

A STUDY OVER THE FACTORS AND COMPONENTS AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF WORK LIFE OF EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT:

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is generally associated with a series of objective organizational conditions and practices that enables employees of an organization to perceive that they are virtually safe, satisfied and have better chances of growth and development as individual human beings. QWL is nowadays drawing more attention globally as in modern society people spend about more than one-third of their lives at their workplace. Hence, the eminence and importance of QWL is unparalleled and unquestionable. This research article first focuses on the definitions of QWL, followed by various paradigms of QWL, which form the basic element of QWL in any employment security, organization, job satisfaction, occupational stress, work environment, work life balance and human relations. Finally, the research proposes some strategies to improve QWL in organizations that focus on different areas of organizational functions: employee participation, job design and work organization, workforce awareness and career guidance, inter-group relationships, role of HR managers, self-managing work teams, rewards, alternative work schedules and supportive organizational culture.

KEYWORDS:

Job Satisfaction, Job Involvement, Job Enrichment, Employee Security, Employee Motivation.

INTRODUCTION:

F.W. Taylor's scientific management principles created awareness regarding human resources, who were earlier considered as mere instruments of production, ready to work from dawn to dusk under whatever conditions and being motivated by the lure of money. From then, till today continuous research and experiments have been undertaken to understand human beings at work and the ways to improve their job satisfaction balance with the aim of the organizations to combine better productivity with job and employee satisfaction. The concept of Quality of Work Life has originated from this continuous research process. Quality of Work Life (QWL) has become one of the most important issues of these days in every organization. Employees are the force that is behind every successful organization. No organization can become successful with technology only because for the use of technology also, organizations need to have strong work force. Quality of Work Life was the term actually introduced in the late 1960's. From that period till now the term is gaining more and more importance everywhere, at every work place. Initially quality of work life was focusing on the effects of employment on the general well-being and the health of the workers. But now its focus has been changed. Every organization need to give good environment to their workers including all

financial and nonfinancial incentives so that they can retain their employees for the longer period and for the achievement of the organization goals.

FACTORS INFLUENCING QWL:

The following 12 factors which influence the quality of work life. These factors working towards the development of organizations and for gaining competitive advantage in the market.

1. Communication: Achieving some level of personal growth may be quite related to the quality of communication in the organization. Proper communication plays a focal role to achieve results in this priority area. Besides the traditional methods of information sharing through house journals, notice boards, shop campaigns etc., novelty can be experienced for orienting shop communication in tune with the process of work, the starting point is that new work practices have deeply changed the way firms operate.

2. Career Development & Growth: The purpose of career planning as part of an employee development program is not only to help employees feel like their employers are investing in them, but also help people manage the many aspects of their lives and deal with the fact that there is a clear promotion track.

3. Organizational Commitment: The relationship of organizational commitment with work life quality is another aspect of working life that is often investigated by researchers. Studies have concluded that committed employees' remains with the organization for longer periods of time than those which are less committed have a stronger desire to attend work, and a more positive attitude about their employment.

4. Emotional Supervisory Support: It has been suggested that emotional support at work helps balance work and family roles because it contributes to the employee's energy level (Van Daalen et al., 2006). Supervisor support, however, is not aimed primarily at combining work and family tasks. Instead, it helps employees in general function better at work and find a work life fit (Anderson et al., 2002).

5. Flexible Work Arrangement: Flexible work arrangements are thought to contribute to job motivation and dedication. They also enable the employee to use time more efficiently by scheduling activities in a way that suits his or her situation best (Hill, Ferris, & Martinson, 2003). Telecommuting actually saves the employee time, as it saves time commuting that cannot be used for work or family activities.

6. Family-Responsive Culture: In addition to providing flexible work arrangement and emotional supervisor support, the organization's culture toward combining work and family roles is at least as important for employees seeking work-family balance (Thompson & Prottas, 2006).

7. Employee Motivation: The general perception is that people leave organization for higher pay. Because the Hawthorne studies (19th century) have already proved long back that money is not the only motivator (Mayo 1960), whereas other environmental factors also play a significant role for employee motivation and performance. It is important to recognize that

individuals have unique motives for working in the organization. Employee motivation plays a central role for success of an organization. (Haim 2003)

8. Organizational Climate: Various aspects of organizational climate have been measured and used in previous researches on QWL. Literature suggests three of them primarily, viz. affective, cognitive and instrumental. The affective facet of organizational climate primarily comprises of the quality of relationships in the organization. This is a critical component of the social relations aspect of climate and has been used in past climate studies.

9. Organizational Support: Organizational Support is defined as the extent to which employees perceive that the organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing. This is a key factor in influencing employee commitment to the organization, job satisfaction, and general quality of work life. Many researchers have studied the relationship between perceived organizational support and work-life quality of workers and have found it to have a positive impact on organizational commitment, employee performance as well as job satisfaction (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Dixon & Sagas, 2007).

10. Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction is one of the central variables in work and is seen as an important indicator of working life quality (Cohen, Kinnevy & Dichter, 2007; Aryee, Fields & Luk, 1999) determining the extent to which the employee is satisfied or is enthusiastic about his job.

11. Rewards & Benefits: Hackman and Oldham's (1980) highlighted the constructs of QWL in relation to the interaction between work environment and personal needs. They emphasized the personal needs are satisfied when rewards from the organization such as compensation, promotion, recognition and development meet their expectations, which will lead to an excellent QWL.

12. Compensation: Besides rewards and benefits the level of support created by the compensation structure is also an indication of the work-life quality in organizations. Many organizations claim to base pay raises on performance, but that is not actually the case. Some companies try to emphasize a team environment, but continue to reward people for individual achievement (Feldman, 2000).

COMPONENTS OF WORK LIFE:

The elements that are relevant to an individual's quality of work life include the task, the physical work environment, social environment within the organization, administrative system and relationship between life on and off the job (Cunningham and Eberle, 1990). The following 9 important components of quality of work life were listed below:

1. Work environment
2. Organization culture and climate
3. Relation and co-operation
4. Training and development
5. Compensation and Rewards
6. Facilities
7. Job satisfaction and Job security

8. Autonomy of work
9. Adequacy of resources

1. Work Environment

Working environment is a place that one works. It is a social and professional environment in which employees are supposed to interact with a number of people and have to work with co-ordination in one or the other way. Safe and healthy working conditions ensure good health, continuity of services, decreased bad labour management relations. A healthy worker registers a high productivity.

2. Organization Culture and Climate

Organization culture is a set of properties and organization climate is a collective behaviour of people that are part of an organization values, vision, norms etc. According to Cavry (1995) Organizational features such as policies and procedures, leadership style, operations, and general contextual factors of setting, all have a profound effect on how staff views the quality of work life.

3. Relation and Co-Operation

Relation and co-operation is a communication between management and employees, concerning workplace decision, conflicts and problem resolving. Work and career are typically pursued within the framework of social organization and the nature of personal relationships becomes an important dimension of Quality of Work Life.

4. Training and Development

Training and development is an organizational activity aimed at bettering the performance of individual and groups. Quality of Work Life is ensured by the opportunities provided by the job for the development of the employee and encouragement given by the management to perform the job. Having good conditions to increase personal empowerment and skills. The employees at each hierarchy actively participate in building the organization environment, developing organizational model so as to produce the organizational achievements. This process is based on the two goals together 1) To improve organizational efficiency and 2) To improve the quality of working life.

5. Compensation and Rewards

Compensation and rewards are motivational factors, the best performer is given the rewards, and this builds the competitions among the employees to work hard and to achieve both organizational and individual goals. Mirvis and Lawler (1984) highlighted that Quality of working life was associated with satisfaction with wages, hours and working conditions, describing the “basic elements of a good quality of work life” as; safe work environment, equitable wages, equal employment opportunities and opportunities for advancement.

6. Facilities

Facilities play major role in actualization of the goals and objectives by satisfying the both physical and emotional needs of the employees. Facilities are like food service, transportation, security etc. Many employers have found it beneficial to allow alternate work arrangements for their employees. This is one way to improve employee productivity and morale. The advantages of these alternate work arrangements to the employee include flexible work hours, shorter or no commute, and a comfortable working environment.

7. Job Satisfaction & Job security

Job satisfaction is the favourableness or unfavourableness with which employees view their work. Job satisfaction is impacted by job design. Jobs that are rich in positive behavioural elements – such as autonomy, variety, task identity, task significance and feedback contribute to employees' satisfaction.

Noor and Abdullah (2012) and Koonmee *et al.* (2010) study indicate that there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and quality of work life. Job satisfaction is found to carry more weightage in explaining the relationship among job satisfaction, job involvement and job security with quality of work life.

Job security

Employees want stability of employment, they do not like to be the victims of whimsical personal policies and stay at the mercy of employers. Job security is another factor that is of concern to employees. Permanent employment provides security to the employees and improves their QWL. A dramatic change of workforce in contemporary work environment has revealed a significant amount organization change. Job security, the central aspect of QWL represents strength of the organizations to provide permanent and stable employment regardless of the changes in work environment.

8. Autonomy of Work

In autonomous work groups, employees are given the freedom of decision making, workers themselves plan, coordinate and control work related activities. It also includes different opportunities for personnel such as independency at work and having the authority to access the related information for their task. According to Scully *et al.* (1995) greater autonomy on job enhances the acquisition and utilization of knowledge whilst greater participation is held to promote cognitive growth via increased knowledge transfer among employees.

9. Adequacy of Resources

Resources should match with stated objectives; otherwise, employees will not be able to attain the Objectives. This results in employee dissatisfaction and lower QWL. According to Chelte (1983) adequacy of resources has to do with enough time and equipment, adequate information and help to complete assignments.

CONCLUSION:

Literatures reviewed have shown that QWL is a multidimensional constructs, these constructs have to be consider during the job design process. The literature would also reveal the contribution of the nine important components and factors of QWL which positively associated with the employee satisfaction and employees opinion on QWL in different sectors.

Contemporary organizations are taking continuous efforts to improve the Quality of Work Life of its employees. These organizations are very much interested in attracting potential candidates in the market, trying to retain the efficient manpower and making attempts to reduce turnover rate of employees.

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