A Study on Quality of Work Life – Key Elements & Its Implications

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Abstract- Quality of work life is multi-dimensional concept that encompasses various factors influencing the wellbeing and satisfaction of employees in the workplace. It goes beyond the traditional focus of monetary compensation and concentrate more on the non-monetary aspects such as job security, career development, supportive work environment and work life balance. This research paper aims to investigate the factors affecting Quality of Work Life and it also helps to analyse and implement suitable strategies adopted to enhance the quality of work life among workers. Through a comprehensive literature review, this paper examined various aspects of quality of work life such as the physical work environment, work life balance, job security, career advancement and interpersonal relationships at work. This paper provides insights for organizations to develop effective strategies for improving quality of work life and enhancing the overall well being of employees as it not only benefits individual employees but also leads to a more productive and successful organization. By creating a harmonious and supportive work environment organizations can attract and retain top talent, foster employee loyalty, commitment and ultimately achieve sustainable growth and success.

Keywords- Quality of Work Life (QWL), Employee Satisfaction, Work Life Balance, Work Environment, Job Security

Introduction of Quality of Work Life (QWL)

Quality of Work Life (QWL) is a term used to describe how happy and contented employees are with their overall working conditions. Employees who are satisfied with their work are said to have high quality of work life while those who are dissatisfied with their work are said to have low quality of work life. It includes a range of elements that have an impact on employee’s ability to balance work and life, their level of job satisfaction, and their general well-being at work. The idea of quality of work life (QWL) is multifaceted and considers both the physical and emotional components of work as well as the interactions between work and personal life.

The term Quality of Work Life originated in the early 1970’s in USA and was first introduced by Louis Davis at the International Labors Relation Conference in New York in 1972. It aimed to share knowledge and how to create the conditions for a humane working life. It was generally associated with improving the working conditions such as reducing physical hazards, improving safety and addressing issues like job security and fair compensation.

The concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) has evolved over time to reflect changing workforce dynamics, societal expectations, technological advancements, and organizational priorities. Today, QWL encompasses a holistic approach that includes considerations such as work-life balance, employee engagement, well-being, technology integration, and inclusion and diversity. Organizations that prioritize QWL are more likely to attract and retain top talent, enhance employee satisfaction, and achieve higher levels of organizational performance.

Objectives of the Research
1. To analyse the concept of quality of work life
2. To examine suitable strategies to improve the quality of work life

Research Methodology
This paper analysis various aspects related to quality of work life and its implications. It uses secondary data from journals, articles and internet resources

Defining Quality of Work Life
Due to cultural differences and philosophical outlook, researchers have modified and measured Quality of Work Life differently. Following are few definitions of Quality of Work Life:

**According to Richard E. Walton,** “QWL is a process by which an organization responds to the needs of its employees for developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their lives at work.”

**According to Keith Davis and John W. Newstrom,** "QWL is a term that describes a favorable work environment that fosters an employee's desire to remain in an organization for the longest possible time."

**According to Louis E. Davis,** "QWL refers to the extent to which members of an organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experiences in the organization."

**According to D.N. Venkatraman,** "QWL represents the sum total of values, both material and non-material, that an organization provides its employees in exchange for their work."

**According to Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, and Lee,** "QWL is a comprehensive construct that includes various facets of employees' well-being, including their job satisfaction, work-life balance, physical and psychological health, safety at work, and opportunities for personal and professional growth."

**According to Beinum,** “QWL is defined in terms of relation between man and his task.”

**According to Boisvert,** “QWL is defined as a set of valuable consequences of work life affecting individuals, organization and society”.

**According to Carlson,** “QWL is considered to be a goal (organization commitment to work improvement), a process (involvement of people within the organization for the realization of these goals through individual and organizational development methods in the process), and a philosophy (acknowledging the individuals dignity within the organization).

These definitions highlight the multidimensional nature of QWL, encompassing various aspects of employees' well-being, job satisfaction, work environment, and opportunities for growth and participation in decision-making. QWL is seen as a continuous process that requires organizations to create a positive and supportive work environment that meets the diverse needs of employees, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction, employee engagement, and retention.

**Factors of Quality of Work Life**

Although the concept of QWL is semi-centennial but the curiosity in the construct has not diminished completely. The changing business environment has raised its significance to the organization and its human resources. Predictors of QWL have been uncovered by different researchers but it has not been fully explored. The factors of QWL are varied and difficult to conceptualize, hence presenting a unique challenge to understand the dimensions of QWL.

Three most predominant works in the area of QWL is of (i) Walton (1975), (ii) Taylor (1978) and (iii) Levine et al (1984).

**Walton (1975)** has identified 8 factors contributing to QWL. These include adequate and fair compensation, (ii) safe and healthy working, (iii) Opportunity for growth, (iv) opportunity to develop human capacities, (v) Social integration, (vi) constitutionalism, (vii) Social relevance (viii) Work and total life space.

**Taylor (1978)** empirically examined the dimensions underlying QWL for the first time by employing the factor analysis method. The factors were common to Walton’s model except that two more dimensions including employer and society, as recommended by Seashore (1975), were identified separately in the model.

**Levine et al (1984)** measured QWL from the perspective of White-collar employees in the insurance company. He identified seven significant predictors namely: (a) the degree to which superiors treat employees with respect and have confidence in their abilities, (b) variety in daily work routine, (c) challenge of work, (d) present work leads to future opportunities, (e) self-esteem, (f) extent to which life outside of work affects life at work, and (g) the extent to which work contributes to society.

**Ghosh (1992)** carried out research on QWL at micro-level in India. The dimensions covered all the work related domains including work environment, job enrichment, participation, compensation, benefits and welfare measures.
Hackman & Oldham (1976) described psychological growth needs to the consideration of quality of work life. They suggested that such needs have to be addressed if employees have to experience high quality of work life. The factors were (i) skill variety (ii) task identity (iii) task significance (iv) autonomy (v) feedback.

Waar et al (1979) considered a range of factors (i) work involvement, (ii) intrinsic job motivation, (iii) higher order need strength, (iv) perceived intrinsic job characteristics, (v) job satisfaction, (vi) life satisfaction, (vii) happiness, (viii) self rated anxiety.

Sirgy et al (2001) conducted a need based measure of QWL conceptualizing constructs in terms of employee’s satisfaction with two sets of needs: Lower-order need constituting (i) health/safety needs, (ii) economic/family needs and higher-order needs constituting (i) social needs, (ii) esteem needs, (iii) self-actualization needs (iv) knowledge needs, and (v) aesthetic needs.

Martel and Dupuis (2006) concluded that measurement of QWL must involve organizational, human and social aspects of job.

Mirvis & Lawler (1984) described that quality of work life was associated with basic elements of satisfaction with wages, hours and working condition. These factors include (i) safe work environment, (ii) equitable wages, (iii) equal employment opportunities, (iv) opportunities for advancement, (v) opportunities to learn and grow, (vi) protection of individual rights.

Yeo & Li (2011) identified eight factors that influence QWL and have implications for career advancement and HRM. These include (i) organization culture, (ii) leadership, (iii) communication, (iv) teamwork, (v) job identity, (vi) performance, (vii) reward, and, (viii) training and development with implications for career development and human resource management.

Baba and Jamal (1991) indicated eight factors of QWL these include (i) job satisfaction, (ii) job involvement, (iii) work role ambiguity, (iv) work role conflict, (v) work role overload, (vi) organizational commitment, (vii) turnover intentions.

Yadav & Naim (2017) examined QWL of employees in Indian power sector. He identified seven dimensions of QWL namely supervisory support, freedom from stress, pay and benefits, Job satisfaction, collegial relationship, involvement and responsibility at work communication and job security.

Who Needs Quality of Work Life?
Work has always been a central part of human life, with many individuals spending a significant portion of their time and energy on their jobs. In today’s world, where technology related stress and need to juggle multiple roles is common, the concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) is not a frivolous luxury, but a necessary consideration. Every individual working in an organization would need a healthy work environment with less stress and lower level of burnout.

For Employees: Quality of work life is essential for employees because it directly affects their overall satisfaction and well-being in the workplace. When employees have a good quality of work life, they experience higher job satisfaction, better work-life balance, improved physical and mental health, and increased motivation. Quality work helps to improve employee’s productivity, growth and economic development. This would result in positive feeling towards oneself i.e. positive self esteem which in return would boost the positivity towards the job and the organization as well. It helps them feel valued and respected, enhances their engagement and productivity, and contributes to their personal and professional growth.

For Employers: Employers also benefit from promoting a good quality of work life. When employees are satisfied and have a positive work experience, they tend to be more productive, motivated, and committed to their work. This leads to higher job performance, increased innovation and creativity, and improved organizational performance. Moreover, organizations that prioritize quality of work life can attract and retain talented employees, reduce turnover costs, and build a positive employer brand.

Quality of Work Life acknowledges that work is not just about earning a living, but also about self realization, enjoyment and satisfaction. Further it results in improvised products and services, reliability, durability and better performance. These factors would help in differentiating the business from its competitors and increases the overall revenue of the organization. With increasing flexibility in work arrangements, such as remote work and freelance opportunities, QWL has become even more relevant. It is important to recognize that work can play a significant role in keeping individuals...
engaged and focused, and can provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment. QWL initiatives, such as establishing appropriate working hours, ensuring fair salaries and considering the needs of different groups, such as young workers, pregnant women and parents raising special children can also contribute to a healthier and more fulfilling work environment. Ultimately, prioritizing QWL can lead to increased productivity, job satisfaction and overall well-being for individuals in the modern workplace.

Objectives of Quality of Work Life

- QWL aims to improve the overall well-being and satisfaction of employees in the workplace. The prime objectives of QWL include creating a work environment that is safe, healthy, and supportive, where employees feel respected and valued. This includes promoting a positive work culture that encourages teamwork, communication, and personal and professional growth opportunities.
- It ensures that employees are treated fairly and equitably in all aspects of their work, including compensation, benefits, and promotions. This helps to create a sense of trust and loyalty among employees towards the organization.
- It also aims to promote employee participation and involvement in decision-making processes that affect their work and the organization as a whole. This creates a sense of ownership and responsibility among employees, leading to increased motivation and job satisfaction.
- QWL aims to promote work-life balance and support employees in managing their personal and professional responsibilities. This helps to reduce stress and burnout among employees, leading to improved mental and physical health.
- QWL promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, creating a culture that values and respects differences among employees. This helps to foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity, leading to improved employee engagement and organizational effectiveness.

Importance of Quality of Work Life

Quality of Work Life (QWL) refers to the overall quality of the work environment, job satisfaction, and well-being of employees in an organization. A good quality work life is crucial for both employees and organizations. It can lead to increased job satisfaction, higher motivation levels, improved health and well-being, reduced turnover rates, and a positive organizational reputation.

The importance of QWL can be highlighted in the following ways:

- Increased employee satisfaction and motivation: A good quality work life can increase job satisfaction, leading to higher motivation levels among employees. This, in turn, can increase productivity and efficiency.
- Lower employee turnover: An organization that focuses on providing a good quality work life can retain its employees for longer periods of time. This reduces the costs associated with recruiting and training new employees.
- Improved health and well-being: A work environment that promotes a good quality work life can improve the physical and mental health of employees. This can lead to reduced absenteeism, increased job satisfaction, and better overall performance.
- Enhanced organizational reputation: A good quality work life can help to build a positive reputation for the organization. This can attract high-quality talent and customers who prefer to work with companies that value their employees.
- Increased innovation and creativity: Employees who have a good quality work life are more likely to be creative and innovative, as they feel valued and empowered. This can lead to new ideas and improvements in processes and products.

Problems of implementing Quality of Work life programmes

Implementing a quality of work life (QWL) program can be challenging, and there are several problems that organizations may encounter during the implementation process. Some of these problems include:

- Resistance to change: Employees may resist changes to their work environment or work processes, especially if they perceive the changes as threatening their job security or working conditions.
- Lack of management support: Without management support, QWL programs are unlikely to succeed. Managers must be committed to the program and actively promote it to employees.
- Limited resources: QWL programs often require significant resources, such as time, money, and personnel. Organizations may struggle to allocate sufficient resources to the program, which can hinder its success.
- Difficulty in measuring results: Measuring the effectiveness of QWL programs can be challenging, as the benefits are often intangible and difficult to quantify.
• Limited employee participation: QWL programs require active participation from employees to be successful. However, some employees may not be interested or willing to participate in the program.
• Inadequate training: Organizations must provide sufficient training to employees and managers to ensure they understand the purpose and benefits of the QWL program and how to implement it effectively.
• Limited sustainability: QWL programs may lose momentum over time if they are not properly maintained or if the benefits are not sustained. Organizations must continually evaluate the program and make adjustments as needed to ensure its long-term success.

To overcome these challenges, organizations must carefully plan and execute their QWL program, involve employees and management in the process, allocate sufficient resources, measure results, provide adequate training, and sustain the program over time.

**Strategies to improve Quality of Work life**

QWL stands for "Quality of Work Life" and refers to the overall quality of an employee's work experience. Implementing QWL strategies can help organizations create a more positive and engaging work environment, leading to increased job satisfaction, productivity, and employee retention.

Here are some strategies that can be implemented to improve QWL:

- **Promote work-life balance**: Encourage employees to maintain a balance between their personal and professional lives by offering flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting, flexible work hours, or compressed workweeks.
- **Offer training and development opportunities**: Provide employees with training and development opportunities that align with their career goals and aspirations. This can help increase job satisfaction and retention.
- **Foster a positive work culture**: Create a positive work culture by promoting open communication, collaboration, and teamwork. Encourage employees to provide feedback and suggestions for improving work processes and procedures.
- **Provide competitive compensation and benefits**: Offer competitive compensation packages and benefits, such as healthcare, retirement plans, and paid time off, to attract and retain top talent.
- **Recognize and reward employees**: Acknowledge employees' contributions and achievements through regular recognition and rewards programs. This can help increase motivation and job satisfaction.
- **Provide a safe and healthy work environment**: Ensure that the workplace is safe and healthy by providing proper equipment and training, implementing safety protocols, and promoting healthy habits.
- **Encourage employee involvement**: Involve employees in decision-making processes and encourage them to participate in company initiatives and events. This can help increase engagement and job satisfaction.

**Conclusion**

Quality of work life is an important aspect of workplace well-being, that emphasizes the overall satisfaction and well-being of employees. It takes into account various factors such as the physical work environment, work-life balance, job security, opportunities for career advancement, and interpersonal relationships at work. Studies have shown that an organization that prioritizes quality of work life leads to a more productive and motivated workforce, which in turn leads to increased job satisfaction and better retention rates.

However, achieving quality of work life requires a holistic approach that involves not just the employer but also the employees themselves. Employers need to create a conducive work environment, offer fair compensation and benefits, and promote work-life balance, while employees need to take ownership of their own well-being and actively participate in creating a positive work culture. On the other hand, quality of work life is a critical aspect of workplace well-being, and organizations that prioritize it can reap numerous benefits in terms of employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention.

**REFERENCES:**

