



QUALITY OF WORK-LIFE AS A PREDICTOR OF LECTURERS' JOB ENGAGEMENT IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

¹Dr. Martha Chioma Ibezim & ²Dr. Sunday Aligwe Nwanga,

¹Department of Educational Management and Planning, Paul University, Awka.

²Department of Curriculum Studies, Educational Management and Planning, University of Uyo,
Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

¹<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3540-6891>

Abstract

The study examined quality of work-life as a predictor of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all lecturers from College of Education in South East, Nigeria. The study sample consisted of 426 lecturers drawn using a multistage sampling procedure. Two sets of instruments, titled "Quality of Work-Life Questionnaire (QWLQ)" and "Lecturers' Job Engagement Questionnaire (LJEQ)" were used for data collection. Three experts face-validated the instruments: two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from the Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, all from the Faculty of Education at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach's alpha method was used to assess the instruments' internal consistency, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.78 and 0.80 for Clusters A and B of QWLQ, respectively, with an overall coefficient of 0.79, whereas 0.81 was obtained for LJEQ. The researchers, along with three research assistants, collected data using a direct approach, achieving a 96% return rate. Simple regression was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. The study's findings revealed, among others, that incentive and safety practices strongly and significantly predict lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that the Management of Colleges of Education should prioritize incentive practices through annual ceremonies to recognize the efforts of outstanding lecturers and improve their job engagement.

Keywords:

Quality of Work-Life, Lecturers, Job Engagement, Incentive Practices, Safety Practices

1.1 Introduction

Colleges of Education are tertiary institutions that prepare and supply competent teachers for primary and secondary education. Isabu (2024) opined that Colleges of Education are higher or tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria that offer National Certificate of Education (NCE) to trainee teachers. Onyenso and Aniobu (2025) noted that colleges of

education are among the highest-level tertiary educational providers that equip their graduates to be useful and sought after by the global educational community. Continuing, Onyenso and Aniobu maintained that Colleges of Education engage in teaching, research, consultancy, discovery of new phenomena, and community service, among others. One of the valuable assets who engage in teaching, research, and consultancy to achieve the set goals of Colleges of Education is the lecturers.

Lecturers are the academic staff in tertiary institutions of learning. Ojo, Alao, and Atolagbe (2024) averred that lecturers in higher educational institutions engage in teaching, research, academic advising, and administration. Furthermore, Ojo *et al.* stated that the success of tertiary institutions is determined by the manner in which the lecturers are engaged with their job. Lecturers' job engagement is the teaching staff's devotion of time and substantial energy to carrying out official responsibilities in learning institutions. Raralio (2022) opined that staff who are engaged with their job feel compelled to succeed and strive to achieve challenging goals. Lecturers' job engagement reflects physical and emotional commitment to carrying out work activities in educational institutions. According to Ebitto and Madubuike (2025), lecturers' job engagement is the level of commitment and enthusiasm academic staff display toward their assigned responsibilities within tertiary institutions of learning. Lecturers demonstrate job engagement by putting high energy, enthusiasm, and concentration into discharging their official obligations in Colleges of Education. Ementa and Orabueze (2024) asserted that engaged lecturers are passionate about their work, show strong loyalty, demonstrate dedication and are motivated to contribute to the organization's success. Ezechukwu and Obi (2023) noted that some lecturers display job disengagement by absenting themselves from duties without permission, being frequently late to work, and engaging in unprofessional conduct that adversely affects the quality of instruction received by students in Colleges of Education in South-east Nigeria. Lecturers could be motivated to improve their job engagement through enhancing the Quality of Work-Life (QWL) in Colleges of Education.

Quality of Work-Life (QWL) is managerial activities that are geared toward satisfying the physical, emotional and professional needs of staff in an organization. Nankani and Kaur (2026) refer to QWL as the programmes designed to promote overall well-being of employees in the workplace. QWL concerns how work conditions and experiences appeal to staff members in an organization. Onyali and Nweke (2025) defined QWL as the extent to which organizations offer enriching job experiences that empower staff and make them comfortable in the workplace. Furthermore, Onyali and Nweke (2025) stated that QWL involves actions that create a supportive, comfortable environment that enriches staff's job experience, improves their well-being, and motivates them to put substantial effort into achieving set goals. QWL can influence lecturers' motivation and dedication to their duties in Colleges of Education. According to Martins, Moreira, and Souza (2026), QWL is a multidimensional concept that encompasses the physical, psychological, and social aspects of the workplace, which collectively shape employees' well-being and satisfaction. Building on this, Martins *et al.* argued that QWL reflects how well the work environment meets employees' needs, supports personal growth, and enhances their ability to contribute to organizational goals. QWL encompasses good working conditions, work-life balance, incentive practices, safety practices, job security, and professional development opportunities. This study focused on incentive practices and safety practices.

Incentives are benefits and tangible materials that motivate staff to work hard to attain set goals. Ifeanyi-Ewuzie (2025) defined incentive as a reward, benefit or motivation that

encourages teachers to take specific actions, achieve goals or exhibit desired behaviours. Incentives can boost lecturers' morale and encourage them to work harder. Chaudhary (2024) noted that an incentive is the compensation an employee receives in return for their contribution to the organization. Furthermore, Chaudhary stated that incentive practices include performance bonuses, research grants, additional allowances, professional development opportunities, recognition, work environment, job security, autonomy, academic freedom, and work-life balance. Similarly, Olasunkanmi and Yemi-Omole (2026) averred that incentive practices such as remuneration, career progression, staff welfare, job security, and staff promotion can motivate staff to work hard in discharging their duties in an organization. Lecturers who receive incentives are likely to exhibit greater willingness to perform assigned responsibilities in Colleges of Education.

Safety is the protection of individuals from violence, hazards, injuries and other risks. Safety also involves protecting one's property from destruction or theft. Okaforcha and Okeke (2025) noted that safety is the state of being free from hazards, risks, threats, injuries, and loss of property. Safety practices are initiatives, protocols, and programmes designed to ensure that students and staff are secure and that available facilities are protected from destruction in the learning environment. Sokpuwu and Akpan (2023) noted that safety practices are proactive measures to prevent accidents/incidents and mitigate personnel injury and damage to equipment and property within the school environment. Furthermore, Sokpuwu and Akpan stated that safety practices include fire alarms, first aid boxes/kits, warning posters, wet-floor signs, personal protective equipment for laboratory work, metal detectors, a school ambulance, bell signals, hand-washing ports, hand-sanitizer ports, and waste/trash bins. Other safety practices include providing identity cards to staff and students, installing closed-circuit television, recruiting security personnel, fencing the school premises, training staff on security issues, supplying clean water, and regularly sweeping and clearing bushes within the learning environment, among others.

Quality of work-life is unfavourable for lecturers in certain aspects in Colleges of Education, South East, Nigeria. Enwezor and Obi (2022) asserted that evidence shows many academic staff in higher institutions, especially those in the Colleges of Education, South East, are unhappy with their job quality and conditions. Enwezor and Obi added that this could be attributed to a lack of teaching and learning materials, low salaries, inadequate training and development programmes, low social status within communities, inadequate housing, heavy workloads, and poor security measures and work environments. This unfavourable quality of work-life tends to impair lecturers' physical and emotional well-being. It may lead them to resort to professional misconduct and withdraw from their responsibilities in Colleges of Education in South East Nigeria. Against this backdrop, the study investigated quality of work life as a predictor of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate quality of work-life as predictors of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine incentive practices as predictors of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.
2. Ascertain safety practices as predictors of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of incentive practices on lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria?
2. What is the predictive value of safety practices on lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria?

1.4 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Incentive practices do not significantly predict lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.
2. Safety practices do not significantly predict lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.

2. Methods

The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all lecturers from Colleges Education in South East, Nigeria. The study sample consisted of 426 lecturers drawn using a multistage sampling procedure. Two sets of instruments, titled "Quality of Work-Life Questionnaire (QWLQ)" and "Lecturers' Job Engagement Questionnaire (LJEQ)" were used for data collection. The researchers developed the instruments based on insights from the literature. QWLQ had 22 items, divided into clusters A and B, with 12 items on incentive practices and 10 on safety practices. LJEQ contained 20 items structured to measure lecturers' job engagement. The items were rated on a four-point scale of Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), with weights of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively.

The instruments were face-validated by three experts: two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and one from the Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Educational Foundations, all from the Faculty of Education at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The suggestions and comments of the experts were incorporated into the final copy of the instruments. Cronbach's alpha method was used to assess the instruments' internal consistency, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.78 and 0.80 for Clusters A and B of QWLQ, respectively, with an overall coefficient of 0.79, whereas 0.81 was obtained for LJEQ.

The researchers, together with three research assistants who are lecturers in Colleges of Education in the study's area, administered copies of the questionnaires. A total of 426 copies of the instruments were distributed and 411 copies of the questionnaires were properly filled and successfully retrieved, indicating a 97 percent return rate. The duly completed and successfully retrieved copies were used for data analysis. Simple regression was used to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. For decisions on the research questions, the coefficient r and the predictive value were interpreted using the correlation coefficient by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, cited in Wubante (2020), as follows:

Predictive Value	Interpretation
.00- .19	Weak Prediction
.20- .39	Fair Prediction
.40- .69	Moderate Prediction
.70- .89	Strong Prediction

.90- .99 Very strong Prediction
1 Perfect Prediction

In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, if p-value is equal to or less ($\leq$) than significant value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, but if p-value is greater than ($>$), the significant value of .05 the null hypotheses was not rejected. All data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27.

3. Results

Research Question 1: What is the predictive value of incentive practices on lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria?

Table 1: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Predictive Value of Incentive Practices on Lecturers' Job Engagement in Colleges of Education

Model	N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
Incentive Practices	411	0.781	0.642	0.641	0.54327	Strong

Table 1 shows that the predictive value of incentive practices on lecturers' job engagement is 0.781 with a coefficient of determination of 0.642. This shows that incentive practices could bring about 64.2% improvement on lecturers' job engagement. The regression coefficient r of 0.781 indicated that incentive practices is a strong predictor of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the predictive value of safety practices on lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria?

Table 2: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Predictive Value of Safety Practices on Lecturers' Job Engagement in Colleges of Education

Model	n	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Remarks
Safety Practices	411	0.735	0.608	0.607	0.45308	Strong

Result in Table 2 shows that the predictive value of safety practices on lecturers' job engagement is 0.735 with a coefficient of determination of 0.608. This shows 60.8% changes on lecturers' job engagement could be attributed to safety practices. The regression coefficient r of 0.735 indicated that safety practices is a strong predictor of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria

Hypothesis One: Incentive practices do not significantly predict lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.

Table 3: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Incentive Practices as a Significant Predictor of Lecturers' Job Engagement in Colleges of Education

Predictor	N	R	R ²	F	P-value	Remark
Incentive Practices	411	0.781	0.642	452.097	0.000	*S

*Significant

As shown in Table 3, the simple regression coefficient (r) is 0.781. while the R^2 is 0.642 showing that incentive practices make 64.2% contribution to the variance in lecturers' job engagement. The F (1/411) =451.097 and the p -value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the p -value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, incentive practices is a significant predictor of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: Safety practices do not significantly predict lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.

Table 4: The Summary of Simple Regression Analysis on Safety Practices as a Significant Predictor of Lecturers' Job Engagement in Colleges of Education

Predictor	N	R	R ²	F	P-value	Remark
Safety Practices	411	0.735	0.608	881.422	0.000	*S

*Significant

Result in Table 4, the simple regression coefficient (r) is 0.735. while the R^2 is 0.608 showing that safety practices can lead to 60.8% improvement on lecturers' job engagement. The F (1/411) =881.422 and the p -value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Therefore, since the p -value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, safety practices is a significant predictor of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.

4. Discussion

The study found that incentive practices strongly predict lecturers' job engagement in the Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria. This finding may be explained by the fact that incentive practices make lecturers feel recognized and motivated to exhibit strong job engagement in the Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria. This affirmed the findings of Ogbonnaya, Daniels, and Nelson (2017), who reported that incentives had a strong relationship with employees' job engagement. This agreement could be attributed to the fact that the studies were conducted in the same country, with similar incentive practices across organizations. This disagreed with the findings of Zhi, Choong, and Wei (2012), which indicated a moderate relationship between incentives and employee engagement. Differences in time span and geographical location may explain this disagreement. Incentive practices enable lecturers to satisfy their needs, which they reciprocate through job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria. It was also found that incentive practices significantly predict lecturers' job engagement in the College of Education in South East, Nigeria. This upheld the finding of Ogbonnaya, Daniels and Nelson (2017) who reported that incentive had a significant relationship with employees' job engagement.

The results revealed that safety practices are a strong predictor of lecturers' job engagement in the College of Education in South East, Nigeria. Safety practices help lecturers feel safe and comfortable at work, which may explain their strong job engagement in the Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria. This aligned with Juba (2024), who found that workplace safety programmes are strongly related to employee engagement. This agreed with Narciso and Narciso (2022), who found a strong relationship between workplace safety and employee job engagement. This agreement may be linked to the fact that the studies were conducted recently, when technological devices are integrated into organizational safety practices. Safety practices make lecturers feel genuinely cared for, which strongly predicts their job engagement in the College of Education in South East, Nigeria. This affirmed with Juba (2024), who found that workplace safety programmes have a significant relationship with employee engagement. This supported the finding of Narciso and Narciso (2022) which showed that there was a significant relationship between workplace safety and employee job engagement.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that quality of work-life is a positive and significant predictor of lecturers' job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria. Quality of work-life creates an enriching and safe work environment, which motivates lecturers to engage with their job in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria. Lecturer who are appreciated for their efforts and provided with a secure environment can exhibit strong job engagement in Colleges of Education in South East, Nigeria.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Colleges of Education management should prioritize incentive practices through annual ceremonies to recognize the efforts of outstanding lecturers and improve job engagement.
2. Colleges of Education management should implement an annual training programme to update administrators' skills and knowledge of safety practices and enhance their job engagement in the Colleges of Education.

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