Quality of working life in educational organisations

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ABSTRACT

The study undertaken the explored the factors of Quality of *working-life experiences in organizations*. The factor analysis of the component 'quality of working-life experiences' led to the extraction of the factors from various organizations. The most points were "Career Growth", "Work Stress" and "Job Satisfaction". The results indicate that these factors have substantial roles to play in satiating the needs of the employees and how at middle managerial level different aspects are valued and employed for developing a unique and inimitable quality of working life within their socio-technical systems for eliciting favorable job-related responses.

1. Introduction

The term Quality Working Life (QWL) gained importance in the late 1960s as a way of concerns about effects of job/work on health and general well-being and ways to positively influence the quality of a person's work experience. After a decade of 1980s, the concept of QWL included other aspects that affect employees' job satisfaction and productivity and these aspects are, reward systems, physical work environment, employee involvement, rights and esteem needs. The organization's work-environment depends upon the Quality of work life and Quality of work life depends upon the human resource. So the Human resources are the main factor of competitive advantage, success and survival of the organization. Human resource required to give attention towards the employees psychological and physical needs. After analysis of several organizations and from various sources, following are the points

(1). Employees' psychological needs are met through the use of quality of work life techniques.

(2). Quality of work life is the employees' mental perception from the physical and psychological desirability in the work place.

(3). Domain of quality of work life does not only affect the employees' job satisfaction but it is also influence the lives outside work of employees such as family, leisure and social needs. When the needs of employees at work does not meet, likely they experience a lot of work stress that will have adverse consequences on the welfare of employees and job performance. A high quality of work life (QWL) is essential for organizations to continue to attract and retain Employees (1). QWL is a comprehensive, department- wide program designated to improve employee satisfaction, strengthening workplace learning and helping employees had better manage change and transition.

(2). Dissatisfaction with quality of work life is a problem, which affects almost all workers regardless of position or status. Many managers seek to reduce dissatisfaction in all organizational levels, including their own. This is a complex problem, however, because it is difficult to isolate and identify all of attributes, which affect the quality of work life.

(3). More recently, "Deutsch" and "shurman" suggested that the strategies in the USA are to increase the amount of employee participation and involvement in decision making around the areas of new technology, work environment and skill training and development.

(4) . In health care organizations QWL has been described as referring to the strengths and weakness in the total work environment.

QWL consists of opportunities for active involvement in group working arrangements or problem solving that are of mutual benefit to employees or employers, based on labor management cooperation. People also conceive of QWL as a set of methods, such as autonomous work groups, job enrichment and high-involvement aimed at boosting the satisfaction and productivity of workers .

In other words, this study examines the reasons behind what employees perceive about high-quality working-life experiences employed by organizations in India. This research focuses on the employees at middle managerial level working in various organizations. Thus, we propose that understanding the reasons behind peoples' perception of QWL experiences for organizations is an important goal, to satisfy the various needs of the employees and in return eliciting favorable job-related responses.

2. A Literature review:

Researchers have different opinions about the quality of work life, for some the concept of the quality of work life refers to industrial democracy, employee participation in company decisions and achieve the goals of human relations movement in two decades ago for others the quality of work life is meant to improve productivity By humans and not through capital or production inputs. Labor unions define the quality of work life

as a healthy working conditions and equitable division of revenue However some labor unions are suspected to attempt of managers to improve the quality of work life in fact . They argue that managers seeking to improve the quality of work life for workers to increase their productivity without pay more to them. Each of the management theorists describes the quality of work in a manner.

Casio defined the quality of work life in two aspects: mentally and objective:

In objective definition quality of work life is equivalent the set of actual and objective Circumstances and procedures that including promotion policies, participatory supervision, involving employees in decision making and working safe conditions.

In mental definition the quality of work life is the perception of employees' physical health (physical) and psychological (mental) health in their work place .in this concept the quality of work life means mental imagine and perception of employees from the physical and psychosocial desirability in the work place.

Casio examined the domination of quality of work life from eight aspect .these eight aspect are the amount of: communication, employee involvement, desire and motivation to work , job security, career progress, solving problems, salary, pride of a job.

Porras & Silver believes that the quality of work life is one of organizational interventions that has a great impact on the changes planned .they argue that the subsets of organizational development are organizational arrangements, quality circles, share of income, Schedule of works, organizational structure, Social factors, theories of personality, technical systems – social.

Stone believed that programs of the quality of work life are seek to the integration needs of employees and appropriateness the needs of employees with the demands of organization for higher productivity.

Sirgy and Etal believes that the quality of work life, is related to satisfy the needs of employees and they suggested that quality of work life of employees should be reviewed in terms of employee needs and they specified seven categories of need.

1 - Health and safety needs (protection against disease and injury within and outside the workplace)
2 - The needs of family economy (wages, job security and etc)
3- The need for social (cooperative work between colleagues, and having free time in the workplaces)
4-social needs(having the cooperative work between colleagues and spare time at work place
5- The need for self-esteem (recognition and appreciation of the work inside and outside the organization)
6 - The need for training (training to improve job skills 7-The aesthetic needs (creativity workplace and personal creativity and general aesthetics.

Winter *et al.*[19] viewed QWL for academicians as an attitudinal response to the prevailing work environment and posited five work environment domains that include role stress, job characteristics, supervisory, structural and sectoral characteristics to directly and indirectly shape academicians' experiences, attitudes and behavior.

QWL can be assessed by combining the amount and the degree of stress and the degree of satisfaction experienced by the individual within his/her occupational role.

QWL is also found to affect employees' work responses in terms of organizational identification, job satisfaction, job involvement, job effort, job performance, intention to quit, organizational turnover and personal alienation (Carter et al., 1990; Efraty & Sirgy, 1990; Efraty et al., 1991).

QWL program for work reform (Beer et al., 1985; May, 1999). The list of QWL factors and literature review is not meant to be exhaustive of all possible theories or variables rather the emphasis in this study is placed on testing the relative frequency with which various QWL factors emerge while analyzing employees' versions of high-quality working-life experiences.

3. Ten Factors of Quality of Working Life:

A brief introduction and review of the 10 QWL factors working towards the development of organizations most valuable assets (employees) for gaining competitive advantage in the market, examined in this study are provided in the following section.

3.1 Communication: Achieving some level of personal growth may be quite related to the quality of communication in the organization. Proper communication plays a pivotal role to achieve results in this priority area.

● Organizations could improve the quality of working life through improving the nature and quality of communication of the mission and vision through the use of team briefings as a first step in the process of employee participation.

● To increase the communication between employee and employer in workplace the employer should train employees for globalization and changes in the technological environment, which make information processing, adaptability, and product quality keys for firm competitiveness.

3.2 Career Development & Growth: The purpose of career planning as part of an employee development program is as follows:

☐ **Improve skills and knowledge:** Make an effort to learn new skills and practice them as much as you can in your current job. Remember these words from Eric Hoffer: "In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists."

☐ **Develop trust:** The employer wants to increase faith with employee they trust. Developing trust takes time and consistent effort. Trust goes in two ways: Employer should have the faith on the employee and vice-versa.

☐ **Help others:** One of the keys to growth is helping others. When you make the effort to assist someone else to become better at what they do, you become better yourself.

☐ **Believe in yourself:** As your skills increase, you gain more experience and a clearer understanding your significance to your organization. Believing in yourself, your skills, and your ability to succeed — without becoming arrogant — is a good thing. And never forget the people who have helped you along the way.

☐ **Work yourself out of the job:** This one may not make sense on its face, but the idea is to work effectively and close the loop on what you are doing. Think in terms of projects: plan what you are going to do, work at it and when it's finished move on to the next project. Work effectively and make it so that anyone could step in and take over. As you do that you will automatically make yourself more valuable to your company, and they will have no choice but to promote you or find something more challenging for you to do.

3.3 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.

Steers (1977) concluded that "commitment was significantly and inversely related to employee turnover." According to Arthur (1994) when organizations seek to foster a philosophy of commitment, then the likelihood of an employee searching for employment elsewhere is lowered. Owens (2006) had a similar finding that employees that had a higher level of commitment also had a higher level of "turnover cognitions". A higher score in "turnover cognitions" indicated that the employee had a more favorable attitude and was less likely to consider turnover representing an inverse relationship of commitment and turnover. The aforementioned studies are representative of much of the research available relating to commitment and turnover. Commitment has a significant and positive impact on job performance and on workforce retention. The underlying belief is that a more committed employee will perform better at their job (Walton, 1985).

3.4 Emotional Supervisory Support: It is also found that some emotional supervision is one of the encouragement or inspiration for an employee to work efficiently. If the supervisor contribute his time for discussing the family matter of the employee, it balancing to maintain the work life and family life of the employee's energy level. A supportive supervisor is the boost of an employee's energy level. This reduce the stress of an employee.

*3.*5 **Work Stress:**

☐   Stress is one's reaction to stressors and consequences of such reaction.

☐   Impact of stress varies person to person

☐   Stress originates at the individual, group, organizational in extra organizational level.

Perception: It is psychological process where by a person selects and organizes stimuli into a concept of reality. Employees perception of a situation can influence stress.

Past Experience: Person's stress depends upon his/her past experience with similar stressor. Writing anonymous letters against the boss in giving leads to the newspaper ad getting false stories published in them against the boss are common among the employees . Over a period of time, the boss will get used to such allegations, through initially he/she underwent stress.

Social Support: The presence or absence of other people influences low in the workplace whether the competencd

3.6 Fun at work place: Society encourages and provides many ways in which people can play and have fun in their recreational lives. Play typically has a number of common elements-immersion in the activity, surprise, variety, choice, experience of progress and the opportunity to make personal contributions and to "win".

A fun at workplaces has several key features:

i)   It is easily recognized

ii)   It means different things at various people.

iii)   It is relatively easy to create at work.

Employees like to work in an environment where some seriousness in work as well as relaxation, play, laugh and fun in

the work . The fun which will reduce the stress, boredom and increase satisfaction.

3.7 Employee Motivation: The general perception is that people leave organization for higher pay. This hypothesis, though intuitively quite appealing, is often not sufficient in describing the entire picture with regard to sales force turnover. Because the Hawthorne studies (19th century) have already proved long back that money is not the only motivator (Mayo 1960), where as other environmental factors also play a significant role for employee motivation and performance.

3.8 Organizational Support: Besides, organizational climate, the level of support offered by the organization is also an indication of the work-life quality in organizations. 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).Work-family policies and the employees whose supervisor supported their efforts to balance work and family were less likely to experience work family conflict expanded the understanding of work-family culture to include the "shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports the values and integration of employees' work and family lives." They consider a negative work-family culture to have at least three components; organizational time demands or expectations that employees priorities work over family, negative career consequences and lack managerial support and sensitivity family responsibilities.

3.9 Job Satisfaction: The relationship of job satisfaction with work life quality is another aspect of working life that is often investigated by researchers. 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). This study utilized instrument developed by Aryee et all (1999), which contained items to determine the extent to which the employee is satisfied or is enthusiastic about his job. This part of feeling enthusiastic or having sense of enjoyment in one's work is reflective of Herzberg's Hygiene factors in his theory of motivation. (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1967; Herzberg, 1968).

To make the best use of people as a valuable resource of the organization attention must be given to the relationship between staff and the nature and content of their jobs. The organization and the design of jobs can have a significant effect on staff. Attention needs to be given to the quality of working life. The manager needs to understand how best to make work more satisfying for staff and to overcome obstacles to effective performance.

3.10 Healthy Environment: In order of priorities it comes next to the earnings of a worker in the Indian context. For an employee to be able to work at his best, it is necessary to understand that in adequate working and living conditions produce adverse mental and physical effect on the employee , ultimately causing decline in the efficiency.

So, the HRD system takes care of employees health and well being of their families by providing them with better

working and living conditions, which generally promote a healthy atmosphere of development and motivation among employees.

4. Quality Work Life (QWL), Job Satisfaction and Stress: Employees' source of stress and level of satisfaction regarding several aspect of work are also measured to get a better understanding of the overall QWL in the institution and although these aspects are not work life on their own, perception of quality of work life is often assessed using job satisfaction and organizational climate surveys (Krueger, Brazil, Lohfeld, Edward, Lewis, Tjam, 2002). The negative consequences of occupational stress are recognized as major problems for both employees and organizations. For employees, stress frequently contributes to the risk of accidents, burn-out and illnesses like coronary heart disease, hyper-tension and severe depression (Sutherland & Cooper, 1988) For organizations, stress-related problems result in low job satisfaction, poor quality of performance, increased absence from work and high turn over (Montowidlo, Packard & Manning, 1986).

5. Research Methods:

5.1 Data Collection: The survey was conducted in a private university in Malaysia in January 2007. All employees (around 460 employees) in the institutions from all levels were asked to participate in the survey. However, only 251 survey questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 54.6%.

5.2 Research Instruments: The survey items were modeled after some of the quality of work life studies done by various organizations in the United States. The survey instrument was based on validated measures of work environment and organizational climate but some items were changed or customized to suit the targeted audience in this institution. Most of the scales used in this study has been utilized in other studies before and has been validated by past researches (Wanous et al, 2000; Gutek, Searle & Kepa, 1991; Jones & James 1979; Spreitzer, 1995; Spreitzer, 1996; Callister, 2006; Hackman and Oldham, 1979). All the items in the questionnaire are based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree.

6. The Conceptual Model:

As expounded earlier in the literature, QWL facets have significant impacts on employees' job satisfaction. Thus, in the present study, 10 QWL variables (work-family interference, quality of relationship, meaningfulness, pessimism about organizational change, self competence, impact, self determination, access to resources, time control and support) were tested the relationships with job satisfaction. Correlations tests and multiple linear regressions were used to examine the relationships.

7. Measures to improve QWL:

7.1 QWL Through Employee Involvement (EI): One of the most common methods used to create QWL is employee involvement. Employee involvement (EI) consists of a variety of systematic methods that empower employees to participate in the decisions that affect them and their relationship with the organization. Through (EI), employees feel a sense of responsibility, even ³ownership´ of decisions in which they participate.

To be successful, however, EI must be more than just a systematic approach; it must become part of the organization's culture by being part of management's philosophy. Some companies have had this philosophy ingrained in their corporate structure for decades; Hewlett-Packard, IBM, General Motors, Ford, etc.

7.2 Quality Circles: Quality circles are small groups of employees who meet regularly with their common leader to identify and solve work-related problems. They are a highly specific form of team building, which are common in Japan and gained popularity in North America in the late1970s and early 1980s. By the 1980s most medium- and large-sized Japanese firms had quality control circles for hourly employees. This effort began as a quality improvement program but has since become a routine procedure for many Japanese managers and cornerstone of QWL efforts in many Japanese firms. Several characteristics make this approach unique. The workers also receive an explanation of the supervisor's role as the group's discussion leader and information on the quality circle concept. Thirdly, as is pointed out in the training, the group is permitted to select the problems it wants to tackle. Management may suggest problems of concern, but the group is empowered to decide which ones to select. Ideally, the selection process is not by democratic vote but is arrived at by consensus, whereby everyone agrees on the problem to be tackled.

7.3 Socio-Technical Systems: Another intervention to improve QWL is the use of socio-technical systems. Socio-technical systems are interventions in the work situation that restructure the work, the work groups, and the relationship between workers and the technologies they use to do their jobs. More than just enlarging or enriching a job, these approaches may result in more radical changes in the work environment.

7.4 Autonomous Work Group: A more common, still rare, approach to employee involvement is the use of autonomous work groups. These are teams of workers, without a formal company-appointed leader, who decide among themselves most decisions traditionally handled by supervisors. The key feature of these groups is a high degree of self-determination by employees in the management of their day-to-day work. Typically this includes collective control over the pace of work, distribution of tasks, organization of breaks, and collective participation in the recruitment and training of new members. Direct supervision is often necessary. QWL is more likely to improve as workers demand jobs with more behavioral elements.

These demands will probably emerge from an increasingly diverse and educated work force that expects more challenges and more autonomy in its jobs such as worker participation indecisions traditionally reserved for management.

Conclusion:

The present study examined the existence of QWL in different organizations. It revealed that QWL is not highly prevalent as per the views of employees and employers perceive the presence of QWL to a greater extent. Taking into consideration the importance of the organizations to the growth of Indian economy and the importance of people to the organization, the employers should take consistent and steadfast measures to improve the QWL of employees at the Educational units as well as other sectors. Such measure, for sure will benefit employee, employer and the nation as a whole.

Scope for Future Research

The present study identified important QWL factors in organizations and revealed employers and Employees perception on QWL factors. It has exposed many avenues for further study. The existence of QWL might be studied in different sectors of

different organizations. A study also may be dedicated to find out the impact and association of QWL on productivity of the employees. The study on existence of QWL and the gender perception may be undertaken exclusively.

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