
PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT AND JOB-RELATED WELLBEING IN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES**NWACHUKWU, Chijioke**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined perceived organisational support and job-related well-being in Nigerian Universities. Based on the analysis of 310 responses, it was observed that participants were neutral concerning perceived organisational support and job-related well-being as important. We found a strong positive and significant association between perceived organisational support and job-related well-being. Our findings suggest that there is no statistically significant difference in lecturers' perception of perceived organisational support and job-related well-being. The study thus recommends that universities should consider implementing practices and policies that improve lecturers' well-being.

Keywords: Job-related wellbeing, lecturers, Nigeria universities, perceived organisational support

JEL Classification: L20, M10

INTRODUCTION

Competition in the global education environment calls for a strategic approach to human resource management (Vu & Nwachukwu, 2020; Maina & Waianjo, 2014) to reduce the constant movement of lecturers. The “human elements” constitute a strategic resource that determines effective efficiency of firms and predict success for both profit and nonprofit organizations (Okochi & Ateke, 2021). This is even as high employee turnover has been known to affect service processes negatively; and carries other costs that erode organizational profitability and sustainability; and therefore, one of the most daunting challenges managers of organizations face in today’s knowledge-based economy (Ateke & Akani, 2018). In this context, the well-being of lecturers is crucial for universities in Nigeria. Through innovative research and teaching, universities make positive contributions to economies (Ali *et al.*, 2014). As such, their success hinges on the perception of the support they receive from their Universities. A higher perception of organizational support and value by the organization promotes positive work-related wellbeing (Sonntag *et al.*, 2013; Arnold & Dupré, 2012).

Eisenberger *et al.* (1986) argue that perceived organizational support (POS) is employees’ perceptions of the extent to which their organization value their contributions and cares about them. Well-being on the other hand is connected to a state of mind and virtue (James, 1988), and the ability to perform some life tasks (Selamu *et al.*, 2017). It is the interface between an individual and their surroundings (physical, social, psychological and spiritual life) (Andrews, 2004). Scholars have linked POS to factors such as employees’ commitment (Ateke & Akani,

2018; Eisenberger et al., 2001), work engagement (Caesens et al., 2016), job performance (Shoss et al., 2013), employees' turnover intentions (Kurtessis et al., 2017), employee performance (Ikon & Nwoye, 2019), absenteeism (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008), workplace harmony (Miidom et al., 2022) and burnout (Caesens et al., 2017). Despite several studies on the positive effect of POS on employee behaviour and organizational performance, the influence of POS on job-related well-being (JRW) has been relatively ignored (Soh et al., 2016), especially among academics in Nigerian universities. Yet, POS is vital to improved well-being of lecturers in Nigerian universities.

Based on information obtained from the National Universities Commission NUC website on 1st May 2022, Nigeria has 217 approved universities. There are 49 Federal universities, 57 State universities, and 111 Private universities (National Universities Commission [NUC], 2022). Nigeria has 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. These States are divided into 6 geopolitical zones (South-West, South-South, North-Central, South-East, North-West, and North-East). Given that literature on the subject is scarce in Nigeria, especially in Universities, and the importance of wellbeing on productivity, this paper attempt to fill the gap in literature. Specifically, the study looks at the connection between POS and JRW and whether the perceptions of lecturers about POS and JRW differ in sample universities. The study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of lecturers concerning POS and JRW?
2. What is the relationship between POS and JRW
3. Is there a significant difference in Federal, State and Private universities lecturers' perception of concerning POS and JRW?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis

The study uses organizational support theory (OST) which suggests the need for management to develop organizational support to enhance job-related wellbeing. The organizational support theory describes how employees perceive organizational support, as well as how it develops and foster positive outcomes (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Support can reduce the negative impact of threatening situations on health by increasing coping (Wattoo et al., 2018). The perception of the availability of support makes stressful situations less negative (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). Employees' perceptions of organisational support could be positive or negative. If employees perceive the support they receive as unfavourable it can have a negative impact on their well-being. Favourable organisational support such as acceptance, esteem, and connection, as well as providing comfort during times of stress can improve employee well-being. Arguably, strong organisational support can affect job-related well-being positively. Based on OST, we argue that POS can explain job-related well-being in Nigerian universities. If the organizational support is high, POS and JRW will be high.

Perceived Organisational Support and Job-Related Wellbeing

POS connote employees' perceptions of the extent to which their organization value their contributions and promote their welfare (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002, in Ateke & Akani, 2018) define POS as employees' perception of the support they get from the organisation in their pursuit of the "better life." Well-being connotes the experience of

positive emotions and relationships as well as the development of one's potential (Huppert, 2009). Ruggeri et al. (2020) contend that well-being is a sustainable condition that allows the individual to grow and thrive. POS meet employees' socio-emotional needs, leading to positive attitudes and behaviours and greater subjective well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2017). It suggests the degree to which the firm cares about the well-being of its employees (Al-Homayan et al., 2013). Lecturers' job-related well-being is assumed to be a positive evaluation of the work experience of lecturers. Kurtessis et al. (2015) submits that POS is essential for both organisational performance and the well-being of employees. Arslaner and Boylu (2017) contend that organisational support enables employees to deal with threatening situations and improves their well-being.

In China, Wattoo et al. (2018) found that POS predict employees' well-being. Arguably, organisations can protect the rights of employees with their policies. Caesens et al. (2016) observed that POS is positively linked to well-being of employees. Ikon and Nwoye (2019) looked at employee performance and POS in selected banks in South-East Nigeria; and concluded that POS is crucial to improved employee performance. They added that banks should show employees' genuine love and support both at work and outside the work setting. Using data from telecommunications companies in Nigeria, Miidom et al. (2022) examined the effect of POS on workplace harmony; and demonstrated that POS has a significant influence on workplace harmony. They concluded that telecommunication companies should coach and mentor their employees to improve teamwork and morale. The literature review shows some studies on POS and wellbeing, none of the studies examines this relationship in the Nigerian context. Yet, there is more to understand about the important relationship. The main goal of our study is to add to the literature by shedding light on this important phenomenon. Based on the literature review we generate the following hypotheses.

H₁: Perceived organisational support significantly relates to lecturers' well-being.

H₂. There is no significant difference in the perception of lecturers in Federal, State and Private universities concerning perceived organizational support and job-related wellbeing.

METHODOLOGY

This paper examines POS and JRW using a descriptive and correlational quantitative research approach. The study used online questionnaires (Google form) to collect data from 310 lecturers from universities (Federal, State and Private) located in 6 geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The survey took place between September 2021 and December 2021. The study adopted purposive and convenient sampling methods that enable the researchers to focus on participants that can provide reliable information about the phenomenon. Since this study seek the opinion of academics, the sampling methods are appropriate. The study adapted The Teacher Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire TSWQ (Renshaw, 2020). The Cronbach's coefficient of lecturer well-being was 0.74. The study adapted the short version of the Perceived Organisational Support POS scale (Eisenberger et al., 1986); which has been proven valid and unproblematic (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The items adequately capture the definition of POS. A sample of items is "My University provides opportunities for promotion and career growth." The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of employee well-being was 0.67.

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the variables and respondents' demographics. Descriptive statistics are useful in describing the distribution of scores or measurements using a few indices (Saunders et al., 2007). Pearson correlation analysis and ANOVA test were employed to test the hypotheses formulated. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25.0 was employed in the analyses conducted.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

310 respondents participated in the study. 227 representing 73% are males while 83 representing 27% are females. 254(82%) are married and 56(18%) are single. Participants included 51 professors (16.5%), 14 associate professors (5%), 46 senior lecturers (15%), 66 lecturer 1 (21%), 63 lecturer 2 (20%), 50 assistant lecturers (16%) and 20 graduate assistant (6.5%). The average age of the respondents was 36.22 years. 96 respondents have worked between 0-5 years, 97 between 6-10 years, 48 between 11-15 and 26 between 16-20. 43 participants have 21 and above teaching experience.

Table 1: Respondents attributes

		Frequency	%
Gender:	Male	227	73
	Female	83	27
Marital status:	Married	254	82
	Single	56	18
Grade level:	Professor	51	16.5
	Associate professor	14	5
	Senior lecturer	46	15
	Lecturer 1	66	21
	Lecturer 2	63	20
	Assistant lecturer	50	16
Teaching experience:	Graduate assistant	20	6.5
	0-5 years	96	30.9
	6-10 years	97	31.3
	11-15 years	48	15.5
	16-20 years	26	8.4
	21 and above	43	13.9

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on perceived organizational support and job-related well-being (2022).

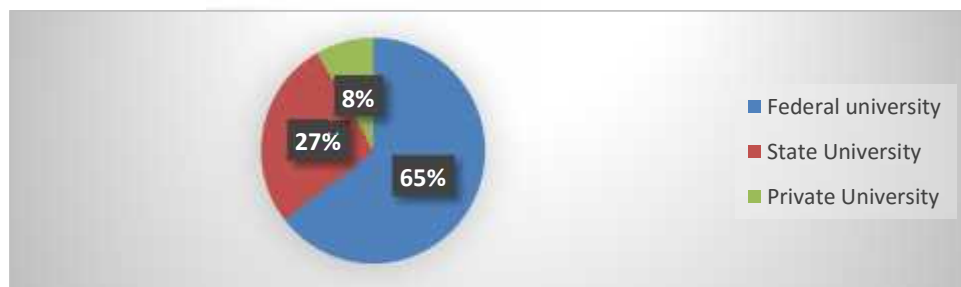


Fig. 1: Participant distribution based on university

Source: SPSS output of data analysis on perceived organizational support and job-related well-being (2022)

The participants included 200 lecturers from Federal universities, 84 from State universities and 26 from Private universities. The sample is adequate concerning the distribution attributes.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Perceived Organisational Support (POS)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
POS1	3.52	.823	310
POS2	2.31	1.643	310
POS3	3.87	1.569	310
POS4	3.40	1.643	310
Composite Mean	3.28		

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on perceived organizational support and job-related well-being (2022).

A mean value of (4.50-5.00 = strongly agree), (3.50 - 4.49 = agree), (2.50-3.49 = neutral), (2.00-2.49 = disagree) and (1.00-1.99 = strongly disagree). Tab. 2 shows participants' extent of agreement to statements based on POS. Respondents agree to the statements; POS1: I receive support from colleagues (mean score, 3.52) and POS3: My university provides opportunities for promotion and career growth (mean score, 3.87). Participants disagree with the statement POS2: My working conditions support the results I am expected to achieve (mean, 2.31). Respondents were neutral concerning the statement POS4: My University has a culture that allows me to develop my teaching and research skills. The composite mean value (3.28) suggests that academic staff are neutral in terms of the support they get from their universities.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Job-Related Wellbeing (JRW)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
JRW1	3.93	.915	310
JRW2	3.38	.831	310
JRW3	3.89	.839	310
JRW4	4.02	.879	310
JRW5	4.21	.861	310
JRW6	4.67	.537	310
JRW7	3.94	.838	310
JRW8	4.41	.656	310
Composite Mean	4.06		

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on perceived organizational support and job-related well-being (2022).

The results in Table 3 show that respondents agreed with the following statements concerning JRW, JRW1: I feel like I belong at this school (mean score, 3.93), JRW3: I am treated with respect at this school (3.89), JRW4: I can really be myself at this school (4.02), JRW5: I am a successful lecturer (4.21), JRW6: I am good at helping students learn new things (4.67). JRW7: I accomplish a lot as a lecturer (3.94), and JRW8: I feel like my teaching is effective and helpful (4.41). However, participants were neutral about the statement JRW2: I feel like people at this school care about me (mean score, 3.38). A composite mean value (4.06) implies that the majority of the lecturers agree with the statements concerning wellbeing.

Table 4: Correlation analysis

	Grade level	Marital status	Gender	Teaching experience	Type of university	JRW	POS
POS <i>r</i>	.007	-.061	-.093	.112*	.040	.546**	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.905	.284	.102	.050	.484	.000	
JRW <i>r</i>	.048	-.106	-.027	.294**	.062		.546**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.408	.065	.635	.000	.282		.000
N	310	310	310	310	310		310

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on perceived organizational support and job-related well-being (2022).

Perceived organisational support has a negative insignificant correlation with marital status ($r = -0.061, p > 0.05$) and gender ($r = 0.093, p > 0.05$). POS has a positive and insignificant connection with grade level ($r = 0.007, p > 0.05$) and type of university ($r = 0.04, p > 0.05$). POS shows a positive and significant relationship with teaching experience ($r = 0.112, p < 0.05$) and job related wellbeing ($r = 0.546, p < 0.05$). Job related wellbeing is negatively and insignificantly correlated to marital status ($r = -0.106, p > 0.05$) and gender ($r = 0.027, p > 0.05$). JRW has a positive and insignificant association with grade level ($r = 0.048, p > 0.05$) and type of university ($r = 0.062, p > 0.05$). JRW is positively and significantly related to teaching experience ($r = 0.294, p < 0.05$).

Test of Hypotheses

H₁: Perceived organisational support significantly correlates to job-related wellbeing.

Based on the result ($r = 0.546, p = 0.000$) in table 4, we conclude that **H₁** is supported.

H₂: There are no significant differences in the perception of lecturers in Federal, State and Private universities concerning POS and JRW.

Table 5: ANOVA test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Group	23.768	2	11.884	.619	.539
Within Groups	5777.834	301	19.195		
Total	5801.602	303			

Source: Simulation from SPSS output of data analysis on perceived organizational support and job-related well-being (2022).

ANOVA test was performed to evaluate if there are statistically significant differences between the perceptions of lecturers concerning Job-related wellbeing. The result of the one-way ANOVA ($F_{(2,0)} = .619, p = .539$) in Tab. 5 indicates that "There were no statistically significant differences in perceptions of lecturers in the sample universities concerning POS and JRW. This implies that the well-being of lecturers is the same across the sample universities. Thus **H₂** is supported.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study focused on the link between POS and JRW of lecturers in Nigerian Universities. Based on data from 310 lecturers from Federal, State and Private Universities, we observed that lecturers are neutral concerning the support they receive from their Universities (composite mean 3.28). Also, job-related wellbeing (composite mean 4.06) is seen as an important factor for

academics in Nigeria. Furthermore, POS has a significant positive association with JRW. JRW measures lecturers' connectedness and teaching efficacy. Arguably, strong organisational support affects lecturers' connectedness to their Universities and their teaching efficacy. In addition, lecturers believe that robust support from their Universities is important to improve their well-being. Our result aligns with the results of Ateke and Akani (2018), Kurtessis et al. (2015) and Eisenberger *et al.* (2001) that POS is essential to the well-being of employees and their commitment to their firms. Also, the results of this study support the position of Wattoo et al. (2018) that POS enhance employee well-being. Arguably, POS experienced by lecturers from their working conditions will promote their wellbeing. If lecturers received the support, care and value from their Universities, they could develop a sense of connectedness to the University (Uçar & Ötken, 2013). Such support assists in improving JRW. This study found that there is no significant difference in the perception of lecturers in the sample Universities concerning POS and JRW. The possible reason for this result may be similarities in support systems and HRM policies and practices. Indeed, POS and JRW are similar across Nigerian universities.

CONCLUSION

A work environment characterized by flexible work arrangements and robust training programmes can be valuable for lecturers' well-being. This study examined the correlation between POS and JRW, and also sought the perception of lecturers in Nigerian Universities concerning POS and JRW. The study established that POS significantly relates to JRW; and that there is no significant difference in lecturers' perceptions of POS and JRW in the studied Universities. The study concludes that JRW of lecturers in Nigerian Universities depend on POS; and that lecturers perceive POS and JRW to be the same in the sample Universities.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study have significant theoretical and practical implications for how the well-being of academic staff should be evaluated. Therefore, the study enriches our understanding of POS and JRW for Nigerian lecturers. The findings contribute to organisational support theory by demonstrating that POS is important for academic staff wellbeing. This result suggests that POS is applicable and relevant to understanding the well-being of academics. The results from this study also have significant practical implications for managing the well-being of academics. First, they suggest that Universities should develop a supportive work environment to enhance lecturers' well-being. The finding of POS as a predictor presents an important area for University interventions to improve the well-being of lecturers. University administrators and HRM practitioners should consider actions that can increase the levels of POS and show that Universities value the contribution and welfare of their teaching staff. Well-being is connected to positive outcomes such as greater productivity, effective learning, positive relationships and increased creativity (Huppert & So, 2013; Diener, 2012; Oishi, Diener & Lucas, 2007), physical health and long life (Diener, Pressman *et al.*, 2017). In this context, policies that support flexible work arrangements, promotion and career growth, robust training programmes as well as a culture that support teaching and research can be useful interventions to improve lecturers' job-related wellbeing (Wattoo et al., 2018).

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The present study used a cross-sectional design in Universities. Future research should consider longitudinal designs as it is most preferred to establish causality. The study employed correlational analysis to test the hypothesised relationship. Caution should be exercised in interpreting the result as correlation does not mean causality. The present study focused on the direct relationship between POS and JRW. Future research should consider a broader approach to evaluating well-being by incorporating other antecedents, outcomes and mechanisms (moderators and mediators) in other tertiary institutions (polytechnics and colleges of education) and sectors in Nigeria. Despite the shortcomings highlighted, our study adds to organisational behaviour and HRM research in Nigeria.

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