



Assessing teachers' quality of work life among Secondary School teachers in Katsina state

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Abstract

This study explores the significance of the quality of work life and its components in the context of secondary school teachers in Katsina State, Nigeria. Using Walton's model, eight components of the quality of work life were assessed: organizational health, adequate remuneration, professional development, supportive work environment, classroom resources, workload management, career growth and advancement, recognition and rewards. A descriptive research method was employed, and data were collected through a questionnaire of quality of work Life (QWL) administered to a sample of 398 teachers. The findings indicate that teachers perceive the quality of work life to be at an average level, with certain components scoring higher than others. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the quality of work life between theoretical and technical school teachers. The study highlights the importance of the quality of work life in enhancing teachers' performance and organizational commitment, aligning with previous research in the field. These findings contribute to the understanding of factors that influence the quality of work life in educational settings and emphasize the need for government to prioritize and improve various aspects of teachers' working conditions to foster a supportive and fulfilling work environment.

Keywords: Quality of work life, organization health, Secondary school teachers, technical schools, theoretical schools

Introduction

As employees strive for more purposeful roles in their workplaces, the significance of the quality of work life as a fundamental component of organizational development is growing. It involves the convergence of science and art, combining social performance and scientific inquiry. In today's organizations, the dissatisfaction expressed by employees regarding their work underscores the necessity of prioritizing enhancements to the quality of work life.

Lewis (1998) suggests that the quality of work life is correlated with employee commitment and performance, and other research findings support the significance of teachers' quality of work life.

In recent times, the significance of the quality of work life has gained prominence, to the extent that it can be considered an intellectual movement (Shirkovand, 2007)^[16]. With the rapid development and complexity of organizational environments, organizations have been compelled to adapt and effectively navigate external changes in order to survive and thrive. The quality of work life has emerged as a key concern in modern times, with efforts to enhance it leading to positive outcomes not only in terms of mental health but also in terms of participation rates and economic efficiency (Hertzberg *et al.*, 1959).

Reyan (1995)^[4] highlights those early studies on the quality of work in the 1960s primarily focused on individuals' psychology and their perception of the industrial environment. The term "quality of work life" was proposed at an International Conference in New York in 1972, emphasizing the importance of knowledge in developing a coherent theory for creating improved working conditions. In the 1980s, the concept of quality of work life encompassed various conditions across different fields, such as organization, work environment, and partnerships, and was equivalent to similar concepts in different countries.

Furthermore, the concept of quality of work life is closely related to social-technical systems in job enrichment, emphasizing employee participation and responsibilities

within their respective roles. However, there is no universally accepted definition for the concept, and debates arise around whether it should be limited to work or should be objectively evaluated. In the UK, attention has predominantly focused on the first aspect, particularly among proponents of the modern theory of social-technical approaches. In this context, the concept revolves around job content, working relations, and the outcomes thereof.

The quality of work life can be understood as a process that allows all members of an organization to have an open and well-designed pathway to participate in matters affecting their work environment. This, in turn, increases job satisfaction, reduces job-related traumas and stress, and cultivates a sense of ownership, self-management, responsibility, and self-esteem among employees.

Different scholars have identified various components of the quality of work life. In this study, Walton's model is used to assess the quality of work life, and the components are described accordingly (Abbas-Pour, 2005)^[18].

Organizational health

The overall well-being and effectiveness of an organization. It encompasses factors such as leadership, communication, culture, adaptability, employee well-being, and performance. A healthy organization fosters positive relationships, effective decision-making, and a supportive work environment, leading to increased productivity, employee satisfaction, and organizational success.

Adequate Remuneration

Fair and competitive salary and benefits that reflect the qualifications, experience, and responsibilities of secondary teachers.

Professional Development

Access to continuous professional development opportunities, training programs, and workshops to enhance teaching skills and knowledge.

Supportive Work Environment

A positive and supportive work environment that promotes collaboration, respect, and effective communication among teachers, administrators, and colleagues.

Classroom Resources

Sufficient availability of teaching resources, including textbooks, technology, and learning materials, to support effective instruction and student engagement.

Workload Management

Realistic and manageable workload expectations, allowing teachers to effectively plan lessons, assess student work, and provide timely feedback.

Career Growth and Advancement

Opportunities for career growth, promotion, and advancement within the teaching profession, providing a clear pathway for professional development.

Recognition and Rewards

Recognition and appreciation for teachers' efforts and achievements, including incentives, awards, and acknowledgment of their contributions to education.

Student Discipline and Support

Adequate support and resources for managing student behavior, ensuring a conducive and disciplined learning environment.

Materials and methods

The objective of this research is to provide a detailed analysis of the conditions and status of "quality of work life and organizational health" without any bias or assumptions. To achieve this, the researcher employed a descriptive research method known as causal comparative study. The target population for this study was all Secondary school teachers in Katsina State, Nigeria during the academic year 2021 to 2022, comprising a total of 25,044 teachers. A sample size of 398 teachers was selected using simple random sampling. Out of the sample, 325 teachers were from theoretical schools, while 73 teachers were from technical schools. The data collection instrument utilized was a questionnaire on quality of life, which was adapted from previous studies.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of quality of work life from teachers' standpoint

Components	Respondents	Mean	SD	Variance
Adequate Remuneration	398	7.2	3.02	9.1
Professional Development	398	8.5	3.04	9.26
Supportive Work Environment	398	8.8	3.17	10.05
Classroom Resources	398	13.1	4.16	17.28
Workload Management	398	9.2	2.96	8.8
Career Growth and Advancement	398	9.4	1.27	1.61
Recognition and Rewards	398	12.4	3.9	15.58
Student Discipline and Support	398	11.8	3.94	15.49
Quality of working life	398	80.5	2.38	564.78

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the quality of working life by school type

Dependent variable	School type	Frequency	Mean	Mean differences	SD
Quality of work life	Theoretical	324	80.59	0.467	23.68
	Technical	73	80.12		24.19

questionnaire was calculated to be 0.98

Quality of work life questionnaire

The questionnaire utilized in this study consists of 27 items that assess the quality of work life, based on the eight components of Walton's model. It employs an ordinal scale and utilizes a 5-point Likert scale for responses. With the exception of the question related to the general hypothesis of the study (Career Growth and Advancement), all the questions in the questionnaire are formulated in a positive manner. The teachers who participated in the study completed the questionnaire by selecting items that corresponded to their work life, using the 5-point Likert scale ranging from "very low" to "very high."

For positive items, scores ranging from 1 to 5 were assigned to the responses "very low," "low," "somewhat," "high," and "very high," respectively. The scoring was reversed for negative items. Previous studies have reported the reliability and validation of this questionnaire. Shahrashob (2006) [15] calculated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, Tamjidi (2007) [17] reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95, and Ghanbari (1998) [2] assessed the reliability through test-retest technique, obtaining a reliability rate of 0.90. The scale's validity was established through factor analysis, and a pilot study conducted by Shincheool (1990) [5] identified seven dimensions of the questionnaire. Furthermore, the factor structure and reliability of the seven subparts of the scale were confirmed through factor analysis on a sample of 78 schools, as reported by Alagheband (1999, cited in Aminfar, 2007) [1, 19].

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the components related to the quality of work life. The findings indicate that the mean value for Adequate Remuneration is 7.2. This mean is lower compared to the overall mean (minimum = 3, maximum = 13, mean = 9), suggesting that respondents perceive their level of Adequate Remuneration to be relatively low.

The mean scores obtained from the other items assessing the quality of work life are approximately equal to the overall mean score. This implies that, according to the respondents, there is an average level of perceived professional development, supportive work environment, classroom resources, workload management, career growth and advancement, recognition and rewards, as well as student discipline and support.

To assess the quality of work life, the researchers considered eight dimensions, namely, adequate remuneration, professional development, supportive work environment, classroom resources, workload management, career growth and advancement, recognition and rewards, and student discipline and support. These dimensions consist of a total of 27 items and were measured on an ordinal scale using a 5-point Likert measurement. When the ordinal items were summed up, an interval scale value of 98

was obtained. A score of 135 indicates a very high quality of work life, while a score of 27 indicates a very low quality of work life. Reviewing Table 2 reveals that the level of quality of work life among teachers is close to the mean value of 5.80.

In order to examine the relationship between the quality of work life and the teachers' place of work, categorized as a nominal variable, the t-test technique was employed. The mean scores for the quality of work life among teachers in theoretical secondary schools (80.59) and those in technical schools (80.12) were found to be similar. This provides strong evidence to reject the main hypothesis of the study, indicating that there is no significant difference between the type of school where teachers work and the quality of their work life.

Discussion

The examination of the quality of work life among secondary school teachers in different types of schools (theoretical and technical) did not reveal any significant differences between these variables. Factors such as identical salaries and benefits, similar performance levels, equivalent teaching hours, comparable educational backgrounds and experience of school principals, as well as similar school administration methods, contribute to the rejection of the main research hypothesis. These factors indicate that the quality of work life for teachers in both types of schools is relatively similar. Although there is no direct research comparing the quality of work life among teachers in different types of secondary schools, several studies have emphasized the importance of work life quality in educational institutions and its impact on employee performance.

For instance, Ramezani (2004) ^[14] conducted a study on the relationship between principals' quality of life and their performance in high schools in Hamedan, Iran. The findings indicated that an improvement in the quality of work life led to enhanced performance. Shahrashob (2006) ^[15] investigated the relationship between the quality of work life and organizational commitment among high school teachers in Gonbadkavus, Iran, and found a positive association between an individual's quality of work life and their commitment to the organization. Another study by Kharazian (2006) examined the relationship between the quality of work life and the performance of female principals in high schools in Tehran, revealing a significant correlation between work life quality and principals' performance. Lau (2000) ^[11] compared the performance of renowned companies with high work life quality to 500 other companies, and the results indicated that work life quality played a crucial role in determining organizational performance.

Ian (2000) ^[8] explored the relationship between employee participation and work life quality, concluding that employees desire participation in decision-making processes and consider work life quality as an important aspect. BetsAnn (2003) ^[9] conducted a qualitative study involving eight independent schools and 82 teachers, finding that organizational conditions influenced teachers' work. The study highlighted that the best working conditions were those created through collaboration between teachers and principals. Lowe *et al.* (2003) ^[12] concluded that when actual work conditions were favorable, employees made genuine efforts to improve work health. Najafi (2006) ^[13]

examined the relationship between work life quality and the productivity of middle managers in the National Iranian Gas Company, identifying variables such as working environment, job design, participation in decision-making, and benefits as significant factors. The findings demonstrated a positive relationship between work life quality and middle managers' productivity.

Shahrashob (2006) ^[15] also investigated the relationship between work life quality and organizational commitment among high school teachers in Gonbadkavus, Iran, finding a positive association between an individual's quality of work life and their commitment to the organization. Shyrkvand (2007) conducted a study on the relationship between work life quality and the performance of managers in the Insurance Company of Iran in Tehran. The research involved 85 managers, and the results revealed the importance of factors such as adequate remuneration, professional development, supportive work environment, classroom resources, workload management, career growth and advancement, recognition and rewards, and student discipline and support. Overall, a significant correlation between work life quality and performance was observed.

The quality of work life is influenced by organizational conditions and the mindset that impacts employee well-being. Glason (1982) examined variables such as satisfaction, attention, health, and safety, and concluded that a positive work life quality experience occurs when employees' competence is respected. This is based on three main sources: the effect of the work environment on employees, the level of work responsibility given to employees, and employees' level of experience coordination in the work environment. All these research findings emphasize the significant impact of work life quality on employee performance. However, in the case of Katsina state theoretical and technical schools, the environment is the same for both types of schools as they are both public secondary schools.

Conclusion

The concept of the quality of work life has gained significant prominence in modern organizations as employees seek more fulfilling and purposeful roles. It encompasses various factors that contribute to the overall well-being and effectiveness of an organization, including leadership, communication, culture, employee well-being, and performance. Enhancing the quality of work life has been shown to have positive outcomes in terms of job satisfaction, mental health, participation rates, and economic efficiency.

The study focused on assessing the quality of work life among secondary school teachers in Katsina State, Nigeria. The findings indicated that teachers perceived their level of quality of work life to be average across various dimensions, such as adequate remuneration, professional development, supportive work environment, classroom resources, workload management, career growth and advancement, recognition and rewards, and student discipline and support. The study also compared the quality of work life between theoretical and technical schools, but no significant differences were found, possibly due to similar factors influencing both types of schools, such as salaries, benefits, performance, and working conditions. Previous research has highlighted the importance of quality of work life in various contexts, including its positive

relationship with organizational performance, individual performance, and organizational commitment. Factors such as decision-making, job security, working conditions, health and safety, and continuous learning opportunities have been identified as significant contributors to the quality of work life.

It is important for organizations to prioritize the enhancement of the quality of work life to create a positive and supportive work environment, foster employee satisfaction, and improve overall organizational success. This can be achieved through fair remuneration, providing opportunities for professional development, promoting collaboration and effective communication, ensuring access to necessary resources, managing workloads effectively, offering career growth opportunities, recognizing and rewarding employees' contributions, and providing support for managing student behavior.

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