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QUALITY OF WORK LIFE (QWL) OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

One of the challenges facing private universities in Nigeria is the inability to retain highly competence academic staff. Heavy workloads, lack of adequate resources and an unfavourable work environment, all affects efficiency and productivity of the academic staff. The poor QWL can cause high stress levels, which may have detrimental effects on family life and the wellbeing of academic staff. Based on the above assertions, this study therefore examined QWL of academic staff in private universities, north central Nigeria. Theoretically, this study adopted the self and organizational theories. A sample size of 245 academic staff was purposively selected for the study. Development and Validation Scale was used to measure QWL among the selected academic staff.The finding indicates that, there was a disparity in terms of the academic staff socio-demographic features and QWL.The study concludes that in today era QWL is an important factor in determining academic staff satisfaction in private universities in north central Nigeria and if it is undermined it can affect the academic staff level of satisfaction adversely.

Keywords: Academic staff, Private University, Quality of work life (QWL), working condition, job satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, (QWL) has been a cause for concern in recent years. This has captured the attention of industrial and human relations specialist, more so due to organizations competing for suitably qualified and competent workforce. Managements in public higher education institutions have utilized QWL factors as a tool for attracting and retaining talented academic staff. Private higher education institutions have not been an exception to this growing phenomenon (Abdulkadir, Ali &Hassan 2017). QWL is a mutually beneficial relationship

between work, home and the organisation. Individual needs such as income, job security and general wellbeing, etc needs to satisfy to keep the individual happy and motivated (Bagtatos 2011).

Furthermore, with the changes going on in the educational sector in Nigeria, there is need for an urgent development of policies and procedures which will cater for the QWL of academic staff in Nigerian private universities in order to determine how best the needs of the member of staff can improve in order to enhance their performance and retention.

1.1. Problem

In universities formal employment and job security changed to stressful issues because of some factors such as the long process of faculty recruitment, workload and teaching hours of faculty hinder some activities in the universities (Noor Shahi & Samie, 2011). Private universities in Nigeria faced a serious challenge of retaining adequately qualified and competent staff due to regular resignations and termination of employment contracts. This has resulted in a steady backlog of vacant positions and which invariably affects the quality of teaching and learning (Mpho, 2013).

Various studies have been done in other zones of Nigeria about QWL and job satisfaction of faculty members in universities (Mamedu, & Ahiakwo, 2016), but studies about QWL of academic staff in private universitiesare limited especially in the north central zone of Nigeria. This is a gap in Knowledge, which this study intends to fill, by examining the QWL of academic staff in private universities in north central zone of Nigeria.

2. BRIEF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This aspect of the study covers the literature review and the theoretical framework.

2.1. Conceptualizing Quality of work life (QWL)

Hackman & Oldhams (1980) define QWL as the by-product of the relationship between the work environment and personal needs. In line with Hackman & Oldham's (1980) definition, Lawler (1982) defines QWL in terms of work conditions and job characteristics. QWL is the degree of covering the important personal needs of workers' lives in an organisation. Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel & Lee (2001) affirm that QWL is determined by employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace.

Hackman &Oldhams (1980), Sirgyet al. (2001) concur in terms of basing their definitions of QWL on the 'needs' of employees. Lau, Wong, Chan & Law (2001) defines QWL as the favourable working environment that supports and promotes satisfaction by providing employees with rewards, job security and career growth opportunities. Schemerhorn, John, Hunt, James, Orsborne & James (1994) asserts that QWL offers fair pay, a safe working environment, opportunities to learn and utilize new skills, career progression, upholding individual rights and pride in the organisation. Kiernan & Knutson (1990) define QWL as methods which serve the individual's needs and the organisational effectiveness. Quality of life is a comprehensive programme the bring about an increase in workers satisfaction as well as enhance their learning and lack of satisfaction from the QWL is a problem that can harm the workers regardless of their status and position (Ramin, Mahmoud & Mahlaqa, 2015).

2.2. Relationship between Work and Home Life

One major factor of QWL which affects the relationship between the individual and the organisation is the interaction between work and home life. Some scholars assert that long

hours at work can bring about physical and psychological ill-health. Today globalized world has brought about technology of wireless connection in the workplace and borderless organisations so that people can work anywhere without being restricted by the physical working environment (Kreiner, Hollensbe & Mathew 2009). Also, the term 'workplace' is no longer necessarily a physical location, meaning that work can be done at anyplace at any time. Therefore, workers can find themselves taking work home and spending long hours performing work and subsequently compromising their personal lives. This creates complexity in terms of the home work interface.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretically, this study adopted the self and organizational theories. The self and Organizational theories aid our understanding of the QWL of academic staff in Nigerian private universities. The University as a global social system is regulated largely by the decisions and actions of university management. Quality of work-life (QWL), as a human resource model is about reification, treating university systems as living organisms by focusing on the dynamic relationships among universities' stakeholders as its driving force.

The Self-Theory was propounded by Snyder & Williams (1982). The self-based theory asserts that human beings have fundamental need to maintain or enhance the self. The theory is concerned about the variety of ways to think about the self and therefore subsumes two of the most widely used terms known as self-concept and self-esteem. Katz & Kahn (1967) and Hoy & Miskel (1996) asserted that organizational behaviour is the result of the dynamic interplay of bureaucratic expectations, individual needs, informal norms, and external influences. All these factors have a significant impact on the quality of working lives of members in an organization.

It is on this basis that this study adopted the self and organizational theories as the theoretical framework that explains the study.

4. METHODS

Research design for this study is descriptive and survey in nature. Data for the survey were retrieved using self-structured questionnaires.The study was conducted amongthree (3) selected private universities in north central part of Nigeria. For convenience and some other constrains, the selected sample size for the study was 245 academic staff who were purposively selected.

6. RESULT

6.1. Socio-demographic characteristics

Respondents' socio-economic and demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1. More males (75.5 percent) were represented in the study. The mean and median ages of the respondents were 38.9 years and 38 years respectively; and the standard deviation was 8.3. Furthermore, 75.5 percent of the academic staff was married. The respondents' monthly salaries were almost evenly distributed across the categories except for 12.2 percent of the respondents who earn below ₦50,000. Majority (36.7 percent) of the respondents had Ph.D. while, 34.7 percent of them had M.Sc. Majority (36.7 percent) of the respondents had spent between 6 and 8 years in service with an average of 4.1 years for all the respondents. Further details about socio-economic and demographic features of respondents are presented in Table 1.

Variables	Categories	n (%)
Sex	Male	185 (75.5)
	Female	60 (24.5)
Age	20-29 years	20 (8.2)
	30-39 years	120 (49.0)
	40-49 years	65 (26.5)
	50-59 years	40 (16.3)
Marital status	Single	60 (24.5)
	Married	185 (75.5)
Monthly salary	Below N50,000	30 (12.2)
	N50,000 - N99,999	55 (22.4)
	N100,000 - N149,999	50 (20.4)
	N150,000 - N199,999	55 (22.4)
	N200,000 and above	55 (22.4)
Highest educational qualification obtained	Ordinary National Diploma (OND)	10 (4.1)
	National Certificate Examination (NCE)	5 (2.0)
	Higher National Diploma (HND)	10 (4.1)
	First Degree (such as B.Sc./B.Eng./B.Ed.)	30 (12.2)
	Post-Graduate Diploma	10 (4.1)
	Master of Science (M.Sc.)	85 (34.7)
	Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)	5 (2.0)
	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)	90 (36.7)
Length of service in the present job (in years)	0-2 years	75 (30.6)
	3-5 years	80 (32.7)
	6-8 years	90 (36.7)
Total		245 (100)

6.2. Field survey (2018)

6.2.1. Measurement of Variables

Swamy, Nanjundeswaraswamy & Rashmi's (2015) 'Quality of Work Life: Scale Development and Validation' was used to measure QWL among the selected private universities staff in north central Nigeria, having been adjusted to fit local context. The scale adopted nine significant dimensions which include: work environment, organization culture and climate, relation and co-operation, training and development, compensation and rewards, facilities, job satisfaction and job security, autonomy of work, and adequacy of resources. Under each of these dimensions, at least two specific questions which aid the measurement of QWL were asked.

In all, twenty set of measurable questions were placed on a Likert scale and each question was coded accordingly which range from strongly agree (5), agree (4), uncertain (3), disagree (2) to strongly disagree (1), with due consideration for the questions that had reverse form of inquiry. The score was determined by adding all the 20 responses under the nine components of QWL and then dividing by 20. The individual response choices ranged between maximum QWL score of 5 and minimum QWL score of 1.

Furthermore, the respondents were grouped into two categories based on their QWL score which include satisfied and unsatisfied. These categories were determined by dividing the range of possible QWL scores (1-5) into two intervals: above and below mean value (3). The scoring which is greater than the mean value were classified as 'satisfied' and the scoring which are lower than the mean value were classified as unsatisfied'.

Chart 1: Quality of Work Life

Chart 1 presents the distribution of respondents according to their quality of work life (QWL). The chart shows that 81.6 percent of the university staff were satisfied with their work while less than one-fifth (18.4 percent) of the respondents were not satisfied with their work.

This implies that the better the quality of work life (work environment, organization culture and climate, relation and co-operation, training and development, compensation and rewards, facilities, job security, autonomy of work, and adequacy of resources) of the academic staff, the better the organizational commitment, productivity level and Job Satisfaction. This corroborates the observation of Mpho (2013), Ramin, Mahmoud &Mahlaqa (2015), whose studies observed that there was a significant relationship between Working Conditions, productivity level and Job Satisfaction.

6.3. Association between socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and QWL

Table 2 presents the association between socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and QWL. The table further shows the values of Cramer's V and Pearson chi-square so as to demonstrate the strength and statistical significance of association between two categorical variables. The table employs percentages 'within socio-economic and demographic characteristics'. This helps to understand the QWL across respondents' socio-economic and demographic features.

The table indicates that among the respondents who were satisfied, 72.5 percent were males. The Cramer's V (0.148) shows weak association between sex of respondents and QWL. However, the Pearson chi-square value shows that the association is statistically significant ($p<0.05$). The cross-tabulation between the ages of respondents and the QWL shows that among the respondents who were satisfied with their work, 52.5 percent were between the ages of 30 and 39 years.

The table further indicates that all respondents who aged 20-29 years were satisfied with their work. The Cramer's V (0.324) shows the association between respondents' ages and quality of life and the Pearson chi-square confirms the statistical relevance of such association (p<0.05). In term of the association between marital status and QWL, Table 2 shows that of those who were satisfied with their job, 72.5 percent were married while the remaining proportion (27.5 percent) was single. Although Cramer's V (0.148) indicates weak association, the Pearson chi-square shows that the association is significant (p<0.05).

Table 2 further shows the association between respondents' length of service and QWL. The cross-tabulation indicates that among the respondents who were satisfied with their job, 40 percent of them had served between 6 and 8 years, 32.5 percent had served between 0 and 2 years and 27.5 percent had served between 3 and 5 years. The Cramer's phi (coefficient) and Pearson chi-square value show that the association is somewhat strong (0.452) and statistically significant (p<0.05) respectively. Further details of the association between respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and quality of life are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Association between socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and Quality of Work Life

Variables	Categories	Quality of Work Life		Cramer's V	χ^2
		Unsatisfied	Satisfied		
Sex	Male	40 (88.9)	145 (72.5)	.148	.021
	Female	5 (11.1)	55 (27.5)		
Age	20-29 years	0 (0.0)	20 (10.0)	.324	.000
	30-39 years	15 (33.3)	105 (52.5)		
	40-49 years	25 (55.6)	40 (20.0)		
	50-59 years	5 (11.1)	35 (17.5)		
Marital status	Single	5 (11.1)	55 (27.5)	.148	.021
	Married	40 (88.9)	145 (72.5)		
Monthly salary	Below N50,000	0 (0.0)	30 (15.0)	.199	.045
	N50,000 - N99,999	10 (22.2)	45 (22.5)		
	N100,000 - N149,999	10 (22.2)	20 (16.3)		
	N150,000 - N199,999	15 (33.3)	40 (20.0)		
	N200,000 and above	10 (22.2)	45 (22.5)		
Highest educational qualification obtained	OND	0 (0.0)	10 (5.0)	.310	.001
	NCE	0 (0.0)	5 (2.5)		
	HND	0 (0.0)	10 (5.0)		
	First Degree	0 (0.0)	30 (15.0)		
	PGD	0 (0.0)	10 (5.0)		
	M.Sc.	25 (55.6)	60 (30.0)		
	M.Phil.	0 (0.0)	5 (2.5)		
	Ph.D.	20 (44.4)	70 (35.0)		
Length of service	0-2 years	10 (22.2)	65 (32.5)	.452	.000
	3-5 years	25 (55.6)	55 (27.5)		
	6-8 years	10 (22.2)	80 (40.0)		
Total		45 (100.0)	200 (100.0)		

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research study examines the QWL of academic staff in private universities in north central zone of Nigeria. The scale adopted nine significant dimensions which include: work environment, organization culture and climate, relation and co-operation, training and development, compensation and rewards, facilities, job satisfaction and job security, autonomy of work, and adequacy of resources. Under each of these dimensions, at least two specific questions which aid the measurement of QWL were asked.

The outcome of the research indicates that majority (81.6%) of the respondents were satisfied with their work while less than one-fifth (18.4%) of the respondents were not satisfied with their work. This may suggests that most private universities in the north central zone of Nigeria strives to meet the demands of the staff and this may have been driving by competition and the need for better performance and retention.

The finding indicates that there was a disparity in terms of the academic staff socio-demographic features and QWL. It also, revealed that male respondents (72.5%) were satisfied with their job; majority of the staff (52.5%) who falls between the age brackets of 30-39 years indicated that they were satisfied with their job. Majority of the respondents (72.5%), who were married and have work for 6 to 8 years asserted that, they were satisfied with their job.

The finding revealed that the Cramer's V and Pearson Chi-Square confirm the statistical relevance of the academic staff's socio-demographic features and the QWL. The finding posits that staff that possessed higher level of educational qualifications who also earn more were satisfied with their job. This view supports the observation of Fatihe, Ali, Shahindokhtand Fariba (2015), whose study reveals that there was a significant relationship between job satisfaction of academic staff and their QWL.

The study recommends that the selected privates Universities in the north central zone of Nigeria should focus on their academic staffs' welfare by providing them better and attractive working conditions. This can be achieved by developing highly professionalized occupational safety and health policies that guarantee the safety of all academic staff at work. Stress-free working environment should be provided for academic staff, this could be achieved by granting them the opportunity to plan for their work schedule with the convenience of their work environment in mind.

Adequate teaching aids that will enable them to perform their work efficiently should also be provided for. The management of the private Universities in the zone should create a career growth opportunity that may lead to a better performance and therefore a better competence. The management should provide avenue for sense of belonging which will increase the academic staff enthusiasm towards their work. The study concludes that in today globalised world QWL holds great significance and if undermined, can affect the level of job satisfaction of the academic staff in private universities in the north central zone of Nigeria adversely.

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