

A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE OF EMPLOYEES WORKING IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

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ABSTRACT

An appreciable Quality of Work Life is known to be the cornerstone for the success of any organization. Here a sincere attempt is made to know the perception of employees about their Quality of Work Life who are working in different manufacturing industries. The procedure involves the establishment of the relationship between the demographic variables and the dimensions or constructs of the Quality of Work Life. The dimension selected for this study is working conditions and the demographic variable chosen is Experience & Designation. In order to show the strength of association between these variables, bivariate analyses and descriptive analyses is carried out. The results of the study show that the Working conditions of the employees are appreciable.

Keywords:

Quality of Work Life (QWL); Working conditions; Experience & Designation.

INTRODUCTION

The present age is an era of globalization that accelerates technological advancements and demands for the best of brains. Quality of Work Life (QWL) refers to the favorableness or un-favorableness of a total job environment for the people working in an organization.^[1] The Management becomes more concerned with the individual's welfare, inter personal relationships and working conditions only when the management gives due importance to QWL programs. By encouraging and adopting QWL programmes excellent working conditions can be ensured for its employees.

The very basic objective of implementing QWL techniques is to develop jobs and working conditions that are excellent for employees as well as for the better health of an organization. Thus it refers to the level of satisfaction, motivation, commitment and involvement an individual experiences at the work.^[2]

QWL programme comprises of open communication, equitable reward systems, a concern for employee's job security, satisfying careers and participation in decision making

Thus, QWL includes every aspect of a person's work which includes working condition, job security, pay and allowances, recognition, appreciation, development, interpersonal relation, etc. and its effect on his/her life outside work. Therefore, it can be said that QWL is concerned with improving life not only at work but also life outside work.

Summi Arora (2016) narrated about the conceptualization of QWL, in which the achievement of a higher level of QWL can be attained through adequate working conditions, job security, fair pay, organizational support, opportunities for advancement, good interpersonal relations, work life balance, participation of workers in decision making, safe and healthy work environment and open communication.

Stephen (2012), shows the importance of small scale Industrial units to the growth of Indian economy and the importance of people to the organization. The employers should take unswerving and steadfast measures to improve the QWL of employees at the Industrial units. Such measures, for sure will benefit employee, employer and the nation as a whole. Some of the measures which are to be taken due care are, Acceptable and fair compensation, Fringe benefits and welfare measures, Job security, Physical work environment, Work load and job stress.^[5]

Lau, Wong, Chan and Law (2001) defines Quality of Work Life as a positive working atmosphere that promotes satisfaction by rewarding employees, promoting job security and career development opportunities. Ultimately Quality of Work Life and its relationship with employee health and performance has become a clear objective for many of the human resource policies in modern organizations.^[6]

Lau and Bruce (1998) states that QWL is an exciting multidimensional construct that currently includes concepts such as job security, reward systems, training and career advancements opportunities and participative decision making. According to Taylor (1979) two significant attributes which forms the critical components of QWL are extrinsic job factors of wages and working conditions and some of the intrinsic job factors are individual power, social support, etc. ^[7]

According to Gerber et al (1998) “working conditions are created by the interaction of employee with their organizational climate, and includes psychological as well as physical working conditions”⁸. Here working conditions denotes to the working environment and features of an employee’s terms and conditions of employment. MarijaTopuzovskaLatkovic (2013) analyzes the relevance of the QWL, from a scientific, business and social perspective and comes out with palpable changes in the paradigms that affect work life in vigorous, domestic and global business environment. The Quality of Work Life is significant for enhancement of organizational performance as well for general welfare of employees. It presents an essential aspect of work ethics and working conditions. According to Mirvis and Lawler (1984) working condition is the crucial to a good quality of working life. The working conditions is not just limited to the physical environment in which the employees work but also comprises of safe work environment, equal employment opportunities, Opportunities for advancement, equitable wages, respect, etc. ^[8]

From the literature review it is evident that though there are several dimensions which influences QWL of employees in an organization, one of the important dimension considered for this piece of research is working conditions. This dimension is considered to be a dependent variable. On the other hand the demographic details such as Experience and Designation is considered to be an Independent variable. Hence the objectives of the study is to know the perception of the employees about the QWL they enjoy in their respective organizations and to know the strength of the association between the dependent and independent variables. The association between independent and dependent variables is known by carrying out Pearson Chi-square test and Fisher’s exact test. Descriptive analysis is also carried out to know the general perception of the employees about their QWL. Further the dimension of QWL selected for this study is influenced by few critical attributes or items. It is evident from the literature review that the items influencing the dimension „Working condition“ are Supervision, Stress, Leadership, Physical working conditions, Work load and Conflict.

The two separate demographic variables Designation and Experience are combined as one independent variable. The Hypothesis describes the relationship between Designation and Experience, which is an independent variable and the dimension of QWL which is a dependent variable. This independent variable is further categorized as Juniors and Seniors, whose details are shown in the below table.

Table 1. Classification of Experience and Designation group

Sl.No.	Description		Name of the Group
	Designation	Experience in years	
1.	Engineer, Supervisor, Foreman, Executive, etc.	0-5	Juniors (J’s)
2.	Senior Engineer, Deputy Manager, Manager, etc.	Above 5 years	Seniors (S’s)

The hypotheses for Experience and Designation is formulated with respect to the dimension „Working conditions“. The null hypotheses states that;

H1: Working Conditions are more favorable amidst Seniors in comparison with Juniors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Basically the primary data was composed through a well-structured questionnaire. The data collection tool was a written Questionnaire (also referred to as self-administered questionnaire) which consisted of questions related to the dimension(s) and its pertinent items. Demographic details of the respondents were also collected in the same questionnaire. The respondents were supposed to respond on a five point Likert scale for each question asked. Though there are different methods of sampling, the method chosen in the research is “Simple Random Sampling”, which selects samples by methods that allow each possible sample to have an equal probability of being

picked and each item in the entire population to have an equal chance of being included in the sample. Hence a sample size of 196 is obtained from a population size of 400. Further all the necessary analyses are carried out with respect to the acquired sample size of 196.

The target population selected was the employees working at supervisory level in various large scale private manufacturing industries. These employees were supervisors, foremen, front line managers, etc. but not the workers working on the shop floor. In other words the questionnaire was administered to only the eligible or qualified population who were able to understand and carefully respond to the questions mentioned in the questionnaire. A test and re-test method was used to find the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Hence Reliability factor also known as Cronbach's Alpha obtained was 0.810.

Descriptive Analysis:

The descriptive statistics of the sample shows different measures of dispersion and central tendency such as Frequency or Count, Mean, Standard deviation, Minimum and Maximum values with respect to the selected dimension of QWL.

Dimension 1: Working Condition

Table 2. Descriptive analysis for Working conditions

Items	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation
Supervision	196	3.5051	1	5	1.1208
Stress	196	3.4030	1	5	1.1028
Leadership	196	3.3826	1	5	1.1100
Physical working conditions	196	3.2857	1	5	1.0907
Work load	196	3.3571	1	5	1.0051
Conflict	196	3.4897	1	5	1.0883

From the table 2. It is apparent that, for the count of 196 subjects, the Mean for the rating given by the respondents on a 5 point Likert scale is around 3.39 and the Standard deviation is around 1.08 which infers that most of the respondents Agree if atleast do not Strongly Agree. This shows that the percentage of respondents agreeing to have good Working conditions is around 68% (3.39/5)

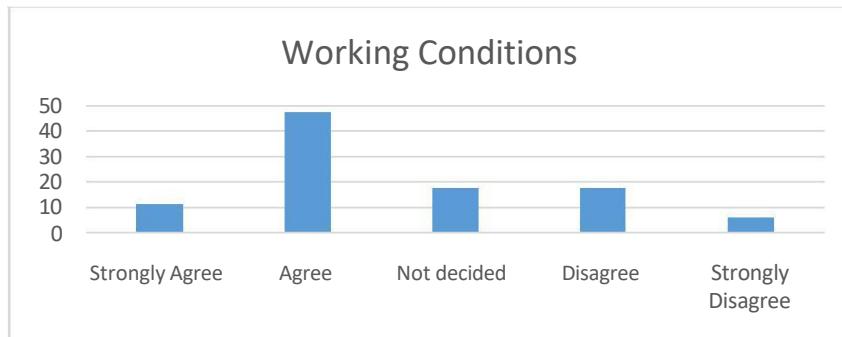


Figure 1. Agreement in percentage of respondent's response to Working conditions

From the chart shown in the figure 1. It is evident that around 48% of the respondents Agree, 12% of the respondents Strongly agree, 17% remain undecided, 17% of them Disagree and finally only 6% of them Strongly disagree. Hence majority of the respondents Agree that Working conditions are appreciable in their organization

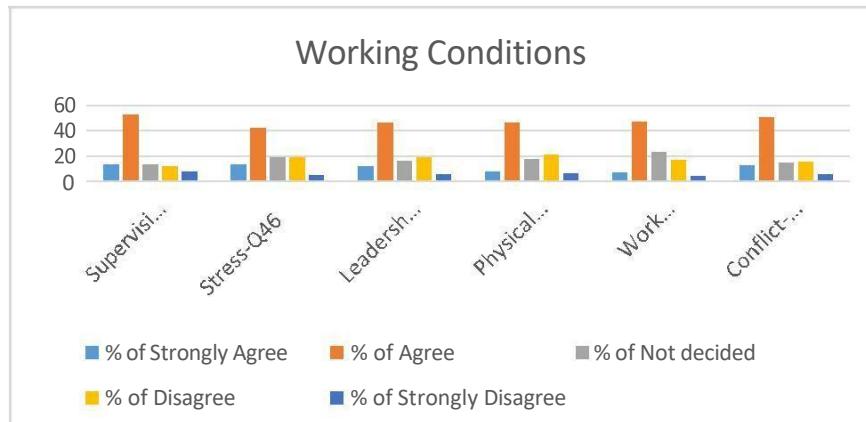


Figure 2. Agreement in percentage of respondent's response to each item of the dimension 'Working conditions'

From the figure 2. It is evident that around 48% of the respondents Agree that the items of Working conditions namely Supervision, Stress, Leadership, Physical working conditions and Work load are adequate. Also Conflict which is the last item of the dimension working condition is minimal in their respective organization

Bivariate test statistic of the sample

Pearson's Chi-square test and Fishers Exact tests were carried out on the selected dimension of QWL with respect to the demographic variable „Experience and Designation". The details of the analyses is as shown below.

Table 3. Cross tabulation between Experience & Designation and Dimensions of QWL

Sl. No.	Dimensions of QWL	Preferences	Experience and Designation					
			Juniors			Seniors		
			Count	Expected Count	% within Experience and Designation	Count	Expected Count	% within Experience and Designation
1.	WC	SD	0	0.6	0.00	1	0.4	1.30
		D	9	7.7	7.80	4	5.3	5.00
		ND	41	43.2	35.30	32	29.8	40.00
		A	62	61	53.40	41	42	51.30
		SA	4	3.6	3.40	2	2.4	2.50
		Total	116	116	100.00	80	80	100.00

The above table shows the Observed values, the Expected values and the percentage of responses pertinent to the five point scale for „Working conditions“ with respect to Experience & designation. The percentages of expected counts less than 5 is 40% for working conditions. As the percentages of the expected count for this dimension is above 20%, Fishers Exact test is carried out with respect to this dimension.

Table 4. Significance test Working condition w.r.t. Experience & Designation

Sl.No.	Dimension	Significance tests for EXPDEG	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)	Exact Sig (2-sided)
2.	Working Conditions	Pearson Chi-square	-	4	0.653	-
		Fisher's Exact Test	-	-	-	0.734

From the above it is very much evident that the Asymptotic significance for Pearson Chi-square statistic varies for the dimension „Working conditions“. It has a *p*-value equal to 0.653. Since this value is greater than 0.05, the Null hypotheses H1 is accepted. As the expected values for this dimension was less than 5, Fisher's Exact test exhibits a *p*-value of 0.734. Hence as even this value is greater than the level of significance, null hypotheses are accepted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It is known that the dimension „Working conditions“ is dependent upon a host of items namely, Supervision, Stress, Leadership, Physical working conditions, Work load and Conflict. After ardent observation of the descriptive analysis, (From Table 2, Mean = 3.39 (68%) and from Figure 1 & 2 it is evident that 48 % of the employees agree to have good working conditions) it can be understood that most of the employees agree that all the stated items of the dimension have a positive impact on the growth of the employees. In other words, the employees perceive that there exists appropriate supervision and support in their organization, secondly the employees consider that they experience a stress-free and conducive environment at their work place and the leadership in their organization is very participative. Thirdly, the employees believe that the physical working conditions are optimal at their work place and also they accept that the work load is easily bearable and enjoyable in their organization. Finally the employees recognize that the work environment and working conditions are very harmonious and conflict-free.

It is observed from bivariate analysis (Table 3 & 4.) that, Working conditions are more favorable amongst Seniors when compared to Juniors. Hence Hypotheses pertinent to Working conditions is accepted.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the employees believe that the Quality of Work Life in their organizations is appreciable but there exists few areas which needs to be addressed and strengthened. Since the dimension and its respective attributes is associated with Experience and Designation there lies some amount of disagreement in the perception of the employees concerning QWL. Employees rate Stress free environment in their respective industries to be least in comparison with other items such as leadership, supervision, work load, etc. Hence it is recommended for the employers to create an environment in their organization which promotes tasks or assignments which do not put the

employees under undue pressure or stress. It is also recommended to take necessary actions to relieve stress among the employees by practicing employee development programs and creating a conducive atmosphere which will benefit the employees and the organization in a long run.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge my profound gratitude to Dr. KVA Balaji for the contribution he made to the success of this paper during my research work.

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