INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, QUALITY OF WORK-LIFE AND EMPLOYEES' EFFECTIVENESS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH WEST, NIGERIA

Oyewo, Faith Omotola

University of Lagos, Department of Educational Management
Phone Number: +2349037498072

Email Address: oyewofaith5@gmail.com

Adebanjo, Babatunde Abraham
University of Lagos, Department of Educational Management
Phone Number: +2348125588400
Email Address: adebanjobabatunde88@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship among Industrial Relations, Quality of Work-Life (QWL), and Employees' Effectiveness in public universities in South West, Nigeria. It explores how working conditions, labor turnover rates, workplace safety and work-life balance influence the effectiveness of university employees. Given the significant role that public universities play in national development, this research aimed to provide insights into improving these areas to enhance institutional effectiveness and academic quality. Data was collected from academic staff in federal and state universities across South West Nigeria using a structured questionnaire. Recommendations include: Implementation of policies that promote a better work-life balance, such as flexible working hours and support for professional development, Universities should invest in better infrastructure, safer work environments, and adequate office space for staff, workloads on lecturers should be reduced to enhance effectiveness and efficiency. Universities' management should address the reasons for high staff turnover rate and tackle

them and effective policies should be put in place to address grievances related to working conditions.

Key words: *Employees, Quality of Work Life (QWL), Working Conditions, Public Universities, Turnover Rate, Employee Effectiveness.*

Introduction

Employee effectiveness is critical in achieving organizational goals, especially in public universities where academic staff performance significantly impacts teaching, research, and student outcomes. In Nigerian public universities, challenges such as unresolved industrial disputes, poor working conditions, and a declining Quality of Work-Life (QWL) are undermining employee effectiveness. Poor industrial relations, typified by frequent strikes and labor unrest, exacerbate issues related to working conditions, job security, and employee morale, leading to job dissatisfaction and diminished academic productivity. Quality of work-life (QWL), which refers to the ability to balance work demands with personal life, is an essential factor influencing employee well-being and performance.

Despite various policies aimed at improving QWL, Nigerian universities face persistent challenges in ensuring favorable work conditions for their staff. This research seeks to explore the relationship between industrial relations, QWL, and employees' effectiveness in Nigerian public universities, with a particular focus on lecturers in South West Nigeria.

Over the years, Nigerian public universities have faced poor industrial relations characterized by strikes, labor disputes, and poor working conditions. These issues have led to job dissatisfaction, burnout, and a decline in employee effectiveness.

The strain on lecturers, compounded by high workloads and inadequate institutional support, has led to increased stress and low morale, affecting their ability to fulfill their academic responsibilities. The lack of effective communication between university management and staff unions, coupled with inadequate policies for work-life balance, further aggravates the situation. This study addresses the need to understand how industrial relations and QWL impact employee effectiveness in Nigerian universities, particularly in South West Nigeria.

Literature Review

Industrial Relations and Employee Effectiveness

Industrial relations traditionally refer to the relationship between employees and employers, primarily through trade unions, and the processes used to address concerns regarding working conditions, pay, and job security. These relations are pivotal in shaping the work environment, which in turn affects employees' psychological and professional well-being. In public universities, the disruption caused by poor industrial relations has affected academic calendars and the quality of education provided to students (Jibril & Salihu, 2019).

Industrial relations, particularly the relationship between university management and staff unions, play a vital role in determining employee satisfaction and effectiveness. Poor industrial relations in Nigerian public universities, characterized by strikes and frequent disputes, lead to low morale and reduced academic productivity (Adewumi & Fashoyin, 2019). Effective industrial relations can foster a cooperative work environment, enhance job satisfaction, and improve employee performance.This issue is particularly evident in **Nigerian public universities**, where strained labour relations between the university management

and employee unions, such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), have resulted in frequent industrial actions, undermining the effectiveness of university staff (Jibril & Salihu, 2019).

Quality of Work-Life (QWL) and Employee Effectiveness

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a multidimensional concept that encompasses aspects such as working conditions, job security, and work-life balance. Research has shown that poor QWL leads to job dissatisfaction, stress, burnout, and a decline in employee effectiveness (Gragnano et al., 2020). In Nigerian public universities, lecturers often face overwhelming workloads, insufficient resources, and inadequate work environments, which negatively impact their well-being and academic performance (Obakpolo, 2021). Efforts to improve QWL, such as increased wages and better work conditions, have been insufficient in addressing the underlying issues affecting employee performance (Adeniji, 2018).

Over the past few years, universities in Nigeria have been threatened with several challenges ranging from increased cost of running the institution, inadequate working employees attending to increased workloads and a general decline in values placed on the quality of education and research (Fapohunda, 2013). Amidst these challenges, employees are expected to be at their best and be most productive in the institution. These have led to a very thin layer between employees" personal life and work life, which often mares their job satisfaction level (Bigirimana et al, 2016). It is with the understanding of these challenges that several government policies and programmes at different levels and tertiary institutions in Nigeria are geared towards improving the QWL in the Nigerian universities environment.

Workplace Safety and Employee Effectiveness

Workplace safety is another critical element of QWL. Unsafe work environments can lead to stress, injury, and absenteeism, negatively affecting employee effectiveness (Trebilcock, 2012). In Nigerian universities, inadequate office space, frequent power outages, and poor campus infrastructure compromise staff safety and well-being, further diminishing their productivity (Obakpolo, 2021).Amidst these challenges, some scholars have pointed out that the fundamental human rights of employees, including the right to safe, healthy, and fair working conditions, remain largely unmet when compared to global standards (Trebilcock, 2012). Despite these adverse conditions, many employees continue to endure demanding duties within an inadequate work environment and with insufficient resources. As a result, the quality of work life (QWL) within the Federal University community still falls short of standard expectations.

Data and Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in this study is the descriptive survey research design. Descriptive design is a research design used to systematically obtain information or describe a phenomenon, situation or population. The reason for the choice is to be able to assess the opinion of the respondents using the questionnaire.

Population of the Study

The study population will consist of all 5, 047 lecturers in public universities in South West, Nigeria.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample used for the study was drawn using simple random sampling technique. Equal representative of the sample was used for the study, as a result of disparity in the numbers of states and federal universities. Three federal and three state universities will be selected for the study using stratified random sampling technique. The sample size for this study was 505 participants representing 10% of the population.

The selected universities are University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Osun State University, Adekunle Ajasin University and University of Medical Sciences, Ondo.

The sample size for this study will be 505 participants, representing 10% of the population.

S/N	Names of Universities	Sample size
1.	University of Lagos	325
2.	Obafemi Awolowo University	260
3.	Federal University of Technology, Akure	140
4.	Osun State University	100

5.	Adekunle Ajasin University	120
6.	University of Medical Sciences	64
	Total	**505**
		10%

Source: Annual Statistics (2023)

Research Instrument

A well-designed questionnaire was used as instrument to collect data from the participants in the study. The questionnaire is patterned along the four Likert- scales of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed of which the participants to ticked the ones that best suited their response on each item. Hence, scores would be assigned as follows:

Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1

For the purpose of data collection, a self-developed questionnaire titled "Industrial Relations, Quality of Work Life and Employees Effectiveness Questionnaire (IRQWLEEQ) was used. The instrument was constructed with two major sections, 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' contains the participants' personal data, while Section 'B' contained the items that the researcher used to answer the research questions and test the formulated hypotheses. Each item of Section B will be of a four-point Likert-scale type of "Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD)." The participants responded to the items by ticking the option they felt tallied with their opinions.

Validity of the Research Instrument

To ascertain the quality of the questionnaire, it was given to some experts in measurement and evaluation to assess its face and content validity. All corrections and comments made was adhered to before the questionnaire is administered.

Reliability of the Research Instrument

A pilot survey was conducted in three public Nigerian universities to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument. Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was employed with the "Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)" to determine the reliability coefficient of the research instrument. This approach was used to measure the internal consistency of the items on the research instrument.

Procedures for Data Collection

The researcher administered the instrument to the selected participants in the sampled Universities. Copies of the research instrument were administered to the participants during their free periods, and the completed copies of the instrument were collected immediately to achieve a high return rate.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis used descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentage counts will analyse the demographic characteristic data of the respondents. Since the study adopted four (4) point scoring scales for the items used in the questionnaire (instruments), data collected was converted to mean scores and used to derive answers to the research questions and thus determine the significance of the results. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at a .05 significant level.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

The analysis of data collected in order to answer the research question are presented tabular form. Using Likert scale, the cutoff point is determined as follows: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Strongly Disagree = 2, Disagree =1   **Total = 10**

The mean calculated =
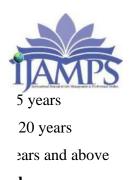
4 + 3 + 2 +1   =   10

4   4   =   2.5

Therefore, the mean score point is 2.5.

Rule: mean score below 2.5 is rejected while mean score above 2.5 is accepted. While the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis of Participant

able	ʃuency	entage
der		
ʃ		
ale		
l		%
0		
0		
ears and above		
l		%
:ational Qualification		
/B.Ed		
er Degree		
ɩ		
l		%
:hing Experience		
rears		
years		

5 years

20 years

ears and above

l   %

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From table 1 the responses revealed that 233(46%) of the participants were male while 272(54%) of the participants were female. This suggests there are more female lecturers respondents than male. On the age of the lecturers,75(15%) of the lecturers were between 31-40 years of age, 227(45%) of the teachers were between 41-50 years of age, 203(40%) of the teachers were 51 years and above of age. while, 20(10%) of the respondent who teachers were between 50 years and above. On qualification, 51(10%) of the respondents were B.Sc/B.Ed holders while 202(40%) of the lecturers were master degree holders and 252(50%) were Ph.D holders. Lastly on teaching experience,25(5%) of the lecturers had worked for 1-5 years, 51(10%) of the respondents were lecturers with 6-10 years of experience, 60(12%) of the respondents were lecturers with 11-15 years of experience, 167(33%) of the respondents were lecturers with 16-20years of experience, 202(40%) of the respondents were lecturers with 21 years and above teaching experience.

Answer to Research Questions

1. **Research Question One:** What is the relationship between working conditions and employees' effectiveness?

Table 2: Working Conditions

MS		1ARK
working conditions in my ersity allow me to perform luties effectively.		Significant
resources available to me adequate for fulfilling my essional responsibilities.		5ignificant
office environment is ucive for productivity.	i)	ificant
	i)	

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physical infrastructure (e.g.,			ificant
lings, facilities) supports	)	)	
tive job performance.			
university has effective			Significant
ies in place to address			
ances related to working			
itions.			

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 on items 1,2 and 5, with a mean score 2.4,2.0 and 2.1 respectively which is below the calculated mean of 2.5 the respondents disagreed that The working conditions in their universities allow them to perform my duties effectively, the resources available are adequate for fulfilling professional responsibilites and the univeristy has effective policies in place to address grievances related to working conditions. Similarly on item 3 and item 4 with a mean score of 2.7 and 2.6which is above the benchmark for favourable responses, the lecturers agreed that the office environment is conducive for productivity and that physical infrastructure support effective job performance.

2. **Research Question Two:** To what extent does the labour turnover rate affect employees' effectiveness?

Table 3: Labour Turnover Rate

s				1ARK
constant replacement of staff				ificant
ers the effectiveness of my team	)	)	)	
ur turnover affects the stability				ificant
ademic activities.	)	)		
university management				Significant
esses the reasons behind high	)	)		
turnover effectively.				
roles are well-defined, which				ificant
to reduce the turnover rate.	)	)	)	

turnover among staff has a					ificant
tive impact on the overall	)	)			
ormance of the university					

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From table 3, items 1, 2, 4 and5, with a mean score of 2.6, 2.5, 2.5 and 2.7 respectively which are above the calculated mean of 2.5 it wasagreed that; The constant replacement of staff hinders the effectiveness of the team, Labour turnover affects the stability of academic activities.Job roles are well-defined, which helps to reduce the turnover rate and while on item 3 with a mean value of 1.9 which is below the calculated mean value of 2.5 the respondents disagreed that:The university management addresses the reasons behind high staff turnover effectively.

3. **Research Question Three:** What is the relationship between workplace safety and employees' effectiveness?

Table 4: Workplace Safety

s					1ARK
university provides a safe					ificant
ing environment.	)	)	)	)	
satisfied with the health and					ificant
y measures in place at my	)	)	)		
place.					
kplace safety concerns are		(43.5)			ificant
ptly addressed by university		)			
agement.					
y hazards in my workplace					ificant
tively affect my job	)	)			
ormance.					
el secure from physical risks					ificant
e at work.	)	)	)	)	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The responses by the respondents on remuneration packages show that on items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with a mean value of 2.6, 2.8 and 3.2, 3.0 and 2.3 which is above the benchmark mean of 2.5 the lecturers agreed that; The university provides a safe working environment, they are satisfied with the health and safety measures in place at their workplaces, workplace safety concerns are promptly addressed by university management, Safety hazards in my workplace negatively affect job performance and they feel secure from physical risks while at work.

4. **Research question 4:** How do work-life balance influence the effectiveness of employees in Nigerian public universities?

Table 5: Work life Balance

MS					ARK
workload allows me to tain a healthy work-life ice.	)	)	)		Significant
m able to manage my ssional and personal nsibilities effectively.	)	))	))	)	Significant
university's policies support -life balance.	))	)	)		Significant
lack of work-life balance ibutes to stress and burnout g staff.	))	))			ificant
workload I am given allows ufficient time for family and re activities.	)	)			Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The responses of the respondents show that with a mean value of 1.9, 1.7, 2.0 and 2.2 which are below benchmark of the mean value of 2.5 the lecturers disagreed that the workloads allow them to maintain

a healthy work-life balance, that they are able to manage their professional and personal responsibilities effectively.The university's policies support work-life balance and the workload they are given allows them sufficient time for family and leisure activities. While on item 4, with the mean vale of 3.6, the lecturers agreed that The lack of work-life balance contributes to stress and burnout among staff.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between working conditions and employees' effectiveness.

Table 6: Working conditions and employees' effectiveness

ables	n	.	.	ark
king conditions	5			
loyees' effectiveness	2	3	3	ted

P<0.05

Table 6 shows the test of relationship between working conditions and employees' effectiveness, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical tool. The table shows that the calculated value of r = 0.238 is greater than the critical value of r = 0.178 at 0.05 level of significance and 118 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between working conditions and employees' effectiveness was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between working conditions and employees' effectiveness.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between labour turn over and employees' effectiveness

Table 7: Labour turnover rate and employees' **effectiveness**

ables	n	.	.	ark
ur turnover rate	9			
loyees effectiveness	2	5	3	ted

P<0.05

The analysis in table 11 indicated that the r-cal is 0.615 which is greater than the table value (r-tab) at 0.178 at 0.05 level of significance and 118 degree of freedom which informed the rejection of the null hypothesis which states that: There is no significant relationship between teachers' training and

teachers' effectiveness. This implies that there is a significant relationship between labour turnover rate and employees' effectiveness.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between workplace safety and employees' effectiveness.

Table 8: Workplace safety and employees' effectiveness

ables	N	.	t.	ark
xplace safety	5			
		7	3	ted
loyees' tiveness	2			

P<0.05

Table 8 shows the test of relationship between relationship between workplace safety and employees' effectiveness. Using Pearson Product Moment correlation (PPMC) statistical tool. The table shows that the calculated value of r = 0.247 is greater than the critical value of r = 0.178 at 0.05 level of significance and 118 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between workplace safety and employees' effectivenesswas rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between workplace safety and employees' effectiveness.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant relationship between work life balance and employees' effectiveness.

Table 8: work life balance and employees' effectiveness

ables	N	.	t.	ark
x life balance	3			
loyees' tiveness	1	7	3	ted

P<0.05

Table 8 shows the test of relationship between relationship between work life balance and employees' effectiveness, using Pearson Product Moment correlation (PPMC) statistical tool. The table shows that the calculated value of r = 0.537 is greater than the critical value of r = 0.178 at 0.05 level of significance and 118 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between staff promotion and teachers' effectiveness was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between work life balance and employees' effectiveness.

Summary of Findings

1. There is a significant relationship between working conditions and employees' effectiveness.

2. There is a significant relationship between labour turn over and employees' effectiveness.

3. There is a significant relationship between workplace safety and employees' effectiveness.

4. There is a significant relationship between work life balance and employees' effectiveness

The study's findings provided a detailed understanding of how industrial relations, QWL, and employee effectiveness are interrelated in Nigerian public universities. Poor industrial relations and inadequate QWL have significant negative impact on employees' effectiveness, leading to low job satisfaction, increased turnover, and reduced academic productivity.

Conclusion

The study concludes that improving industrial relations, enhancing QWL, and addressing issues related to working conditions, job security, and work-life balance
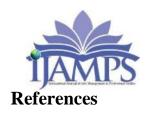
are essential for boosting employee effectiveness in Nigerian public universities. Effective policies and interventions are necessary to improve the working environment and employee morale, which will, in turn, enhance the quality of education and research output in these institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends:

1. University management and staff unions should engage in continuous dialogue to resolve disputes and create a more harmonious work environment.

2. Policies that promote a better work-life balance, such as flexible working hours and support for professional development, should be implemented.

3. Universities should invest in better infrastructure, safer work environments, and adequate office space for staff.

4. Workloads on lecturers should be reduced to enhance effectiveness and efficiency.

5. Universities management should address the reasons for high staff turnover rate and tackle them.

6. Effective policies should be put in place to address grievances related to working conditions.

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