

Impact of Quality of Work Life at Work Place

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Abstract: *This paper explores the concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and its effect on employee job performance. It aims to provide a deeper understanding of how enhancing the quality of the workplace environment can boost employee performance. The primary goal of this paper is to examine the relationship between quality of work life and employee performance within the work environment. The findings suggest that a high quality of work life results in improved employee performance, as employees are the most valuable assets in an organization. Enhancing their quality of work life can lead to greater job performance.*

Keywords: *Quality of work life (QWL), work environment, and quality of life.*

Introduction

The Quality of Work Life (QWL) has gained increasing attention and significance worldwide. It plays a crucial role in fostering commitment to work, motivation, and job performance. QWL aims to fulfil human needs and support goal achievement. It encompasses the overall life of workers, both physically and intellectually, within the work environment, addressing aspects such as working conditions, compensation, and organizational climate. Quality of work life is about humanizing the workplace and prioritizing the human element. It mainly refers to how favourable or unfavourable the job environment is for those involved. The primary objective is to design jobs that are beneficial for both employees and production.

Literature Review

Cohen and Rosenthal (1980) describe Quality of Work Life (QWL) as a deliberate effort to enhance labor management and cooperation, aimed at jointly addressing the challenges of improving organizational performance and employee satisfaction. Walton (2005) identified eight major conceptual categories related to QWL:

1. Adequate and fair compensation
2. Safe and healthy working conditions

3. Immediate opportunities for continued growth and security
4. Opportunities to use and develop human capacities
5. Social integration within the work organization
6. Constitutionalism in the work organization
7. Work-life balance
8. Social relevance of work life

Several studies have explored the components that constitute the QWL domain and the key elements of QWL programs. Cherg.S suggests that a high quality of work life should positively impact personal life, provide opportunities for involvement in decision-making, and ensure an acceptable level of physical comfort. "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor."

Objectives of the study

1. Understanding the importance of quality of work life for enhancing performance.
2. Learning methods to measure the quality of work life in organizations.

Need For Quality Of Work Life

In the current scenario, every organization aims to achieve more output with less input. This can be realized when employees find their workplace comfortable and aligned with job requirements. Therefore, it is crucial for an organization to foster a quality relationship between its employees and the work environment. Nowadays, the balance between family and work life is disrupted due to job pressure and conflicting interests, leading to over-socialization and excessive concern for co-workers, which can create issues among colleagues. Work norms often impose heavy burdens on workers and strict control by their supervisors. Employees are required to follow the rules, and non-compliance can lead to layoffs. Consequently, employees are more focused on job retention than on improving their quality of life at the workplace. This shift in focus explains why the importance of improving the quality of work life has diminished in our country.

Measures To Improve QWL

A) QWL through Employee Involvement

One of the most effective methods to enhance QWL is through employee involvement (EI). EI encompasses a range of systematic approaches that enable employees to participate in decisions affecting them and their relationship with the organization. Through EI, employees gain a sense of responsibility and even ownership of the decisions in which they are involved. For EI to be successful it must transcend being merely a systematic approach; it must become ingrained in the organization's culture and management philosophy. Companies such as Hewlett-Packard, IBM, General Motors, and Ford have embedded this philosophy in their corporate structures for decades.

B) Quality Circles

Quality circles are small groups of employees who regularly meet with a common leader to identify and resolve work-related issues. This highly specific form of team building, which originated in Japan, gained popularity in North America in the late 1970s and early 1980s. By 1990, most medium and large-sized Japanese firms had implemented quality control circles for hourly employees. Initially started as quality improvement programs,

these circles have evolved into routine procedures and are now a cornerstone of QWL efforts in many Japanese firms. Several characteristics make this approach unique and effective.

C) Socio-Technical Systems

Another intervention to improve QWL is the use of socio-technical systems. These systems involve restructuring the work, work groups, and the relationship between workers and the technologies they use. Unlike merely enlarging or enriching a job, socio-technical systems can lead to more radical changes in the work environment, significantly enhancing QWL.

D) Autonomous Work Group

A less common but notable approach to employee involvement is the use of autonomous work groups. These groups consist of workers who operate without a formal company-appointed leader, making most decisions traditionally handled by supervisors. The key feature of these groups is the high degree of self-determination by employees in managing their day-to-day work. This typically includes collective control over the pace of work, task distribution, break organization, and participation in recruiting and training new members. While direct supervision is often reduced, QWL is likely to improve as employees seek jobs with more behavioral elements. Such demands are expected to arise from an increasingly diverse and educated workforce that seeks more challenges and autonomy in their roles, including participation in decisions traditionally reserved for management.

Barriers of Quality of Work Life

1. Resistance to change from both management and employees.
2. A general perception that implementing QWL will be costly for the organization and may lead to a plateau in productivity, where further improvements in QWL do not proportionally increase productivity.
3. Widespread dissatisfaction stemming from comparisons with colleagues.
4. Regional prejudice.

5. Scepticism regarding the performance appraisal system and promotion criteria.

Suggestions for Improving Quality of Work Life

1. Provide physical amenities at the workplace, including health, safety, and welfare provisions.
2. Involve workers in decision-making processes on all matters.
3. Formalize QWL experiences for future reference and improvement.
4. Develop an appreciation for the changing work environment.
5. Educate workers and raise awareness about the importance and benefits of QWL.
6. Encourage active participation of workers in QWL activities.
7. Organize workshops and seminars to increase awareness and understanding of QWL.
8. Implement policies that provide greater autonomy and facilitate experimentation with QWL initiatives.
9. Take executive actions to ensure the implementation of legislated facilities.
10. Foster a supportive organizational culture that values and promotes QWL.

Conclusion

Quality of Work Life (QWL) plays a crucial role in human resource management, raising awareness among workers for the success of the organization. In India, QWL can be improved through various means, including education, employee training, effective communication, union participation, research projects, and adapting to the changing environment. Good human resource practices encourage employees to be more productive while enjoying their work. Thus, QWL is becoming a significant issue in all organizations.

The aim of QWL is to develop, enhance, and utilize human resources effectively to improve the quality of products and services, boost productivity, reduce the cost of production per unit, and satisfy workers' psychological needs for self-esteem, participation, and recognition. Improved QWL leads to better performance, which encompasses not only physical output but also positive behaviours such as assisting colleagues with job-related problems, fostering team spirit, and accepting temporary unfavourable work conditions without complaint. A high quality of work life not only attracts young

and new talent but also helps retain experienced employees.

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