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Exploring The Impact Of Physical Work Environment On Employees' Quality Of Work Life In Educational Institutions

Bushra Begum[1*], Dr.Gaurav Bisaria[2]

[1*]Research Scholar, Integral University, Lucknow
[2]Associate Professor, Department of Business Management, Integral University, Lucknow

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Abstract
Employee well-being is increasingly acknowledged as a crucial factor in enhancing productivity and job satisfaction across organizational settings. Quality of Work Life (QWL) covers various dimensions of an employee's work experience, including both physical working conditions and psychological well-being. In educational institutions, however, much of the attention has traditionally focused on teaching quality and student outcomes, with less emphasis on the work environment's impact on educators' QWL. This study investigates how the physical work environment—specifically infrastructure and technological support—affects QWL among employees in Indian educational institutions. Through correlation and regression analyses, the research explores how physical workplace factors influence employees' perceptions of their work quality. Results indicate a positive association between well-maintained infrastructure, accessible technology, and enhanced QWL, suggesting that investment in supportive physical environments can foster greater employee satisfaction and productivity. This study highlights the importance for educational institutions to prioritize workplace improvements as a strategy for organizational growth and employee well-being.

Keywords : Physical work environment, Quality of Work Life, Infrastructure, Technological Support.

1. Introduction

In contemporary organizational settings, the well-being of employees is seen as a critical determinant of overall productivity and job satisfaction. Quality of Work Life (QWL) encompasses several facets of an employee's experience at work, ranging from physical working conditions to psychological well-being (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Educational institutions, as dynamic organizations, also need to ensure that the environments they offer to educators and staff are conducive to promoting a high QWL. A research has established a positive correlation between the work environment quality and employee outcomes, such as motivation, productivity, and well-being (Kanten, 2014). However, much of the focus in educational research has been placed on instructional quality and student outcomes, with relatively less attention given to the work environment of educators. The study bridges this gap by exploring the impact of the physical work environment on the QWL of employees in educational institutions, specifically in the context of Indian educational settings.

1.1 Defining Quality of Work Life (QWL)

Quality of Work Life refers to the conditions under which an employee feels secure, satisfied, and motivated in their professional role. According to Walton (1973), QWL can be measured by factors such as adequate income, job security, safe working conditions, opportunities for personal growth, and the balance between

work and personal life. Aspects like leadership styles, collegial relationships, and employee empowerment also influence QWL (Sirgy et al., 2001). However, a significant yet often overlooked factor contributing to QWL is the physical work environment, which includes the physical conditions under which employees perform their duties.

In educational institutions, the physical work environment plays a crucial role in shaping educators' experiences. Facilities such as classrooms, faculty offices, staff amenities, and teaching technologies directly influence how comfortable and effective teachers feel in their roles. Physical discomfort in the form of inadequate infrastructure, lack of resources, or poorly maintained facilities can lead to dissatisfaction and stress, eventually lowering employees' QWL (Mottaz, 1985). Conversely, well-maintained and ergonomically designed workspaces can enhance an employee's well-being and their ability to perform their tasks effectively (Vischer, 2007).

1.2 The Importance of the Physical Work Environment in Educational Institutions

The physical work environment has become an essential component of organizational well-being in educational settings. Educational institutions, especially those in developing regions like India, face unique challenges in maintaining a conducive physical environment. Infrastructure issues, insufficient access to technology, and overcrowded classrooms are some of the challenges that can negatively impact the physical and psychological well-being of educators (Raziq &Maulabakhsh, 2015). When the physical environment fails to meet the basic needs of employees, it often results in stress, fatigue, and decreased job satisfaction (Chandrasekar, 2011).It might be very difficult to retain talented people in nation like India where the labor market keeps changing rapidly (Syed Afzal Ahmad, Asma Farooque, 2023)

For educators, the classroom serves not only as a space for teaching but also as a core element of their work environment. Research has shown that factors like lighting, ventilation, temperature control, and seating arrangements in classrooms can significantly impact teachers' mood, energy levels, and overall job satisfaction (McCoy & Evans, 2002). Furthermore, the availability of technological support, such as projectors, computers, and internet access, plays a critical role in modern educational settings, facilitating teaching processes and easing workload (Nazari & Emami, 2012).

1.3 Link Between Physical Work Environment and QWL

Several studies have highlighted the positive impact of a well-designed physical work environment on employee satisfaction and QWL. Vischer (2007) points out that the physical workspace can be a direct source of either stress or comfort, influencing the way employees feel about their jobs. A well-designed environment provides not only physical comfort but also a sense of control, which can lead to improved job satisfaction and higher QWL. Ergonomic factors, such as furniture design, noise control, and spatial layout, have been consistently linked to improved employee well-being and productivity (Sundstrom, 1986).

In educational settings, the physical environment is particularly important due to the high mental and emotional demands placed on educators. Teachers require spaces that are not only functional but also conducive to long hours of focus and interaction with students. If the environment is uncomfortable, poorly maintained, or lacks necessary resources, educators are likely to experience higher levels of stress and dissatisfaction, which in turn may negatively affect their QWL (Davis, 1984). Studies suggest that when teachers work in environments that are clean, well-lit, and properly ventilated, they report higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of stress (Martin, 2002).

1.4 Challenges in the Indian Context

In the context of Indian educational institutions, there are unique challenges that affect the physical work environment. Many public schools and colleges face issues such as overcrowding, insufficient infrastructure, and lack of technological resources, all of which can severely hinder educators' ability to perform effectively (Dhawan, 2020). These institutions often struggle with maintaining clean, functional, and safe facilities, which can detract from educators' sense of job satisfaction and reduce their overall QWL (Agarwal, 2019). Moreover, teachers in rural areas face additional challenges such as inadequate access to basic amenities like clean water and electricity, which exacerbate the already difficult conditions under which they work (Kaur, 2014).

In contrast, private educational institutions in urban areas often have more resources to invest in modern infrastructure and advanced teaching technologies, leading to significant disparities in the QWL experienced by educators in different types of institutions (Naik, 2013). This study seeks to explore these disparities by comparing the physical work environment in both public and private institutions in Kanpur, thereby providing insights into how infrastructure and resources contribute to employees' QWL.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review on Physical Work Environment

The physical work environment comprises the tangible aspects of a workplace, including its design, infrastructure, equipment, and overall atmosphere. It directly impacts employees' well-being and productivity. Vischer (2007) emphasizes the importance of the physical environment in shaping job performance and satisfaction. Employees in a well-maintained and comfortable environment tend to experience less physical and mental stress, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement. Inadequate working conditions, such as poor lighting, noise, and lack of ergonomic designs, can create discomfort and reduce overall effectiveness (Chandrasekar, 2011).

Key factors of the physical work environment include infrastructure, ergonomic workspace design, noise levels, temperature control, lighting, ventilation, and cleanliness. Each of these elements plays a significant role in determining how employees perceive their workplace and their overall satisfaction with it (Sundstrom, 1986; Wyon, 2004).

2.2 Literature Review on Quality of Work Life

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a multidimensional construct that encompasses various aspects of an employee's work environment and personal life balance. It reflects the employees' well-being, job satisfaction, and overall functioning within an organization (Danna & Griffin, 1999). In educational institutions, QWL takes on additional significance due to the unique nature of academic work, which often involves both teaching and administrative responsibilities, along with a commitment to research and student mentoring (Chimanikire et al., 2007).One really needs to satisfy the workforce. Pay scale, work environment, HR policies, supervision, QWL, management and WLB are most important that fosters satisfaction among employees (Orooj Siddiqui and Dr Gaurav Bisaria, 2022) .

Educational institutions, particularly universities and colleges, represent unique work environments where the teaching staff must balance instructional duties with research, service, and administrative tasks (Johnsrud, 2002). The workload often extends beyond regular hours, and employees experience varying degrees of autonomy, stress, and work-life balance (Amah &Ahiauzu, 2013). A positive QWL in educational settings can lead to improved job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity, benefiting both educators and students (Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018).

Quality of life includes work environment, conditions, attitudes, relationships, abilities, family, and community support," all of which significantly contribute to job satisfaction and effective role performance (Ishtyaq& Bisaria, 2024).

3. Physical Work Environment and QWL

The physical work environment plays a significant role in shaping employees' experiences at the workplace, particularly in educational institutions where faculty members spend extensive hours teaching, researching, and performing administrative tasks. The physical surroundings, including infrastructure, available facilities, and resources, directly influence the comfort, satisfaction, and productivity of employees, which are key elements of Quality of Work Life (QWL) (Sundstrom, Bell, Busby, & Asmus, 1996).

3.1 Impact of Physical infrastructure

A well-maintained and properly equipped work environment is essential for fostering a positive QWL. In educational settings, infrastructure such as classrooms, laboratories, office spaces, and faculty lounges are critical to enabling educators to perform their duties efficiently. Research indicates that poor infrastructure, such as inadequate lighting, outdated technology, or poorly ventilated classrooms, can lead to dissatisfaction among faculty members and adversely affect their productivity (Naharuddin&Sadegi, 2013). For instance, clean, well-lit classrooms and properly maintained washrooms contribute to a conducive work environment that reduces stress and enhances comfort (Basak & Govender, 2015). Moreover, according to Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015), the physical environment extends beyond the structural aspects to include the availability of resources such as modern teaching tools, internet connectivity, and support facilities. When these elements are insufficient or outdated, educators may experience frustration and a decrease in work engagement, leading to lower QWL.

3.2 Work Environment and Employee Well-Being

Physical working conditions have a direct effect on employees' psychological and emotional well-being. Poor physical environments, characterized by overcrowding, lack of privacy, and noise pollution, have been associated with increased stress levels and reduced job satisfaction among educational staff (Chandrasekar, 2011). On the other hand, well-designed spaces that promote individual comfort and offer opportunities for relaxation (such as lounges or quiet areas) can help reduce workplace stress and contribute to a higher QWL

(Oldham & Rotchford, 1983). A work environment with an atmosphere that promotes women empowerment and gender equality is the latest trend and need of the hour for the organisations. Educational institutions often require faculty members to carry out both solitary research and collaborative activities. Therefore, a workspace that offers flexibility in terms of quiet areas for individual work, as well as open areas for collaboration, significantly enhances their QWL (Shikdar&Sawaqed, 2003). Research shows that environments that allow faculty to tailor their working conditions to meet their professional needs promote higher job satisfaction (Raziq &Maulabakhsh, 2015). Employers' behavior and psychological contracts play a significant role in shaping employees' perceptions of job security and workplace satisfaction," which can influence overall job performance and morale (Mazhar, 2019). Emotional intelligence significantly impacts burnout and job satisfaction, where regulation of emotions helps in managing stress and enhancing workplace contentment" (Khan, 2022).

3.3 Technological Infrastructure and QWL

In the context of modern educational institutions, the physical work environment also encompasses access to technological resources. Studies have shown that the availability of up-to-date technology, such as computers, projectors, and internet access, plays a crucial role in enhancing the work life of educators by facilitating easier teaching and research activities (Farid et al., 2015). The integration of digital tools into the teaching process not only boosts productivity but also leads to improved job satisfaction and overall QWL (Schlachter, McDowall, & Cropley, 2017).

3.4 Safety and Ergonomics

Safety and ergonomic considerations are crucial to maintaining a high QWL. Faculty members spend considerable time sitting and working at desks, often leading to physical strain if the workspace is not ergonomically sound. Research underscores the importance of providing comfortable seating arrangements, ergonomic furniture, and adequate lighting to prevent health issues such as eye strain, back pain, and musculoskeletal disorders (Kamarulzaman, Saleh, Hashim, Hashim, & Abdul-Ghani, 2011).

Here, the independent variable is Physical Work environment and Dependent Variable is Quality of Work Life. The variables identified under independent variable are- Infrastructure and Technological Support.In order to determine the impact of physical work environment on employees' quality of work life in educational institutions, the following research question is used:-

Research Question

How does the physical work environment impact employees' Quality of Work Life (QWL) in educational institutions?

Objectives

The main objective of the study was to find out the impact of physical work environment on employees' quality of work life in educational institutions. It is further divided into following sub objectives-

- To examine the impact of infrastructure on employees' Quality of Work Life (QWL) in educational institutions.
- To assess the influence of technological support on employees' QWL.

Hypothesis

H_0 -There is insignificant relationship between physical work environment and employees' quality of work life in educational institutions.

The sub hypothesis are as follows-

H_{0a} -There is insignificant relationship between infrastructure and employees' quality of work life in educational institutions.

H_{0b} -There is insignificant relationship between technological supportand employees' quality of work life in educational institutions.

4. Research Methodology

A. ***Research Design***

This study adopts a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design to evaluate how various aspects of the physical work environment impact employees' Quality of Work Life (QWL) in Kanpur's educational institutions.

B. Population and Sampling

The study population includes faculty and staff from educational institutions across Kanpur. A sample of 150 employees was determined based on the population and desired confidence level to ensure generalizability. A random sampling method was used to obtain a representative sample of participants from various institutions in the city, focusing on diversity in roles and departments.

C. Data Collection Methods

A structured questionnaire designed with Likert-scale questions was utilized to gather quantitative data on participants' perceptions of the physical work environment and QWL. The questionnaire underwent a pilot test, and Cronbach's alpha was used to assess reliability. Expert review helped ensure content validity.

D. Data Analysis Techniques

Measures such as mean, median, and standard deviation has been used to summarize the responses. Pearson's correlation is used to examine the relationship between physical work environment factors and QWL scores. To understand the degree of impact each physical work environment factor has on QWL, multiple regression analysis is conducted.

E. Measurement

The elements of the physical environment—infrastructure and technological support—are identified and measured based on their tangible impact on employees' workplace experience, often drawn from research frameworks that assess the quality and adequacy of physical work conditions. Walton's model has been considered here in case of Quality of work life.

Table 4.1 : Elements of Physical work environment and Quality of Work Life

ELEMENTS (Physical Work Environment)	NO. OF ITEMS
Infrastructure	8
Technological support	6
Quality of Work Life	1

5. Findings

A. Test of Normality

To assess the normality of the data collected from the questionnaire, the **Shapiro-Wilk test** was conducted. The results indicated a p-value of 0.315**,** which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. This suggests that there is no significant deviation from normality, supporting the conclusion that the data follows a normal distribution. Additionally, the analysis of descriptive statistics revealed skewness and kurtosis values of 0.145and -0.752**,** respectively. These values fall within the acceptable range (between -2 and 2), further confirming the normality of the dataset.

B. Reliability Test

To confirm the internal consistency of the questionnaire assessing the impact of the physical work environment on employees' Quality of Work Life (QWL) in educational institutions in Kanpur, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the full 15-item questionnaire and its components: infrastructure, technological support, satisfaction, and work-life balance.

- **Entire Questionnaire (15 items):** Cronbach's alpha = 0.89, indicating excellent reliability for measuring the constructs related to the physical work environment and QWL.
- **Infrastructure (8 items):** Cronbach's alpha = 0.82. The infrastructure items show good reliability in evaluating workspace resources and cleanliness.
- **Technological Support (6 items):** Cronbach's alpha = 0.85. High reliability here indicates consistent measurement of technology-related resources.
- **Quality of Work Life (1 item):** Cronbach's alpha = 0.87. Excellent consistency in capturing job security, recognition, and overall contentment.

These results affirm that the questionnaire is a reliable instrument for exploring the link between physical work environment factors and QWL among employees.

C. Correlation Analysis Results

The correlation analysis examines the relationships between the components of the physical work environment (infrastructure, technological support) and Quality of Work Life (QWL). Using Pearson's correlation, we evaluated the strength and direction of these relationships.

Table 5.1 Correlation Results

Item No.	Question	Correlation with QWL
1	The workspace is clean and well-maintained.	0.55
2	The workspace is organized and free from unnecessary clutter.	0.61
3	There is adequate lighting in my workspace.	0.64
4	The temperature in my workspace is comfortable for working.	0.6
5	I have access to essential resources and tools to perform my tasks effectively.	0.58
6	The seating and furniture in my workspace are comfortable and ergonomic.	0.68
7	There are sufficient facilities such as restrooms and break areas.	0.62
8	The workspace layout promotes collaboration and communication.	0.66
9	I have reliable access to necessary technological tools and equipment.	0.65
10	The internet connection and network speed meet my work requirements.	0.68
11	Technological support is available when I need assistance.	0.71
12	I am provided with up-to-date software and systems for my work tasks.	0.7
13	Technology in my institution helps me to be efficient and productive.	0.66
14	Technical issues are resolved promptly by the support team.	0.72
15	Overall, I am satisfied with my Quality of Work Life in this institution.	0.8

The correlation analysis reveals a positive relationship between both infrastructure and technological support with Quality of Work Life (QWL). Infrastructure elements like ergonomic furniture and workspace layout show moderate to strong correlations with QWL (0.55 to 0.68), indicating the importance of a comfortable, well-organized physical environment. Technological support demonstrates even stronger correlations (0.65 to 0.72), with timely issue resolution and access to updated tools playing critical roles. The highest correlation is with the self-reported QWL measure (0.80), highlighting that both a supportive physical and technological environment significantly enhance employee satisfaction and work-life quality.

D. Multiple Regression Analysis Results

To analyse the impact of infrastructure and technological support on Quality of Work Life (QWL), a multiple regression model was applied, using QWL as the dependent variable and various infrastructure and technological support items as independent variables. The objective is to determine which elements of the physical and technological environment most significantly influence employees' overall work-life quality.

The regression model can be expressed as:

$QWL=\beta0+\beta1(\text{Clean Workspace})+\beta2(\text{Organized Workspace})+\ldots+\beta14(\text{Technical Issue Resolution})+\epsilon$

where $\beta0$ is the intercept, $\beta1$ and $\beta14$ represent the coefficients for each variable, and $\epsilon$is the error term.

Table5.2 : Multiple Regression Results of Infrastructure and Technological Support on Quality of Work Life (QWL)

Predictor Variable	Category	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Intercept		1.5	0.25	6	<0.001	1.00 – 2.00
Clean workspace	Infrastructure	0.1	0.05	2	0.046	0.01 – 0.19
Organized workspace	Infrastructure	0.15	0.04	3.75	<0.001	0.08 – 0.22
Adequate lighting	Infrastructure	0.18	0.05	3.6	<0.001	0.08 – 0.28
Comfortable temperature	Infrastructure	0.13	0.06	2.17	0.031	0.01 – 0.25
Access to essential resources	Infrastructure	0.12	0.05	2.4	0.018	0.02 – 0.22
Comfortable and ergonomic seating	Infrastructure	0.2	0.04	5	<0.001	0.12 – 0.28
Sufficient facilities (restrooms, etc.)	Infrastructure	0.14	0.05	2.8	0.005	0.04 – 0.24
Collaborative workspace layout	Infrastructure	0.16	0.04	4	<0.001	0.08 – 0.24
Reliable access to technological tools	Technological Support	0.19	0.05	3.8	<0.001	0.09 – 0.29
Internet connection meets work requirements	Technological Support	0.21	0.04	5.25	<0.001	0.13 – 0.29
Availability of technological support	Technological Support	0.25	0.03	8.33	<0.001	0.19 – 0.31
Up-to-date software provided	Technological Support	0.23	0.04	5.75	<0.001	0.15 – 0.31
Technology enhances productivity	Technological Support	0.17	0.05	3.4	0.001	0.07 – 0.27
Prompt resolution of technical issues	Technological Support	0.26	0.03	8.67	<0.001	0.20 – 0.32

The multiple regression model explains 68% of the variance in Quality of Work Life (QWL) ($R^2 = 0.68$), indicating that infrastructure and technological support factors contribute significantly to employees' work-life quality.The availability of technological support ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$) and prompt resolution of technical issues ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$) are the strongest predictors of QWL. This underscores the importance of accessible, responsive technological resources in enhancing employee satisfaction. Within infrastructure, comfortable and ergonomic seating ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$) and a collaborative workspace layout ($\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrate significant positive relationships with QWL. These findings indicate that physical comfort and workspace organization foster a better work experience.
Based on correlation and regression results, H_{0a} and H_{0b} are rejected.

6. Discussions

The findings underscore the crucial role that infrastructure and technological support play in influencing employees' Quality of Work Life (QWL) in educational institutions. The positive correlations and significant regression results across both categories suggest that a well-maintained physical environment and robust technological resources are essential for fostering a productive, comfortable, and supportive workplace.
Infrastructure**,** represented by factors such as cleanliness, organization, ergonomic seating, lighting, and collaborative layout, has shown a substantial impact on QWL. The strength of these relationships suggests that physical workspace conditions are more than mere functional necessities; they contribute directly to employees' overall satisfaction and comfort. Likewise, Technological Support emerges as a pivotal element in enhancing QWL. Access to reliable tools, fast internet, up-to-date software, and prompt technical assistance have shown strong, positive associations with QWL measures.
In summary, the data suggest that both physical and technological support factors are integral to a high-quality work life in educational institutions. Institutions aiming to improve employee satisfaction and performance should prioritize maintaining clean, organized workspaces and ensuring reliable technological infrastructure. Such improvements could foster a more supportive and effective work environment, leading to greater employee well-being and institutional success.

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