



Staff Welfare and Academic Staff Job Satisfaction in the University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study determined the extent to which staff welfare predicts staff job satisfaction. Two objectives, research questions, and null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The correlation research design was used for the study. The design was used to discover or clarify the relationship between the variables in the study by using correlation coefficients. The population of the study comprised 1521 academic staff members from the 12 Faculties of the University of Uyo at the time of the study. The sample size was 317 academic staff members. Two instruments were used for data collection namely, Staff Welfare Questionnaire (SWQ) and Academic Staff Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (ASJSQ). The reliability of the questionnaires was determined using Cronbach Alpha Analysis. The reliability indices of 0.84 for SWQ and 0.82 for ASJSQ were obtained. R and R² values of Simple Linear Regression were used for testing the null hypotheses at 05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that health and medical services, childcare support services significantly predict academic staff job satisfaction in the University of Uyo.

Keywords: Academic staff, Staff welfare, Job satisfaction.

Introduction

Authorities in organisational management generally concur that staff welfare comprises the various initiatives and programmes that organisations put in place to support the wellbeing of their employees. These initiatives and programmes may include direct support in the settlement of medical bills, health care insurance scheme, childcare support, retirement plans, paid leave and time-off, wellness programmes, flexible work arrangement, etc. For (Armstrong, 2023 p.45), these initiatives also include housing benefits and other supports which enhance

employee's quality of life and contribute significantly to their overall welfare. (Robbin and Judge, 2022p. 67) point out in particular that leave and recreational benefits promote work life balance and improve employees' physiological wellbeing. This study conceptualizes staff welfare as the effort made by the employer to make the employees physically, financially, emotionally, and psychologically comfortable. Studies have consistently shown a positive correlation between employee wellbeing and organisational outcomes such as profitability, customer satisfaction, and innovation (Oswald *et al.*, 2015). Research by Wright and Cropanzano (2002) suggested that satisfied employees exhibit higher levels of motivation, engagement, and commitment to their roles. Dessler (2020) emphasized that welfare programmes are designed to promote workers' wellbeing and increase organisational effectiveness, just as Luthans (2021) also emphasized that, employees who work in safe environments experience higher morale, lower stress level, and greater job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is here conceived of as the feeling of contentment on the job with no turn over intention.

Some authorities and studies have focused on and investigated the level of job satisfaction in relation to specific elements of staff welfare programmes like the provision of health and medical services, childcare services, etc., rather than on the whole gamut of the components of such programmes. This researcher has found this quite pertinent to this investigation of the level of job satisfaction among the academic staff of the University of Uyo where the researcher was a doctoral student at the time of the investigation. In this perspective, Armstrong (2020) asserts that employee health support programmes are an essential component of staff welfare management because they promote employee wellbeing and contribute to organisational performance. Armstrong specifically pointed out such services as health insurance schemes, medical bill reimbursements, wellness programmes, occupational health and safety measures, counselling services, and preventive healthcare initiatives. He showed for instance that health insurance coverage reduces employees' concerns about medical expenses and financial insecurity associated with illness. This is also the view of Dessler (2024), of Noe *et al.* (2023), as well as of Luthans (2021). Focusing on mental health and counselling services, and their particular importance in academic institutions which are characterized by heavy workload, publication pressure, and administrative demands, Luthans submitted that employees who receive adequate psychological support are better able to manage stress and maintain a positive work attitude.

Childcare and support services are another component of staff welfare schemes that has been investigated in relation to job satisfaction. This component provides on-site or organisation sponsored day-care centers where employees' children are cared for during working hours. In the specific context of academic institutions, Dessler points out for instance that, such facilities allow academic staff

members to work with peace of mind, knowing that their children are receiving proper care, and this enhances job satisfaction. Childcare and support services also involve financial subsidies and assistance provided by employers to employees to offset their childcare expenses such as school fees, children's medical bills, etc. Childcare support programmes often and so easily dovetail into family support programmes which ultimately alleviate financial burdens associated with general family life. These programmes improve the overall welfare of employees and give them satisfaction with their job.

Statement of the Problem

The present investigation is largely inspired by studies such as the ones reviewed above which focused on medical and healthcare support initiatives and on childcare and family support schemes as major components of staff welfare programmes with relation to job satisfaction, particularly in higher educational institutions with their peculiar job characteristics. Academic institutions depend to a large extent on the commitment, productivity, and effectiveness of their academic staff to achieve their educational goals. The observations of this researcher as a member of the University of Uyo community for over a decade (having studied for the Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees there), have revealed the University continues to face challenges related to academic staff dissatisfaction, low morale, reduced productivity, and high staff turnover. Specifically, the researcher has observed, going by staff complaints, that the University has no staff welfare scheme in the form of support for medical bills of academic staff who have to treat serious illnesses, nor for their children's school fees. This has led to the untimely death of a number of academic staff members who do not have assistance outside the University to foot huge medical bills arising from serious health conditions. Many young families of academic staff members, combining children's school fees with family (including children's) medical bills, house rents, and other financial burdens, particularly those associated with their career progression, have experienced considerable dissatisfaction, low morale, low productivity, and have considered resignation. There have been studies on job satisfaction in the University and similar institutions focusing on such factors as leadership style and administrative effectiveness. To the knowledge of this researcher, there is as yet no formal investigation on the job satisfaction of the academic staff of the University of Uyo, using health and medical support and childcare support services as mediating variables of staff welfare. This is therefore the gap that this study seeks to fill.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine how staff welfare predicts academic staff job satisfaction in the University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to find out the extent to which:

- i. Health and medical services predict academic staff job satisfaction in the University of Uyo;
- ii. Childcare and support services predict academic staff job satisfaction in the University of Uyo.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. How do health and medical services predict academic staff job satisfaction in the University of Uyo?
- ii. How do childcare and support services predict academic staff job satisfaction in the University of Uyo?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- i. Health and medical services do not significantly predict academic staff job satisfaction.
- ii. Childcare and support services do not significantly predict academic staff job satisfaction.

Research Method

The correlation research design was adopted for the study. This design is used to discover or clarify relationships between variables in a study by using correlation coefficients. The population of the study comprised 1521 academic staff from the 12 faculties in the institution as at the time of this study. A sample size of 317 respondents was used for the study. Multistage sampling approach was used for this selection. Two instruments titled Staff Welfare Questionnaire (SWQ) for academic staff and Academic Staff Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (ASJSQ) for students were used for data collection. The instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts, two from the department of Educational Management and Planning, one in Psychological Foundation all in the faculty of Education University of Uyo. The reliability of the instrument was established using test re – test reliability. The questionnaire was tested using Cronbach Alpha Analysis, the reliability indices of 84 for SWQ and 83 for ASJSQ were obtained. Values of R and R² of Simple linear regression analysis were used to answer the research questions while the F-value was used to test the hypotheses. Each of the hypotheses was tested at .05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One

How do health and medical services predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo?

Table 1: Result of R and R²- values of how health and medical services predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo (N= 317)

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Health and medical services			
	.693	.481	.479
Academic staff job satisfaction			

The result presented in Table 1 revealed the R-value of .693 as the strength of the relationship between health and medical services and academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo. The R² – value of .481 also shown in Table 1 indicates that only 48.1 percent variation in academic staff job satisfaction is explained or predicted by health and medical services. This result implies that health and medical services predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo.

Research Question Two

How do childcare and support services predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo?

Table 2. Result of childcare and support services R and R²- values of how predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo (N= 317)

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Childcare and support services			
	.714	.510	.509
Academic staff job satisfaction			

The result presented in Table 2. revealed the R-value of .714 as the strength of the relationship between childcare and support services and academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo. The R² – value of .510 also shown in Table 2 indicates that only 51.0 percent variation in academic staff job satisfaction is explained or predicted by childcare and support services. This result implies that

childcare and support services predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo.

Hypothesis one

Health and medical services do not significantly predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo.

Table 3 Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis of how health and medical services predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo (N= 317)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1612.67	1	1612.67	53.83	.01 ^b
	Residual	9436.6	315	29.96		
	Total	11049.31	316			
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.08	1.26		7.99	.01
	Health and Medical	.71	.04	.69	17.08	.01

The result in Table 3 shows the F-ratio of 53.83 while the corresponding probability level of significance is .01 alpha at 1 and 315 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result in Table 3 also shows an unstandardized coefficient (B) of .71 which indicates that for every unit rise in health and medical, academic staff job satisfaction increases by .71. Furthermore, the result in Table 3 shows the t-value of 17.08, while its corresponding probability level of significance is .01 alpha. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that health and medical services significantly predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo.

Hypothesis Two

Childcare and support services do not significantly predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo.

Table 4. Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis of how childcare and support services predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo (N= 317)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1638.02	1	1638.02	54.83	.01 ^b
	Residual	9411.29	315	29.88		
	Total	11049.31	316			
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.00	1.41		4.25	.01
	Childcare and support services	.84	.05	.71	18.12	.01

The result in Table 4. shows the F-ratio of 54.83 while the corresponding probability level of significance is .01 alpha at 1 and 315 degrees of freedom. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. The result in Table 4.8 also shows an unstandardized coefficient (B) of .84 which indicates that for every unit rise in childcare and support services, academic staff job satisfaction increases by .84. Furthermore, the result in Table 4.8 shows the t-value of 18.12, while its corresponding probability level of significance is .01 alpha. This level of significance is less than .05 in which the decision is based. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result implies that childcare and support services significantly predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis of the prediction of academic staff job satisfaction by health and medical services revealed that university health and medical services do not significantly predict academic staff job satisfaction in the university of uyo. The findings are possible in view of the fact that, employees who have access to quality healthcare benefits perceive that their institution values their well-being. This perception strengthens their commitment and attachment to the organizations. This is in agreement with Armstrong (2023), who said that health insurance coverage reduces employees' concerns about medical expenses and financial insecurity associated with illness. Consequently, employees can focus more effectively on the teaching, research, and administrative responsibility where by enhancing job

satisfaction. The findings of the study support Dessler (2024) who assert that access to medical facilities enables staff to receive timely treatment and preventive healthcare services reducing absenteeism and improving work satisfaction. The study has shown that provision of health and medical services contributes to job satisfaction in the following ways: it improves employees' physical and mental well-being, reduces absenteeism caused by illness, promotes organizational commitment and loyalty and creates a positive and supportive work environment. The findings further support Noe et al. (2023) which said that medical allowances and reimbursement schemes lessen the financial burden associated with healthcare costs, thereby improving employees' satisfaction.

The researcher's view of the study revealed that, health services help academic staff manages stress, anxiety and burnout. Improved mental well-being contributes significantly to employees' satisfaction with their jobs. It reduces financial stress, that is, employees who are protected from excessive healthcare costs often experience greater peace of mind and satisfaction with their employment. Employees who enjoy good health are better able to manage both professional and family obligations resulting in increased satisfaction and improved quality of life.

The result of the analysis of the prediction of academic staff job satisfaction by childcare and support services revealed that childcare and support services significantly predict academic staff job satisfaction in University of Uyo. Uyo. The findings are attributed to the fact that when institutions provide adequate childcare support, employees experience reduced work- family conflict and improved work-life balance. This is supported by Dessler (2024) who said that childcare facilities allow staff members to work with peace of mind knowing that their children are receiving proper care during working hours. This reduces anxiety and enhances concentration, thereby increasing job satisfaction. The study revealed that childcare and support services foster a family- friendly organizational culture, reduce work-family conflict and stress, and promote work-life balance among employees. This is in collaboration with Armstrong (2023) who opine that childcare subsidies alleviate financial burdens associated with childcare expenses, improving employees' overall welfare and satisfaction. The study also supports Burke (2021) whose study revealed that welfare and support services positively influence satisfaction, commitment, and workplace engagement.

To the researcher, the findings of the study revealed that childcare and support services create a caring and supportive work place culture. Employees who perceive their institution as family -friendly are willing to develop positive attitudes toward their work and colleagues. Such a positive organizational climate enhances job satisfaction and teamwork. It encourages gender equality in workplace. Childcare and support services help both male and female employees manage parenting responsibilities more effectively. Such support enables employees, especially women,

to pursue career advancement opportunities without compromising family obligations. This contributes to a more inclusive and satisfying work environment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that staff welfare significantly predicts academic staff job satisfaction in the University of Uyo, Uyo. The findings showed that staff welfare enhance higher levels of job satisfaction among the academic staff of the University of Uyo leading to improved institutional performance and competitiveness.

Recommendation

The University of Uyo Management should prioritize health and medical services, childcare and support services programs as a strategic means of improving job satisfaction and achievement of organizational success.

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