

An Overview of Quality of Work-life

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Abstract

Quality of work Life (QWL) has evolved as an important aspect, which affects an organizational efficiency and productivity. Quality of work life is a key factor for the success of any organization. Quality of work life consists of opportunities for active involvement in groups arrangements or problem solving that of mutual benefit to employees or employers, based on labour management cooperation. If an organisation expects to conduct its business in long run, then it requires loyal and satisfied brand of customers that can be earned only when organisation take care of quality in their work employees and products. This review paper puts forward the meaning of QWL, various definitions, key dimensions of QWL, factors affecting, barriers to QWL and some recommendations for the same.

Key Words: Quality of work life, QWL, employees, work, work life, improvement.

Objectives

- To understand and develop the concept of QWL in organization.
- To identify dimensions and factors in the environment of an organization that leads to QWL.

Introduction

Human as a resource plays a crucial role in achieving the success of an organisation so the management of human resource is an important tasks to u done in an effective manner. There are many aspects which affect the management of human resource. And one such aspect is Quality of Work Life (QWL). It is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that the 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. The elements that are relevant to an individual's quality of work life include the task, the physical work environment, social environment within the organization, administrative system and relationship between life on and off the job.

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. Further the efficiency of any organisation depends on their work environment, working methodology and degree of employee satisfaction. The level of employee motivation is dependent on elements like job security, reward system, job satisfaction, satisfaction of social, physical and personal needs. Quality of work Life is referred to as humanizing the working life and emphasizing the human factor. It mostly refers to favorableness' or unfavourableness of a job environment for the people involved in it. The basic objective is to develop jobs that are excellent for people as well as for production. So we can see the basic questions of Quality Work Life

What is Quality? "Quality is the ability of a product or service to consistently meet or exceed customer expectations.

What is work? Work can be defined as the application of discretion within limits in order to produce a result.

What is work life? Work life does not merely means the facilities provided to the employees during office hours. It comprises of all the collusive feelings, which reside in the mind of the employee while he works in the organization, he is in the office or away from it.

Meaning and Definition

Quality of Working Life can be defined as "The quality of relationship between employees and the total working environment."

QWL is a process by which an organization responds to employee needs for developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their lives at work. QWL is "The degree to which members of a work organization are able to satisfy important personnel needs through their experience in the organization" by J Richard and J Loy.

The basic purpose is to develop work environments that are excellent for people as well as for the economic health of the organization.

"When organizations have addressed the issue of quality of working life, they have always achieved great productivity breakthroughs" -Jerome M. Rosow.



(Source: www.uscg.mil)

A better quality of work life for employees leads to a higher productivity for the employer. It is almost impossible today to pick up a newspaper or news-magazine without finding a reference to quality of work/working life. In the search for improved productivity, manager and executives alike are discovering the important contribution of QWL. QWL entails the design of work systems that enhance the working life experiences of organizational members, thereby improving commitment to and motivation for achieving organizational goals. Most, often, this has been implemented through the design of jobs that afford workers more direct control over their immediate work environment. Quality of work life is the degree to which members of a work organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experiences in the organization? More specifically, QWL may be set into operation in terms of employees perceptions of their physical and psychological well-being at work.

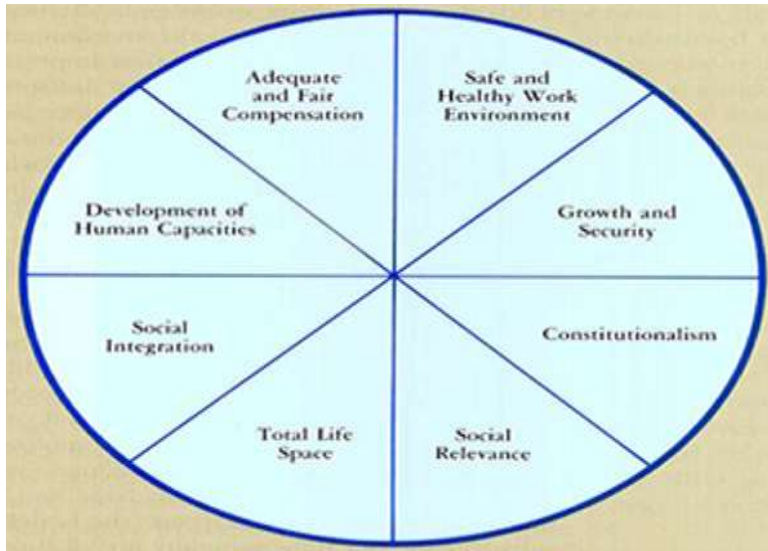
Origin of the Concept

- ❖ Most of the management theories give emphasis on production, manipulating the skills of employees.
- ❖ And after the Industrial Revolution, the importance of human factor reduced because of the vast mechanization. Various problems like job dissatisfaction, boredom, absenteeism, lack of commitment etc came up.

Objectives of Focusing On QWL:

- ❖ To improve the employee satisfaction.
- ❖ To enhance the employee skills
- ❖ To improve the physical and psychological health of employees

- ❖ To develop positive attitude of employee towards the organisation
- ❖ To reinforce workplace learning
- ❖ To build the image of the company as in best recruitment, retention and in general motivation of employees.



(Source: www.alexandriamarketing.com)

Key Dimensions of QWL

The concept of quality of work life has many dimensions, some of the key dimensions are as follows:

Well-being and Health:

Health and well-being of QWL refer to physical and psychological aspects of an individual in any working environment. It has been seen that an unstrained work environment ensures good health and psychological conditions which enable the employees to perform job and non-work related functions without inhibitions. Thus, it leads to an un-stressful work environment providing comfortable work life. There are many definitions of stress as it is deemed as a subjective phenomenon of QWL. Physical illness and psychological disorders increase when pressure at work increases. Stress causes problems to the muscular system and circulation thus, increasing the risk of myocardial infarction which is well documented in psychosomatic studies.

Job Satisfaction

Both cognitive and behavioural components were added to this definition. The cognitive aspect represents an employee's belief about his job or job situation. This means an employee may believe that his or her job is interesting, stimulating or otherwise.

The behavioural component represents an employee's behavioural tendencies toward his or her job. The action of attending work regularly, working hard and intending to stay in the organisation for long period of time shows the positive behaviour which indicates job satisfaction. Job satisfaction of an employee differs in meaning and importance in relations to the facets of work. Some may feel pay and fringe benefits that meet his expectations to be extremely important; another, it may be essential to have a job that provides an opportunity for challenging assignment.

Work and non-work life balance

A major component of QWL, which is important for both the employees and the employers, is the relationship between work and home life. In an increasing competitive environment, it is difficult to separate home and work life. Employees today are more likely to express a strong desire to have a harmonious balance among career, family and leisure activities.

Competency Development

Growth in skills and knowledge is an important aspect of competency development that enhances QWL. Therefore competency development is operationalized as the nature of job that provides opportunities and stimulates growth in skills and knowledge either for career or organizational development. Career development opportunity will provide essential training that will help the individual employees to equip with the new skills to spearhead in 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. Learning opportunities and skill discretion have also proven to have a positive effect on job satisfaction and reduced job stress that will lead to better QWL. The opportunity to develop and the use of skills are associated with learning mechanisms.



(Source: www.a-star.edu.sg)

Barriers to QWL

- ❖ Gap between the actual and required change both by management and employees.
- ❖ A general misperception that Q.W.L. implementation will cost much to the organization
- ❖ Continuous increase in QWL may result in less productivity, that is after a certain level the productivity will not increase in proportion to the increase in QWL.
- ❖ Widespread dissatisfaction due to comparison with colleagues.
- ❖ Regional prejudice
- ❖ Deficiencies in the performance appraisal system and promotion criteria.

How to Improve The QWL?

In our country, recently many changes have introduced in the Government policies like privatization. The Government organizations are mismanaged incurring heavy loss on public money either due to corruption by bureaucrats' intervention of politicians and Trade Union leaders and their affiliated political parties with the motives of winning elections. The scope for transfer of technology has increased and inflow of investments from non-resident Indians allowed. The privatization created many avenues for many unemployed people by reducing severity of the problem.

Conclusion and Recommendation

A fundamental reconsideration of the balance between work and life are essential. First, individual must create a personal vision by articulating something to be accomplish in career. Such vision will set a target of where individual wants to be in life and must be prepared to make adjustment at any time. Employee need to be flexible and ready as life's journey is all about twists and turns. It keeps employee focus and strives towards the vision and when they pull off, it will be a meaningful accomplishment. Individual must not perplex real identity with role played at work. Roles play at work is intended for the work game. It does not replicate true identity. To guarantee job satisfaction, employees must let their vision lead them. Third, individual must develop healthy personal habits by taking care of their body, mind and spirit to withstand all those challenges and pressures you face at work. Eating habits, sleeping routines and exercising will helps employees live a healthy life style and resilient enough to face anything coming. It helps employees to be positive and accept almost everything in a positive way. Individual must let go of the underlying forces that drive their behavior and choose to perform better. Be a good citizen and create healthy community around you. This principle will attract others to create a community of like-minded folks who strive to get the job done while serving everybody's needs. Recognize others for their achievements and work in collaboration with others to effect responsible change. Lastly, listen to and learn from the lessons of life. Job satisfaction is all about taking those day to day challenges, pressures and upsetting situations and turning them into life lessons that allow employees to grow and move on as a better, more fulfilled person. QWL incorporates values of job enrichment and socio-technical enrichment in an ample effort to progress the excellence of the work environment.

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