

**QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AS PREDICTOR OF PERCEIVED EMPLOYEE'S
JOB COMMITMENT IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY IN LAGOS
STATE, NIGERIA.**

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Abstract

The study examined the joint and relative effects of elements of Quality of Work Life on Employee Job Commitment in Food and Beverage Industry, Lagos State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted and a sample of 610 respondents was selected through multi-stage sampling techniques. Data were collected through Quality of Work Life Scale ($r=0.85$) and Perceived Employee Job Commitment Questionnaire ($r=0.75$). Two hypotheses were tested and data analysed through multiple regression. The four elements of Quality of Work which constitute the independent variables jointly predicted employee's job commitment of the respondents ($R=0.467$). Precisely, the predictors contributed 21.3% (adjusted $R^2 = 0.213$) to the variance of the criterion variable. Also, each of the independent variables with the exception of career development significantly ($p < 0.05$) predicted the dependent variable. Based on the findings, it was suggested that employers of labour especially in the organized private sector should endeavour to offer competitive compensation to their workers, maintain good occupational health and safety and make job relatively stabled.

Key Words: Competitive compensation, Job security, Occupational health and safety, Career development, Employee job commitment.

Introduction

It is common knowledge that among the resources available for the survival and growth of work organizations, labour seems to be the most vital and indispensable (Bankole, 2001; Fajana, 2002; Armstrong, 2006). This is so because without the involvement of labour, other resources will remain passive and dormant in the production process. If labour is, therefore, important in the organizational pursuit for survival and growth, particularly in the contemporary global work environment that is highly competitive, the work life of workers must be of high quality. Quality of work life, according to Raduan, Loq, Jegak and Khairuddin (2006) is a philosophy, a set of principles which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution and they should be treated with dignity and respect. In other words, workers must be given access to some quality of work life that will make them to be more committed to their organization in order to ensure that the corporate objectives of the organization is/are achieved.

The concept of quality of work life is recently well orchestrated in the analysis of world of work among scholars (Walton, 1975; Lawler, 1982; Shamir and Salomon, 1985; Chan and Einstein, 1990; Andries, Smulders and Dhoudt, 2002; Serey, 2006; Rethinam and Maimunah, 2008; Salami, 2010) especially in the fields of industrial psychology, industrial sociology, industrial relations and human resource management generally. The term quality of work life – refers to the degree of personal satisfaction experienced by an average employee at work (Nwagbo, 2004; Oloyede, 2005). In essence, it is the extent to which employees can enhance their personal lives through their work environment and experiences. It implies therefore that quality of work life is contingent on the extent to which an employee feels valued, rewarded, motivated, consulted and empowered (Salami, 2010).

However, quality of work life as a phenomenon has not been adequately explored. In essence, review of literature reveals little studies on quality of work life particularly in Nigeria. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that regular assessment of quality of work life can essentially provide organizations with important information about the welfare of their employees such as job satisfaction, general well-being, work related stress and the home work interface (Wikipedia, 2009). In a

situation where the aforementioned issues are not well attended to, there is likelihood that employees may become unsatisfied and less committed to the job. The above assertion is in agreement with the view of Onasanya (1999) that when workers are dissatisfied or lack necessary drive, it may create grievances which can lead to a lower level workers' commitment.

Essentially, job satisfaction, which is one of the by product of quality of work life, brings a pleasurable emotional state that often leads to positive work attitude (Raduan et al, 2006). Thus, a satisfied worker is more likely to be creative, flexible, innovative and above all committed to the achievement of the organization (Salami, 2010). Therefore, the ultimate goal of quality of work life in business organisation is to attract, retain, and motivate people of the right quality needed to achieve the corporate objectives of the organization (Alo, 1999).

As a concept, quality of work life has been subjected to a variety of definitions by various scholars. For instance, Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger, (1997) describe quality of work life as the feelings that employees have towards their job, colleagues and organizations that ignite a chain leading to the organization's growth and profitability. It therefore implies that with quality of work life, employees will feel happy doing work which will lead to a productive work environment. Quality of work life has also been viewed, by Reithinam and Maimunah (2008), as a wide ranging concept, which includes adequate and fair remuneration, safe and healthy working conditions and social integration in the work organization that enable an individual to develop and use all his capacities. In their contribution, Lau, Wong, Chum, and Law (2001) define quality of work life as "the favourable working environment that supports and promotes satisfaction by providing employees with rewards, job security and career growth opportunities". It is deductive from the definition that an individual who is not satisfied with reward may be satisfied with the job security and to some extent would enjoy the career opportunity provided by the organization for their personal and professional growth.

In agreement with Heskett et'al (1997), Achakhanna (2007), says quality of work life expresses a clear way of thinking about people, their work and the organization in which their careers are fulfilled. This definition establishes that high performance can be achieved with high

job satisfaction. But in contrast to the submissions of Heskett et al (1997) and Lau et al (2001), Danna and Griffin (1999) argue that quality of work life is not a unitary concept but that it incorporates a hierarchy of perspective that not only include work-based factors such as: job satisfaction, satisfaction with pay and relationships with work colleagues, but also factors that broadly reflect life satisfaction and general feelings of well being. Thus, quality of work life is seen as an umbrella term which includes many concepts; hence, it is inadequate to concentrate on only one job characteristic, whether it is wages or management style, when assessing quality of work life.

In a more holistic manner, Walton (1975) identifies eight major components of quality of work life as follows:

Adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities, opportunity for continual growth and security, social integration in the work organization, constitutionalism in the work organization, work and total life space; and social relevance of work life

Writing on the same subject, Craudhall (2006) sees quality of work life as comprising competitive compensation, appropriate benefit structure, physical environment and safe workplace. However, he added that even though the aforementioned institutional levers of quality of work life are necessary, they are not the main drivers of employee commitment. The main drivers, according to Craudhall (2006) come from the beliefs, values, and functionality of the individual and how the individual works in the environment. By inference, it seems Craudhall is clamouring for shift in paradigm from the institutional motivation to the personal. This is because the committed environment is not only an institutional commitment, it is a personal commitment. The views expressed above on the definition of quality of work life have apparently shown that it is a multi-dimensional construct, made up of a number of inter-related factors that need careful consideration to conceptualise and measure. Therefore, the following variables are considered in this study as the contents of quality of work life: Competitive compensation, job security, health and safety working conditions and career development.

On the other hand, employee job commitment has been seen to be a powerful driving force in the success of work organization. This is so because environment, that fosters commitment, accords employees the opportunity to be more involved and engaged with the work they do (Bennett & Durkin, 2000).

Over the years, an impressive amount of research efforts had been devoted to understanding the nature, antecedents as well as consequences of employee job commitment. Thus the concept has been defined in many diverse ways. Commitment as a concept has been defined as the identification and the attachment of an employee to an organization, which implies three elements: a strong belief/acceptation of the organisation's objectives and values, the willingness to exert strong efforts for it, and the firm intention to stay within the organization (Mowday, 1982; De Jong, Bosma, Peter and Siegrist, 2000). In essence, commitment is the process through which the organisation's goals and the individual's goals get more and more integrated (Hall et al, 1970).

In line with the preceding argument, Randal and Riegel (1995) described commitment in three ways which are; a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization, a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization, and a defined belief in and acceptability of the values and goals of the organization.

Essentially, if an employee is allowed to do his job and is encouraged to feel as part of the whole, his commitment will tend to increase. Therefore, employee job commitment is the result of an individual-organization exchange relationship, where individuals attach themselves to the organization in return for certain valued rewards or payment from the organization. Following this line of argument, it seems that employees who are satisfied with their personal needs and aspirations will express feelings of satisfaction and be obliged to reciprocate the organization's good gesture.

Nevertheless, employee job commitment must be differentiated from job satisfaction. This is so because while job satisfaction results from individual relation to work, employee job commitment control and guides the person in the organization (Estay, 2001). In other words, employee job commitment goes beyond job

satisfaction. It is the psychological attachment of workers to their work places (Salami, 2010). Thus, employee job commitment is the key to achieving productivity and performance in any organisation (Berry, 1997). Also, it has been argued that employees that are highly committed stay longer, perform better, miss less work and engage in organizational citizenship behaviour (Salami, 2010).

Considering the central role which employee commitment occupies in organizational productivity and performance, coupled with the recent clamour for quality of work life at work place, it becomes imperative to find out the relationship between the two variables. Therefore the objectives of this study, is to find out the joint and relative effects of elements of Quality of Work Life on employee job commitment. The elements of Quality of Work Life as earlier identified by the present study are: job security, competitive compensation, health and safety working conditions and career development.

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant joint effect of quality of work life (job security, competitive compensation, health and safety working conditions and career development) on perceived employee job commitment.

Ho2: There is no significant relative effect of quality of work life (job security, competitive compensation, health and safety working conditions and career development) on perceived employee job commitment.

Methodology: The research design adopted for this study was correlational survey research since the variables were not subjected to manipulation. The population comprises staff of ten randomly selected organizations in food and beverage industry in Lagos State, Nigeria. A sample of 610 respondents among the factory workers in food and beverage industry were selected using multi-stage sampling procedure. At first, simple random sampling method was used to select ten organizations in the food and beverage industry. Thereafter, purposive sampling method was employed to select workers in the production department (factory workers). This was followed by stratified sampling method that was applied to ensure that each of the strata in the sample was proportionally represented. The strata include gender

(male/female), occupational status (permanent/casual workers) and designation (supervisor/workers). A standardized 20-items scale on Quality of Work Life ($r = 0.85$) and a self developed 19 items questionnaire on Employee Job Commitment ($r = 0.75$) were the two instruments used for the study. A total of 700 copies of the questionnaires were administered, out of which 624 copies were retrieved but only 610 copies were found valid for analysis. Data were analysed using multiple regression to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The respondents consist 545 males and 65 females. Their ages range from 21 to 45. The minimum qualification was secondary school certificate and maximum was ordinary diploma (OND).

Results and Discussion

Ho1: There is no significant joint effect of Quality of Work Life (Job Security, Competitive Compensation, Career Development and Health and Safety Working Conditions) on perceived employee job commitment.

Table 1: Regression analysis of joint effect of Quality of Work Life (QWL) on perceived employee job commitment

R = 0.467					
R ² = 0.218					
Adjusted R ² = 0.213					
Standard Error of the Estimate = 5.1230					
Source of variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	4421.192	4	1105.298	42.114	.000
Residual	15878.528	605	26.246		
Total	20299.720	609			

Significant at $F(4,605) = 42.114, p < 0.05$

The result of Table 1 shows that the identified four elements of Quality of Work Life when taken together were effective in predicting perceived employee job commitment of the respondents. This is so because the combined factors made joint significant effect of $R = 0.467$

and adjusted R^2 value of 0.213 which implies that all the four elements of quality of work life put together, accounted for 21.3% of the total variance in perceived employee job commitment of the respondents. The result further established that the joint contribution of the elements of quality of work life could not have occurred by chance since F-ratio value of 42.114 lends credence to the effectiveness of the four independent variables to predict perceived employee job commitment of the respondents.

Ho2: There is no significant relative effect of Quality of Work Life (Job Security, Competitive Compensation, Career Development and Health and Safety Working Conditions) on perceived employee job commitment.

Table 2: Showing relative effects of Quality of Work Life (Job Security, Career Development, Health and Safety Working Condition and Competitive Compensation) on perceived employee job commitment.

VARIABLES	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardized coefficient		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig
Job security	101	.026	.193	.3.826	.000
Carrier devt	.063	.046	.069	1.368.	.172
Competitive compensation	.178	.021	.315	8.425	.000
Health and safety working condition	.0181	.026	.115	3.170	.002
Constant	11.390	2.555.		4.458	.000

Significant at $p < 0.05$

From the result displayed in Table 2 above, each of the four elements of Quality of Work Life (QWL) with exception of career development, made significant individual contributions to the prediction of perceived employee job commitment. The result indicated the following beta weights which represented the relative contribution of the independent variables to the prediction: Competitive Competition ($\beta = .315$, $t = 8.425$; $p < 0.05$); Job Security ($\beta = .193$, $t = 3.836$; $p < 0.05$) and Health and Safety Working Conditions ($\beta = .115$, $t = 3.170$; $p < 0.05$). Although three of the independent variables made significant relative contribution to the prediction of perceived employee job commitment, competitive compensation is the most potent predictor.

Discussion

The result of the multiple regression analysis revealed that competitive compensation, job security, health and safety working conditions and career development (which are the identified elements of Quality of Work Life), either collectively or separately are potent predictors of perceived employee job commitment. The magnitude of the relationship between the independent variables in predicting perceived employee job commitment of factory workers in the Food and Beverage industry in Lagos State, Nigeria is reflected in the values of coefficient of multiple regression $R = 0.467$ and in multiple R-squared adjusted (0.213) as shown in Table 1. Thus, it could be said that 21.3% of the total variance in employee job commitment was accounted for by the combination of Competitive Compensation, Job Security, Health & Safety Working Conditions and Career Development.

The F-ratio value of 42.114 which is significant at 0.05 further attests to the fact that the predictive capacity of the independent variables could not be attributed to chance factor. The findings of the present study corroborates the assertion of Lawler (1992); Nair and Nair (2001); Rethinam and Maimunah (2008); Oloyede (2005), Heskett et al (1997) and Serey (2006) that challenging job, equitable rewards, supportive working colleagues and supervisors are some of the characteristics of job which give employee job satisfaction and made them committed to their jobs. Also, the finding of this study finds support Oloyede (2005) and Onasanya (1999) that when workers are not given access to better Quality of Work Life, it may create grievances that can lead to a lower level of workers' commitment on the job. This,

in turn may have severe consequences such as labour strikes, absenteeism and other industrial actions (Fajana, 2002). In addition, the findings are in agreement with the work of Serey (2006), Onasanya (1999) and Andries, Smulders & Dhoudt (2002) who opined that motivated workers who are treated to better Quality of Work Life tend to be interested in their job, feel happy and get committed to the service of the employer. In essence, when a worker is satisfied with his job, he would be committed and associate himself with the achievement of the organization's corporate objective (Raduan et al, 2006).

As for the extent to which each of the independent variables contributed to the prediction of employee job commitment, it could be inferred from table 2 that competitive compensation is the best predictor of employee job commitment among the respondents. This finding is in line with the work of Owen and Wright (2001) that indicated a direct relationship between satisfaction with compensation and employee commitment. Owen and Wright (2001) assert that the higher the pay satisfaction, the higher the employee commitment on the job.

Another unique revelation of this study centres on job security. It was found that job security too has significant influence on the commitment of employees at work place. The findings of the current study support the work of Watson, Buchanan, Campbell & Briggs (2003) who observed that organization change such as downsizing, right sizing and outsourcing do have adverse effects on employee's loyalty, morale, motivation and job commitment. It implies therefore that job insecurity can erode the job satisfaction and commitment of employees. Similarly, job security is equally capable of stimulating job satisfaction and employee job commitment. Health and Safety Working conditions are also found to play very significant roles in the determination of employee job commitment. The finding reported in the current study supports previous research findings that job demand and work environment that cause strain can be detrimental to individual health, thus leading to psychological distress and health complaints that may dampen the morale of employees and lessens their commitment to the job (Cheng, Kawachi, Coakley, Schwartz & Colditz, 2000). Career development as a factor is not found to have significant influence on job commitment of the respondents. This may be due to the fact that

the bulk of the respondents are factory workers who have very low educational qualifications, hence do not seem to appreciate career development. This category of workers is only interested in getting their pay on regular basis and assurance that their job is well secured. Also, some of them do not intend to make their career on the manual job they do.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has been able to establish that Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a strong predictor of employees' job commitment. Out of the four elements of QWL identified in the study, competitive compensation was isolated as the most potent predictor of employee job commitment. Again, due to the manual nature of the job of the respondents used in the study, it was discovered that career development as a factor does not exert significant influence on the job commitment of the employees. Based on the findings, it is suggested that employers of labour in the organized private sector should endeavour to adequately compensate workers for their labour services. Also, the health and safety of workers at workplace should be well catered for. In the same vein, the job security of workers should be guaranteed. In other words, massive retrenchment and downsizing of workers should be discouraged. Government on her part could come up with legislations that will checkmate the indiscriminate laying off of workers by organizations. Finally, employees should be encouraged to develop in their career.

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