

The Relation Between Quality of Work Life and Job Performance

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Abstract: This study contributes to the literature on quality of work life (QWL) by testing the relationship between QWL and job performance by using questionnaires to survey a sample of 35 employees in Dadevarz Jooya Company in Iran. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between QWL and job performance. A two-factor model with correlated factors was postulated and supported. Analysis procedures showed that the two-constructs are highly correlated are the quality of work life. Implications of results and directions for future research on offered.

Key words: Quality of work life • Job performance • Achieve model • Walton model

INTRODUCTION

For the last decade, the increasing effects of factors such as globalization, information technology, world business competitiveness and limited natural resources have changed people's views of how a good company is defined. In the past, financial figures were the major factor in defining "a good company". In recent years, quality of work life (QWL) is increasingly being identified as progressive indicators related to the function and sustainability of business organizations [1]. On the other hand, management recognizes that a productive workforce will provide a global, sustainable competitive advantage for business organizations [2,3]. Also as the composition of the workforce continues to change over the years, companies that offer better benefits and supportive working environment are expected to gain leverage in hiring and retaining valuable people [4]. QWL has different meanings which depend on the location where the study is taking place, but in general idea it includes all the objective and subjective concepts which their recognition will help us in how employees perceive their work.

Knowing QWL in an organization will clarify weak and strong points in the interface between that organization and its employees. This recognition will lead to productivity and higher job performance. Nowadays, management science considers human resources as the most important resources in the organization development, so the act of motivating them is a critical

point. All in all, it seems that taking care of QWL will reduce mental stress, turn over and absenteeism which in turn will enhance job performance.

Literature Review

Quality of Work Life: The term quality of work life (QWL) was first introduced in 1972 during an international labor relations conference [5]. QWL received more attention after United Auto Workers and General Motors initiated a QWL program for work reforms.

When initially developed in the mid-1970s, quality of work life (QWL) was defined in terms of people's reaction to work, particularly individual outcomes related to job satisfaction and mental health. Using this definition, QWL focused primarily on the personal consequences of the work experience and how to improve work to satisfy personal needs. A second definition included terms about techniques and approaches for improving quality of work, such as job enrichment, self-managed teams and labor-management committees [6, 7]. The expansion of QWL beyond its initial development includes defining features the workplace that can affect employee productivity and satisfaction, such as reward systems, work flows, management style and physical work environment [8].

Robbins [9] defined QWL as "a process by which an organization responds to employee needs by developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their lives at work" (p.207). In another definition QWL is defined as the favorable conditions and environments of a work place that support

and promote employee satisfaction by providing employees with rewards, job security and growth opportunities [4]. QWL has been well recognized as a multidimensional construct and it may not be universal or eternal [4]. QWL is the perception to which the organizational environment meets the full range of employees' needs for their well-being at work [10, 11]. According to their research into different dimensions of need-based QWL, Sirgy *et al.* [11] categorizes QWL into two major categories: lower-and higher-order needs. According to them, lower-order QWL is comprised of healthy / safety needs and economic/ family needs and higher-order QWL is comprised of social needs, esteem needs, self actualization needs, knowledge needs and aesthetic needs. Based on this classification, Koonmee *et al.* [1] have done a survey about QWL in Thailand.

In this paper Walton's theoretical framework [12] is used for measuring the respondents' perceptions of QWL in terms of the following elements:

Satisfaction with Fair Payment: Sufficient salary for a full time work and enough payment to cover current life requirements considering social criteria;

a Safe and Healthy Working Environment: It consists of safe physical and mental working situations and determining logical working hours;

an Opportunity for Continuous Growth: Having good conditions to increase personal empowerments and skills;

Social Relationships in Organization: It refers to the employees' perceptions of social responsibilities of the firm;

Balanced Role of Work: Existence of equilibrium between work life and other sections of employee's life;

Social Coherent in the Work Organization: Sense of belonging to the organization;

Regulations and Rule Orientation: The situation for employees to express their opinions without being afraid of top managers;

Developing Human Capacities: Includes different opportunities for personnel such as independency at work and having the authority to access the related information for their tasks.

Job Performance: Similarities exist between QWL and job performance in that both are organizationally based. Job performance is a function of both the individual and the organization. Therefore, the two constructs are situationally based and contextual to the workplace. This means that individuals and organizations are predictor of job performance [13]. Many studies have examined the multidimensional and complex construct of job performance. For example, Campbell and co-workers [14] identified eight major dimensions of performance: (1) Job-specific task proficiency, (2) non-job-specific task proficiency, (3) written and oral communication tasks, (4) demonstrating effort, (5) maintaining personal discipline, (6) facilitating peer and team performance, (7) supervision and (8) management and administration. A number of theoretical perspectives have been put forth, some representing performance on jobs in general and some specific to managerial jobs (for example, Borman and Brush, [15], Yukl [16]). In the literature, dimensions of individual job performance include units of production, quality of work, tenure, supervisory and leadership abilities, output, quality, lost time, turnover, training time, promotion and satisfaction.

Hunter and Hunter [17] described characteristics that can predict future job performance. Their list includes past performance on related jobs, job knowledge, psychomotor skills, cognitive abilities, social skills and job-related attitudes such as the need for achievement, enthusiasm, stress and control. Viswesvaran and co-workers [18] identified 10 dimensions of job performance: (1) overall job performance, (2) job performance or productivity, (3) quality, (4) leadership, (5) communication competence, (6) administrative competence, (7) effort, (8) interpersonal competence, (9) job knowledge and (10) compliance with or acceptance of authority. Witt and co-workers [19] identified eleven dimensions: quality of work, planning, organizational commitment, job knowledge, allocation, interpersonal orientation, self-development and account management. Beh and Rose (2007) identified 7 dimensions of job performance: (1) effort, (2) consistent, (3) time, (4) work, (5) competent, (6) commitment, (7) excel.

This study obtained performance measures from the 7 dimensions of job performance developed by Hersey and Goldsmith:

Ability: Personnel's knowledge and skills;

Clarity: The clarity of the role perception;

Help: Organizational support which employees need in accomplishing their tasks effectively;

Incentive: An eagerness to complete a given task successfully;

Evaluation: Providing feedback to employees about their performance;

Validity: Valid and proper decision about human resources;

Environment: External factors.

In general, the literature on QWL and job performance suggests that these two factors may be linked. Not much previous research has examined the links between QWL and job performance in a field study except for Lau [20], Delaney and Huselid [21] and Beh and Rose [13]. The research reported in this article was designed to fill this gap in the literature.

Hypotheses: This paper sets out, through a case study in Dadevarz Jooya Company in Iran, to investigate the impact of QWL'S components on job performance. SO the following hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Satisfaction with fair payment is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 2: A safe and healthy working environment is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 3: An opportunity for continuous growth is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 4: Social relationship in organization is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 5: Balanced role of work is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 6: Social coherent in the work organization is positively related to improvement in job performance

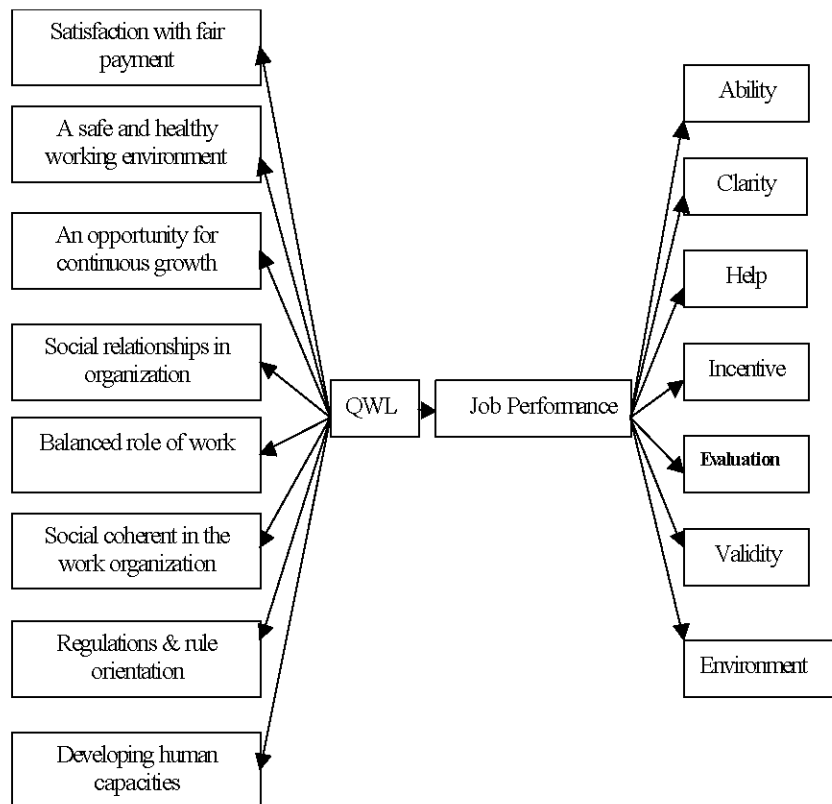


Fig. 1: Two-factor model of the relation between QWL and job performance based on Walton model of QWL and Achieve model of job performance

Hypothesis 7: Regulations and rule orientation is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 8: Developing human capacities is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Also this study intends to describe the effects of the elements in Achieve model on personnel's performance of Dadevarz Jooya Company. So other hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 9: Personnel's ability is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 10: Clarity of role perception is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 11: Organizational support is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 12: Eagerness to complete a task is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 13: Providing feedback to employees is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 14: Valid decision about human resources is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Hypothesis 15: Environment is positively related to improvement in job performance.

Methodology: Quality of work life and job performance were assessed respectively by using the Walton's scale and Achieve scale in this paper. The questionnaire was completed by a total of 35 employees in Dadevarz Jooya Company. A five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" (value of 1) to "Strongly agree" (Value of 5) was used to measure QWL and job performance. The questionnaire of this paper involves 44 questions which are represented here (Fig 1).

Figure 1: Measurement scales:

- **Satisfaction with Fair Payment:**
 - The effect of payment on satisfaction
 - Income comparing to other organizations
 - The effect of income on job performance
 - The effect of motivation on creativity and innovation

- **a Safe and Healthy Working Environment:**
 - Measuring physical environment
 - The effect of mental environment on job performance
 - Hygiene facilities
- **an Opportunity for Continuous Growth:**
 - Job security
 - Improvement opportunities
 - Benefiting from skills
- **Social Relationships in Organization:**
 - Trust between employees
 - Support between employees
 - Responsibility a valuable factor
 - A regular procedure in complaining
- **Balanced Role of Work:**
 - Work life equilibrium
 - The value of successful services from the organization's point of view
- **Social Coherent in the Work Organization:**
 - The effect of motivation on success
 - Addressing to personal problems
 - Paying attention to team work
- **Regulations and Rule Orientation:**
 - Merit rating in improvements
 - Work orientation
 - Expressing opinions without fear from top managers
- **Developing Human Capacities:**
 - The effect of job training
 - Having necessary skills
 - Update the organization
- **Ability:**
 - Independency at work
 - Autonomy at work
- **Clarity:**
 - Proper perception of organization's objectives
 - The effect of polling from employees on the organization's objectives
 - Having information about the relation between the job and it's related subjects
- **Help:**
 - Clear informative ness
 - Self assessment
 - The results of feedback
- **Incentive:**
 - Having support for hard works from the organization
 - Lack of facilities
 - Having support from the other departments

- **Evaluation:**
 - Decision making based on accurate information
 - The level of employing ability
 - Informing from job performance improvements
- **Validity:**
 - The effect of governmental rules on job performance improvements
 - Skillfulness in making decisions
 - Operational situation in the organization
- **Environment:**
 - The effect of external control
 - The effect of external decision makings

Among different methods of estimating reliability, Cronbakh's α is used and it shows that for the 25 items of Walton's scale, $\alpha = 0.801$ and for the 19 items of Achieve scale $\alpha = 0.861$. So the mentioned questionnaire is reliable enough.

RESULTS

The main proposed hypothesis which consists of a positive relation between QWL and job performance was significantly accepted in the level of 95% confidence. The intensity of this relation, based on Pearson's Correlation coefficient was 71%.

In secondary hypotheses, the effects of QWL'S components on job performance were analyzed. All of these secondary hypotheses were significant in the level of 95% confidence. Mean Scores and Standard deviation are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Means and standard deviation of QWL and job performance scores

Hypothesis	Mean score	SD
1. Satisfaction with fair payment	2.54	0.616
2. A safe and healthy working environment	2.86	0.701
3. An opportunity for continuous growth	2.45	0.741
4. Social relationships in organization	2.70	0.494
5. Balanced role of work	3.52	0.785
6. Social coherent in the work organization	2.04	0.630
7. Regulations and rule orientation	3.22	0.625
8. Developing human capacities	3.27	0.524
9. Ability	3.17	0.512
10. Clarity	2.91	0.621
11. Help	2.65	0.624
12. Incentive	3.06	0.622
13. Evaluation	3.16	0.631
14. Validity	2.90	0.562
15. Environment	2.87	0.558

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research are generally consistent with those from previous studies on QWL and job performance. This paper exhibits optimism concerning the potential of QWL in enhancing the performance of employees and organizations, as QWL is found to significantly reduce absenteeism, minor accidents, grievances and quitting [22].

Based on the first hypothesis, it shows that the payment is not enough in the mentioned company. So salary and benefits of employees in this company should be increased in order to make it as much salary and benefits as in the other organizations. Also we propose to top managers of the mentioned company to allocate a given percentage on company's revenue to its personnel in order to motivate them in a better way.

Results acquired from the second hypothesis, shows that the work situation of the mentioned company is not safe and secure, so considering a proper physical situation (brightness, temperature and etc.) is suggested. Results yielded from hypothesis 3 shows that the continuous opportunity for development in Dadevarz Jooya is lower than the mean level (supposing that mean level is equal to 3). So a scientific improvement system should be developed and some related training courses should be implemented.

Outputs obtained from the hypothesis 4 indicate that social relation is lower than the mean level in the company. So to improve social relationships, managers should respect employees' opinions and motivate the sense of responsibility. The consequences obtained from hypothesis 5 imply that the general life situation in the company is higher than the mean value, so the reasons should be investigated and be enriched. Result yielded from hypothesis 6 shows that the social coherent in the company is lower than the mean value. So employees' problems should be addressed more.

The consequences obtained from hypothesis 7 shows that rule orientation in the company is higher than the mean value, so the reasons should be investigated and be enriched. Result obtained from hypothesis 8 implies that the human capabilities improvement is higher than the mean value. So the reasons should be studied and be enriched by the mean of on the job training (OJT) courses and general and specialized educational courses. Result acquired from hypothesis 9 shows that personnel's ability in the company is higher than the mean value. So effective factors in this field should be identified and be increased, for example by using specialized training.

Consequences acquired from hypothesis 10 imply that the personnel don't have enough perception of their own job. So the mission of the organization should be expressed to employees in order to make it clear for them.

If the objectives were unclear, it would be rather impossible for employees to achieve them. Result obtained from hypothesis 11 shows that the appraisal and feedback system in Dadevarz Jooya Company is a weak one. So a regular and continuous evaluation and feedback is proposed. Result acquired from hypothesis 12 shows that the organizational support in the company is higher than the mean value. So the reasons should be studied and enriched, for example by using financial and mental support from the organization. Result from the hypothesis 13 shows employees' motivation in the company is higher than the mean value so studying on the effective reasons is suggested.

Making a sense of responsibility and a deep and direct relationship between managers and employees could be some of the critical factors that have effect on this field. Result from hypothesis 14 implies that the decisions which are made by the decision makers are not reliable enough, so applying a method of participative management is suggested. Also it proposes to develop an updated information system in the company in order to obtain accurate information which is a necessity for making proper decisions. Result from hypothesis 15 indicates that environmental situation in the company is lower than the mean value. So decision makers should have enough information about environmental factors such as the industry, raw materials, human resources, financial resources, market, technology and economical and social situations.

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