THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE FRIENDSHIP IN CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK-LIFE: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of cultural intelligence (CI) and workplace friendship (WPF) on the quality of work-life (QWL) of individual workers and to examine whether WPF mediates the relationship between CI and QWL between employees of the same nationality, but of different ethnic groups working in government-owned organisations. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 161 employees using self-report measures. Data analysis was performed using two statistical procedures (the Harman single factor test and the correlation matrix) to assess the presence of a common-method variance (CMV) bias in the data collected for this study. Theoretical propositions and empirical observations offered plausible explanations for WPF's mediating role in the CI-QWL relationship. The present study confirms the reliability and, to some extent, the validity of the measures in a developing economy context. However, this study also builds empirical evidence that age and gender are fewer differentiating factors in employees' work attitudes and behaviour.

Keywords: *cultural intelligence, workplace friendship, quality work-life, social capital theory, public organisations employees*

JEL Classification: J24, I30, M10

Introduction

The humanistic perspective on workplace organising draws attention beyond the structural imperative to the need for employees' socio-psychological well-being to drive the organisation's effective functioning. Consequently, the humanistic organisation theorists' thesis, both in its founding scope and extensions, concerns employee quality of work-life (QWL). The QWL focusses on the value of human experience in the workplace. QWL describes the perception and experience of employees about their work environment, which involves their perception of physical and psychological well-being obtained from their work (Moda et al., 2021). As Singh (2011) presented, QWL emphasises the value of worker rights and industrial democracy, focussing on advancing organisational processes, such as coordination, communication, motivation, and personnel development.

The concept of QWL is not a new entrant in the literature on corporate behaviour. It has attracted much research interest (Alzamel et al., 2020; Perangin-Angin et al., 2020; Risla & Ithrees, 2018) substantially because people now spend a significant amount of their entire lives in work settings. Therefore, work organisations should contribute meaningfully to the whole life experience of employees. The exposition of how much proper work settings accomplish this need for the employee is mainly in QWL. QWL is becoming a phenomenon of empirical and practical interest, as the emerging body of knowledge has identified it with several positive attitudes and behaviours. For example, QWL positively influences organisational commitment, job satisfaction, employee innovation, job involvement, work engagement, and job performance (Alzamel et al., 2020; Perangin-Angin et al., 2020; Risla & Ithrees, 2018). Similarly, QWL has been broadly reported to be inversely associated with harmful employee work behaviour, such as intentions to leave (Alzamel et al., 2020). This necessarily maintained the long-existing need for empirical interest in QWL.

Workforce diversity refers to variations in the composition of employees based on personal and background factors. Contemporary work organisations are characterised by demographic diversity, including ethnic, cultural, and religious differences (Robbins et al., 2018). The fundamental disposition and situations that employees need to function effectively in demographically diverse work settings are cultural intelligence (CI) and workplace friendship (WPF). CI refers to the ability to succeed in complex cross-cultural environments through knowledge, cognition, motivation, and behaviours (Yari et al., 2020). CI improves individual

performance (Perangin-Angin et al., 2020; Risla and Ithrees, 2018) and gives a competitive advantage (Tu et al., 2020). Similarly, WPF is conceptualised as nonexclusive workplace relationships that involve mutual trust, commitment, reciprocal linking, and shared interests or values (Choi & Ko, 2020). WPF predicts job satisfaction (Yavuzkurt & Kıral, 2020), work motivation, well-being (Craig & Kuykendall, 2019), and work stress (Ratasuk, 2020) in an organisationally desirable direction.

These various CI and WPF outcomes influence how employees perceive and interpret their organisation's experience, principally informing QWL. They are essential measures of employee perceived and experienced QWL (Bora, 2017). The above indicates that the needs of CI and WPF in contemporary and culturally diverse work settings have implications for QWL. However, there is a lack of studies on the relationship between CI, WPF, and QWL. Some studies focus on how CI or WPF relates to a specific element, such as job satisfaction (Perangin-Angin et al., 2020; Risla & Ithrees, 2018) and organisational commitment (Risla & Ithrees, 2018) that formed QWL. In other words, the existing literature lacks studies that examine how CI or WPF relates to QWL as a composite. Studies examining QWL would provide results and knowledge that imply several other works' attitudes and behaviour components of QWL. Considering all of the above, the lack of studies that examined CI or WPF with QWL is a research gap that should be addressed.

Nigeria is a federation of six geopolitical zones of 36 states and a federal capital territory. The federation has more than 250 ethnic identities (Çancı & Odukoya, 2016; CIA, 2016). However, the number of ethnic groupings remains unknown (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). The principle of "federal character" was enshrined into the 1999 constitution to accommodate the various states and the federations' varied cultures. The principle required the federal and the constituent states to ensure that their governing structures were not dominated by persons from a few states or ethnic or other sectional groups. The principle was designed to check inequality and marginalisation (Onimisi et al., 2018) and reflect the country's linguistic, religious, ethnic, and geographic diversity in all public service institutions. Implementing the federation principle in Delta State has led to a mixture of people from the four main ethnic groups (Igbo, Urhobo, Ijaw, and Itsekiri) within the state in all government-owned establishments. Therefore, this principle brings together employees of different cultural backgrounds. However, in the face of this reality in the public sector, the literature on CI tends substantially towards multinational

corporations (MNCs), expatriates, and privately owned enterprises (Afsar et al., 2020).

Conspicuous, cultural diversity is neither exclusive to MNCs nor privately owned organisations in new work organisations but is a reality in every organisation, including government-owned ones. The need for CI exists for everyone, including leaders and subordinates working in culturally diverse environments. However, existing studies on CI in work settings focus principally on the context of leadership (Nosratabadi et al., 2020; Rüth & Netzer, 2020). The only exception is Isfahani et al. (2013), which examined the effect of CI on employee performance among employees of national cultures. Taking this into account, the purpose of this study is to (1) examine how CI relates to QWL, (2) how WPF associates with QWL, and (3) whether WPF mediates the relationship between CI and QWL between employees of the same nationality, but of different ethnic groups working in government-owned organisations. This study would explain how an employee's ability to function effectively in situations typified by cultural diversity builds friendship and contributes to employee perception and attitude of the work environment and job contents.

Theoretical Foundation and Hypotheses

Cultural intelligence and quality of work-life balance

CI refers to getting used to and functioning successfully in diverse cultural environments(Lee & Hong, 2021). Culturally intelligent individuals can effectively interact and work with people of different cultures. They can function successfully in various cultural settings that could be national, ethnic, or organisational. It entails an individual's ability to gather, interpret, and act upon different cues to function effectively across different cultures or multicultural situations (Liao & Thomas, 2020). Like other forms of intelligence, such as emotional and social, CI is a valuable development aspect through education, training, and experience (Raver & Van Dyne, 2018). Earley and Ang (2003)introduced the concept to disciplines in social and management sciences by offering a model of four dimensions: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural, which is widely adopted in the literature (Cabral et al., 2020; Fan et al., 2020; Wujiabudula & Karatepe, 2020). However, more recently, Thomas et al. (2015) introduced a model of three facets (cultural knowledge, cross-cultural skills, and cultural metacognition) that was adopted in this study as it was theoretically based and, therefore, an improvement on Earley and Ang's (2003) model.

QWL has a history characterised by varied perspectives. QWL has been conceptualised as industrial democracy with increased employee participation in the decision-making process; as an improvement in the psychological aspects of work that improves performance; as secure, healthy, and friendly working conditions; and as an improvement in social relationships at work through autonomous work (Klein et al., 2019). However, QWL refers to how members of a work organisation can satisfy critical personal needs through their organisation's experience (Daniel, 2019). It concerns the quality of the relationship between the worker and the working environment (Adikoeswanto et al., 2020). Even within the approach adopted above, several models have varied factors in QWL (Bora, 2017). However, Van Laar et al.'s (2007) six-factor model comprises job and career satisfaction, general well-being, stress at work, control at work, home-work interface, and working conditions are adopted in this study. It is a synthesis and improvement of several models and measures (Baba & Jamal, 1991; Cole et al., 2005; Mirvis & Lawler III, 1984; Warr et al., 1979). QWL that preceded it.

Several circumstances predispose CI to QWL. For example, studies have found a link between CI and job satisfaction (Takdir et al., 2020) and employee well-being (Chou, 2020). occupational stress (Stokes, 2013), organisational commitment (Risla & Ithrees, 2018), job performance (Afsar et al., 2020), and work-family conflict (He et al., 2019). All these consequences of CI are measures of QWL (Bora, 2017). Several studies have reported that CI positively links cultural adaptability and adjustment (Hu et al., 2020; Naushad & Majid, 2020; Setti et al., 2020). In addition to work adjustment (Malek & Budhwar, 2013) and adaptive selling behaviours (Charoensukmongkol, 2020), more people spend their entire lives in work settings. Employees who can adapt and adapt to various cultures in the organisation are more likely to be satisfied with their job and balance work-life, experience better workplace relationships, and less career stress (Deniz et al., 2015; Giorgi et al., 2020; Karatepe & Karadas, 2016; Tsen & Do, 2018). These outcomes of cultural adaptation, adjustment, and work adaptation are determinants of QWL (Bora, 2017). More so since CI improves individual performance (Afsar et al., 2020; Fan et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2019; Naushad & Majid, 2020; Takdir et al., 2020). Therefore, it is hypothesised that

H_1. Cultural intelligence positively predicts the quality of work-life balance

Workplace friendship and the quality of work-life
A workplace friendship is an interpersonal relationship that involves mutual commitment, trust, shared values, and interest between individuals at work beyond

mere acquaintanceship but does not include romance (Eriş, 2020; Xiao et al., 2020). The WPF influences the quality of information employees should receive from their workplace, and the information that is available affects the perceived QWL. Nielsen et al. (2000) conceptualised WPF as a dual-dimensional construct of prevalence and opportunity. WPF indicates recognition and social support for the employee, which are elements of a workplace environment that substantially influence perceived QWL. Similarly, studies show that WPF creates a work environment that could influence in a desirable direction many of the components of QWL. The components of QWL such as job satisfaction, work motivation, work stress, insecurity, respect, and trust (Bora, 2017; Sari et al., 2019), well-being (Craig & Kuykendall, 2019), and organisational culture (Bilgin & Kiral, 2019) are influenced by WPF. Similarly, WPF gives social support, and QWL is influenced by the employees' social support from co-workers and the organisation. Based on the nomological network of WPF, it is hypothesised that:

H2: Workplace friendship positively predicts the quality of work-life balance.

Workplace friendship as a mediator in the CI and QWL relationship

Theoretical propositions and empirical observations offered plausible explanations for the mediating role of WPF in the CI and QWL relationship. Social capital theory underpins the proposed mediating role of WPF in the relationship between CI and QWL. The social capital theory proposes that social relationships are resources that can lead to the development and accumulation of human capital (Machalek & Martin, 2015). The basic assumption of the social capital theory is that a person's family, friends, and associates constitute an essential asset that can be turned into capital when needed, leveraged for capital gain, or enjoyed purely for the human interaction it affords (Nanton & Alfred, 2009).

CI enhances exchange and cooperation and builds and bridges connections, creating a friendship network. As Cabral et al. (2020) observed, CI was a significant impetus for external networking behaviour. Therefore, a clear outcome of the CI is social capital, which is defined as the sum of actual or potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from a network of relationships, associated norms, and trust possessed by an individual that facilitates coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Lyu & Ji, 2020; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). CI helps socialise or make friends, including the positive outcomes associated with the network. Moreover, social capital creates an environment that aligns positively with QWL. Ko (2021) reported that organisational social capital relates to organisational commitment and subjective well-being. The findings

implicate WPF as a potential mediator in the CI and QWL links. For example, CI and WPF are related to job satisfaction, employee well-being, and organisational commitment (Barakat et al., 2015; Craig & Kuykendall, 2019; Risla & Ithrees, 2018; Yavuzkurt & Kıral, 2020). All these outcomes are aspects of QWL. Since CI breeds cooperation on which WPF is built, it is most likely that the impact of CI on QWL will pass through WPF. The thesis is that CI creates friendship and, through some characteristics of friendship (e.g., cooperation), impacts the components of QWL. It is hypothesised that

H3: Friendship in the workplace mediates the relationship between CI and QWL.

Research Methodology
Sample and design

Participants were sampled from four ethnic groups (Igbo, Urhobo, Ijaw, and Itsekiri) in Delta State, Nigeria. The sample consists of employees of public organisations. Every participant works and resides in a neighbourhood not of their ethnicity. Placing each participant in an alien cultural environment creates a greater likelihood that existing employment relationships are more of friendship than cultural affiliation. The total sample, 161, comprises 40 Igbos, 51 Urhobos, 38 Ijaws, and 34 Itsekiris. Furthermore, 39% were women, 61% were men, 71% were married, 29% were unmarried, and the mean age was 38.30 (SD = 9.87). The research was essentially exploratory and was conducted with a non-experimental design. Sixty-one per cent of the participants hold a first degree or equivalent certificate, 12% hold a postgraduate degree certificate, and 27% hold certificates lower than a first degree but not below a secondary school leaving certificate. Thus, participants are literate, which validates adopting a self-report measure. The sample size met the maximum sample-to-item ratio (5–1) and sample-to-variable ratio (20-to-1), which is widely recommended (Memon et al., 2020).

A convenience sampling technique was used as participants worked in several public organisations within the location of the study. Verbal approval was obtained from the management of the various organisations where the participants work. With the help of the organisations' administrative staff, the research questionnaires were distributed to the participants at their workplaces. Two hundred and one questionnaires were distributed; 174 completed questionnaires were received in three weeks. On physical examination of the returned questionnaires, it was observed that eight copies were not filled appropriately. Therefore, data analysis was performed on the responses of 161 participants. Surveys and non-random

samples are standard features in related studies (Eriş, 2020; Memon et al., 2020). Preliminary data analysis used descriptive statistical procedures that included central tendency and Pearson's moment correlation. Regression analysis (complemented with the PROCESS tool for SPSS (Field, 2018; Hayes, 2018) was used to test hypotheses, as it is used substantially in related studies (Cabral et al., 2020; He et al., 2019). Regression is a parametric statistical test; therefore, the design and preliminary data analysis observed several assumptions associated with its usage. For example, the collected data were independent of each other, which met the separate response requirement. The adopted Likert scale format met the demand for interval scaling, and scatter plots on the data revealed that the variables are linearly related.

Measures
A 10-item scale developed by Thomas et al. (2015) was used to measure CI. The scale has three dimensions that cover knowledge (2 items), skill (5 items), and metacognitive (3 items). The scale development followed best practises as it is based on theory. It is a refinement of the scales based on Earley and Ang's (2003) four-dimensional model of CI that dominates the literature. Nielsen et al.'s (2000) 12-item scale was adopted for WPF. It has two dimensions: friendship opportunity (6 items) and friendship prevalence (6 items). It appears to be the most widely adopted measure of WPF in the literature. The measure of the quality of work-life related to work was adopted (Easton & Van Laar, 2018) was adopted. It is a 23-item scale of six dimensions that cover job and career satisfaction, general well-being, work stress, work control, home-work interface, and work conditions. The scale has received wide acceptance, as it has been translated and adapted into many languages. The three adopted scales have received satisfactory psychometric properties from their authors and several other users (Bilgin & Kiral, 2019; Dwyer, 2020; Easton & Van Laar, 2018). A five-point Likert scale format ranging from 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-undecided, 2-disagree, and 1-strongly disagree was adopted to generate enough response variability, which gives statistical output validity. All study variables were analysed as one-dimensional constructs due to the few items associated with the dimensions of each CI and QWL scale and evidence of the high association between the dimensions of CI and WPF. Specifically, Barakat et al. (2015) recommended using the latent overall CI measure or one or two CI components. In developing the CI measure (Barakat et al., 2015). Thomas et al. (2015) conceptualised the CI as a single construct with three facets as compensatory.

Common-method variance

Using self-report measures in data collection led to incorporating several procedures into this study design to control common-method variance (CMV). The procedures include (1) having the various items comprising CI, WPF, and QWL presented in alternate order on the research questionnaire. This arrangement prevents similar thoughts from flowing from one item to the other. (2) The participants were ensured of their anonymity and confidentiality in the questionnaire cover letter. It was aimed to reduce evaluation apprehension and improve honesty in response (Cabral et al., 2020).

Control variables

Gender (men = 0, women = 1) and age (number of years reported by the participants) were introduced into the data analysis. Theories acknowledge that these demographics influence behaviour in social settings. Socio-emotional selectivity theory (Cubrich & Petruzzelli, 2020) proposes that age-related motivational shifts change how people interact. In addition, what they expected from their environment offered justification for age as a control variable in this study. Sociocultural theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) and cognitive and social learning (Bussey & Bandura, 1999) also justified testing age and gender control variables in CI and WPF's relationship with QWL. Age and sex were also included as control variables in several related studies (Cabral et al., 2020; Ratasuk, 2020).

Results

Reliability and Validity Analyses

Two statistical procedures (the Harman single factor test and the correlation matrix) were used as diagnostic tools to assess the presence of CMV bias in the data collected for this study. The observed results of the analyses were satisfactory. Harman's single-factor test revealed that the factors accounted for 93.33% of the total variance, while the first factor accounted for 24.44% of the total variance. Since the first factor did not explain most of the variance, there is insubstantial CMV in the data. For the correlation matrix procedure, the correlation between the constructs was less than 0.9 (see Table 1). These statistics indicate that CMV is not an issue in this study (Martínez-Córcoles & Zhu, 2020; Rodríguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2020). In achieving data reliability, Cronbach's alpha for the items selected to represent the variables was derived through an internal

consistency estimate. The observed coefficients and factor loadings for the measuring scales are presented in Table 1. Cronbach's alpha statistics ranged between α = 0.71 to α = 0.96, indicating sufficient reliability coefficients for the measuring scale (Howitt & Cramer, 2017). The inter-scale correlation was carried out to obtain convergent validity. WPF and CI positively correlate, as expected theoretically. There were positively related. The satisfactory alpha coefficients observed also support the convergence validity of the measuring scales (Field, 2018). Convergent validity is one of the two aspects of construct validity. The other part of the validity of the construct was the discriminant validity, tested with the factor structure (factor loadings). Each item loaded higher in its construct than its cross-loading signifies acceptable discriminant validity; such a pattern of items loading substantiates that the item belonged solely to their factors (Makhijaa & Akbarb, 2019). Adopting scales from the literature enables researchers to achieve content validity (Mirjana et al., 2018).

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the factor loading and Cronbach's alpha in the variables studied, while Table 2 shows the research variables' mean, standard deviations, coefficient alpha, and zero-order correlation coefficients. On a 5-point Likert scale, the observed means could be adjudged moderate. The correlation coefficients showed that all relationships were positive and significant at 0.05. The highest degree of the relationship was between WPF and QWL. The degree of correlation between the variables was modest, indicating the absence of multicollinearity in the model (Field, 2018).

Table 1: Factor loading and Cronbach's alpha on the studied variables

Factor	Factor loadings	α
Cultural Intelligence		0.71
I know how cultures around the world are different	0.84	
I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience and reading.	0.77	
I enjoy talking with people from different cultures.	0.77	
I can understand the feelings of people from other cultures accurately.	0.75	
I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective.	0.74	
I can change my behaviour to suit different cultural situations and	0.77	

Factor	Factor loadings	α
people.		
I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally diverse people.	0.76	
I am aware of cultural knowledge when interacting with someone from another culture.	0.74	
I think a lot about how culture influences my behaviour and how I am culturally different from others.	0.71	
I must plan my course of action in different cultural situations and with culturally diverse people.	0.76	
Workplace Friendship		0.89
I can get to know my co-workers	0.86	
I can work with my co-workers to solve problems collectively.	0.75	
In my organisation, I have the chance to talk informally and visit others	0.82	
Communication among employees is encouraged by my organisation	0.79	
I can develop close friendships at my workplace	0.82	
My organisation tolerates informal talk if the work is completed	0.76	
I have formed strong friendships at work.	0.85	
I socialise with co-workers outside of the workplace	0.69	
I can confide in people at work	0.74	
I feel I can trust many co-workers a great deal	0.87	
Seeing my co-workers is one reason why I look forward to my job.	0.73	
I do not feel that anyone I work with is a true friend [R]	0.77	
Quality of Work Life		0.96
I have a clear set of goals and aims to enable me to do my job	0.78	
I feel able to voice opinions and influence changes in my area of work	0.74	
I can use my abilities at work	0.81	
I feel well now	0.88	
My employer provides adequate facilities and flexibility for me to fit work around my family life	0.67	
My current working hours/patterns suit my circumstances	0.76	
I often feel under pressure at work	0.78	
When I have done an excellent job, it is acknowledged by my line manager	0.81	
Recently, I have been feeling unhappy and depressed	0.87	
I am satisfied with my life	0.67	
I am encouraged to develop new skills	0.76	

Factor	Factor loadings	α
I am involved in decisions that affect me in my area of work	0.74	
My employer provides me with what I need to do my job effectively	0.82	
My line manager actively promotes flexible working hours/patterns	0.82	
In most ways, my life is close to ideal	0.78	
I work in a safe environment	0.69	
Generally, things work out well for me	0.76	
I am satisfied with the career opportunities available to me here	0.72	
I often feel excessive levels of stress at work	0.74	
I am satisfied with the training I receive to perform my present job	0.83	
Recently, I have been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered	0.71	
The working conditions are satisfactory	0.77	
I am involved in decisions that affect members of the public in my area of work	0.77	

Table 2: Mean, SD, and Zero Order Correlation on Research Variables

	$\bar{x}$	Sd	CQ	WPF	QWL
CQ	3.86	0.50	1		
WPF	3.73	0.50	0.33**	1	
QWL	3.45	0.55	0.32**	0.45 **	1

Legen: Cultural intelligence (CQ), Workplace friendship (WPF), Quality of work-life (QWL), **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Hypotheses Testing

The study performed a simple linear regression analysis to test the unmediated pathways between the two independent variables and the criterion variable. Age and sex as control variables were not significantly related to QWL when entered together with CI; age (β = -0.13, p > 0.10), gender (β = -0.02, p > 0.73). Similarly, control variables were not significantly related to QWL when entered along with WPF, age (β = -0.14, p > 0.06), gender (β = -0.07, p > 0.32). The bivariate relationship between CI and WPF with QWL remained significant after introducing the control variable into the analysis. Therefore, these results ruled out the influence of control variables on the relationship between predictors and criterion variables among public organisation employees.

Table 2 (third row) shows simple regression analyses that predict QWL from CI (β = 0.32, 95% confidence interval [0.19 -0.52], t = 4.36, p < 0.001). The β value of 0.32 indicated that the association between CI and QWL was modest, positive, and

significant. Since confidence interval statistics exclude zero values, the relationship is statistically significant at a two-tailed 0.05 level. Therefore, from both point and interval estimates, Hypothesis 1 was supported. The ANOVA test, F (1, 160) = 19.04, p < 0.01), indicates that the regression was statistically significant, which implies that QWL can be predicted from CI. The B value of 0.36 means that for every increase of 1 unit in CI, QWL increases by 0.36 units. The observed R^2 signifies that CI explained a 10% variance in QWL. An R^2 of 0.107 indicates a medium effect size (Cohen, 2013). Again, the slight difference between R^2 0.107 and adjusted R 0.101, which is 0.006, indicates good cross-validity; that is, this model has the potential to be applied to other samples.

Table 3: Simple regression on CQ, WPF with QWL

	B	SE	β	R^2	$Adj\ R^2$	T	P	95 % CI	
								LLCI	ULCI
CQ	0.33	0.08	0.32	0.11	0.10	4.36	0.001	0.20	0.53
WPF	0.49	0.07	0.45	0.20	0.19	6.38	0.001	0.34	0.65

Note: CQ = Cultural intelligence, WPF = Workplace friendship, QWL = quality of work-life

Table 3 (fourth row) shows simple regression analyses that predict QWL from WPF (β = 0.45, 95% confidence interval [0.34 -0.65], t = 6.38, p < 0.001). The *R-*value of 0.45 indicates that the association between WPF and QWL is modest, positive, and significant. Since confidence interval statistics exclude zero values, the relationship is statistically significant at a two-tailed 0.05 level. Therefore, from both point and interval estimates, Hypothesis 2 was supported. An analysis of the variance test, F (1, 160) = 40.71, p < 0.01), indicates that the regression was statistically significant, implying that QWL can be predicted from WPF. The observed B value of 0.49 means that for every one-unit increase in CI, QWL increases by 0.49 units. The observed R^2 means that WPF explained a 20% variance in QWL. An R^2 of 0.20 indicates a medium effect size (Cohen, 2013). Again, the slight difference between R^2 0.20 and adjusted R^2 0.19, which is 0.01, indicates good cross-validity; this model can be applied to other samples.

Figure 1 shows the result of the mediation model. The statistics revealed a significant indirect effect of CI on QWL through WPF, β = 0.14, 95%, BCa confidence interval [0.07, 0.24]. The significant effect is expressed because the confidence interval statistics excluded a zero value. Effect size statistics (Index of Mediation) (Preacher and Kelley, 2011) indicate that QWL increases by 0.13 [95% confidence interval, 0.06-0.21] standard deviations for every one standard

deviation increase in CI indirectly through WPF. The β value of 0.43 in the figure indicates the direct effect of WPF on QWL (Multiple regression of CI and WPF on QWL). Table 4 shows the summary of the findings.
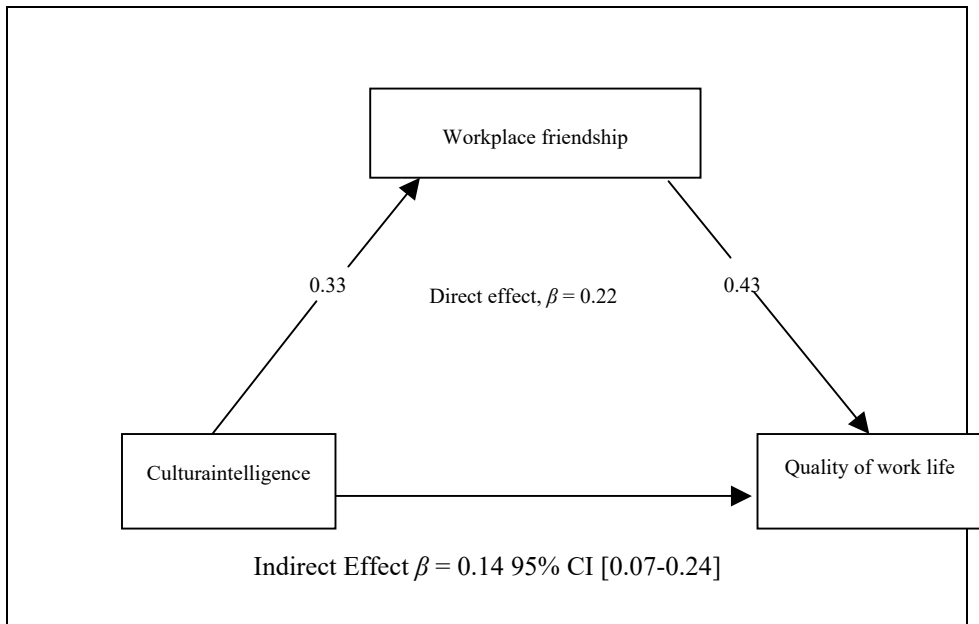

Figure 1: Research model and results of hypotheses testing

Table 4: Summary of findings

Hypothesis	Type of effect	Result
H1: Cultural intelligence positively predicts the quality of work-life	Direct effect	Supported**
H2: Workplace friendship positively predicts the quality of work-life	Direct effect	Supported**
H3: Workplace friendship mediates the relationship between cultural intelligence and quality of work-life	Indirect effect	Supported **

**p < 0 .01

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the effect of CI and WPF on the QWL of individual workers and to examine the mediating role that WPF plays in the relationship between CI and QWL. The study further investigates the existing literature since CI was studied with four different ethnic groups within a nation and employees in a workplace setting. The current literature is built on studies that examined CI in leadership (Nosratabadi et al., 2020; Rüth & Netzer, 2020) and among expatriates (Afsar et al., 2020; Guang & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Jyoti and Kour (2017) noted that existing CI studies were conducted in multinational companies (MNCs), focussing primarily on expatriates.

The three hypotheses tested received confirmation. CI has a positive and significant influence on QWL. CI influences job satisfaction (Takdir et al., 2020) and employee well-being (Chou, 2020). Organisational commitment has been implicated in QWL (Bora, 2017; Risla & Ithrees, 2018). The observed relationship between CI and QWL is conceivable, as the former variable can create a work environment of mutual understanding and cooperation. Similarly, WPF positively predicted QWL. QWL is characterised by the various elements that WPF and its representations positively influence, such as social support and workers' well-being (Craig and Kuykendall, 2019). WPF indicates recognition and social support. Recognition leads to organisation-based self-esteem, and employees with high self-esteem would be less prone to job stress. Social support has a desirable effect on job autonomy and job satisfaction (Giao et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2019) and employees' subjective and psychological well-being (Peters et al., 2018; Sahai & Mahapatra, 2020).

Furthermore, all of these are involved in perceived QWL. The third hypothesis test revealed that WPF mediates the effect of CI on QWL, implying that CI creates an environment, both within and between individuals, that enhances the shared value and mutual understanding and cooperation reflected in perceived QWL. The descriptive statistics revealed that the participants experienced moderate CI, WPF and QWL. Unsurprisingly, there is no systematic and deliberate programme to improve these variables in the sampled organisations. Based on theory and empirical work, age and sex were proposed to influence the relationship between CI, WPF, and QWL, but data analysis revealed the contrary. Studies on organisational behaviour that do not confirm age and gender as control variables are becoming substantial (Harrison, 2019). This trend could result from equal rights and inclusion agendas and the near absence of differential employment policies based on various demographics.

Contribution

In various ways, this study contributes to theory and practise. This research pioneered an investigation that combines CI, WPF, and QWL and the CI study among employees of different indigenous cultures. The current study introduced a model into the literature, and its findings serve as a basis for discussing subsequent tests of the model. This study observed that CI and WPF positively influence QWL and that WPF also acts as a mediator mechanism in the CI-QWL relationship. These findings started and provided an understanding that could help guild middle-range theorising on CI and QWL link. Researchers (Mollah, 2019) have discussed the importance of theory building in management, organisational research, and practise. The findings that WPF positively predicts QWL add to the extent studies that have offered support and confirmation to social capital theory, which proposes that the network of relationships possessed by an individual is embedded with resources (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). The present study also builds empirical evidence that age and gender are fewer differentiating factors in employees' work attitudes and behaviour. This accumulation of knowledge has implications for choosing control variables in organisational behaviour research. Related to the above, this and other related findings (Harrison, 2019) imply various theories (e.g., socioemotional selectivity theory) that propose several demographics as control variables in the relationship between some organisational behaviour variables. Specifically, the findings offered disconfirming aspects of the approaches that suggest such an influence of age and gender on employee work behaviour. The context in which the CI, WPF, and QWL measures were developed was unfamiliar to the present study. However, this study confirms the reliability and, to some extent, the validity of the measures in the Nigerian context. This contribution is most applicable to the CI scale, which is new.

The results of this study have some practical implications. CI and WPF positively influence QWL. Indicates that the two variables contribute to the positive attitudes towards the organisation. In various discussions, positive feelings and thoughts have contributed to positive work behaviour and effective functioning. Organisational practitioners must reflect variables that have been proven effective in strengthening CI and WPF among corporate members. Creating culturally intelligent and quality friendships benefits both the employee and the organisation. It can be archived through recruitment and selection, training, and reasonable rules and policies.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

One limitation of this research is the reliance on cross-sectional data, as all measures were self-reported and collected at a single point. The possibility of reversed causality and some common-method bias remains despite some researchers' technical measures and verification. Triangulation of the data collection method, longitudinal studies, and possibly quasi-experiments are recommended in future research.

QWL also has various perspectives. The mediation model has one mediator; this is a simple model of limited representation of reality. Therefore, future studies should be theoretically and empirically more inclusive of the mediators examined. However, this study is approached as an attitude related to work context and content satisfaction. This perspective is inclusive; therefore, this study is limited to the factors of the adopted measure. A review of the relatedness of measures developed from this perspective is necessary to provide the information necessary to discuss the findings.

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