

Quality of Work-Life and Career Development among Non-Teaching Staff at the University of Lagos, Akoka in Post COVID-19 Era.

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Abstract

Quality of work-life and career development of staff seems to be the most critical and controversial issues in contemporary work environment. The consensus about quality of work-life is that it assists in the recruitment and retention of good employees and enhance organizational performance. This study examines the relationship between quality of work-life and career development. Three hypotheses guided the study. This study adopted descriptive survey research design. Out of the total population of 2,682 non-teaching staff, 435 were drawn from 3 Faculties and the Senate Building in the University of Lagos, sample size consisted 237 junior staff and 198 senior staff using accidental random sampling technique. Quality of work-life and career development questionnaire (QWLCDQ) was developed by the researchers to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos. The Cronbach Alpha reliability testing was used to determine the reliability index of 0.72. The findings of the study revealed that there was a positive relationship between quality of work-life and career development among the non-teaching staff of University of Lagos. The study therefore recommended that there should be an equitable reward system to encourage staff towards career development, a friendly and conducive work environment should also be encouraged and maintained to achieving job satisfaction among staff.

Keywords: **Quality of work-life, career development, reward system, organizational climate, job satisfaction.**

Introduction

COVID – 19 is a virus that has created tension and devastation around the globe. The World Health Organization (WHO) in December 2019 received report on clusters of pneumonia cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. The Chinese authorities subsequently identified a novel strain of Coronavirus (SARS – COV₂) as the causative agent (WHO, 2019). The Coronavirus disease outbreak has affected almost all the countries in the world including Nigeria, the most populous black nation in the world, and with a population of over 200 million people. The Coronavirus entered Nigeria through an infected Italian citizen who came in contact with a Nigerian citizen who was subsequently infected with the Coronavirus and was confirmed in Lagos State on 27th February 2020.

The Nigerian government in response to COVID – 19 outbreak put a lot of interventions in place to curb the spread of the virus, this includes; international and domestic air travel bans, closure of schools, universities and religious places, ban on social gathering and general restrictions of movements. This culminated in a lock down order imposed by the Federal Government on States with a very high infection rates. As a step to further effect social distancing and check the spread of Coronavirus, the Federal Government directed all public servants from level 1 through 12 to work from home effective Tuesday March 24, 2020. The Post – COVID 19 lock down had negative ripple effect across all sectors and mostly had negative effects on Nigeria. The macro effects on the economy have been documented ranging from a fall in both aggregate supply and demand, increase in the prices of goods and services, insecurity and rise in overall government spending, but much less has been said about the post – COVID 19 impact on quality of work life and career development of non-teaching staff in Nigeria Universities. In countries such as Nigeria, education should be viewed as a high government priority, hence the need to invest in human capital. The more educated the university non-teaching staff are, the more productive and competent they are. There is no better way to improve employees' quality of work life than career development and engaging in lifelong learning.

In this challenging and post – COVID 19 pandemic situation, the impact of the COVID – 19 pandemics has taken a significant toll on employees work life and their career development. COVID – 19 abruptly affected work routines as most universitie staff were working from home, some lost their jobs. It also caused an acceleration of trends of work to online or virtual

environments. There is overwhelming fears around health, safety and job uncertainty which are continuously affecting the quality of work life of university staff. Thus, quality of work life is now an important issue in the management of human resources in an institution such as universities. Hence, the university management should have the understanding of the biggest challenges of the negative impact of COVID – 19 on the QWL of its staff. The impact of COVID-19 is overwhelming on the non-teaching staff because they spent a disproportionate amount of time handling students' file and office work. An individual university staff lives a successful and satisfied life when there is a correlation between his or her quality of work life and career development. The basic idea of quality of work life involves employees learning capabilities and organization environment without which job become threatened; insecurity, and increased levels of employee dissatisfaction. The universities priorities should centers on enhancement of his employee given their importance to the university.

Quality of work life (QWL) is a dynamic multidimensional construct that includes concept such as job security, reward system, training and career advancement opportunities and participation in decision making (Fapohunda, 2013). Fapohunda (2013) explained further that QWL encompasses working conditions, working time, mode of wage payment, health hazard issue. It includes financial and non-financial benefits and management behavior towards workers. The factors affecting quality of work life have substantial roles to play in satisfying the needs of the employee. To buttress this point Fapohunda (2013) identified drivers of QWL to include employee motivation, emotional supervisory support, communication, compensation and reward, career development and growth, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, flexible work arrangement, occupational stress, organization culture, organizational support, job security, and psychological attachment. In a nutshell, quality of work life (QWL) does not only deal with how people can work, or contribute to their organization but also have to do with how people can do their work better and also how the work can motivate them to be competent and better employees. It equally has to do with how the university work environment can motivate individual to perform and work better in an institution. To keep the work environment in harmony with the post COVID-19 era require meeting the employees demands for good reward system, organizational climate, job satisfaction, and career development. The universities must continually seeking quality in the work of their staff so as to achieve its institutional goal and objectives. How then can universities non-teaching staff prepare to adapt to a post COVID – 19 world of work and still remain competent

and perform better on their work? The answer is on training and career development of the employees.

The non-teaching staff are one of the most important components of universities system, they contribute to the development and attitudes of the society. The quality of any education system depends on the way its staff are developed. The quality of work life of university staff can only be enhanced and noticed when they are involved in development programming. This is so because staff development focus on professional growth, bringing about change in individuals' knowledge, understanding, behavior attitudes, skills, values and beliefs (Okebiorun, 2019, Ozurumba & Amasuomo 2015).

Career development seems to be the most crucial and controversial issues in contemporary work environment. Staff career development at work is often considered in isolation wherein it is assessed on the basis that individual staff had acquired a certificate before joining an organization, hence, little or no attention is paid to their continuing learning and development. Employers tends to withdraw from career development process. Okebiorun (2016) argued employers considered staff development as an unworthy investment because they believe employee can decide anytime to leave the organization. It is a truism that initial formal education, no matter its terminal is a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition to make an individual functionally active all through his working life (Okebiorun, 2016). It has equally been established that schooling or initial formal education cannot provide all the knowledge, skills and attitude that all individuals would require during a lifetime. In spite of this challenges, Lasio, Sipos & Slavic (2018) explained that it is more beneficial for organizations to deal with career planning and management. Numerous benefits can be identified for the universities and also for the non-teaching staff. Lasio, Sipos & Slavic (2018) buttress that career development is useful for the institution because it can increase employee motivation, performance and thus the efficiency of the organization. Once institution has a fair idea about staff strengths and weaknesses, attitudes and behavior, values and future aspirations and skills competencies, they are able to make better use of staff skills and put them at the right place. Okebiorun (2019) explained the ability of institutions to be productive and ensure its competitive advantage depends to a large extent on how the workforce are trained and developed. She pointed out for Nigeria universities to be able to catch up in service delivery, research and teaching with her counterparts in advanced countries, they must have crops of workers both teaching and non- teaching that are well trained to work towards the 21st century

development goals. Similarly, the staff on their part will need to get helpful assistance and guidance with their career decision and get feedback on their performance. This helps improve their working style and improve employee's quality of work life.

Statement of the problem

The scenario in which the Nigeria universities and its employees found themselves as a result of COVID-19 calls for a debate. There seems to be impediments and uncertainties in the form of quality of work life of universities non-teaching staff. The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have resulted in a severely diminishing pool of employees who has previously before the pandemic not garnered the necessary skills to work and to stay ahead in their future work. With Nigeria already behind in preparing its workforce for the workplace of the future, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have further exacerbate the unpreparedness of the non-teaching staff in Nigeria universities. There are ongoing concerns about the quality of work life which may be more pronounced in the post COVID-19 pandemic era. Hence the non-teaching staff career development becomes imperative. Government seems not to be concerned about his human resources who are their most important assets and take necessary measures in updating and upgrading them to improve their quality of work life. Career development of an employee is related to work environment. A well trained employee is one that is able to contribute effectively to the growth and development of an organization without which might lead to high turnover, low morale and increased absenteeism. This study therefore investigated the relationship between quality of work life and career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos, Akoka, in post COVID-19 era.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between quality of work-life and career development among non-teaching staff at the university of Lagos, Akoka, in post – COVID era and specifically;

1. To examine the relationship that exist between reward system and career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos.
2. To find out the relationship between organizational climate and career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos.

3. To determine the relationship that exist between career development and job satisfaction among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated and tested in the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between reward system and career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos in the post- COVID era.
2. There is no significant relationship between organizational climate and career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos in the post- COVID era.
3. There is no significant relationship between career development and job satisfaction among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos in the post- COVID era.

Literature Review

Quality of Work-life is a combination of three words namely quality, work and life which are interrelated with each other. The quality may be defined as continuous improvement regarding workers, organization and society. Work is an important means of livelihood because it provides enjoyment and satisfaction while life, the present state of existence and employment. Quality of work life is basically the quality of life that an employee experiences at his work place. The concept of quality of work life has been perceived in a number of ways by many scholars. Maccoby (2001) defined quality of Work-life as a commitment of management and union to support localized activities and experiments to increase employee participation to determining how to improve work. Rethinam & Ismail (2008) defined Quality of Work-life as the effectiveness of the work environment that transmit to the meaningful organization and personal needs in shaping the values of employees that support and promote better health and well-being, job security, job satisfaction, competency development and balance between work and non-work life. Okebiorun (2017) found out many institutions failed to achieve their stated goals because little or no attention is paid in valuing employees and creating a stimulating work environment towards achieving their goals. Thus, any institution that lacks human resource practices lacks the necessary foundation for quality and staff effectiveness.

Reward system play a key role as they determine the employer-employee relationship. The reward system defines what the employer is willing to give which has a direct impact on what the

employees are willing to contribute in exchange. Saari & Judge (2004) point out that rewards are vital for staff acquisition and retention. Promotion is necessary for job satisfaction and it stands for increased incentives in recognition of the employee's performance and contribution. One major workplace source of motivation includes encouraging career development and training with its attendant benefits and rewards system. Armstrong (2009) agrees and point out that today's dynamic environment requires continuous professional and managerial development. Boxall & Purcell (2008) concurred that training and development of employees should be seen as an investment not a cost; and that bad performance, ignorance and low commitment to duty are very costly barriers in business. Prince (2009) pointed out that the key to high levels of performance lies in having employees who are willing to work, are well managed, well led, well-motivated and are always re-skilling.

Organizational climate can be describe as feeling in the air and the atmosphere that employees perceive is created in their organization due to practices, procedures and rewards (Brooks 2002). Organizations that can create environments that employees see as benign and in which they can accomplish their maximum capacity are viewed as a key source of competitive advantage. Zhang & Liu (2010) agreed that the organizational climate in career development of the employees is important for the employee to perform better in work as providing necessary and related trainings are required. Bahrami, Barati, Ghoroghchian, Montazer-Alfaraj, & Ezzatabadi (2016) emphasized the relationship between the employee and organization such as the employee wellness, priority for minority people have directly affected the perception of employee as well as their performance. The work environment that is able to fulfil employees' needs is considered to provide a positive interaction effect which will lead to an excellent quality of work-life.

Job satisfaction is the fulfilment enjoyed by employees about their present career. A satisfied employee is always happy with the job and sees the job as the best career path (Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert, 2003). Various research studied conducted on job satisfaction have revealed that employees who are more satisfied with their jobs are more loyal and committed to the organization. On the other hand, individuals who are not satisfied with their jobs are more likely to abandon their organization either temporary by absenteeism or permanently by turn over. According to Lee (2000) organizations that empower management of career are more likely to enlarge employee's satisfaction of job.

Methodology

The design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it dealt with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing conditions from a few sample representative of the population. The target population are all the non-teaching staff in University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample of four hundred and thirty five (435) were purposively drawn from a population of two thousand six hundred and eighty two (2682) non-teaching staff, from 3 faculties (Engineering, Education and Social sciences) and the senate building in the University of Lagos. The sample consisted 237 junior staff and 198 senior staff. For the purpose of this study, the researchers employed non-probability sampling technique. This technique is adequate due to the partial lockdown of the Nigerian economy as a result of the COVID – 19 Pandemic. More so, there was skeletal and partial work ongoing in the University of Lagos as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The respondents were chosen using accidental random sampling technique. The accidental random sampling technique is the method where the researchers administer questionnaires to respondents as at when they meet them. It involves the researcher standing close to areas where respondents are mostly found and in the case of this study, the 3 faculties and the senate building of the University of Lagos were the location of administering questionnaires to solicit responses from respondents.

The instrument used for data collection was a set of researchers' designed questionnaire titled "Quality of Work-life and Career Development Questionnaire (QWLCDQ)". The instrument contained twenty (20) items that measure quality of work life and career development. The items of the questionnaire were scored on a 4-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree – 4 (SA), Agree – 3 (A), to Disagree – 2 (D) and Strongly Disagree – 1(SD).

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure face and content validity of the instrument, draft copies of the instrument were given to two experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the department of Educational foundations in the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos. Their modifications and suggestions were used to produce the final copy.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined through split-half pilot test. The instrument was administered to 80 non-teaching staff in the College of Medicine from the University of Lagos and the data obtained was subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability testing to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. This provided the opportunity to identify the strength of each item in the instrument. Thus, the reliability coefficient of 0.72 resulted as index of internal constituency. Consequently, the instrument was adjudged to be reliable and useable for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The three hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between reward system and career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos in the post- COVID era.

Table 1:

Reward System and Career Development

Variable	Mean	SD	N	Df	R	p-value	Decision
Reward System	18.66	1.24	435	433	0.233	0.000	Reject H ₀
Career Development	17.86	1.78					

Table 1 show there is a positive and significant relationship between reward system and career development among non-teaching staff at the university of Lagos, Akoka, in post- COVID era ($r=0.233$; $df=433$; $p<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between reward system and career development among staff at the University of Lagos, Akoka, in post- COVID era is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Organizational climate does not significantly relate with career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos in the post- COVID era.

Table 2:

Organizational Climate and Career Development

Variable	Mean	SD	N	Df	r	p-value	Decision
Organizational Climate	17.84	1.32	435	433	0.245	0.000	Reject H ₀
Career Development	17.86	1.78					

Table 2 show there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational climate and career development among non-teaching staff at the university of Lagos, Akoka, in post- COVID era ($r=0.245$; $df=433$; $p<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that Organizational climate does not significantly relate with career development among staff at the University of Lagos, Akoka, in post- COVID era is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between job satisfaction and career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos in the post- COVID era.

Table 3:

Job Satisfaction and Career Development

Variable	Mean	SD	N	df	r	p-value	Decision
Job Satisfaction	17.89	1.86	435	433	0.265	0.000	Reject H ₀
Career Development	17.86	1.78					

Table 3 show there is a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and career development among non-teaching staff at the university of Lagos, Akoka, in post- COVID era ($r=0.265$; $df=433$; $p<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant

relationship between job satisfaction and career development among staff at the University of Lagos, Akoka, in post- COVID era is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The first findings show that there is a significant relationship between reward system and career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos, Akoka, in post- COVID era. The study shows that adequate reward encourages staff to develop their skills which will be of great benefit to themselves and also to the organization. This result agrees with Armstrong (2009) who pointed out that today's dynamic environment requires continuous professional and managerial development. Boxall & Purcell (2008) also concurred that training and development of employees should be seen as an investment not a cost; and that bad performance, ignorance and low commitment to duty are very costly barriers in business. The second findings show that there is a significant relationship between organizational climate and career development among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos, Akoka, in post- COVID era. The study revealed that employees working in an organization where the climate is conducive are the ones who internalized the goals and values of the organization, making effort for the organization to be successful and at the same time wish to stay in the organization. This is confirmed by Zhang & Liu (2010) they agreed that the organizational climate in career development of the employees is important for the employee to perform better in work as providing necessary and related trainings are required. The study also shows that the organization that takes the well-being of the employee into consideration has won the trust of the employee which also aids performance. This runs in line with Bahrami et al (2016) they emphasized that the relationship between the employee and organization such as the employee wellness, priority for minority people have directly affected the perception of employee as well as their performance.

Finally, the third findings show that there is a positive and significant relationship between career development and job satisfaction among non-teaching staff at the University of Lagos, Akoka, in post- COVID era. The study also revealed that a satisfied staff put in their best, improve their skills and stays longer on the job. This agreed with Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert (2013) who reported that a satisfied employee is always happy with the job and sees the job as the best career path.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It has been seen that career development is the lifelong process of managing progression in learning and work. The quality of this process significantly determines the nature and quality of individual's lives, the kind of people they become, the sense of purpose they have, the income at their disposal. Career development is greatly influenced by equitable and fair reward system, a conducive organizational climate and a happy and satisfied staff.

To this end, the following recommendations are hereby suggested based on the findings of the study:

1. There should be an equitable reward system to encourage staff towards career development. Rewards should commensurate, not delayed and also should be seen as fair by all staff of the organization.
2. A friendly and conducive work environment should also be encouraged and maintained. This is necessary because it reduces tension and staff are more relaxed to do their job.
3. On Job satisfaction, organizations should ensure ease of work processes to allow for career development. This is important because a happy staff is a satisfied staff and a satisfied staff give their best and stays with the organization.

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