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WORK ENVIRONMENT AS A PREDICTOR OF JOB SATISFACTION OF UNIVERSITY STAFF IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The pursuit of developing a creative, loyal, committed, and productive workforce illustrates the essential impact of job satisfaction of employees today. The quality of work environment as well, is a key factor in employees' attitudes and behaviours in organisations; a relationship that is significantly consequential in higher education. This study, therefore, examined the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction of university staff in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design as three research questions and one hypothesis were developed to guide this study. The population of the study comprises all university staff in Ogun State, Nigeria. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select foremost universities (one each at the federal, state and private levels) whose number of members of staff is 4,747. Israel Model sampling determination table was used to select a sample size of 164 respondents. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection and was validated by experts. The reliable co-efficient of 0.97 was obtained for the instrument. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of chi square to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. The outcome of the study revealed that there is a significant connection between work environment and job satisfaction among university staff in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study concluded and recommended that the government and University management should make the provision and maintenance of adequate physical infrastructure such as well-equipped offices, functional laboratories, reliable power supply, and access to modern teaching and research technologies a top priority.

Keywords: Work Environment, Creativity, Job Satisfaction, University Staff.

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Introduction

Feeling fulfilled, exited and contented at the workplace of one's career choice is crucial for employees globally, as work arguably plays a significant role in man's life. Job satisfaction indicates a sense of joy, motivation, and actualization at work. The pursuit of developing a creative, loyal, committed, and productive workforce illustrates the essential impact of job satisfaction of employees today (Makanjuola, 2024). Job satisfaction is a worker's (positive) attitude towards his/her job, which comes up based on an assessment of the work situation. Employee job satisfaction is the job satisfaction that is enjoyed at work, by getting praise for work results, placement, treatment, equipment, and a good work environment.

Universities are essential establishments in national socioeconomic development, carrying out the role of advancing knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The ability of these organisations to fulfill and meet up with their mandate and expectations hinges basically on the quality, strength, and motivation of their workforce, whose continuous effectiveness is shaped by both work environment and job satisfaction. An encouraging and supportive work environment which includes sufficient physical facilities, helpful management, continuing professional development opportunities, and affirmative interpersonal relations is of utmost importance to employee morale, retention, and organisational productivity. It is indisputable that higher education institutions play a crucial role in developing the minds of future leaders in the quickly changing academic landscape of today. However, the working environment has a big impact on academic staff members' performance and general well-being in addition to their job satisfaction (Ortan et al., 2021). Since human capital is the primary driver of academic institutions (Goldin, 2024; Asongu & Tchamyou, 2020; Chankseliani et al., 2021), the working environment that academic employees experience has a significant impact on their degree of job satisfaction, productivity, and work-life balance. Work environment is an umbrella term which includes physical infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories, offices), organisational arrangements (policies, workload, promotion systems) as well as psycho-social features (leadership style, team spirit, recognition, and opportunities for professional development). These shape staff outcome, alongside with employees' job satisfaction, which influences turnover rate, commitment to the organisation and productivity (Akinlade 2022; Agugbosim et al., 2023).

Workers' physical, social, and psychological surroundings while performing their jobs are called workplace conditions or environment (Zhenjing et al., 2022; Akinwale & George, 2020). The workplace environment is a crucial determinant of employee productivity and the quality of their work. When a workplace effectively engages employees, it boosts their motivation to

learn new skills and enhances their commitment to performing well. A clean, safe, and comfortable workspace supports employee relaxation and job satisfaction, thereby promoting organisational success (Ramli, 2017). In fact, supportive working conditions are recognized as key drivers of job satisfaction, which significantly impacts employees' abilities to perform effectively (Ramli, 2012; Ramli & Sjahruddin,, 2015). The quality of work environment is a key factor in employees' attitudes, behaviours, and overall productivity in organisations; a relationship that is significantly consequential in higher education.

Job Satisfaction is depicted in an individual's deliberate effort to perform his/her task with an enthusiastic attitude consequently bringing about a favourable result. Job satisfaction is shown in the feelings of workers about their jobs; colleagues, the work itself, and work environment. Job satisfaction has traditionally been conceptualized as employees' affective and cognitive assessment or evaluation of their job conditions and experiences at work. Past Nigerian studies on job satisfaction in university settings have aimed on factors such as remuneration, promotion, working conditions and interpersonal relations (Olorunsola, 2010; Makanjuola, 2024).

Creativity is a key indicator of job satisfaction (Nwibere, 2024; Makanjuola, 2024; Adigun et al., 2025), as this study capitalised on creativity in defining job satisfaction. Creativity portrays intrinsic motivation and shows someone enjoying work. Creativity also offers a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. It indicates employee engagement and commitment; this shows the presence of job satisfaction among employees.

In Nigeria, universities face tenacious structural limitations such as outdated or insufficient infrastructure, periodic funding shortfalls, delayed or contested allowances or pay, as well as frequent industrial actions. All these are forces that haphazardly affect workplace conditions and staff morale (TETFund, 2024; Agubosim et al., 2023). These small-scale factors interact with local institutional practices to bring forth highly diverse staff experiences across

universities. Recent sector reports and studies indicate that targeted interventions (such as capital disbursements and academic staff training programmes) are being dispatched but implementation gaps and imbalanced allocation of benefits depict that work environment improvements keep fluctuating across institutions (TETFund, 2024; Kuforiji, 2024).

Ogun State offers a strategic and informative setting for examining these dynamics. The state has a mix of federal, state and private universities--these are institutions that vary in governance, funding models and managerial practices. They offer a natural context to compare how institutional type conditions the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction. Current empirical work in Ogun State advocates the essence of multiple work environment dimensions. To illustrate, a focused study of academic staff at Olabisi Onabanjo University discovered that workplace conditions and managerial support significantly affect academic staff well-being, performance and satisfaction (Kuforiji, 2024). In the same vein, research on academic stress management and job performance among Ogun State university staff accentuates psycho-social stressors (workload, role ambiguity, and poor support systems) as crucial parameters of staff outcomes (Timilehin, 2024). Studies of specific staff categories (such as library personnel) further show that the physical work environment (space, lighting, equipment) are important for job satisfaction among non-academic staff members in the state (Akinlade, 2022).

Given the fact that Ogun State accommodates a host of diverse sets of universities (private, state, and federal), with varying work environments, there is a need to empirically find out the relationship between work environment conditions and job satisfaction among university staff in this region. Also, although grassroots studies support the evidence base, a number of gaps still persist. Much of the literature seems to single institutions or a particular staff category (for instance, academic staff only) restricting cross-institutional ability to generalize within Ogun State (Akinlade, 2022; Kuforiji, 2024). Also, a substantial fraction of the researches examine

detached variables (salary, fringe benefits, or workload) rather than evaluating the joint influence of physical, organisational and psycho-social factors on job satisfaction. Furthermore, there is a need for a corresponding analysis across federal, state, and private institutions in the same sub-national context for clarification on how governance and funding models regulate the work environment relating to job satisfaction (Agubosim et al., 2023, Timilehin, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

In current times, Nigerian universities have continued to grapple with resolute issues related to poor working conditions, insufficient funding, infrastructural deterioration, overcrowded offices and classrooms, restricted research facilities, uneven promotion exercises, heavy workload, and delayed or insufficient pay. Some of these challenges seem to be more evident in public universities, especially at the federal level, where financial constraints and policy irregularities usually affect staff welfare. Given Ogun State's crucial role as a key educational hub in Nigeria, anecdotal evidence suggests that quite a number of university staff experience varying degrees of dissatisfaction at work as a result of unfavourable work environments. Although several studies have examined work environment and job satisfaction in Nigerian organisations, there remains profound gap in empirical research with the focus particularly on university staff in Ogun State. Existing studies are either generalised across various sectors or concentrated in other regions of the country, making it difficult context-specific conclusions applicable to universities in Ogun State. In addition, a couple of studies have holistically assessed both academic and non-academic staff within the same institutional framework, despite their complementary roles in achieving university objectives.

Considering these obstacles in the achievement of educational goals, there is a compelling need to systematically examine the nature of work environment in universities in Ogun State and investigate how it influences the job satisfaction of the staff members. Having an understanding

of this relationship is essential for university administrators, policymakers, and government authorities in developing effective strategies for improving working conditions, enhancing better staff satisfaction, reducing industrial conflicts, and ultimately bringing about the expected quality of higher education delivery in Ogun State, Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to explore the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction of university staff in Ogun State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the Study was to examine the effect of work environment on job satisfaction of university staff in Ogun State. The specific objectives are to:

i. determine the extent to which physical work environment affect university staff job satisfaction in Ogun state.
ii. ascertain to what extent availability of resources influence university staff job satisfaction in Ogun state.
iii. assess the effect of high level of autonomy and flexibility on the job satisfaction of university staff in Ogun state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

i. To what extent do physical work environment affect university staff job satisfaction in Ogun state?
ii. To what extent does the availability of resources affect the job satisfaction of university staff in Ogun state?
iii. What effect do high level of autonomy and flexibility have on the job satisfaction of university staff in Ogun state?

Research Hypothesis

This hypothesis was formulated and tested:

- There is no significant effect of physical work environment on university staff members' job satisfaction.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised members of staff of universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The population in this study is the academic and non-academic staff of all the universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. According to NUC (2022), Ogun has one (1) federal university, three (3) state universities, and twelve (12) private institutions which signifies a total of sixteen (16) universities. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two universities in Ogun State which are Federal University of Agriculture (FUNAAB) and Olabisi Onabanjo University (OOU), which are a public universities and Babcock University (BU), which is a private university. The reason for the selection of these three is that each is the oldest in terms of year of establishment in each category of public (federal and state) and private universities respectively, and because they are the foremost institutions, they have most number of long serving members of staff. The estimated total population of all the members of staff of Federal University of Agriculture is 2,352, Olabisi Onabanjo has 1,327 while Babcock University has 1,068 to make a total of 4,747 (National Universities Commission, 2019).

Based on the aforementioned statistics, Israel Model (2003) sample size determination table was used to determine the required sample size for the study. By applying Israel Model in this study, the total population of the staff of the selected universities in Ogun State, which is 4,747 was used, when ±7% is taken for precision level and 95% taken as confidence level, with p= .5,18,686 falls within the range of 5,000. Hence, a sample size of 164 is considered as the minimum threshold. Hence, 164 is the required sample size.

The main instrument for data collection was a self-developed structured questionnaire captioned "Work environment and Creativity (Job Satisfaction) of University Staff in Ogun

State". The instrument consisted of section A and B. Section A sought information on the demographic and bio-data of the respondents. These include: age, marital status, gender, type of staff and years of working experience while section B on the other hand was designed to solicit for information on work environment and job satisfaction of university staff in Ogun State. The respondents were to rate the responses on a modified four Likert Scale; Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Strongly Disagree (2), and Disagree (1). The split-half method will be used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability at 0.05 level of significance to get the result of 0.97 and this confirmed the reliability of the instrument. The researcher with two research assistants administered the questionnaire. From a total of one hundred and sixty-four (164) questionnaires administered, one hundred and forty (140) were returned and fit for analysis implying 85% return rate.

The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics of chi-square to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level.

Table 1

Number of academic and non-academic staff of the selected universities

University	Academic	Non-Academic	Total	Proportionate Number for Sample Size 164
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta	684	1,668	2,352	(2,352/4,747x 164) = 81
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	293	1,034	1,327	46
Babcock University, Ilishan Remo	560	508	1,068	37
Total	**1,537**	**3,210**	**4,747**	**164**

Selection of Heads of Human Resources Department

Three (3) Heads of Human Resources Department were selected for key informant interview from the universities. They were purposefully selected for key informant interview to be able

to compare their positions on the effect of work environment on job satisfaction as advocates of university management and employer (being the representatives of the unit that caters to members of staff in the universities), with that of members of staff.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Analysis of Bio-data of the Respondents

Table 1: Participants Bio-data

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	82	59%
Female	58	41%
Age		
18-27 years	11	8%
28 -37 years	41	29%
38 - 47 years	59	42%
48 and above	29	21%
Educational Qualification		
S.S.C.E./OND	15	10.7%
B. Sc./B.A.Ed./HND.	67	47.9%
M. Sc./M.A. Ed.	19	13.6%
Ph.D.	39	27.6%
Work Status		
Academic	59	42%
Non-Academic	81	58%
Total	**140**	**100%**

Source: *Field Survey, 2024*

The analysis above shows that the respondents are made up of more of the male gender, more of persons within the range of 38 and 47 years old, more of first-degree holders, and more of non-academic staff.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Questions

Table 2: Respondents' Responses on work environment and job satisfaction

Items	Academic LE	HE	$\bar{X}$	Non-Academic LE	HE	$\bar{X}$
To what extent does physical work environment e.g. office space, facility, and equipment in your university stimulate and encourage creative thinking?	29 49%	30 51%	2.5	50 62%	31 38%	2.4
To what extent does availability of resources e.g. technology, funding and materials in your work environment support the exploration and implementation of new ideas?	32 55.5%	27 44.5%	2.3	45 55%	36 45%	2.2
How effective are the policies in your work environment in recognising and rewarding creative contributions from staff members?	26 43%	33 57%	2.5	30 38%	50 62%	1.8
Overall, the impact of the university work environment on fostering and nurturing my creativity as a staff member is outstanding.	31 53%	28 47%	1.8	49 61%	32 39%	1.8
There is high level of autonomy and flexibility given to staff members in my work environment to pursue creative or initiatives.	38 65%	21 35%	2.5	32 40%	49 60%	2.5
Grand Mean			**2.3**			**2.1**

Source: *Field Survey, 2024*

Table 2 demonstrates the mean of each item on the opinion of respondents (academic and non-academic staff) regarding the manner to which the work environment enhances university staff members' creativity which is a measure of job satisfaction. The grand mean for the construct for academic and non-academic staff reveals 2.3 and 2.1 respectively, indicating that the majority of the respondents agreed to a low extent that work environment enhances university staff members' creativity. This therefore, implies that the physical work environment, the availability of resources and the policies in the work environment affect both academic and non-academic staff of the university, hence, impede their level of job satisfaction.

This particular sub-theme from the interview emanated out of the deep reflection of the interviewees about the theme of discussion. Interviewees were of the opinion that the work

environment must enable staff members to creatively perform their duties peacefully and seamlessly leading to satisfaction. Once this is compromised, employees will not be comfortable working in such a system. All the interviewees maintained that the working environment in the university system is fair as staff members are provided with what is required to discharge their duties and responsibilities. One of the interviewees said this:

> *"Relatively you can't have it all. But the university system to an appreciable extent ensures a supportive working environment for every member of staff. In terms of facilities, internet, and offices, I can still score the university above average" (HRM 2).*

The interviewees resolved that if the work environment is hospitable, it will spur creativity in employees and they will be more effective and efficient in the work they do. Hence, the university system ensures that staff members have a good working environment to thrive, although it may not be perfect working conditions.

Hypothesis One (Ho1) - There is no significant effect of work environment on university staff members' creativity (job satisfaction).

Table 3

Linear Regression Analysis Results of Relative Contribution of Work Environment and Creativity (Job Satisfaction)

Model Summary
R= .467[a]
R^2= .218
R^2 (Adjusted) = .217
Standard Error of Estimate = .436
F=147.589, *P*<0.05

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	p.	Decision
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.416	.113		12.505	.000	**Reject**
	Work Environment	.465	.038	.467	12.149	.000	**HO_4**

a. Predictors: (Constant), Work Environment

b. Dependent Variable: Creativity(Job Satifaction)

The result from Table 3 revealed that the work environment had a positive correlation with creativity (job satisfaction) (R=.467). The R square value of .218 indicated that the work environment contributed 21.8% to the variability of staff creativity. This implies that for every small improvement in the work environment, there is a 21.8% change in staff creativity. Hence, this gives the reason the predictor variable which is work environment is statistically significant with staff creativity given (β=.467, t=12.149, p=.000<.005). This means that the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is a significant effect of the work environment on university staff members' creativity.

Discussion of Findings

The study affirms the fact that there is a correlating relationship between work environment and job satisfaction of university staff in Ogun State, with creativity serving as the key indicator of job satisfaction. This result suggests that the conditions under which university staff tend to their various duties play a vital role in shaping their creative engagement and innovative capacity in the workplace.

The affirmative influence of the work environment on creativity postulates that when university staff is provided with supportive physical facilities, adequate resources, conducive office space spaces, and favourable organisational climates, they are more likely to express originality in teaching, research, and administrative functions. This finding corroborates the paradigm that creativity thrives in environments that encourage autonomy, intellectual liberty, collaboration, and psychological safety. In Nigerian universities, typical of settings where workforce responsibilities demand regular solving of problems and innovation, an enabling work environment becomes crucial for sustenance of creative output.

Finding from this study showed that there is a strong relationship between work environment and creativity. The physical work environment, the availability of resources and the policies in the work environment affect university staff job satisfaction in terms of creativity. This position

aligns with the findings of Adigun et al. (2025), Nwibere (2024), Raziq, A. & Maula-Bakhsh (2014), Jain & Kaur (2014), Taheri, Miah & Kamaruzzaman (2020) and Anand & Vohra (2019). They submitted respectively that there is a strong relationship between work environment and the creativity level of employees. Taheri et al. (2020) further added that without providing better facilities, workers cannot perform efficiently and organisations cannot run properly. In the ICT driven economy, employees now seek a more comfortable work environment, physically and psychologically safe to work. This is also in agreement with the finding of Sukdeo (2017) who asserted that from the finding that there is very strong causal effect between work environment and employees' creativity, which increases productivity. This corroborates with the findings of Smtiri, Dhir, and Dhir (2020), who averred that organisations need to realise the importance of creating a good working environment to maximise employees' abilities for better job performance. The researchers further asserted that ensuring a good working environment is one of the major ways of motivating employees to reach their full potential. Similarly, a study by Okolie et al. (2020) supported the finding of the study claiming that many Nigerian universities lack basic facilities like well-equipped laboratories, libraries, and reliable internet connectivity, which hinders teaching and research activities and the performance level of staff members.

In addition the findings of this work imply that creativity functions not only as a performance outcome but also a reflection of job satisfaction. University staff members who feel their job environment as being supportive are more likely to experience internal satisfaction. This is exhibited in their willingness to generate new ideas, adopt innovative teaching methods and strategies, and engage in research initiatives. This supports the findings of some Nigerian studies which discovered that favourable conditions enhance positive work attitudes and innovative behaviours among university workforce (Akinwale & George, 2020; Adeyemi & Popoola, 2019; Lebo et al, 2023).

The findings are also in alignment with Herzberg's Two Facttor Theory, which laid emphasis on the point that environmental and organisational factors (such as working conditions, supervision, and institutional policies) serve as hygiene factors that avert dissatisfaction, while intrinsic factors such as such as creativity contribute to motivation and satisfaction, and in this context, a conducive work environment seems to provide the foundation upon which creative satisfaction among which university staff can thrive.

Conclusion

It is obvious from the findings of this study that work environment significantly affects the job satisfaction in terms of creativity of university staff in Ogun State. Work environment should be structured in such to foster facilitation of creative and innovative thinking among members of staff. The study also shows that reported dissatisfaction with work environment is rampant among university staff at the federal and private levels compared to the state level.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

i. Improvement of Physical Work Facilities: The government and University management should make the provision and maintenance of adequate physical infrastructure such as well-equipped offices, functional laboratories, reliable power supply, and access to modern teaching and research technologies a top priority. These foster a conducive environment, and in turn, enhance staff creativity and productivity consequent of job satisfaction.

ii. Promotion of Supportive Leadership and Management Practices: Government and University administrators should adopt participatory leadership styles that encourage staff engagement and involvement in decision-making processes, especially, the non-teaching members of staff. Supportive supervision, recognition of innovative

contributions, and transparent administrative policies and practices can enhance staff motivation and creative engagement.

iii. Reduction in excessive workload and administrative burdens: Management should adopt strategies such as staff recruitment, equitable workload distribution, and administrative support systems to prevent burnout and allow staff adequate time for creative and scholarly engagements.

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