

Effect of Quality of Work Life on Employee Engagement in Small Enterprises: A Survey in Kogi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of quality of work life (QWL) on employee engagement in small enterprises in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study used a survey research design, which involved collecting data from a sample of 250 employees of small enterprises, with a specific focus on key personnel. A well-structured questionnaire was developed and administered to the participants. The internal consistency of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Statistical methods such as mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis were employed to analyze the quantitative data and determine the effects and relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The results showed that work environment, work time, and work conditions have significant positive effect on employees' commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction. This study also established that improved work conditions can increase employee commitment to the enterprise's success. The findings of this study were essential for small enterprise owners and managers to understand the factors influencing their employees' attitudes and behaviors.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Quality of Life (QoL) is individuals' personal evaluation of their life circumstances, considering the socio-cultural environment they are a part of [1]. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the importance of QoL in the context of Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs), which aim to create a sustainable and fair future for all [2,3]. This commitment to the SDGs has garnered global attention, with various organizations actively working towards enhancing QoL [3]. In Nigeria, particularly in Kogi State, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role in improving QoL within the framework of the SDGs.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges for SMEs, leading to workforce reductions and the adoption of "double-decker roles" by employees to sustain operations [4,5]. This shift in work dynamics post-pandemic has influenced the Quality of Work Life (QWL) for employees, impacting their engagement and well-being [6,7]. Factors such as work hours, conditions, compensation, and rewards directly affect QWL and employee engagement in SMEs [8].

The challenges faced by SMEs during the pandemic have raised concerns about the QWL of employees, particularly in the SME sector of Kogi State. Issues such as work conditions, work time, work environment and work autonomy can impact employee turnover intentions and job satisfaction [9]. Addressing these challenges and improving the work environment in SMEs can enhance employee commitment, reduce turnover rates, and increase productivity. The main objective of the study is to investigate the effect of QWL on employee engagement in Small Enterprises in Kogi State, Nigeria.

The hypotheses of the study are:

- H1: Work environment, work time and work conditions have effect on employees' commitment in small enterprises;
- H2: Work environment, work time and work conditions have effect on employees' turnover intentions in small enterprises; and
- H3: Work environment, work time and work conditions have effect on employees' job satisfaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various perspectives exist on QWL, emphasizing the need to unveil its conceptual meaning from different scholarly viewpoints. Huang et al. [10] describe QWL as the fulfillment of employee and career needs while actively contributing to organizational goals. Programs supporting employee career development are integral to fostering QWL [11]. El Badawy et al. [12] define QWL as the level of satisfaction employees experience in both personal and professional aspects. This satisfaction is achieved by meeting employees' physiological and psychological needs, prioritizing their mental, physical, social, and financial well-being [13]. In this study, factors such as work environment, time, and

conditions play crucial roles in enhancing QWL. Retaining key employees involves recognizing and addressing their unique preferences through excellent working conditions [14], which can significantly impact workplace contentment.

Work is the cornerstone of employment, where employees willingly undertake job roles and are rewarded for their contributions. To maximize organizational efficiency, small enterprises must recognize the importance of cultivating a positive work environment. The enterprise environment provides the context within which employees carry out their responsibilities [15].

Establishing a good work environment is crucial for small enterprises to boost employee engagement and motivation towards achieving corporate goals. The working conditions in a workplace play a vital role in shaping both the physiological and psychological well-being of employees during their job performance. These conditions encompass the entire work environment and the relevant regulations that apply to an employee's position [16]. The physical work environment considers factors such as workspace organization, availability of tools and equipment, safety measures, and overall workplace ergonomics and comfort. Occupational health and safety regulations are essential for ensuring a secure work environment. Providing better working conditions demonstrates the value that enterprises place on their employees [17].

Working time is another critical aspect that impacts employee well-being and productivity. The number of hours worked by an employee is directly linked to their pay and salary. Organizations typically establish moral standards for work hours, with the possibility of overtime work for additional compensation. However, long working hours can have detrimental effects on employee health [18]. It is important for small enterprises to establish ethical work hours that are reasonable and considerate of employees' need for rest and personal time. Legal guidelines on standard working hours set limits on the total amount of time an employee can work within a specified period. Overtime work beyond these standard hours requires proper compensation as per legal regulations.

The success of small enterprises heavily relies on the work environment's impact on employee commitment. A positive workplace can lead to increased employee engagement, employees' retention, and job satisfaction, while a toxic environment can result in disengagement, decreased productivity, and higher turnover rates. Research has shown that a supportive work culture with open communication and trust fosters employee commitment [19]. Likewise, leadership qualities such as empathy, justice, and effective communication play a significant role in creating an environment where commitment can thrive [20]. Recognizing and appreciating employees' contributions and accomplishments also boosts commitment levels [21]. Additionally, a well-designed workspace can enhance employee happiness and productivity.

Extended work hours and overtime have been consistently linked to increased intentions among employees to leave their jobs [10,22]. The negative impacts of long work hours extend beyond physical fatigue, affecting employee well-being and job satisfaction. Burnout, characterized by persistent physical and emotional exhaustion, is a common consequence of prolonged overtime work [23,24]. Factors such as high job expectations, lack of control over tasks, and excessive work hours contribute to burnout, leading to feelings of despair and reduced personal accomplishment. Moreover, long work hours can also adversely affect employee health, as insufficient downtime for rest and recovery can result in fatigue that impairs cognitive function and productivity [25]. This can pose risks to the health and safety of workers, particularly in tasks requiring high concentration or physical effort. The cumulative effects of fatigue and burnout significantly heighten employees' inclination to seek alternative job opportunities with better work conditions and improved work-life balance. Persistent issues with extended work hours without proper support or relief often prompt employees to consider leaving their current jobs in pursuit of a healthier and more fulfilling work environment.

In today's competitive business environment, organizations recognize the critical importance of employee job satisfaction for maintaining a competitive edge and long-term success. Small firms must understand how workplace conditions impact employee job satisfaction to

achieve this goal. High turnover rates in businesses often indicate low job satisfaction among employees, leading to decreased productivity, increased training and recruitment costs, and loss of institutional expertise [26,27]. By comprehensively understanding the factors influencing job satisfaction, small enterprises can implement effective measures to improve working conditions, thereby enhancing employee satisfaction and commitment.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research design selected for this study was the survey research design, which involved collecting data from a sample of 250 employees of small enterprises, with a specific focus on key personnel. The study utilized purposive sampling, complemented by snowball sampling techniques. In examining the research variables, the study identified work environment, work time, and work conditions as independent variables, while employees' commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction were considered as dependent variables. To gather data, a well-structured questionnaire was developed and administered to the participants. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This statistical analysis is crucial for measuring the reliability of a research instrument. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 is generally considered indicative of a reliable instrument. In this study, the analysis revealed high internal consistency across all variables, confirming the reliability of the instrument (see Table 1). The study focused on employees of small enterprises because of their significance in the success and sustainability of these businesses. By targeting key personnel within these enterprises, the research aimed to gather insights into factors such as work environment, work time, and work conditions that could impact employees' commitment, turnover intentions, and job satisfaction. The findings of the study were essential for small enterprise owners and managers to understand the factors influencing their employees' attitudes and behaviors. By identifying areas of strength and areas needing improvement, enterprises can develop strategies to enhance employee satisfaction, reduce turnover, and ultimately improve overall performance.

Table 1. Reliability of Instrument (Source: Field Survey, 2024).

S/N	Variables	No. of Items	Results
1	Work environment	5	0.861
2	Work time	5	0.872
3	Work conditions	5	0.830
4	Employees' commitment	5	0.896
5	Employees' turnover intentions	5	0.880
6	Employees' job satisfaction	5	0.903

Statistical methods such as mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis were employed to analyze the quantitative data and determine the effects and relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Specifically, a linear regression model was utilized for inferential purposes in the analysis. The models are specified below:

$$EPE = f(QWL) \tag{1}$$

In specific form:

$$ECO = a + \beta_1WET + \beta_2WKT + \beta_3WKC + \varepsilon \tag{2}$$

$$ETI = a + \beta_1WET + \beta_2WKT + \beta_3WKC + \varepsilon \tag{3}$$

$$EJS = a + \beta_1WET + \beta_2WKT + \beta_3WKC + \varepsilon \tag{4}$$

where: f = a function to be specified, a = Constant, QWL= Quality of work life, WET= Work environment, WKT= Work time, WKC= Work conditions, EPE= Employee engagement, ECO= Employees' commitment, ETI= Employees' turnover intentions, EJS= Employees' job satisfaction, ε = residual or stochastic term, and $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ are regression coefficients

4. ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the QWL variables: work environment, work time, and work conditions. The results show work environment (mean = 3.70; median = 4.00), work time (mean = 3.75; median = 4.00) and work conditions (mean = 3.06; median = 3.00). The mean and median values indicate that on average, respondents rate their work environment and work time relatively positively, with scores close to 4. Work conditions are rated slightly lower, around 3. The standard deviations show a moderate spread of responses around the mean

for all three variables, with work conditions showing slightly more variability.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables of QWL.

	WET	WKT	WKC
Mean	3.700000	3.752000	3.056000
Median	4.000000	4.000000	3.000000
Maximum	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000
Minimum	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
Std.Dev.	1.249096	1.242849	1.297536
Skewness	-0.707409	-0.716927	-0.126133
Kurtosis	2.431662	2.355465	1.939558
Jarque-Bera	24.21583	25.74339	12.37683
Probability	0.000006	0.000003	0.002053
Sum	925.0000	938.0000	764.0000
Sum Sq. Dev.	388.5000	384.6240	419.2160

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for the variables of employee engagement—employees' commitment, employees' job satisfaction, and employees' turnover intentions. The results show employees' commitment (mean = 3.33; median = 4.00), employees' job satisfaction (mean = 3.22; median = 3.00), and employees' turnover intentions (mean = 2.74; median = 3.00). The means show moderate levels of employee commitment and job satisfaction, while turnover intentions are slightly lower. The medians reveals that most responses are at or above the average level. The standard deviations show moderate variability in responses, with job satisfaction showing slightly more variability than the other two variables.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of variables of employee engagement.

	ECO	EJS	ETI
Mean	3.332000	3.224000	2.736000
Median	4.000000	3.000000	3.000000
Maximum	5.000000	5.000000	5.000000
Minimum	1.000000	1.000000	1.000000
Std.Dev.	1.297888	1.337528	1.245999
Skewness	-0.379006	-0.181892	0.072327
Kurtosis	2.074680	1.814448	1.890117
Jarque-Bera	14.90418	16.01950	13.04963
Probability	0.000580	0.000332	0.001467
Sum	833.0000	806.0000	684.0000
Sum Sq. Dev.	419.4440	445.4560	386.5760

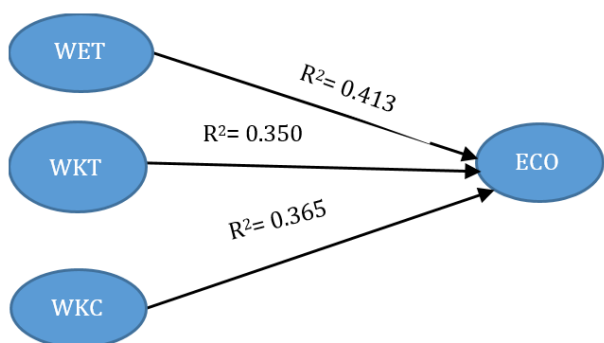


Fig. 1. Regression Model.

The R-squared for work environment is 0.413 (Fig. 1). This implies that approximately 41.3% of the variability in employees' commitment can be explained by the work environment. The R-squared value for work time is 0.350. This also implies that approximately 35.0% of the variability in employees' commitment can be explained by work time. The R-squared value for work conditions is 0.365. This indicates that approximately 36.5% of the variability in employees' commitment can be explained by work conditions.

Table 4 shows that the coefficient for the work environment is 0.652252, suggesting that for each unit increase in the work environment score, employees' commitment increases by 0.652252 units. The high t-statistic (13.21081) and very low p-value (<0.01) indicate this relationship is statistically significant. The coefficient for work time is 0.617226, showing that for each unit increase in work time, employees' commitment increases by 0.617226 units. The high t-statistic (11.55919) and p-value (<0.01) show that this relationship is statistically significant. The coefficient for work conditions is 0.604347, showing that for each unit increase in work conditions, employees' commitment increases by 0.604347 units. The high t-statistic (11.94043) and p-value (<0.01) show that this relationship is statistically significant.

The R-squared value for work environment is 0.001 (Fig. 2). This means that only 0.1% of the variability in employees' turnover intentions can be explained by work environment. The R-squared value for work time is 0.006. This implies that only 0.6% of the variability in employees' turnover intentions can be explained by work time. The R-squared value for work environment is 0.085. This signifies that approximately 8.55%

of the variability in employees' turnover intentions can be explained by work conditions.

Table 4. Effect of work environment, work time and work conditions on employees' commitment.

	WET	WKT	WKC
Coefficient	0.652252	0.617226	0.604347
t-Statistic	13.21081	11.55919	1.94043
P-Value	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
S.E. of regression	0.973154	1.047213	1.036300
Sum squared resid	234.8633	271.9705	266.3314
Log likelihood	-346.9275	-365.2637	-362.6447
F-statistic	174.5254	133.6149	142.5739
Mean dependent var	3.632000	3.700000	3.332000
S.D. dependent var	1.267677	1.296427	1.297888
Akaike info criterion	2.791420	2.938110	2.917158
Schwarz criterion	2.819591	2.966281	2.945329
Hannan-Quinn criter.	2.802758	2.949448	2.928496
Durbin-Watson stat	2.057189	2.290608	2.012066

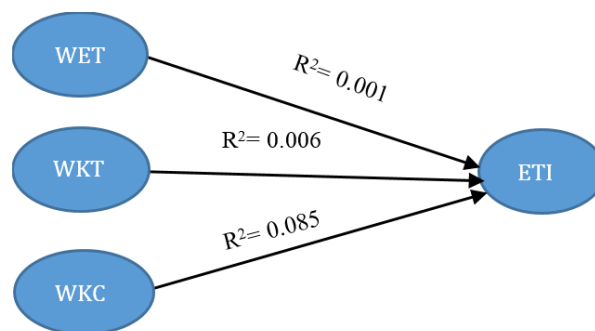


Fig. 2. Regression Model.

The coefficient for work environment is -0.038095, suggesting that for each unit change in work environment, employees' turnover intentions decrease by 0.038095 units. However, the t-statistic (-0.601855) and the p-value (>0.05) indicate that this relationship is not statistically significant. The coefficient for work time is -0.078955, indicating that for each unit change in work time, employees' turnover intentions change inversely by 0.078955 units. However, the t-statistic (-1.244106) and the p-value (>0.05) indicate that this relationship is not statistically significant. The coefficient for work conditions is 0.280753, revealing that for each unit increase in work conditions, employees' turnover intentions increase by 0.280753 units. The high t-statistic (4.814530) and p-value (<0.01) show that this relationship is statistically significant.

Table 5. Effect of work environment, work time and work conditions on employees' turnover intentions.

	WET	WKT	WKC
Coefficient	-0.038095	-0.078955	0.280753
t-Statistic	-0.601855	-1.244106	4.814530
P-Value	>0.05	>0.05	<0.01
S.E. of regression	1.247598	1.244631	1.193957
Sum squared resid	386.0122	384.1783	353.5325
Log likelihood	-409.0356	-408.4404	-398.0490
F-statistic	0.362229	1.547800	23.17970
Mean dependent var	2.736000	2.736000	2.736000
S.D. dependent var	1.245999	1.245999	1.245999
Akaike info criterion	3.288285	3.283523	3.200392
Schwarz criterion	3.316457	3.311695	3.228563
Hannan-Quinn criter.	3.299623	3.294861	3.211730
Durbin-Watson stat	1.841913	1.842278	1.780406

The Fig. 3 shows that the R-squared value of work environment is 0.257. This implies that approximately 25.7% of the variability in employees' job satisfaction can be explained by work environment. The R-squared value for work time is 0.045. This signifies that approximately 4.51% of the variability in employees' job satisfaction can be explained by work time. The R-squared value for work conditions is 0.137. This implies that approximately 13.69% of the variability in employees' job satisfaction can be explained by work conditions.

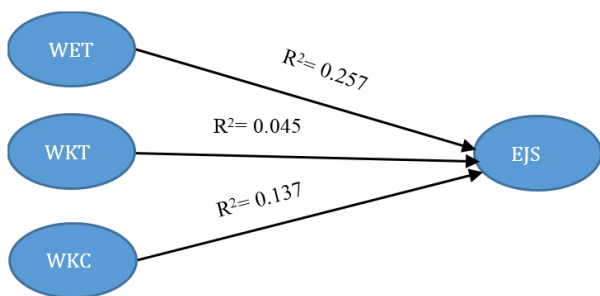


Fig. 3. Regression Model.

The coefficient for work environment is 0.542600, revealing that for each unit increase in work environment, employees' job satisfaction increases by 0.542600 units (Table 6). The high t-statistic (9.256293) and p-value (<0.01) show that this relationship is statistically significant. The coefficient for work time is 0.228504, showing that for each unit change in work time, employees' job satisfaction inversely changes by 0.228504 units. The t-statistic (3.421780) and p-value (<0.01) show that this relationship is

statistically significant. The coefficient for work conditions is 0.381340, showing that for each unit increase in work conditions, employees' job satisfaction increases by 0.381340 units. The high t-statistic (6.270658) and p-value (<0.01) show that this relationship is statistically significant.

Table 6. Effect of work environment, work time and work conditions on employees' job satisfaction.

	WET	WKT	WKC
Coefficient	0.542600	0.228504	0.381340
t-Statistic	9.256293	.421780	6.270658
P-Value	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
S.E. of regression	1.155415	1.309662	1.245141
Sum squared resid	331.0760	425.3733	384.4934
Log likelihood	-389.8455	-421.1729	-408.5428
F-statistic	85.67896	11.70858	39.32116
Mean dependent var	3.224000	3.224000	3.224000
S.D. dependent var	1.337528	1.337528	1.337528
Akaike info criterion	3.134764	3.385383	3.284343
Schwarz criterion	3.162936	3.413555	3.312514
Hannan-Quinn criter.	3.146102	3.396721	3.295681
Durbin-Watson stat	1.755687	1.744315	1.784791

5. DISCUSSION

Findings showed that work environment, work time and work conditions have significant positive effect on employees' commitment in small enterprises. This implies that by prioritizing a positive work environment, employers can cultivate a stronger sense of commitment from their employees. This supports the finding of Rasool et al. [28] that toxic work environment significantly affects employees' commitment. It also implies that flexible work arrangements and well-defined work schedules can lead to a better work-life balance, ultimately resulting to an improved employees' commitment. The study also established that improved work conditions, such as comfortable workspaces, access to necessary resources, and opportunities for professional development, can increase employee commitment to the enterprise's success.

Finding showed that work environment has insignificant negative effect on employees' turnover intentions. This implies that changes in the work environment do not have a considerable impact on whether employees decide to leave their organization. This supports the finding of

Kundu and Lata [29] that supportive work environment can foster employee retention. Although the effect is negative, implying that a better work environment would theoretically reduce turnover intentions, the insignificance implies that this relationship is not strong or consistent enough to be relied upon. This may mean that employee turnover intentions are influenced by a myriad of factors, including but not limited to job satisfaction, career growth opportunities, compensation, organizational culture, and personal reasons.

Finding showed that work time has insignificant negative effect on employees' turnover intentions. This implies that variations in work hours or schedules do not significantly influence employees' intentions to quit. The relationship is negative, and this may indicate that longer work hours would theoretically increase turnover intentions. Employees might be more affected by the quality of their work experience rather than the quantity of time spent working.

Finding showed that work conditions have significant positive effect on employees' turnover intentions. This implies that work conditions play a critical role in employee retention. When work conditions are unsatisfactory, employees are more likely to consider quitting their jobs. Employees may also feel that unsafe working conditions can pose a significant risk to their well-being. This feelings may spring up a sense of insecurity and discouragement from staying in the long run.

Findings showed that work environment, work time and work conditions have significant positive effect on employees' job satisfaction. This means that these factors play a crucial role in enhancing how employees feel about their jobs. The work environment may consist of physical and social environment. A pleasant physical environment may foster comfort and reduce stress, leading to higher job satisfaction. This aligns with the findings of Pawirosumarto et al. [30] and Taheri et al. [31] that work environment significantly enhances job satisfaction. Positive social interactions and a supportive organizational culture can enhance a sense of belonging and recognition, boosting employee job satisfaction. This is supported by the findings of Pawirosumarto et al. [30] that social environment (like organizational culture)

significantly affect employee job satisfaction. In addition, reasonable working hours or flexibility may help employees maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life, and this is cardinal to job satisfaction. Lastly, job security is aspect of work conditions that can provide peace of mind and reduces stress, and this is likely going to contribute to overall job satisfaction.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Small enterprises should develop integrated strategies that address work environment, work time, and work conditions simultaneously to enhance employee commitment. They should adopt a multifaceted approach to reduce turnover intentions, considering different aspects like career development, compensation, recognition, and personal growth, in addition to maintaining a good work environment. By understanding the nexus between work conditions and employee turnover intentions, small enterprises can prioritize creating a positive work environment. This may lead to a more engaged and productive workforce, reduced costs connected with employee turnover, and a stronger employer brand in the long run.

Small enterprises should implement comprehensive strategies that simultaneously address work environment, work time, and work conditions to maximize job satisfaction. They can also conduct regular surveys and feedback sessions to comprehend employee perceptions and areas for improvement in these domains.

7. CONCLUSION

This study established that work environment, work time, and work conditions can significantly affect employees' commitment. While establishing that a positive work environment is important, it may not be sufficient on its own to significantly reduce turnover intentions. Enterprises can consider a broader range of factors and tailor their retention strategies to address the specific needs and motivations of their workforce. While work hours is important, it is not a primary drivers of turnover intentions. Enterprises can adopt a holistic approach that considers a variety of factors and customizes their strategies to meet the unique needs and motivations of their workforce. This

comprehensive approach will promote higher levels of employee satisfaction and retention in the long term.

The significant positive effect of work environment, work time, and work conditions on employees' job satisfaction shows the importance of these factors in creating a fulfilling and engaging workplace. Small enterprises can enhance overall job satisfaction, leading to better employee retention, increased productivity, and a more positive organizational culture when they focus on improving these areas.

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