

Quality of Work Life: The Need and Relevance to Organisations

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ABSTRACT

Quality of work life is important and significant to all organisations. The impact of QWL in different phases of work and its contribution to positively enhancing the efficiency and productivity of organisations have made not to overlook its importance. Any mode and method of doing the work by an employee at the work place becomes his work life. organisations should ensure that employees have better work life, while they are at the work place. Employees are more sensitive than any other resource and therefore they should not feel frustrated or their feelings hurt by the rules and policies of the organisations. The work life of the employees designed by the organisations is directed towards satisfaction of its broader goals. The human resources in an organisations play a significant role in making an optimum utilisation of other resources. The strength of an organisation is influenced by the work behaviour of its human resources. This can be positively achieved by controlling the utilisation of other resources, so as to add maximum value to the organisation. This article tries to review the meaning of QWL various literature reviews, and definitions of QWL.

Keywords: Quality of Work Life, Organisations, Human Resource

Introduction

The concept of work life revolves around an individual and human resource as his performance is impacted by it. A human resource shall not only give his performance at work in the organisation to which he is affiliated but shall also give enough space for his family life. This also will involve the holistic life of organisations in looking after the welfare of their immediate employees. Organisations tend to have their own work culture and after many years of consistent working evolves into a philosophy, which is directed towards its entire structure and activity. Giving more attention to the happiness and welfare of the employees rather than merely focussing on his work aspect, is the underlying principle and essence of QWL. Hence the concept of QWL is oriented towards human resources in the organisation as they possess the qualities of trust, commitment, dedication and responsibility and further they shall make valuable contribution to the betterment of the organisation. It therefore implies a comprehensive structure that highlights an individual job related welfare and the manner in which he attempts to find his job experiences rewarding, pleasurable and encouraging. Quality of work life signifies a concern to know and assess people behaviour and experience at work, relationships with other people's, work settings and their effectiveness on the job. Quality of work life has different meanings to different people. Some consider it industrial democracy with increased employee participation in the decision

making process, others relate it to psychological aspects of work to improve productivity.

Meaning and definitions of QWL

The term Quality of Work Life is defined by various people in different ways. Some definitions have also undergone changes with the passage of time. The origin of this concept dates back 1970 and since then has become significant in all organisations. The authors have focused on different aspects of human resource as well as work while defining quality of work life.

Quality of work life is the quality of the content of relationship between human beings and their work (Beinum, 1974).

Quality of work life means more than job security, good working conditions, adequate and fair compensation, more even than an equal employee opportunity. (Glaser, 1976)

Quality of work life is a process by which an organisation attempts to unlock the creative potential of its people by involving them in decisions affecting their work lives. (Greenberg and Glaser, 1980)

Quality of work life is generic phrase that is multi-faceted and comprehensive in nature. It is a measure of quality of human experience which is a matter of the individual- organisation interface. (Guest, 1979)

Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger (1997) define QWL as feelings that employees have towards their jobs, colleagues and organizations that ignite a chain leading to the organizations' growth and profitability.

Quality of work life (QWL) is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution and they should be treated with dignity and respect (Straw & Heckscher 1984)

Quality of work life is the degree to which works are able to satisfy important personal basic needs though their experience in the organisation is no longer relevant. (Suttle, 1977)

Vince Lombardi gives a related definition which places high emphasis on people organisation team work & the resultant performance. The achievement of an organisation is the result of the combined effort of each individual.

Quality of work life is a process by which an organisation responds to employee's needs for developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decision that design their lives at work (Walton, R.E. 1973).

Quality of work life requires employee's commitment to the organisation and an environment in which this commitment can flourish. (Walton, 1975)

QWL is concerned with relationship between individuals and features of their physical, social and economic work environment. They also reflect those on-and-off that society considers to be important (Wood, Rasmussen and Lawler, 1975).

The definitions by various authorities have identified certain dimensions or key areas of quality of work life as follows:

1. Human Resource is the most important and prominent resource of any organisation and should be valued as such
2. Human resource can prosper, flourish and optimise their work if they are given better and conducive work environment in organisation.
3. Employees need to be given freedom and autonomy in the performance of their jobs for better results.
4. Quality of work life will greatly reduce tensions, stress at work, and will improve the performance.
5. Human Resources should participate in decision making process of the organisations. They shall be more loyal, committed, trustworthy and valuable to organisations.

Quality of work life helps in establishing a balance between work life and family life. Thus it makes employees more effective.

Models of Quality of Work Life

In modern times not only the use and consumption of end product is important for end customers, but the delivery of services by the service oriented organisations is of prime significance and value. As these organisations become more and more competitive the employees of such organisations become its valuable assets

The SERVQUAL Model

This model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry emphasis service quality of organisations to customers. It is sometimes referred to as GAP model as it tries to compare and analyse the gaps between service quality needs of customer and the service quality performance of organisation. The model identifies five core components.

1. Tangibles – Assets, equipment and other physical facilities
2. Reliability – trust, dependability to perform service.
3. Responsiveness – sensitive to help customers to meet their need and requirements. Assurance – instilling confidence and hope.
4. Empathy – caring and a sense of belongingness for others.

WRKLFQUAL Model

This model is developed by Kandaswamy and Sreekumar. It studies the relationship between the expectation and need of quality of work life from the standpoint of employees for this to happen different dimensions of QWL are considered. The organisation considers its responsibility to ensure committed and dedicated employees with high quality of work life. The organisation can work with this model by identifying the dimensions and the same could be projected on a likert scale for respondent employees. The result and outcome of the perception become valuable in improving QWL of the organisation.

Review of Literature

Avani Sharma, Roopam Kothari (2014) conducted a study to find out the quality of work life of employees in public and private sector Banks of Rajasthan region. The study is based on Walton's eight QWL parameters. The result of the study showed that public sector bank employees are dissatisfied with compensation, but private sector bank employees get compensation on the basis of their performance. It is also found that there are more career opportunities for the employees of private sector bank to grow as compared to public sector banks.

Barkha Gupta, Anukool, Manish Hyde (2013) have done a study titled – Demographic study on quality of work life in Nationalised Banks. It shows that employees working in banking sector feel that their jobs are secure. It is also concluded that there is no significant relation between experience, age in case of employees of nationalised banks and QWL.

Chan and Einstein (1990) observed that QWL is conceived as a set of methods such as autonomous work groups, job enrichment and high involvement aimed at scaling up the satisfaction and productivity of workers.

Daljeet Kaur (2010) conducted a study to find out quality of work life of employees in branches of ICICI Bank in Chandigarh to show their satisfaction level. It was revealed that they were happy with working conditions of the bank. The employees felt that Bank should start its own transport facility.

Divya Negi and Seema Singh (2012) have done a study titled work life balance for banking employees: A comparative study. This is related to professional life of employees of banking sector in Dehradun district. The study concludes that it is primary desire of professionals of public and private sector banks to significantly consider the personal and family interest, which if given due time, shall positively impact their working in the organisation.

Hackman and Oldham (1976) pointed out in their study that Psychological growth needs are important determinant of quality of work life. They identified several needs like skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback which were important. They observed that proper identification and fulfilment of these needs shall result into high quality of work life.

Hoque M. Ekramul, Rahaman and Alinoor (1999) conducted a study to assess and compare quality of work life of bank workers of public and private sector banks in Bangladesh and to study whether there

is any significant relationship between job behaviour and demographic variable of the employees. The result showed that employees of private sector bank have significantly higher QWL than their counter parts in public sector.

Jacobson et al (2014) tried to study the relationship between various levels of employees and groups and some dimensions of working life viz work satisfaction, emotional fatigue and absence on account of sickness. The outcome of the study indicated a strong influence between levels of employees and work satisfaction, while on the remaining two dimensions it was moderate and weak.

Karrir (1999) studied quality of work life of managers of public, private and cooperative sector and concluded that top level managers lead further quality of work life. **Mirvis and Lawler (1984)** found in their study that quality of work life was related to satisfaction with wages, hours and working conditions. They described that essentials of good QWL depended on safe work environment, equitable wages, equal employment opportunities, and opportunities for advancement.

Namarata and Prabhakar (2012) made a study of various factors influencing QWL in banking sector. They conclude that factors of wages, better work environment, opportunities for personal growth, good leadership and work life balance impacted QWL.

Saklani D. R. (2004) has made a study of different factors and their impact on QWL of employees in organisation. The respondents were from managerial and non-managerial categories in organisation in Delhi. The results of the study indicated that there is improvement in work environment with elements of hygiene, comfort at work place. However other dimensions of reward, penalty system and welfare measures were found to have low impact on QWL of employees.

Shivi Srivastava has done a study to find out the relationship between women participation and their quality of work life in public sector banks. The study found that relationship between women employee and quality of work life is found to be positive. It was also found that higher participation of women employees in the policies of the organisation enhances their QWL.

Ten tips to improve Quality of work life (by Judy Worrell and Brian Ward) Having a personal vision

This is important as it brings clarity in one's thinking and designed action plans.

Test one's own personal vision

Vision should be supportive with the goals of the organisation. Mission vision and values of the organisation should be clear and well defined

Learn and keep on learning

Relentless learning by training sessions, courses, books, lectures, discourses should form the part and habit of employees.

Buddy-Up

Distribution and sharing of work among team members. This makes the work more easier to perform and less stressful.

Share your successes

This helps in learning more from the success of others.

Get it off your chest

Discuss and talk things with your friends' team members when things trouble you don't suppress them

Find joy in being of services to others

Think and find out how the person you are serving is better off with your work

Take time for breaks

Due attention to the need to refresh body, mind and soul.

Try out new ideas

New innovative ideas, and making use of the same will give added happiness and satisfaction.

Have fun at work

Performance should be a fun. This will eliminate stressful situations and work optimization will naturally happen.

Conclusion

Quality of work life is an important component of human resource management in modern times. Due to various complexities it has further grown in importance. Organisations all over have given utmost significance value to the need for imbibing a culture of improved quality of work life and work life balance. In India many top organisations are not only embracing QWL, but also making efforts to improve it day by day. This is true particularly of service organisations. They make arrangements in-house or through external agencies in conducting programmes for human resources. Improved performance can positively impact organisations in terms of cost reduction, better innovative ideas, minimisation of stressful situations and better interpersonal relations among team members.

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