

Challenges Confronting Quality of Work-Life Programmes in Selected Manufacturing Firms in Benin City

Eguonor J. Oleabhielle Ph.D.
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Faculty of Social and Management Sciences
Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Nigeria

oleabhielle@biu.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigates the challenges facing Quality of Work-Life (QWL) programmes in selected manufacturing firms in Benin City. Utilizing the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as a foundation, the research adopts a mixed-methods approach to explore various dimensions of QWL, including occupational health and safety, healthcare and wellness, recreation and leisure, training and skill development, and long-service awards. Employing a cross-sectional survey design, data were gathered from 536 participants through structured questionnaires, alongside 19 interviews with key stakeholders to ensure methodological triangulation. The quantitative analysis using SPSS revealed significant discrepancies between the two organizations' programme awareness, participation, and perceived benefits. Qualitative insights highlighted systemic challenges, including inadequate participation mechanisms, resource limitations, and organisational inefficiencies. These barriers hinder the effective implementation of QWL programmes, ultimately affecting the overall productivity of the firms. This study contributes to the wider discourse on sustainable workforce management, offering actionable recommendations to foster a supportive work environment within Benin City's manufacturing sector. In conclusion, critical challenges, particularly limited participation, impede the effective implementation of QWL programmes in Benin City's manufacturing sector. Therefore, improvements should include promoting inclusive participation, enhancing staff training, incentivizing wellness initiatives, and providing comprehensive recreational and healthcare programs to enhance both productivity and employee satisfaction.

Keywords: Quality of Work-Life programmes, manufacturing firms, work environment, workforce, employee well-being

Introduction

The implementation of Quality of Work-Life (QWL) programs has become increasingly vital in promoting employee well-being, enhancing organizational performance, and sustaining competitiveness within the dynamic industrial landscape (Mishra & Sharma, 2023). In the manufacturing sector, where employees frequently encounter strenuous working conditions and stringent operational demands, QWL

initiatives can foster transformative changes. Such programmes incorporate elements such as equitable compensation, work-life balance, and workplace safety, effectively addressing both the physical and psychological needs of employees (Mokhtar et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the execution of QWL programs in regions such as Benin City, Nigeria, faces numerous challenges. Factors including organizational resistance, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural dynamics often impede successful implementation. This study seeks to investigate these barriers, providing an empirical examination of their implications for employee satisfaction and organizational outcomes within the manufacturing sector.

Benin City's manufacturing sector serves as a crucial driver of Nigeria's economic diversification and exemplifies the inherent tension between productivity objectives and workforce well-being (Okon et al., 2023). Despite widespread acknowledgment of the benefits associated with QWL, the sector continues to grapple with structural and policy-related obstacles that inhibit effective program deployment. These challenges are further exacerbated by limited financial resources, technological shortcomings, and inconsistent government support (Adebayo & Okechukwu, 2023). This paper aims to shed light on these difficulties through insights derived from relevant organizational experiences, thereby contributing to the broader dialogue on aligning organizational goals with employee-centric strategies. By addressing these impediments, the study intends to offer actionable recommendations for enhancing the quality of work life for manufacturing employees, facilitating sustainable growth and improving workforce morale in the region.

The manufacturing sector in Benin City is confronted with substantial challenges in the implementation of quality of work-life (QWL) programs, which are essential for increasing employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational commitment. Despite a growing recognition of the importance of QWL, numerous organizations encounter difficulties related to inadequate policies, ineffective communication, and insufficient managerial support. These issues frequently result in elevated employee turnover, absenteeism, and diminished morale (Akinwale & George, 2023; Osifo & Adebayo, 2022). Furthermore, external economic pressures and infrastructural deficiencies exacerbate these challenges, limiting the effective adoption of QWL initiatives (Onyeaka et al., 2023). Although research has investigated QWL in broader contexts, there is limited empirical data and lack of sector-specific policy analysis that specifically address the unique socio-economic and cultural dynamics affecting QWL programs in Benin City's manufacturing sector. This gap emphasizes the urgent need for a thorough examination of organizational barriers and contextual factors in order to develop tailored strategies for enhancing QWL within this vital economic hub.

Previous scholarly research on Quality of Work-Life (QWL) programs within the manufacturing sector has undergone considerable evolution over time. Early studies conducted by Walton (1973) emphasized fundamental dimensions of QWL, including equitable compensation, safe work environments, and

opportunities for professional growth. Subsequently, research broadened its focus to incorporate employee well-being as an essential factor (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). In the 2000s, subsequent studies highlighted the interrelationship between work-life balance and organizational productivity (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). More recent contributions, including those by Sun and Pan (2018), have examined the contextual influences of cultural and economic factors on QWL, particularly in emerging economies. However, within the Nigerian context, specifically in the manufacturing sector of Benin City, there exists a substantial research gap regarding the unique challenges that organizations encounter in the effective implementation of QWL programs. These challenges encompass inadequate infrastructure, insufficient regulatory compliance, and ineffective employee engagement strategies, which are relatively underexplored in the existing literature. Consequently, this study aims to address this gap by providing insights into these specific obstacles and offering actionable recommendations tailored to the socio-economic realities of the region.

Literature Review

The concept of Quality of Work-Life (QWL) has attracted significant scholarly attention due to its critical role in enhancing employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness. In the manufacturing sector, where operational demands and physical requirements are substantial, the effective implementation of QWL programs is imperative (Balaji & Anbu, 2023). This literature review investigates the challenges affecting QWL programs in the manufacturing sector of Benin City, drawing insights from contemporary studies and theoretical frameworks.

Challenges in Implementing QWL Programmes

1. Economic Constraints

Economic instability represents a significant barrier to the successful implementation of QWL programs in the manufacturing sector of Benin City. Organizations operating under stringent profit margins can limit the implementation of welfare initiatives for employees with cost implications, leading to suboptimal working environments (Ibhadon et al., 2022). This challenge is further exacerbated by inflationary pressures and volatile market demands, which constrain organizational budgets allocated for QWL investments.

2. Inadequate Policy Frameworks

The lack of robust labor policies and enforcement mechanisms significantly hinders the implementation of QWL programs. Research indicates that weak regulatory oversight enables organizations to neglect

employee-centric policies without facing consequences (Omoriegbe & Adejumo, 2023). As a result, employees often contend with insufficient wages, hazardous work environments, and limited access to health and wellness programs.

3. Cultural and Leadership Barriers

Organizational culture and leadership styles play a crucial role in influencing QWL outcomes. Research suggests that hierarchical and authoritarian leadership structures, which are common in many manufacturing firms in Benin City, impede employee involvement in decision-making processes (Okoh et al., 2023). In the contemporary business landscape, the symbiotic relationship between organizational culture and leadership development has become increasingly pivotal for sustained success (Adeniyi et al., 2024). This lack of inclusivity contributes to employee disengagement and limits the effectiveness of QWL initiatives.

4. Technological and Skill Deficits

The industry's transition towards automation and advanced technologies presents both opportunities and challenges. While technological advancements can enhance operational efficiency, they may also lead to increased job insecurity and work-life imbalance for employees who lack the necessary skills (Eze et al., 2023). This technological disparity underscores the necessity for targeted training and development programs to be incorporated into QWL strategies.

Mitigating Strategies

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-stakeholder approach. Organizations should prioritize employee training, implement participatory leadership models, and advocate for stronger regulatory frameworks. Moreover, promoting a culture of continuous improvement and leveraging technology for employee-centric solutions can significantly enhance QWL outcomes (Ibhadon et al., 2022). The challenges affecting QWL programs in Benin City's manufacturing sector are multifaceted and rooted in economic, policy, cultural, and technological factors. Effectively overcoming these barriers necessitates a strategic blend of organizational commitment, policy interventions, and inclusive leadership practices. As the manufacturing sector evolves, prioritizing QWL will be vital for achieving sustainable organizational success and fostering employee well-being.

Empirical Evidence

Empirical studies illuminate the relationship between workplace challenges and employee well-being. For instance, a survey conducted by Eze et al., (2023) among manufacturing workers in Benin City revealed that 72% of respondents cited inadequate workplace facilities and health support systems as

significant sources of stress. Highlighting health support systems and other significant aspects of employee well-being, findings from a survey conducted by Saraji, and Dargahi, (2019) on the quality of working life on TUMS hospital staff revealed that majority of the employees experienced a poor quality of work life as they were dissatisfied with their organizations' OHS programme, their pay, poor work-life balance, middle and senior managers, and equally noted that work was uninteresting and dissatisfactory. Similarly, Fapohunda (2013) who evaluated the views of employees' on 15 QWL indicators and administered questionnaire to a sample of 300 employees of four organisations in Lagos Nigeria over a period of two months (July – August, 2013), found that most employees did not give high positive ratings even though some of the indicators were positively assessed. Specifically, while some indicators showed significant gender gaps others had similar levels of satisfaction. The study concluded that for organisations to achieve a high-quality work-life experience for employees, it must be committed to consistently and steadfastly take measures to improve QWL and invest in the work force responsible for organisational sustainance. In the same vein, Gopinath (2019) on the quality of work among a sample of 150 LIC employees using simple random sampling method, found the consistent and committed pursuit of management approach towards QWL as influencing element of employee quality of work life in the organization. However, the research by Okoh et al. (2023) demonstrated a strong correlation between authoritarian leadership styles and low employee engagement, underscoring the critical role of participatory management in enhancing the quality of work life (QWL). The study's findings have implication for understanding QWL as a way by which management can achieve employee and organisational needs.

Theoretical Framework

Social Exchange Theory (SET) serves as a foundational framework for analyzing the challenges associated with QWL. According to SET, employees tend to reciprocate favorable working conditions with improved performance and organizational loyalty (Cropanzano et al., 2017). However, inadequate QWL initiatives may result in employee dissatisfaction, elevated turnover rates, and diminished productivity, particularly in manufacturing environments characterized by demanding work conditions (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). Against this backdrop, this paper is grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, which explores the relationship between job demands, such as workload, time pressures, and emotional strain, and job resources, such as support systems, autonomy, and opportunities for personal development. In this context, the study investigates how manufacturing firms in Benin City implement work-life balance initiatives and the challenges they encounter in meeting the diverse needs of their employees. These initiatives are vital for reducing job-related stress and burnout, particularly in sectors marked by high physical and mental demands.

However, the paper highlights those various organizational constraints, including limited financial resources and insufficient management commitment, impede the ability to offer effective work-life interventions that could alleviate the negative consequences of high job demands. By employing the JD-R framework, the paper emphasizes the necessity of aligning job demands with organizational resources to enhance the quality of work-life programs in the manufacturing sector. While work-life balance initiatives are theoretically intended to relieve the strain created by excessive job demands, several challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient human resource policies, and cultural attitudes toward work-life balance, often hinder the effectiveness of these efforts. Consequently, this paper provides insights into how addressing these barriers through increased managerial support, improved resource allocation, and customized work-life programs can help mitigate the adverse impacts of job demands on employee health and productivity. It advocates for a more integrated approach to employee well-being, where resources are recognized not merely as supports but also as strategically aligned tools to lessen job demands, thereby fostering positive outcomes for both organizations and individuals.

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the challenges confronting quality of work-life (QWL) programmes in selected manufacturing firms in Benin City, Nigeria. A mixed-methods approach was utilized, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research issue (Creswell, 2009).

Study Area and Sample Selection

The research focused on two organizations: the Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC) Ltd. and the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC) Ltd. These organizations were purposefully chosen due to their active implementation of QWL programs, with NBC representing the private sector and NPDC representing the public sector. The study population comprised both permanent and contract employees, totaling 1,389 individuals. Using Yamane's (1967) formula, a sample of 646 participants was selected, employing purposive and stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation across various departments.

Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaires that addressed demographics, QWL dimensions, satisfaction, and job attitudes. The response rate for the distributed questionnaires was 83%, with 536 completed surveys. Qualitative data were collected from 16 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with

employees and union officials, alongside 3 key informant interviews (KIIs) with HR managers, ensuring methodological triangulation (Barnham, 2012; Caruth, 2013).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.0, which included univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses. Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and regression models were employed to explore the relationships between variables. Qualitative data underwent content analysis, with verbatim quotes utilized to emphasize key insights.

Validity and Reliability

Research instruments were reviewed by experts in Industrial Sociology, and modifications were made to enhance validity. Reliability was ensured through a thorough review of questionnaire items and accurate transcription of qualitative interviews. The instruments were double-checked to avoid the occurrence of conjectures, misrepresentation and misinterpretations. The reliability of the research instrument, which bothered on the consistency of the instrument when administered at different times, was determined by a pre-test. This helped in giving clarity to the interpretive and conceptual angles of the questions, as well as making addition and deletion in the instrument. Items measuring QWLF had a Cronbach Alpha of 0.982 (i.e items were 98% reliable and had a relatively high internal consistency). Also, the validity and reliability studies based on the Work-Related Quality of Life Scale by Akar, and Üstüner, (2017) confirmed the validity and reliability of the research instrument.

Ethical Considerations

The basic ethical principles for research involving human subjects as highlighted by Babbie (2021), which includes voluntary participation, no harm to the participants, anonymity and confidentiality, deception, and analysis and reporting were strictly adhered to in the study. Prior to the commencement of data collection for the study, the consent of respondents and participants was sought using information sheet and consent form. Information given was treated with confidentiality.

Data Collection and Discussion of Findings

To investigate the challenges influencing Quality of Work-Life (QWL) programs within Benin City's manufacturing sector, it is vital to present a discussion that is rooted in robust evidence gathered via carefully designed data collection and analysis. This section details the methodologies employed to collect relevant data from the participating organizations, highlighting the tools, techniques, and processes that ensured both validity and reliability. By synthesizing the viewpoints of stakeholders and

examining the underlying patterns, the findings offer critical insights into the barriers that hinder effective QWL implementation. This discussion seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical realities, providing recommendations tailored to the unique context of the manufacturing sector in Benin City.

Table 1a: Distribution of Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

S/N	Variables	Study Organizations				Total (F/ %)	
		NPDC (F/ %)		NBC(F/ %)			
1		70	25.5	128	48.9	198	36.9
		100	36.5	72	27.5	172	32.1
	Age	57	20.8	40	15.3	97	18.1
	25 – 30 years	12	4.4	10	3.8	22	4.1
	31 – 36 years	10	3.6	5	1.9	15	2.8
	37 – 42 years	25	9.1	7	2.7	32	6.0
	43 – 48 years	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
	49 – 54 years						
55 – 60 years							
2	Sex						
	Male	198	72.3	189	72.1	387	72.2
	Female	76	27.7	73	27.9	149	27.8
	Total	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
3	Marital Status						
		89	32.5	103	39.3	192	35.8
	Single	180	65.7	142	54.2	322	60.1
	Married	1	0.4	12	4.6	13	2.4
	Divorced/Separated	4	1.5	5	1.9	9	1.7
	Widow/Widower	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
4	Religious Affiliation						
		0	0.0	10	3.8	10	1.9
	ATR	50	18.2	74	28.2	124	23.1
	Islam	224	81.8	178	67.9	402	75.0
	Christianity	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
	Total						

Source: Survey, 2024

Table 1a presents a detailed analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents from two organizations: the Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC) Ltd. and the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC) Ltd. The data reveals that the largest percentage of respondents, 36.9%, falls within the age range of 31 to 36 years, followed closely by those aged 25 to 30 years at 32.1%. Conversely, older age groups, specifically those between 49 and 60 years, represent a smaller fraction of the sample, indicating a predominantly younger or mid-career demographic. In terms of gender distribution, males

make up the majority at 72.2%, while females account for 27.8%. Regarding marital status, 60.1% of respondents are married, 35.8% are single, and divorcees/separated individuals and widows/widowers each comprise a minor share, at 2.4% and 1.7%, respectively. When it comes to religious affiliation, Christianity emerges as the dominant faith, encompassing 75.0% of respondents, followed by Islam at 23.1%, with African Traditional Religion represented at a minimal 1.9%. Both organizations display similar trends in gender and marital status distributions. However, a notable distinction arises in religious affiliations, as NBC reports a slightly higher representation of Islamic respondents.

Table 1b further details the distribution of respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics

S/N	Variables	Study Organizations				Total (F/ %)	
		NPDC (F/ %)		NBC(F/ %)			
5	Average Monthly Income						
		21	7.7	36	13.7	57	10.6
		25	9.1	97	37.0	122	22.8
	Less than ₦20,000	79	28.8	62	23.7	141	26.3
	₦20,001 - ₦70,000	13	4.7	33	12.6	46	8.6
	₦70,001 - ₦120,000	136	49.6	34	13.0	170	31.7
	₦120,001 - ₦170,000 Above ₦170,001	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
6	Highest Educational Qualification						
		1	0.4	16	6.1	17	3.2
	No formal Education	0	0.0	18	6.9	18	3.4
	Primary Education	1	0.4	35	13.4	36	6.7
	Secondary Education	272	99.3	193	73.7	465	86.8
	Tertiary Education	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
7	Employment Status						
	Contract Staff	114	41.6	139	53.1	253	47.2
	Permanent Staff	160	58.4	123	46.9	283	52.8
	Total	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
8	Cadre						
	Junior staff	76	27.7	182	69.5	258	48.1
	Senior Staff	198	72.3	80	30.5	278	51.9
	Total	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
9	Duration in Service						
		122	44.5	104	39.7	226	42.2
	Less than 5 years	62	22.6	103	39.3	165	30.8
	5 - 10 years	46	16.8	42	16.0	88	16.4
	11 - 16 years	44	16.1	13	5.0	57	10.6
	More than 16 years	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0

Source: Survey, 2024

The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, as outlined in Table 1b, reveal significant disparities and trends that highlight the challenges impacting quality of work-life (QWL) programs within the manufacturing sector of Benin City. A considerable proportion of respondents (31.7%) reported earning above N170,001 monthly, pointing to a notable income disparity, as nearly one-third earned below N70,000, indicating income inequality prevalent in the sector. In respect of educational qualifications, an overwhelming 86.8% of respondents possessed tertiary education, which emphasizes the necessity for skill-specific policies within QWL initiatives. The employment status reflects a nearly even division between contract (47.2%) and permanent (52.8%) staff, with contract workers potentially facing more precarious employment conditions. Regarding organizational hierarchy, senior staff comprised 51.9%, likely benefiting from more favorable working conditions compared to junior staff, who accounted for 48.1%. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (42.2%) had less than five years of service, suggesting high turnover rates and potentially limited organizational commitment. These findings resonate with recent literature that identifies income inequality, job security, and skill development as critical factors affecting QWL (Okafor & Agbonlahor, 2023; Oyekunle et al., 2024). To address these disparities, targeted interventions are essential to improve inclusivity and equity within QWL programs.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents' Opinions on Occupational Health and Safety

Variables	Study organizations				Total	
	NPDC		NBC		F	%
	F	%	F	%		
Awareness of OHS Program:						
Yes						
No	264	96.4	257	98.1	521	97.2
Not Sure	7	2.6	3	1.1	10	1.9
Total	3	1.1	2	0.8	5	0.9
	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
Employee participation in OHS program:						

No	17	6.4	8	3.1	25	4.8
Yes	247	93.6	249	96.9	496	95.2
Total	264	100.0	257	100.0	521	100.0
Perceived level of benefit from OHS program:						
Little	30	12.1	152	61.0	182	36.7
Much	217	87.9	97	39.0	314	63.3
Total	247	100.0	249	100.0	496	100.0

Source: Survey, 2024

An IDI participant underscores this finding by stating that Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is regarded as a fundamental practice within his organization. He noted:

"There are essential aspects of OHS that everyone is expected to engage in. In fact, participation in OHS is mandatory for all. Health and safety truly is everyone's responsibility."

(IDI/Male/Permanent Staff/NPDC/July 2024).

Additionally, a KII participant further reinforces this perspective by saying:

"Our health and safety program is designed to support our business objectives. Healthy and safe employees perform better, which ultimately benefits the organization. Furthermore, it fulfills our human rights obligations. In essence, it is fundamentally good for business." **(KII/Male/Regional Training Manager/NBC/July 2024).**

The analysis of Table 2 provides valuable insights into the status of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) programs within manufacturing organizations in Benin City. A striking 97.2% of respondents from the study organizations expressed awareness of OHS programs, reflecting a strong level of communication and visibility surrounding these essential initiatives. Furthermore, employee participation in OHS programs was impressively high at 95.2%, underscoring the inclusive and mandatory nature of these efforts. One IDI participant emphasized that OHS is "everyone's responsibility." However, notable disparities were observed in the perceived benefits, with 61% of NPDC employees acknowledging significant advantages compared to only 39% of NBC employees. This variation may indicate differences in program effectiveness or employee satisfaction across the organizations. Qualitative insights from IDI and KII participants further reinforce the importance of OHS as a strategic tool for enhancing employee well-being and organizational performance, in line with recent literature that highlights OHS's dual role in fostering workforce productivity and fulfilling corporate social responsibilities (Akanbi & Adeleke, 2024; Zhang et al., 2023). These findings underscore the necessity for targeted interventions aimed at bridging gaps in perceived benefits, while

leveraging the high participation rates to improve program outcomes and create a safer, healthier workplace for all.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents' Views on Health Care and Wellness

Variables	Study organisations				Total	
	NPDC		NBC		F	%
	F	%	F	%		
Awareness of HCW Programme:						
Yes						
No	239	87.2	240	91.6	479	89.4
Not Sure	23	8.4	15	5.7	38	7.1
Total	12	4.4	7	2.7	19	3.5
	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
Employee participation in HCW programme:						
No	38	15.9	10	4.2	48	10.0
Yes	201	84.1	230	95.8	431	90.0
Total	239	100.0	240	100.0	479	100.0
Perceived level of benefit from HCW programme:						
Little	30	14.9	105	45.7	135	31.3
Much	171	85.1	125	54.3	296	68.7
Total	201	100.0	230	100.0	431	100.0

Source: Survey, 2024

The findings presented in this report are further supported by insights gathered from a Key Informant Interview (KII) and an In-Depth Interview (IDI) participant regarding the health and wellness programs implemented within their organizations.

A KII participant expressed: "Our healthcare and wellness program includes a clinic staffed with medical professionals, including a physician and nursing staff. In addition, we have an on-site ambulance with a designated driver. We partner with a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) to manage our health initiatives, allowing employees to register at any hospital of their choice under the HMO program, which covers both themselves and their dependents. For employees under 40 years of age, we provide an annual comprehensive medical examination. Moreover, we regularly organize health training sessions and informative discussions, inviting external experts to engage with our staff. We also offer various free tests, including HIV screenings, and actively support the World Blood Bank." **(KII/Male/HR Manager/NBC/July 2024).**

An IDI participant commented: "Regarding employee healthcare and awareness initiatives, our organization operates a clinic that provides a variety of programs. I must commend these efforts; a session organized by the clinic is scheduled for tomorrow, and I encourage you (the researcher) to attend

if you are nearby. The clinic frequently hosts lectures on relevant medical topics, and every two years, we conduct what is known as a Periodic Medical Examination (PME). All permanent staff members at NPDC undergo a comprehensive series of evaluations, including blood tests, cardiac assessments, eye exams, and lung tests, with all medical assessments offered at no cost to the staff." **(IDI/Male/Branch Union Vice Chairman, NUPENG/NPDC/July 2024).**

The findings presented in Table 3 reveal a significant level of awareness regarding Health Care and Wellness (HCW) programs among the surveyed organizations, with 89.4% of respondents indicating that they are aware of these initiatives. Participation rates are impressively high, with 90% of employees reporting active involvement in HCW programs. However, a noticeable disparity arises in the perceived benefits of these programs, as only 68.7% of respondents described them as significantly beneficial, leaving a substantial 31.3% who assessed their impact as minimal. These results are further substantiated by qualitative data derived from a Key Informant Interview (KII) and an In-Depth Interview (IDI). Insights from the KII emphasize the presence of a comprehensive healthcare framework, encompassing medical staffing, HMO partnerships, and health training.

In contrast, the IDI highlights strong employee engagement, as evidenced by regular medical examinations and various diagnostic assessments. These programs not only enhance employee well-being but also exemplify the incorporation of preventive healthcare strategies within workplace environments. This aligns with recent findings that underscore the positive effects of workplace health initiatives on employee satisfaction and productivity (Anitha & Kumar, 2023; Johnson et al., 2024). Nonetheless, the data indicate a need to improve the perceived impact of these initiatives, as a segment of employees experiences limited benefits. This observation is consistent with recent studies advocating for customized health programs that address the specific needs of the workforce (Smith et al., 2023).

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents' Views on Recreation and Leisure

Variables	Study organisations				Total	
	NPDC		NBC		F	%
	F	%	F	%		
Awareness of RL Programme:						
Yes	232	84.7	228	87.0	460	85.8
No	27	9.9	22	8.4	49	9.1
Not Sure	15	5.5	12	4.6	27	5.0
Total	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
Employee participation in RL programme:						
No	111	47.8	116	50.9	227	49.3
	121	52.2	112	49.1	233	50.7

Yes	232	100.0	228	100.0	460	100.0
Total						
Perceived level of benefit from RL programme:						
Little	28	23.1	20	17.9	48	20.6
Much	93	76.9	92	82.1	185	79.4
Total	121	100.0	112	100.0	233	100.0

Source: Survey, 2024

A participant in an in-depth interview (IDI) highlighted a key aspect of the findings:

"My workplace features recreational and sporting facilities, including a table tennis table located near the canteen. I typically enjoy playing during breaks with a few interested colleagues. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to play recently due to the heavy rains this week. It is quite severe given that we are in the rainy season. For me, engaging in this activity offers a much-needed break from work."
(IDI/Male/Permanent Staff/NBC/July 2024).

The findings presented in Table 4 offer valuable insights into the challenges and perceptions associated with recreation and leisure (RL) programs within the manufacturing sector in Benin City. Awareness of these programs is notably high among the surveyed organizations, with 85.8% of respondents confirming their existence, which suggests effective communication regarding their availability. However, participation rates are relatively low, with only 50.7% of employees actively engaging in the programs. This disparity indicates potential barriers such as lack of interest, time constraints, or organizational limitations. Conversely, the perceived benefits of participation in these programs are overwhelmingly positive, with 79.4% of respondents reporting significant advantages. This highlights the potential of RL programs to enhance employee well-being. In-depth interviews further corroborate these findings, revealing that while facilities are available, external factors, such as seasonal weather, can impede participation, thereby diminishing the overall impact of these programs. These results draw attention to the necessity of addressing both environmental and organizational barriers to maximize participation and fully leverage the benefits of RL programs (Adeleke et al., 2024; Zhang & Li, 2023).

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents' Views on Training and Skill Development

Variables	Study organisations				Total	
	NPDC		NBC		F	%
	F	%	F	%		
Awareness of TSD Programme:						
Yes	256	93.4	254	96.9	510	95.2
No	13	4.7	6	2.3	19	3.5

Not Sure	5	1.8	2	0.8	7	1.3
Total	274	100.0	262	100.0	536	100.0
Employee participation in						
TSD programme:						
No	39	15.2	31	12.2	70	13.7
Yes	217	84.8	223	87.8	440	86.3
Total	256	100.0	254	100.0	510	100.0
Perceived level of benefit from TSD programme:						
Little	25	11.5	77	34.5	102	23.2
Much	192	88.5	146	65.5	338	76.8
Total	217	100.0	223	100.0	440	100.0

Source: Survey, 2024

This is further substantiated by a participant in a Key Informant Interview (KII), who remarked:

"Our training and development programs are meticulously structured. We actively engage our employees in a variety of training sessions, and we do not conduct these programs merely for formality. Our goal is to empower our staff to perform exceptionally well, and the knowledge they acquire becomes a valuable personal asset. Even when they move on from the company, their knowledge remains with them; it is something no one can take away. Thus, it creates a win-win situation for both the organization and the individual." **(KII/Male/Regional Training Manager/NBC/July 2024).**

The findings detailed in Table 5 demonstrate a robust awareness and active participation in training and skill development (TSD) programs among the organizations surveyed within Benin City's manufacturing sector. A significant majority (95.2%) of respondents from both NPDC and NBC organizations indicated their awareness of TSD programs, highlighting the widespread implementation of such initiatives (Survey, 2024). Furthermore, participation rates reinforce this trend, with 86.3% of respondents actively engaging in these programs. This is consistent with global research underscoring the critical importance of employee involvement in skill development for enhancing organizational performance (Rahman et al., 2023). However, there is a notable disparity in the perceived benefits of these programs.

While a majority (76.8%) reported experiencing substantial advantages, a considerable segment (23.2%) felt that the benefits were limited. This divergence points to the need for more tailored program designs to maximize their effectiveness. Qualitative insights from the Key Informant Interview (KII) further support this notion, as they highlight the strategic structuring of TSD programs, which aims to equip employees with transferable skills that benefit both the organization and the individuals involved,

thereby reinforcing the "win-win" principle (KII/Male/Regional Training Manager/NBC/July 2024). Overall, this analysis affirms the essential role of comprehensive TSD initiatives in improving the quality of work life within the manufacturing sector.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents' Views on Long Service Award

Variables	Study organisations				Total	
	NPDC		NBC		F	%
Awareness of LSA Programme:	F	%	F	%		
Yes	244	90.4	245	92.1	489	91.2
No	10	3.7	14	5.3	24	4.5
Not Sure	16	5.9	7	2.6	23	4.3
Total	270	100.0	266	100.0	536	100.0
Employee participation in LSA programme:						
No	101	41.4	118	48.2	219	44.8
Yes	143	58.6	127	51.8	270	55.2
Total	244	100.0	245	100.0	489	100.0
Perceived level of benefit from LSA programme:						
Little	20	14.0	18	14.2	38	14.1
Much	123	86.0	109	85.8	232	85.9
Total	143	100.0	127	100.0	270	100.0

Source: Survey, 2024

A participant in the Key Informant Interview (KII) mentioned that:

Each plant has its own recognition program for employees based on their duration of service. Employees are acknowledged at key milestones: after the first 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, and 20 years, with subsequent recognitions every 5 years thereafter. Rewards vary for different employees and typically include plaques, approximately 10 cases of company products (drinks), and monetary awards that depend on the employee's level; for example, some levels may receive N75,000. Along with the cash award, employees are presented with a plaque and, occasionally, a letter of appreciation. (KII/Male/HR Manager/NBC/July 2024).

Table 6 offers a comprehensive analysis of respondents' perspectives on the Long Service Award (LSA) program within Benin City's manufacturing sector, focusing on awareness, employee participation, and perceived benefits. A notable majority of employees (91.2%) at both NPDC and NBC are aware of the

LSA program, reflecting a strong level of recognition for the initiative (NBC, 2024). However, even with such awareness, a significant proportion of respondents (44.8%) indicated that they do not participate, suggesting potential barriers to engagement, such as a lack of motivation or eligibility restrictions (Smith et al., 2023). Moreover, while a large majority of respondents (85.9%) view the benefits of the LSA as substantial, a smaller segment (14.1%) perceives these benefits as minimal. This discrepancy may point to issues regarding the distribution of rewards or dissatisfaction with the program's overall effectiveness (Jones & Wang, 2024). Additionally, insights from the Key Informant Interview (KII) highlight the importance of personalized rewards for long service milestones, which include monetary awards, plaques, and company products. This underscores the significance placed on employee recognition (KII/Male/HR Manager/NBC/July 2024). These findings reveal a complex relationship between awareness, participation, and perceived value of the LSA program, indicating challenges in achieving equitable access and satisfaction for all employees.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study illuminate the multifarious challenges that impede the implementation of Quality of Work-Life (QWL) programs within the manufacturing sector of Benin City. These challenges are effectively analyzed through the framework of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which emphasizes the interplay between job demands and job resources. The data indicate that significant obstacles arise from the elevated job demands placed on employees. Socio-demographic insights presented in Tables 1a and 1b indicate that a considerable proportion of the workforce consists of junior staff or contract workers, who frequently encounter heavier workloads, limited resources, and inadequate access to QWL initiatives such as healthcare and wellness (HCW) programs, as well as occupational health and safety (OHS) programs. The resultant high job demands contribute to stress and dissatisfaction, thereby hindering the effective implementation of QWL programs and adversely affecting overall employee well-being.

In contrast, the findings reveal that resources such as OHS and HCW programs, when properly implemented, may serve as mitigating factors against job demands. For instance, Table 2 demonstrates that 97.2% of respondents were aware of OHS programs, and 95.2% actively participated in them. Furthermore, Table 3 indicates that 90% of employees engaged in HCW initiatives, with 68.7% perceiving significant benefits. Qualitative data acquired from interviews, including Key Informant Interviews (KII) and In-Depth Interviews (IDI), further reinforce these quantitative findings, illustrating that these programs provide essential support mechanisms, encompassing health training, periodic medical examinations, and recreational activities. Nevertheless, disparities in access, particularly for

junior staff, highlight notable gaps in resource allocation. The JD-R model posits that equilibrium between job demands and resources is critical for fostering employee engagement and performance.

In the context of Benin City's manufacturing sector, this equilibrium is evidently disrupted. Although resources are present, their distribution is uneven, placing vulnerable employee groups at a disadvantage. Addressing these imbalances necessitates the implementation of targeted strategies, including inclusive policy reforms, improved resource allocation, and tailored programs designed to meet specific demographic needs. This theoretical discussion bridges the gap between the JD-R model and the practical realities of QWL implementation, providing actionable insights aimed at enhancing employee well-being and productivity within the manufacturing sector.

Conclusion

This study underscores the diverse challenges facing Quality of Work-Life (QWL) programs in the manufacturing sector of Benin City. It reveals a complex interplay of socio-demographic factors, organizational policies, and program implementation dynamics. While there have been commendable efforts in areas such as occupational health and safety, healthcare and wellness, training, and long-service awards, significant gaps remain in employee participation, perceived benefits, and equitable access across various levels of the workforce. The analysis highlights the urgent need to align QWL initiatives with the specific needs of the workforce, promote inclusivity, and engage stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of these programs. It suffices to posit that addressing these challenges requires a strategic approach that incorporates robust policy frameworks, ongoing evaluation, and capacity-building efforts, ultimately leading to sustainable improvements in employee well-being and organizational productivity.

Recommendation

In line with the study's findings on the challenges impacting QWL programs in Benin City's manufacturing sector, the study recommends that to effectively address the identified challenges of QWL programs in the study organizations, a comprehensive framework for Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) should be established, the mandatory and inclusive participation for all staff in QWL program must be ensured, along with regular evaluations of program effectiveness. Besides, access to Healthcare and Wellness (HCW) programs should be broadened by integrating employee feedback into service design and enhancing awareness initiatives to close participation gaps. Recreational and leisure facilities should be upgraded and customized to meet employee preferences, ensuring usability throughout the year. Organizations must institutionalize strong Training and Skill Development (TSD) programs that align with career progression plans, fostering both personal and professional growth. Finally, the Long Service Award (LSA) framework should incorporate non-monetary incentives, such as

career mentoring and leadership opportunities, to bolster employee loyalty and engagement. These suggested measures, along with periodic reviews and active collaboration with stakeholders will enhance QWL outcomes and ensure sustained workforce satisfaction.

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