

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE: A REVIEW

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Abstract: The concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) has emerged as an important determinant of a model employment. Good QWL is necessary for an organization to attract and retain skilled and talented employees. In order to survive in the competitive market and to minimize the attrition rate of employees the QWL initiatives are very important. Several researches have been conducted on QWL, but considering the contributions of QWL in the recent times, a more comprehensive review is attempted here. In this connection, the author has reviewed the literature on QWL. For this purpose, the author considered available secondary data. Based on the review a conclusion is provided.

IndexTerms - Quality of Work Life (QWL), Work Environment, Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Quality of Work Life has different connotations for different people. QWL refers to the favourableness or unfavourableness of a job environment for people. It refers to the quality of relationship between employees and the total working environment. According to Harrison. QWL is the degree of which work in an organization contributes to material and psychological well-being of its members.

Quality of Work Life is a process of joint decision-making, collaboration and building mutual respect between management and employees. It is concerned with increasing labour management cooperatives to solve the problems of improving organizational performance and employee satisfaction. According to the American Society of Training and Development, it is a process of work organization which enables its members at all levels to actively participate in shaping the organisation's environment, methods and outcomes. This value based process is aimed towards meeting the twin goals of enhanced effectiveness of organisation and improved quality of work for employees. Quality of work life (QWL) has become a focus of growing concern in work and humanistic values which

got neglected in the process of excessive concern for economic development and materialism during a major part of the twentieth century. Quality of work life means a set of objective organizational conditions and practices (e.g., promotion from within policies, democratic supervision, employee involvement, safe working conditions etc.). The other way equates QWL with employees' perceptions that they are safe, relatively well satisfied, and able to grow and develop as human beings. This way relates QWL to the degree to which the full range of human needs is met.

Suttle (1977) defines QWL as the degree to which employees are able to satisfy important personal basic needs through their experience in the organization is no longer relevant. Generally jobs in the contemporary work environment offer sufficient rewards, benefits, recognition and control to employees over their actions. Although to some extent contemporary workforce members are compensated appropriately, their personal spending practices, lifestyles, leisure activities, individual value systems, health and so forth can affect their levels of need. It is similar to the argument posted in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs in which each individual has different level of needs because in reality what is important to some employees may not be important to others although they are being treated equally in the same organization. This definition, focusing on personal needs has neglected the fact that the construct of QWL is subjective and continuously evolves due to burgeoning needs of each and every employee.

Hackman and Oldhams (1980) further highlight the constructs of QWL in relation to the interaction between work environment and personal needs. The work environment that is able to fulfill employees' personal needs is considered to provide a positive interaction effect, which will lead to an excellent QWL. They emphasized the personal needs are satisfied when rewards from the organization, such as compensation, promotion, recognition, and development meet their expectations. Parallel to this definition, Lawler (1982) defines QWL in terms of job characteristics and work conditions. He highlights that the core dimension of the entire QWL in the organization is to improve employees' well-being and productivity in the design of the job. Job design that is able to provide higher employee satisfaction is expected to be more productive. However, he accepted the fact that QWL is complex, because it comprises physical and mental well being of employees.

Beukema (1987) defines QWL as the degree to which employees are able to shape their jobs actively, in accordance with their options, interests and needs. It is the degree of power an organization gives to its employees to design their work. This means that the individual employee has the full freedom to design his job functions to meet his personal

needs and interests. This definition emphasizes the individual's choice of interest in carrying out the task. However, this definition differs from the former which stresses on the organization that designs the job to meet employees' interest. It is difficult for the organization to fulfill the personal needs and values of each employee. However if the organization provides the appropriate authority to design work activities for the individual employees, then it is highly possible that the work activities can match their employees' needs that contribute to the organizational performance.

Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger (1997) define QWL as the feelings that employees have towards their jobs, colleagues and organizations that ignite a chain leading to the organizations' growth and profitability. A good feeling towards their job means that the employees feel happy doing work which will lead to a productive work environment. This definition provides an insight that the satisfying work environment is considered to provide better QWL.

Lau, Wong, Chan and Law (2001) operationalised QWL as the favourable working environment that supports and promotes satisfaction by providing employees with rewards, job security and career growth opportunities. Indirectly the definition indicates that an individual who is not satisfied with reward may be satisfied with the job security and to some extent would enjoy the career opportunity provided by the organization for their personal as well as professionals' growth.

The recent definition by Serey (2006) on QWL is quite conclusive and best meet the contemporary work environment. The definition is related to meaningful and satisfying work. It includes (i) an opportunity to exercise one's talents and capacities, to face challenges and situations that require independent initiative and self-direction; (ii) an activity thought to be worthwhile by the individuals involved; (iii) an activity in which one understands the role the individual plays in the achievement of some overall goals; and (iv) a sense of taking pride in what one is doing and in doing it well. This issue of meaningful and satisfying work is often merged with discussion of job satisfaction, and believed to be more favourable to QWL.

QWL is a construct that deals with the well-being of employees (Danna and Griffin, 1999). One might argue at this point that QWL is the same as job satisfaction, however it has been stated that QWL differs from job satisfaction as job satisfaction is constructed as one of the many outcomes of QWL (Greenhaus, Bedian and Mossholder, 1987). It was also stated that QWL does not only affect job satisfaction but also satisfaction in other life domains such as family life, leisure life, social life, financial life and so on. Therefore, there is

evidence to say that the focus of QWL goes beyond job satisfaction by encompassing the effect in non-work life domains, and satisfaction with overall life, personal happiness, and subjective well-being.

Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel and Lee (2001) stated that need satisfaction resulting from workplace experience contributed to job satisfaction and satisfaction in other life domains. Satisfaction in the most important life domains, for example, work, family, home or leisure, contributes directly to satisfaction with overall life. Taking the above into consideration, QWL can be defined as, “employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace”, (Sirgy et al., 2001)

Quality of Working Life is a term that had been used to describe the broader job-related experience an individual has.

Whilst there has, for many years, been much research into job satisfaction (1), and, more recently, an interest has arisen into the broader concepts of stress and subjective well-being (2), the precise nature of the relationship between these concepts has still been little explored. Stress at work is often considered in isolation, wherein it is assessed on the basis that attention to an individual’s stress management skills or the sources of stress will prove to provide a good enough basis for effective intervention. Alternatively, job satisfaction may be assessed, so that action can be taken which will enhance an individual’s performance. Somewhere in all this, there is often an awareness of the greater context, whereupon the home-work context is considered, for example, and other factors, such as an individual’s personal characteristics, and the broader economic or cultural climate, might be seen as relevant. In this context, subjective well-being is seen as drawing upon both work and non-work aspects of life.

However, more complex models of an individual’s experience in the workplace often appear to be set aside in an endeavour to simplify the process of trying to measure “stress” or some similarly apparently discrete entity. It may be, however, that the consideration of the bigger, more complex picture is essential, if targeted, effective action is to be taken to address quality of working life or any of its sub-components in such a way as to produce real benefits, be they for the individual or the organisation.

Quality of work life refers to the level of satisfaction, motivation, involvement and commitment individuals experience with respect to their lives at work. Quality of work life is the degree to which individuals are able to satisfy their important personal needs (e.g. A need for independence) while employed by the firm. Companies interested in enhancing

employees Quality of work life generally try to instill in employees the feeling of security, equity, pride, family, democracy, ownership, autonomy, responsibility and flexibility.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhatnagar and Harvinder (2015) in their study on the impact of quality of work life on job satisfaction has been studied based on the demographic variables of gender, age and work experience of teachers. The method of this study is descriptive research and the survey was conducted among 100 school teachers in Udaipur city. Results show that there is a relationship between QWL and job satisfaction. **DebasisPani (2015)** in their research tried to understand how various independent factors like nature of job, Stress Level, Work Independence, Job Security, Career Prospects, Safety and Health Work Conditions, Opportunity for growth and security and Total life space positively influence the dependent factor i.e., overall QWL experiences of faculties working in various private engineering colleges. The study reveals that Opportunity for Growth and Security factor have larger impact on overall QWL experience, whereas nature of job, job security and life space has moderate impact and the rest factors has less impact on overall QWL experience. Finding of the study further indicates that overall QWL experiences do not vary significantly due to age and gender.

Singh and Singh (2015) observed that the current study would be of strategic importance to educational institutions to identify the critical factors that could enhance teacher's job satisfaction, commitment, and performance level. Hence, higher educational authority should take progressive steps to organize a conducive and congenial work culture and environment at higher educational level in which every teacher works in a well defined manner for their own excellence and for institutional effectiveness also.

Nanjundeswaraswamy (2013) in a study says that a high quality of worklife (QWL) is essential for all organizations to continue to attract and retain employee. There is an impressive contribution by technical Institutions to the development of technology and economy of our nation. The study helps the technical institution employees to know the level of perception towards QWL and to enhance the same by the management. The sample consists of 109 employees of a technical institution. The questionnaire was designed based on nine important components of QWL. The research reveals that male employees are more satisfied than female employees. Chi Square test show that there are no significance relationship between demographic characteristics of employees and QWL.

Research also reveals that Adequacy of Resources are more correlated and Training & Development are less correlated with QWL in teaching staff and in case of non-teaching staff Compensation & Rewards are more correlated and Work Environment are less correlated with QWL. The correlation analysis also reveals that all the dimensions of QWL are positively correlated with QWL of faculties, which indicates that enhancement in the dimensions of QWL can lead to increase the overall QWL of faculties.

Nayem and Tripathy (2012) in a study points out that the evolving patterns of work and personal aspects of life offer greater challenges to the modern workforce. Many organizations and employees seek approaches to better manage the conflict and tensions between work and non-work activities. Among other occupations, teaching is reported to have positive and negative experiences about work-life. This paper examines the relationship of Job satisfaction with Work-Life Balance (WLB), turnover intentions and burnout levels of teachers. The paper provides empirical evidence to prove the relationship and ascertains the predictors of Job satisfaction among the technical teachers. One of the key findings of this paper is that WLB is a major contributor toward Job satisfaction and male teachers feel more burnout compared to female teachers.

Rethinam and Ismail (2008) in a study on quality of work life of IT Professionals on constructs namely health and well being, job security, job satisfaction, competency development and balance of work and non-work life essentially points to the fact that human resource issues are highly significant in making the work enjoyable for the employees as well as in making the organizations globally competitive. The IT professionals facing tremendous job pressures in the form of stringent deadlines and resource limitations need to be addressed by proper human resource strategies to improve the quality of work life. It is necessary to humanize the work place Alternatives like career breaks, flexible working arrangements and friendly employment policies are suggested to reduce spillover and maintain work life balance.

Dolan et al., (2008) in a study focused on examining the effect of supervisory support, intrinsic and extrinsic job demands, as well as motivation on overall quality of working life and negative health consequences by using the Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) of Karasek and colleagues (1990) and recommend concrete actions to reduce stress, reduce negative health outcomes and enhance the quality of work lives of the people in the sector.

Joshi (2007) described Quality of work life as ‘democratization of the work place’. The Quality of work life is a broad expression covering a vast variety of program techniques,

theories and management styles through which organizations and jobs are designed so as to grant employees more autonomy, responsibility and authority than is usually done. The general objective is to arrange organization's management procedures and jobs for maximum utilization of individual talents and skills in order to create more challenging and satisfying work and improve organization effectiveness. Corporate excellence has become the current issue and has been keenly watched by many organizations.

Ghai (2007) made an attempt to study the Quality of work life in JK Tyre. In general the employees with good QWL tend to prove themselves as an asset for the organization by developing their knowledge and skills, creating the environment of mutual co-operation and collaboration, becoming a self-disciplined and motivated individual. The factors of the QWL depict the commendable efforts made by the management of the organization.

Varma (2007) in *The Hindu* dated June 24th has quoted the findings of a 4-month long research project, conducted in 9 Indian cities with 1140 respondents. The researchers (AVTAR Career Creators-Flexi-Careers Viewport-2007) noted that many modern day women employees experienced a sense of guilt at leaving a child to pursue their career. This was a strong negative motivator for quitting a full-time job. For an increasing number of women "flexible work timings" offer the perfect via-media of achieve better "Work Life Balance". Over 73% of the respondents stated that managing a career and a home was the primary reason for their stress and poor health. They found it almost impossible to focus on personal wellness or find time for leisure while juggling a demanding career and home.

Cohen, Kinnevy and Dichter (2007), in their study, compare the quality of work life of child protective investigators in two very different organizational settings-a public child welfare agency and a law enforcement agency. Legislation passed in Florida in 1988, transferred responsibility for investigations from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to the Sheriff's Offices (SO) in four counties. The survey was conducted of investigators in the four experimental counties and in four comparison counties where DCF was still conducting investigations. The finding indicates that while both groups had similar demographic characteristics and perceptions of their role, the investigators who worked for the SO experienced a higher quality of work life than those who worked for the DCF.

Dutta (2006) in *India Today (Women's Special Issue)* dated April 24th states that many women employees are still seeking that elusive balance between work and life. She further

states that in a survey covering 4000 women across 5 metros in India, over 80% of the respondents reported that they felt guilty for not spending enough time with their families.

Bhola (2006) in the article highlights that the QWL is one of the interesting approaches to motivation. It also works as a means of increasing productivity and reducing inflation and as a way of obtaining industrial democracy and minimizing labour disputes. The basic purpose of the QWL is to develop jobs and working conditions that are excellent for people as well as for the economic health of organization.

Lees and Kearns (2005) outline the systematic approach used at Bluewater Health in Sarnia, Ontario, to recognize the importance of job quality in work life and progresses, for a diagnosis to the implementation of improvements, with positive outcomes.

Rosser (2005) in an investigation on change in faculty members' perceptions of their work life and satisfaction over time using two group structural equation modeling indicates that the perceptions of faculty members changed significantly from 1993-1999. Administrative support dimension was perceived as less supportive of their overall work life in comparison to 1993 subset. Technical support and professional development too contributes to the quality of faculty members' work life in both subsets. The degree of support institutions offer in the form of integrating technology with all aspects of work of faculty members governs quality of work life in both subsets. The perception of faculty members' work life directs response as to whether they are satisfied (or dissatisfied).

Parshotam (2005) in a study on young people changing jobs has focused on the reasons for a career change option comparing the work life and work environments of technical call centre employees. Quality of work life has a significant impact on employee behavior, job satisfaction, intention to quit and turnover. The decision of mechanic to work as a technical advisor may be seen as a career progress depending on beliefs and values of the person and views in success opportunity growth was one reason for turnover of employers. The study also supported the fact that we are all governed by survival needs, security needs, pay, social needs and need for self-esteem and in order to support one or all of the needs, persons go in for job change. The spillover approach to quality of work life was also supported by the study indicating satisfaction in one area of life may influence satisfaction in another. Thus the study of job transition is essential in order to design and undertake effective strategies to reduce stress and improve the quality of work life.

Rosser (2004) in a study has examined the relationship between the dimensions of faculty work life, satisfaction and intentions to leave. The dimensions of work life namely

professional development, administrative support, committee and service work and technical support, were studied. The satisfaction issues namely advising and course load, benefit and security were gauged separately. Also the overall satisfaction level was checked on a scale of 1-4 ranging from highly satisfactory to highly dissatisfactory. Structural Equation Model tried to investigate the perceptions of faculty members' work life and satisfaction and their intention to leave. The study concludes that the perceptions of faculty members regarding their work life have a direct impact on the satisfaction. The quality of work life though does not have a direct impact on the faculty members' intention to leave but indirectly influences through satisfaction.

Bruning (2004) in his article has discussed the transformation in America's labour workforce and around 53.2 per cent are those where both husband and wife are working. These workers face problems in balancing work responsibilities with home commitment. The involvement of dual career couples have forced organizations to take a role in developing quality of work-life programs. The purpose behind introducing such programs is the growing realization that quality of work life effect absenteeism employer turnover, morale and job satisfaction aspects. Business interested in enhancing employee commitment need to redesign their strategies focusing on quality of work life since there are ample evidence in support of quality of work life increasing productivity, loyalty and morale.

Wall, Cordery and Clegg, (2002) in a study pointed out that career development opportunity will provide essential training that will help the individual employees to equip with the new skills to spearhead their career. Most contemporary organizations do not limit themselves to just training an employee for a job, but they go beyond to furnish them with a support system that encourages workplace learning.

Johnsrud (2002) in study on quality of work life admits the fact that quality of work life has deteriorated in college and university campuses. The difference in quality of work life, its impacts on attitudes and those which explain behavioural outcomes have been explored in this study. The perceptions of various groups differ with respect to work life aspects. The new faculty members felt isolated and burdened with workloads. A comparison of attitudes display similarity between new faculty members and senior colleagues' satisfaction is another domain influenced by salary, work hours, support of colleagues, positive relationships with management and healthy faculty – student interactions. The quality of work-life perceptions also influence the behaviour of the employees which can be analyzed by productivity or intention to leave. A gender based approach found that

women consider wage differential as the most important variable, effecting their intention to remain in academic or leave. Frustration due to time constraints and lack of a sense of community at the institution were the highly significant variables having an impact on faculty members' intention to leave. The administrative staff too displayed variations in perceptions regarding quality of work life with negative orientation move of the union staff than non-union staff. There is a need to identify issues related to work life and respond to the concerns appropriately. It is notable that addressing all the concerns of work life do not involve cost. The performance quality is directly governed by the quality of work life.

Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel and Lee (2001) in a research study have discussed the two theoretical perspectives for measure of quality of work life namely, needs satisfaction and spillover approaches. The need satisfaction approach believes that people have basic needs which they fulfill through work, whereas the spillover approach believes that satisfaction in one area of life may influence satisfaction in another, Quality of work life construct has been considered to be an interplay of seven needs namely health and safety needs, economic and family needs, social needs, esteem needs, actualization needs, knowledge needs and aesthetics needs. The QWL measure discussed is based on common observation that the organization provides financial and non-financial resources to employees and these resources serve to satisfy employees' many needs. The satisfaction of needs results in satisfaction with the job as well as other domains thereby resulting in satisfaction with life.

Martinsons and Cheung (2001) reported that IT professional's insufficient compensation and poor promotion prospects were key sources of dissatisfaction. For example, offering compensation and rewards significantly lower compared to the competitors for the same type of work can trigger employees' dissatisfaction that will create intention among them to leave the organization. Therefore, it is important to know whether the employees are satisfied. It is also widely expressed that job satisfaction appears to stem from the interaction between the employee, the job itself and the organizational context within which the job is carried out.

Narongrit and Thongsri (2001) in a research deals with the quality of work life and organizational commitment. The objectives of this research were to study the level of the asset management organization, Thaitoyo Denso Company Limited's staffs' quality of work life and organizational commitment, to compare the organizational commitment according to personal factors, and also to analyse the factors affecting organizational commitment. The population consisted of all the two hundred employees in Thaitoyo

Denso Company Limited. Data was collected by using questionnaires and analysed by using SPSS/FW computer program. The statistics used for analyzing the data were percentage, mean, standard deviation test at the 0.05 percentage level of significance, and Pearson product moment correlation coefficients at the 0.01 percentage level of significance. It was found that the levels of the staffs' quality of work life were moderate. Personal characteristics like sex, age, status, education, position, staff salary, and line function caused no difference. All factors of quality of work life have positive correlation with organizational commitment.

Kauppineu, Mannila and Kandolin (1989) in their study on work life conditions of Finnish labour market where sex segregation is predominant in work force tried to investigate the qualitative aspects of women in work and if they had advantage over men or not. The results confirmed that women do profit while performing the same sort of work as men. The high status token women had found salaries higher, work autonomous, challenging, less rigidly controlled than for women who performed work done by men. It was suggested that organizational measures should be applied to prevent sexual harassment resulting in dissatisfaction. The comparison of successful men and women display disillusionment of women about their non-traditional work roles. The difference in work opportunities, positions and salaries between men and women have been found to be significant as time elapse in job occurs.

Lowther, Stark and Chapman (1984) in their study on perceptions of work related conditions among teachers and persons in other occupations were analysed on the criteria of commitment and expectation, job mobility and life satisfaction, employment attitudes and professional accomplishments. The study concluded that teachers find themselves having less horizontal occupational mobility than non-teachers. Lack of equivalent positions outside the organizations, low control over the assignment, policies and practices, a non growing organization and lack of opportunities in modifying current situations leads to lock in phenomenon. The opportunity for advancement or lack of it also effects employee's motivation. The study further suggests that due recognition of work done and promotions based on it, increased job responsibility and various forms of symbolic advancement are more effective in changing the attitude of teachers' towards their work life rather than sole monetary incentives.

Maccoby (1984) in a study identifies the job satisfaction of employees and supervisors of Bell System over a five-year period. He found that the employees and supervisors were

satisfied with their pay and benefits and were also motivated to work productively, but they were dissatisfied with the technology in use and felt too much supervisory control. They believed they were mismanaged, pushed around, not listened to, and that the spirit of service was being eroded by the drive to increase profit.

Toropanen, Kandolin and Mutanen (1983) in a study on job dissatisfaction and work related exhaustion in male and female work have analysed the job strain model and attempted to see the compound effect of self determination and time pressure demands on job dissatisfaction and work related emotional strain. The study concluded that job dissatisfaction and work related exhaustion increased as a result of the joint effects of lack of self determination and time pressure.

Cooke, Kornbluh and Abramis (1982) in a study on Quality of Work Life of Michigan teachers in comparison to a National sample of workers found them to be less satisfied than reported by either the national sample or college educated workers. The female teachers of Michigan found their job to be challenging and also reported higher general satisfaction with life in comparison to the national sample of teachers and sub sample of college educated workers. The study concludes that dissatisfaction of the teachers could be reduced by designing programs to improve the organization of their schools and quality of their work environment.

Nieva, Perkins and Lawler (1980) in a study on effectiveness of a collaborative selection procedure within the context of a Quality of Working Life Programme where the outcomes of the interviewers' decisions were examined found that interpersonal attraction plays an important role in selection. Relatedness needs and sex were the two factors influencing diction. A general tendency of the supervisors was to select those candidates whose characteristics were similar to their own. The under selection of females further points to the fact that the supervisors found male candidates to be better suited for the task.

The study thus holds that participative process of selection suffers from lack of technical expertise of the interviewers but the process had no relationship or impact on effective selection decision and quality of work life improvement.

CONCLUSION

Quality of Work Life concept though researched since a long time has undergone changes in view of changing dynamics of socio technical system in the work context, the economic growth and higher levels of educational standards in India.

The broadly identified dimensions of QWL from various studies include supportive management, favourable work environment, personal growth and autonomy, the nature of the job, stimulating opportunities and co-workers.

The work life of a person has an overbearing influence on his family and social life as also his emotional state. Imbalance in quality of work life may result in employees being less productive, absent more often or for longer duration, disguise the real reason for absence, feel more stressed and have low morale.

The employees are more likely to seek exit from workplace if the work life balance issues are unsupportive. The benefits of introducing work life policies include reduction in stress better time management and better decisions. The motivation and focus of the employees improve due to the realization that organization understands and supports them with family responsibilities. The increased job security resulting thereof definitely improves work life and productivity. The overall job satisfaction can be achieved hitherto.

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