

## **An Examination of Employees' Working Conditions on Job Satisfaction in the Federal Universities in Southeast Zone of Nigeria**

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### **[0189] Abstract**

*This study examines employees' perception working conditions on their job satisfaction among staff of federal Universities in the Southeast zone of Nigeria. A cross-sectional sample survey was adopted for data collection. The study adopted a mixed method research design. The sample size for the study comprised of one thousand and forty three 1,043 respondents, selected through the Proportionate Stratified Sampling Technique. The structured Questionnaire schedule and In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guide were used to collect data for the study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21 was used to process the quantitative data and descriptive statistics including frequency count, and simple percentages were used to analyse the data. Hypotheses stated were tested at 0.05 significant levels using t-test, Mann-Whitney U and multinomial logistic regression statistical tests. In addition, the qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. Findings of the study indicated that employees in the Federal Universities within the study area had fair ratings on perceived working conditions were and job satisfaction among employees. The study therefore recommended the need for the National Universities Commission (NUC) to make university accreditation which is one of quality assurance measures that help to improve the working conditions of employees an annual event within different Universities in Nigeria.*

**Keywords: Employees, Job Satisfaction, working Conditions & Universities**

### **Introduction**

Employee job satisfaction is one of the major contemporary issues that have gained tremendous attention within the ambit of studies in organisational behaviours and industrial relations. Among the most important variables affecting employee job satisfaction, is perception of Working Condition, which is very critical (Ekebosi, Nnonyelu & Nwankwo, 2019). Working conditions refer to the circumstances in which an individual employee or staff works, including but not limited to such things as amenities, physical environment, stress and noise levels, degree of safety or danger, and the likes (Alzalabani, 2017). Positive working conditions reflect a work environment that promotes the efficient performance of job tasks by employees such as proper modes of recruitment and promotion, availability of good office space and equipment, quality internal customer support services, clear formulation and administration of contracts, safety at the workplace, support from supervisors and management, and opportunities for self-development and career advancement (Bigirimana, Sibanda & Masengu, 2016). On the other hand, negative working conditions like physically dangerous environment, inadequate space utilization, poor lighting, unsupportive boss, ineffective workplace technology, inefficient workplace processes, lack of workplace flexibility and uncomfortable working conditions reflect any condition of work that are contrary to the above (Shammout, 2021).

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), working conditions cover a broad range of subjects and issues, from working time (hours of work, rest periods, and work schedules) to payment, as well as the physical conditions like lighting, noise, temperature, air quality, furniture and mental demands that exist in the workplace. Corroborating this conceptualisation, Eurofound (2011) used the following definition of working conditions:

Working conditions refer to the working environment and aspects of an employee's terms and conditions of employment. This covers such matters as: the organisation of work and work

activities; training, skills and employability; health, safety and well-being; and working time and work-life balance (Pg.8).

However, to make the concept of working conditions more manageable, it is usually broken down into two categories, which seem to be pretty much agreed upon in the literature (Arnold & Randall, 2010; Bambra 2011; Schnall, Dobson & Roskam, 2009) viz: the physical work environment and the psychosocial work environment. Accordingly, the physical work environment is the least ambiguous of these concepts, as it refers to the material, objective surroundings that the employee is exposed to in the workplace. The psychosocial environment can loosely be defined as non-material psychological and social processes occurring at the workplace, or as a result of exposure there, such as stress arising from work load or unconducive working office (Bambra, 2011). From the understanding of the researcher, psycho-social condition of the work is the nature of work situation under which the employees operate, which has the capabilities to influence their mental, as well as social wellbeing positively or negatively.

Based on the foregoing, working conditions are deduced as the nature or conditions of the physical working environment such as equipment, machineries, tools, offices, laboratory equipment, stationeries etc., which employees use in their daily work performance. It also connotes other aspects of the work conditions that result to psychological imbalance on the employees such as excessive workloads, long working hours without commensurate payment, working under ill health, or under stress (Muchiri, 2022). Over the past few decades, the Nigerian public University system has gone through tremendous changes in line with global practices for improved learning. These changes have also been occasioned by various academic and non-academic strike actions targeted at improving the working conditions of the employees in the university communities. By and large, it cannot be claimed that such actions have not yielded significant changes in the Nigerian Universities environment but the degree of the changes are often relative among different Universities in Nigeria. Hence, the major concern of this study is to investigate the connection between these changes and how they affect the ways in which the employees perceive their working conditions in relation to their job satisfaction in the different Universities' working environment.

### Research Design

This study used the mixed method research design.

### Area of the Study/ Study Organisation

This study was conducted in the universities in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

However, the major target institutions for this study are the five (5) Federal Universities in the Southeast zone as shown in table 1:

Table 1: FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHEAST ZONE OF NIGERIA.

STATES	FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES	Year of Establishment
Abia	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAI)	1992
Anambra	Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka (NAU)	1991
Ebonyi	Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI)	2011
Enugu	University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN)	1960
Imo	Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO)	1980

There is relative variation in the organisational structure of different Universities in Nigeria. However, for coherence in this study, the following structures were identified as being common in the Nigerian Federal University system: *Non-Academic staff*: (a) Administration (b) Finance (c) Information Technology (d) Library (e) Personnel (f) Planning and Resource Allocation Unit (g) Records (h) Security

(I) Students Affairs and (j) Works. **Academic Staff:** (a) Professors/Associate Professors (b) Senior Lecturers (c) Lecturer II & I and (d) Assistant Lecturers/Graduate Assistants.

### Population of the study

The population for this study comprised of all the employees in the federal Universities in the Southeast zone of Nigeria. According to the data obtained from the personnel units of the five Federal Universities in the Southeast Nigeria, there was Seventeen thousand, five hundred and sixteen (17,516) employees as at the period of this study. However, this study was conducted among the academic and non-academic staff in two selected Federal Universities in the Southeast Nigeria (UNN & FUTO). According to the data obtained from the personnel units of the two Universities, there was a total of nine thousand, seven hundred and eighty-eight (9,788) employees as at the time of this study.

Table 2: POPULATION COMPOSITION OF ACADEMIC STAFF CATEGORIES IN THE SELECTED FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES.

Academic Staff Categories	UNN	FUTO	Total
Professors/Associate Professors	339 (12.0%)	221 (22.7%)	560 (14.7%)
Senior Lecturers	497 (17.6%)	160 (16.4%)	657(17.3%)
Lecturer II & I	1,041 (36.8%)	365 (37.5%)	1,406(37.0%)
Assistant Lecturers/Graduate Assistants	950 (33.6%)	228 (23.4%)	1,178(31.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,827 (100.0%)</b>	<b>974 (100.0%)</b>	<b>3,801(100.0%)</b>

*Field Survey, 2020.*

For the non-academic staff category, ten departments were used for this study. The population composition of each of ten departments in the two selected Federal Universities is shown in table 3.

Table 3: POPULATION COMPOSITION OF NON-ACADEMIC UNITS WITHIN THE SELECTED FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES

Non-Academic Staff Units	UNN	FUTO	Total
Administration	3,022 (57.8%)	251 (33.0%)	3,273 (54.7%)
Finance	11 (0.2%)	48 (6.3%)	59 (1.0%)
Information Technology	28 (0.5%)	10 (1.3%)	38 (0.6%)
Library	227 (4.3%)	63 (8.3%)	290 (4.8%)
Personnel	102 (2.0%)	35 (4.6%)	137 (2.3%)
Planning and Resource allocation	19 (0.4%)	16 (2.1%)	35 (0.6%)
Records	31 (0.6%)	10 (1.3%)	41 (0.7%)
Security	799 (15.3%)	160 (21.1%)	959 (16.0%)
Students affairs	395 (7.6%)	29 (3.8%)	424 (7.1)
Works.	593 (11.3%)	138 (18.2%)	731 (12.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,227 (100.0%)</b>	<b>760 (100.0%)</b>	<b>5,987 (100.0%)</b>

*Field Survey, 2020.*

### Sample Size

The sample size for this study was one thousand and forty-three (1,043). In determining the sample size, the researcher used the Yamane (1967) method of sample size determination.

**Sampling Techniques:** The proportionate stratified sampling technique was used as the sampling technique for the quantitative study and for the qualitative aspect of this study, the researcher purposively selected 12 participants (six from each of the selected Universities) for the In-depth Interview. The interviewees included: A Vice Chancellor, University Registrars, ASUU Chairmen, SSANU Chairmen, NASU Chairmen, a Professors and a Senior Administrative staff in the two selected Universities. These individuals were selected based on the consideration of their position and level of knowledge of the University community and as stakeholders in the administration of the University institution.

**Instruments for Data Collection:** This study adopted the mixed method for data collection. This involved the combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments in the collection of data for the

study. For the quantitative data collection, a questionnaire were used to gather the quantitative data for the study and for the qualitative data, the In-Depth Interview (IDI) guide. The IDI was conducted with top stakeholders in the University community.

**Administration of Research Instruments:** A letter introducing the researcher was obtained from the Department of Sociology/Anthropology of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, which was submitted to the respective selected universities for their approval to use their institution for the study. As soon as, approval was obtained from the universities, the researcher sought the consent of the respondents through a letter of consent attached to the questionnaire as he distributed the questionnaires on face-to-face basis and other administered (with the help of four trained research assistants, 2 males and 2 females) to the selected respondents. The In-depth Interview (IDI) was conducted by the researcher with the help of a male and female research assistant, at a venue (location) and time suggested by the selected participants.

### Methods of Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected was sorted, coded and processed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. However, frequency counts and simple percentages were used to present the descriptive aspect of the data; while the inferential analysis involved the test of study hypotheses using multinominal logistic regression statistical tools. The qualitative data was however analysed using the method of content analysis.

### Research Question:

How do employees' working conditions influence their job satisfaction in federal Universities in the Southeast zone of Nigeria? Questionnaire items were used to answer this research question.

Table 4: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION ABOUT DIMENSIONS OF WORKING CONDITIONS

	Options	Non Academic Staff	Academic Staff	Total
Perception about the functionality of working tools.	Yes	229 (36.6%)	73 (29.8%)	302 (34.7%)
	No	288 (46.1%)	116 (47.3%)	404 (46.4%)
	I am not Certain	108 (17.3%)	56 (22.9%)	164 (18.9%)
	Total	625 (100.0%)	245 (100.0%)	870 (100.0%)
Perception of workplace environment in relation to work efficiency	<b>Options</b>	<b>Non Academic Staff</b>	<b>Academic Staff</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Very conducive	144 (23.3%)	36 (14.7%)	180 (20.9%)
	Fairly conducive	398 (64.5%)	165 (67.3%)	563 (65.3%)
	Unconductive	75 (12.2%)	44 (18.0%)	119 (13.8%)
Employees' Perception of Work Expectations as reasonable	<b>Options</b>	<b>Non Academic Staff</b>	<b>Academic Staff</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Yes	362 (58.3%)	109 (45.4%)	471 (54.7%)
	No	140 (22.5%)	75 (31.3%)	215 (25.0%)
	No Opinion	119 (19.2%)	56 (23.3%)	175 (20.3%)
Perception about time given to employees to complete specific tasks	<b>Options</b>	<b>Non Academic Staff</b>	<b>Academic Staff</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Very Reasonable	213 (34.4%)	47 (19.3%)	260 (30.1%)
	Fair Enough	364 (58.7%)	175 (71.7%)	539 (62.4%)
	Very Little	43 (6.9%)	22 (9.0%)	65 (7.5%)
Perception of Squabble and antagonism between employees and the top management	<b>Options</b>	<b>Non Academic Staff</b>	<b>Academic Staff</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Certainly Yes	150 (24.4%)	38 (15.5%)	188 (21.9%)
	I can't say for sure	392 (63.7%)	168 (68.6%)	560 (65.1%)
	Not at all	73 (11.9%)	39 (15.9%)	112 (13.0%)
Perception of physical work environment in comparison with other universities	<b>Options</b>	<b>Non Academic Staff</b>	<b>Academic Staff</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Very Nice	160 (25.7%)	30 (12.2%)	190 (21.9%)
	Fair Enough	321 (51.6%)	163 (66.5%)	484 (55.8%)
	Very Poor	141 (22.7%)	52 (21.2%)	193 (22.3%)
	Total	622 (100.0%)	245 (100.0%)	867 (100.0%)

	Options	Non Academic Staff	Academic Staff	Total
Perception of safety at work unit	Very safe	315 (50.9%)	82 (33.7%)	397 (46.1%)
	Not very safe	262 (42.3%)	147 (60.5%)	409 (47.4%)
	Not safe at all	42 (6.8%)	14 (5.8%)	56 (6.5%)
	Total	619 (100.0%)	243 (100.0%)	862 (100.0%)
Perception of work schedule interference with other personal and family life	Options	Non Academic Staff	Academic Staff	Total
	Absolutely Yes	94 (15.2%)	31 (12.8%)	125 (14.5%)
	Somehow	311 (50.3%)	155 (63.8%)	466 (54.1%)
	Not at all	213 (34.5%)	57 (23.5%)	270 (31.4%)
	Total	618 (100.0%)	243 (100.0%)	861 (100.0%)

*Field Survey, 2020.*

**Note:** Missing values that occurred in each item were excluded by default in SPSS.

Table 4 indicates that a majority 404(46.4%) of the respondents perceived their working tools as non-functional. Only 302(34.7%) of them perceived the tools to be functional; while 164(18.9%) of them indicated that they were not certain about the functionality the tools. It was perceived by a majority 563(65.3%) of the respondents that workplace environment was fairly conducive to influence their work efficiency. Only 180(20.9%) of them perceived workplace to be very conducive to significantly influence the efficiency of their work; while 119(13.8%) of them had the perception that it is very noisy/unconducive to influence work efficiency. Furthermore, a considerable majority 471(54.7%) of the employees perceived the amount of work expected of them to be reasonable. This is against a lower proportion 215(25.0%) of them, who perceived it as unreasonable; while 175(20.3%) had no opinion on it. It was also the perception of a majority 539(62.4%) of the respondents, that time often given to them to deliver a task was fair enough.

However, 260(30.1%) of them perceived it as being very reasonable; while 65(7.5%) of them perceived that very little time is often given to them to complete tasks. With regards to the perception about the existence of squabble and antagonism between the employees and top management, a majority of the respondents 560(65.1%) indicated that they cannot say for sure. Only a lower proportion 188(21.9%) of them were very certain that there were much squabble and antagonism between them; while a very lower proportion 112(13.0%) of them perceived that such squabble and antagonism do not exist at all. Going further, a majority 484(55.8%) of the respondents perceived their physical work environment as fair enough in comparison to other Universities. 193(22.3%) of them perceived it to be very poor compared to other Federal Universities; while only 190(21.9%) of them perceived it as very nice compared to other Universities. With respect to the perception about safety at work unit, a majority 409(47.4%) of the respondents felt somewhat unsafe at their work units. However, another sizeable and closer proportion 397(46.1%) of them felt very safe; while a very lower proportion 56(6.5%) of them felt not being safe at all. Finally, majority 466 (54.1%) of the respondents perceived their work schedules as somehow interfering with their personal and family lives, 270(31.4%) of them perceived their work schedules as not interfering seriously with their family or personal life; and another 270(31.4%) of them perceived their work schedules as 'not interfering at all' with their family and personal lives. Meanwhile only 125(14.5%) of them were of the perception that their work schedules absolutely interfere with their family and personal lives. These data were also reflective of the responses according to employees' job designation.

To determine the general perceptions of the respondents about working conditions, the respondents were requested to rate their general perception about the working conditions in their respective work units. The analysis to this is presented in figure 10, with corresponding statistical test comparing selected socio-demographic characteristics with the general perception of working conditions as contained in table 22.

Table 5: GENERAL PERCEPTION ABOUT WORKING CONDITIONS WITH SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS.

Variables	Very Good	Fairly	Undecided	Very Poor	Poor	Total	Statistics
Gender							
Male	64 (46.4%)	226 (44.8%)	46 (43.0%)	42 (53.8%)	18 (58.1%)	396 (46.1%)	$\chi^2 = 4.459$ , df =4, P = .347
Female	74 (53.6%)	279 (55.2%)	61 (57.0%)	36 (46.2%)	13 (41.9%)	463 (53.9%)	
Total	138 (100.0%)	505 (100.0%)	107 (100.0%)	78 (100.0%)	31 (100.0%)	859 (100.0%)	

<b>Job Duration</b>							$\chi^2 = 30.519$ , df = 16, P = .015
Less than 5 Years	78 (57.8%)	211 (42.4%)	42 (40.0%)	24 (31.2%)	6 (19.4%)	361 (42.7%)	
6 - 10 Years	21 (15.6%)	103 (20.7%)	27 (25.7%)	23 (29.9%)	9 (29.0%)	183 (21.6%)	
11 - 15 Years	19 (14.1%)	85 (17.1%)	20 (19.0%)	12 (15.6%)	9 (29.0%)	145 (17.1%)	
16 - 20 Years	6 (4.4%)	38 (7.6%)	9 (8.6%)	7 (9.1%)	3 (9.7%)	63 (7.4%)	
Above 20 Years	11 (8.1%)	61 (12.2%)	7 (6.7%)	11 (14.3%)	4 (12.9%)	94 (11.1%)	
Total	135 (100.0%)	498 (100.0%)	105 (100.0%)	77 (100.0%)	31 (100.0%)	846 (100.0%)	

  

<b>University</b>							$\chi^2 = 9.995$ , df = 16, P = .041
Non Academic Staff	110 (79.7%)	362 (71.7%)	74 (69.2%)	52 (66.7%)	17 (54.8%)	615 (71.6%)	
Academic Staff	28 (20.3%)	143 (28.3%)	33 (30.8%)	26 (33.3%)	14 (45.2%)	244 (28.4%)	
Total	138 (100.0%)	505 (100.0%)	107 (100.0%)	78 (100.0%)	31 (100.0%)	859 (100.0%)	

Field Survey, 2020.

**Note:** Missing values that occurred in each item were excluded by default in SPSS.

Table 22 shows the general perception of employees on working conditions. The perceived working conditions was cross-tabulated with some selected socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Hence, gender was not associated with the respondents' perception about working conditions in the selected Universities ( $p = .347$ ). In other words, there was no significant difference between male and female employees in their perception of working conditions. However, a statistically significant difference was found in employees' job duration and their perceptions about working conditions in the selected Universities ( $p = .015$ ). That is to say that the number of years spent in the job has a significant influence on how the employees perceive their working conditions. Again, the analysis shows a statistically significant difference in employees' perception of organisational support based on their job designation ( $p = .041$ ). Findings also emerged from the qualitative data supporting the findings made quantitatively. Accordingly, an interviewee had this perception about working conditions in the selected universities,

...it is very clear the working conditions are not palatable. We do not get the conducive atmosphere that would enable us work effectively. Many employees work under stringent conditions, yet pretend that all is well. It is just about suffering and smiling (Male, 53 Years Old, Chairman Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, UNN, Enugu State).

Another interviewee also expressed the opinion that working conditions in the selected Universities are not favourable by saying; Yes, I have worked in other organisations and I know the time I go to work and I often do not know the time I close, because I feel comfortable working in such places. But here, I often mark time; knowing that I am uncomfortable. yes I mark time, and once it is 4'oclock I go; but if there's anything that could make me to stay, I will stay, not because I want to stay or that am very happy, just that I wouldn't want to face any query (Male, 56 Years Old, Head of Department, UNN, Enugu State). Another interviewee also shared similar opinion about working conditions when he said:

...although the government is working very hard to address some of the challenges, but for now, the environment is not very conducive. ...in fact if you move towards bush side, you will notice that people are defecating or urinating over there because toilet or urinary facilities has no water; but ideally such things should be consistent light and water supply (Male, 55 Years Old, ASUU Chairman, FUTO, Imo State).

### Hypothesis:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The perception of the respondents towards their working conditions has a significant influence on their job satisfaction in the selected federal universities in Southeast Nigeria.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The perception of the respondents towards their working conditions has no significant influence on their job satisfaction in the selected federal universities in Southeast Nigeria.

**Table 6:** SUMMARY OF MULTINOMINAL LOGISTIC REGRESSION SHOWING THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED WORKING CONDITIONS ON JOB SATISFACTION.

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests			Nagelkerke
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.	
Intercept	42.897 <sup>a</sup>	.000	0	.	.093
Perceived Working Conditions	106.466	63.568	8	.000	

The multinomial logistic regression was also run to test if the independent variable (perceived working conditions) could predict the dependent variable (job satisfaction). The result of the test indicates that the overall model using the Chi-square statistics accounted for a statistically significant variability in the outcome variable,  $\chi^2(8) = 63.568, p = .000$ . This equally indicates that it is more likely that employees are satisfied with their jobs since they strongly agreed that there is a favourable working condition in their institutions. The model however yielded approximately 9.3% of the variance in the outcome variable, Nagelkerke's Pseudo -  $R^2 = .093$ . Based on this test, the stated hypothesis is accepted but the conclusion reached here is that there was only a slight influence of perceived working conditions on employees' job satisfaction.

### **Discussion of findings**

With respect to the objective of this study, which examined employees' perception of working conditions in the selected Universities, the result of the descriptive analysis shows that the respondents showed a somewhat negative perception about the working conditions in the selected Universities. In all the items that measured perception of working conditions, only work expectations and physical environment in comparison with other universities received positive perception. Other dimensions including: functionality of working tools, workplace environment, time given to employees to complete specific tasks, squabble and antagonism between employees and the top management, safety at work unit and work schedule interference with other personal and family life, received negative perception by a majority of the respondents. These findings imply that the respondents perceived most aspects of working conditions in the selected Universities as unfavourable. However, this was further examined using the data on respondents' general perception about working conditions, which indicated that in general, a majority of the respondents expressed a fair level of perception about the working conditions. This perception was also subjected to statistical test using the chi-square statistics, to test if the perception was associated with some selected demographic characteristics of the respondents. Consequently, gender was not associated with the respondent's perception about working conditions ( $p = .347$ ).

However, job duration and type of university showed a statistically significant association with employees' perception about working conditions ( $p = .015; .041$ ) respectively. The result of hypothesis testing with regards to the relationship between perceived working conditions and job satisfaction of employees indicates that employees' perception of working conditions has a statistically significant influence on the respondents' job satisfaction level ( $p = .000$ ). Findings from the qualitative data also vary, with some findings supporting the quantitative data and some other findings falling at variance with the quantitative findings. Meanwhile, the findings obtained quantitatively in this study are in line with previous studies especially those conducted in other international Universities. For instance, Thulta and Oiye (2018) found a favourable working condition that was also associated with job satisfaction among the employees in their study area. Bakotic and Babic (2013) also found a significant relationship between working conditions and employees job satisfaction in Croatian Shipbuilding Company. However, the findings fall at variance with other previous studies which documented that the working conditions within the University system in Nigeria are not favourable. For instance, Osaat and Ekechukwu (2017) found in their study that working conditions were not favourable, with workloads showing the most dissatisfying features. Igbe et al. (2017) also found unfavourable working conditions in their study and also found that the unfavourable working conditions were said to have had a significant relationship with deviant behaviours among employees in their studied institution.

### **Summary of Findings**

The study also showed that the respondents expressed a somewhat positive perception about the working conditions in the selected Universities. This implies that cumulatively within the Federal Universities in the Southeast zone, the working conditions are fair. Statistically, job duration and type of university was associated with perception about working conditions in the selected Universities. Meanwhile evidence of statistical relationship was found between employees' perceptions about working conditions and job satisfaction. However, findings of the qualitative data contradict the quantitative findings. It was found qualitatively that working conditions in the selected institutions are rather very stringent.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Working Conditions is a key variable that influences optimal job satisfaction of employees within organisations. This study was conducted with the view to investigate the working condition within the Federal Universities in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria, and how such, influence employees' job satisfaction. Based on the complexity of data used in this study, it is concluded that the opinion of the respondents varied significantly based on the mixed-approach to data collection. While the quantitative data suggest that employees have fair level of perception about QWL and job satisfaction, the qualitative data however suggest strongly that there is a lot of pretence among the employees regarding their actual situation; hence, the working condition and employees' job satisfaction in the federal Universities within the Southeast Nigeria may not actually reflect the findings of the quantitative data. Based on the two contradicting findings, this study also concludes that there are observable improvements in the working conditions within the Federal Universities in the Southeast, Nigeria, which have consequently improved the job satisfaction of employees beyond what previous studies documented. This may be due to the periodic strike actions by ASUU and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and series of negotiations that have occurred within the last few years between the Federal Government and these unions. However, lots of areas need significant improvements. Hence, all hands must be on deck to improve the employees' working conditions which is a key factor towards their job satisfaction, which will eventually culminate into greater productivity within the Southeast Federal Universities in Nigeria.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made (a) There is also the need for coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding between the University management and employees' unions in pursuing single objective, which is to improve the working conditions of the workers within the University community. (b) There is equally the need for universities to introduce compulsory monthly general meeting within different units with conditions that would give each employee the opportunity to express their concerns, challenges, as well as their suggestions on areas for improvement within their respective units. (c) University accreditation is one of quality assurance measures that help to improve the working conditions of employees. As such, it is recommended that the NUC make Universities accreditation an annual event, so as to keep Universities' management conscious of the need to utilise available resources to improve the existing structures within their institutions.

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