time management as demanded in the work place.

Workers or employees are always obliged to be submissive to some form of autocratic authority in a workplace. This attribute of work suggests that, regardless of rank, most employees in conventional organizations do have a boss to whom they report daily. The prevailing organizational practice in contemporary world is that subordinates are accountable to their boss. This fact suggests that, the boss have a right to impose his will on subordinates provided such an action is in good faith and in the best interest of the organization. There is no gain saying on the fact that at some instance, there exist a conflict between what is considered the best interest of the organization and the personal values of the individual worker. Once this conflict is sharp, there is the likelihood of movement by the worker no matter the financial benefits attached to the job or the management of the organization fires the worker.

There is strict discipline and regimentation in modern organizations. In all forms of modern organizations, organizational managers in their wisdom do create and put in place control systems intended to regulate behavior of all people. These control measures are to harmonize the different background of people brought together by the organization to work for the achievement of its goals in an ethical manner without contravening regulatory authority. In contemporary organizations, the development of code of conduct and the creation of sub-structures within the organization best suits the purpose.

In modern organizations, there is a job description for each employee. Modern organizational managers are of the view that for efficient performance, individual employees need to be assigned specific roles in their daily work life. This is to make them accountable and responsible for actions and inactions. The assignment of roles would enable Managers to evaluate the performance of

each employee in terms of productivity and for purposes of reward. The ultimate goal is increase in efficiency, greater output and good service delivery.

Modern organizations also encourage interpersonal relationships among members. Modern organizations bring together people from different background. Thus, to be able to cope and survive in the work place, people by reasons of work carry out adjustment in their lifestyle and accept both the demand of organization and the lifestyle of other members.

Layoffs are no longer strange news in modern day work life. This is associated with the uncertainty surrounding the business environment as well as the economy of Nations. Over three decades ago, securing a job in any public sector organizations was as good as having a meal ticket for the rest of one's life by reasons of government pension schemes, especially in my Country, Nigeria. Today, the public sector workers are no longer insulated from layoffs. This situation is also applicable to other developing economies as well as the advance World. The private sector is witnessing severe layoffs all over the World due to dwindling business earnings in the midst of increasing cost of business operations. This suggests that, there is insecurity among workers be they in the private or public sector. This emphasizes the fact that, workers must put in their best, be more innovative in their work places so that organizations would achieve the organizational aim of being a going concern. The World economy had placed more burdens on the average worker to be productive and value added at all circumstances if they are to stay employed and bargain competently on their welfare.

Another attribute of a modern organization is diversity of workforce. Modern organizations are a collection of people from different background either locally or internationally for a common goal. This gives more burdens to managers of these organizations. For the common good of the organization, members or employees are compelled to surrender part of their lifestyle and values to accept organizational values and lifestyle. This they do in acceptance of the organizations Code of Conduct and Ethics they have volunteered to work with.

## **Leisure**

Leisure according to the New Webster Dictionary of the English Language is "free time, time an individual is free from the need to do any work". This suggests that, leisure is time not sold by an individual for pay. Leisure is time available to the worker that he or she is free from the obvious and formal duties which a paid job or regulatory occupation imposes upon them. To Dumeziedier (1959) "Leisure is the activity to which an individual freely devote himself outside the needs and obligation of his occupation or work, his family and society for relaxation, diversion and personal development". To David Steindl-Rast, Leisure is the balance between work and rest thus concluded that leisure is the opposite of idleness. Leisure from the above definition suggests that, it is an activity an employee or worker participate outside his/her official

sold time; an activity the worker intended to enjoy maximally during such a free time. The participant in a leisure activity is under no compulsion to participate and he or she is supposed to have maximum utility from engaging in such an event.

However, for the purpose of this paper, leisure means withdrawal from official work activity and involvement instead in a pleasurable activity, whether in the worker place or moving away from the work environment to participate in such an activity during work hours. The activity may or may not be highly valued by the individual. Leisure may or may not be productive but must not involve the social responsibilities attached to an individual's social roles in the workplace. This is perhaps why some organizational experts consider leisure as the converse of work or escape from work. They argue that, some employees feel that their job description place too many physical and mental demands on them, while others feel that their job descriptions are intrinsically boring and uninteresting. Hence, they view leisure as an avenue to relieve pent-up emotions and tensions stemming from work. No doubt, some workers to deal with the two scenarios above may indulge in and participate in certain activities that may take place within and around the work place, activities that may be purely outside one's job description. This approach to fatigue and time management in a paid employment is unethical and equally unacceptable. Employees are expected to seek better ways of managing on the job challenges. From the foregoing above, one can boldly conclude that in a work place and during official hours of paid work, the employee must not carved out time out of official time and allocate it to any activity outside the business of the organization. This fact is applicable whether an employee is called up to perform a specific task or not; whether the job description is boring or uninteresting; whether the job description places too much mental and physical demand on the employee or not. This is to say, there is no time for any form of leisure activity during paid work hours. The organization that one works is equally not of any difference in the circumstance.

### **Material and Methods**

The materials for this study were collected from secondary sources. The secondary data are those obtained from works of other scholars for different purposes, which includes textbooks, journals, business magazines, professional publications, and past research studies. The secondary data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis. According to Ndiyo (2005), descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. They are directed toward determining the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study. Baridam (2001), Osuala (2005) also stated that descriptive analysis largely describes and explains the various activities of human actions in the society.

### **Discussion of Electronic Media and Leisure Activity in a Work Place**

Information is perhaps one of the greatest assets in any modern organization. Accessing information as well as the management of information are vital processes for any organization. Modern organizational managers do believe that members' access to global information while in the work place is of vital



importance. In addition, to achieve efficiency in information generation, capture and processing for the purposes of the organization's work and further facilitate access to global information, modern offices are equipped with both Computers and Cable News enabled Television sets to meet the needs of workers and members. Because information and communication technology has made the World, a global village, workers and members of organization are always ready to have access to all sorts of information during work hours and no boundary exist for even private information. The Internet and the Cable News are two major sources for global information. The question is, are these sources of global information a problem to workplace? The answer is simply Yes and No.

Computers are known for their accuracy and speed to process information if the right data are fed to it. Computers are also the basis for having access to the internet. In addition, once the Internet is enabled, access to global information is at the tip of the fingers. The information sort for from the Internet is not limited to organizations but users are equally privileged to access private information during official work hours. The misuse of technology – computers and cellular phones in the office or organization by the users especially when it is internet enable for online browsing, either for private mails, playing quake games, looking at personal investments or pornography sites are impediments to productivity. In the same vein, Television sets and Cable News Technology Equipment placed in offices are placed for members to have access to both local and international news while in the workplace. However, should the worker misuse these facilities by way of staying glue to the screen to an aired programme in expense of official work, it is justifiable to say that on the hands of the employee, leisure takes precedence to paid work thus no longer desirable.

Modern day organizations' managements desire to ensure fantastic work environment must not be taken to mean a way of encouraging leisure in any circumstance. This is a fact because work time is paid time. Leisure whether presumed to be productive must not be allowed to intervene into work time for such would bring about fracture in the employment relationship between the employer and the employee.

The employer – employee relationship is a critical one and do affect any organization's performance. Both parties in the relationship assume certain duties and obligations that have to be respected and honoured. On the part of the employer, employer – employee relationship must be targeted at satisfying employees at work, emphasizing interesting and challenging work, performance based compensation, and training to help employees become more employable within and outside the organization. This is the fit most organizations are set out to achieve with in-house trainings by way of workshops, seminars, compulsory strategic courses, as well as staff development and advancement courses, etc.. On their part, employees must work to contribute to sustain the relationship by way of providing strong commitment to the job, task and team. The common saying in contemporary organizations is that, employees must

share in the responsibility of achieving organizations' goals. The bottom line of this statement is that, employees are responsible for an enduring employer - employee relationship. Workers in modern organizations do have a role to keep their jobs in an uncertain work environment.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Work is a necessary condition for all individual is to live a happy life. Work is equally a value creation process. Work time is sold time to another person in compensation for salaries and wages, thus it is time paid for, while leisure is withdrawal from official work activities for personal satisfaction whether within the workplace or outside the workplace no matter what would prompt the action. Modern organization's desire to provide technology facilitated offices is to increase efficiency, productivity and have access to both local and international information during work hours, thus it would be wrong for employees to misuse such facilities by sparing official work time for private activities no matter the challenges that comes with a given task or assignment. Work contract is a responsibility contract thus must be worked to fruition with all sense of commitment. The benefits of productive work are to both the employer and the employee. To this end, respect and regard should be part of all work contracts with an attendant effort to eliminate leisure activities to an acceptable minimum during official work hours.

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