

A Study of Review of Literature on QWL – Manufacturing Sector

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Abstract: *Work life balance is a crucial factor for workers to contribute to the growth of the organization as well for their own wellbeing. Employees spend most of their time and energy in their workplace. Therefore, it is essential for the employees to be satisfied with their job and the organization. Since the economic reforms in India, there is a growing disparity in terms of socio-economical, psychological and personal wellbeing among the employees in the conventional manufacturing industries and the fast growing knowledge-based industries. The literature survey attempts to analyze the determinants of QWL in these sectors and the QWL measures implemented and how the workers in these two sectors perceive QWL and job satisfaction. The purpose of this study was to analyze the determinants of QWL in Manufacturing Sector and how the employees in this sector perceive QWL and Job Satisfaction.*

Keywords: *QWL, manufacturing sector, overall satisfaction, job satisfaction, QWL factors*

I. Introduction

A study of the available literature on the Quality of Work Life was carried out to identify the research gap and to set direction for the proposed research. This chapter provides for an outline of the studies done so far. A few studies discuss the benefits of working in groups and the involvement of these workers in organizational design (Pasmore, Francis, Haldeman, & Shani, 1982). Similarly, a smattering of studies on the relationship between QWL and work related factors are also found. Nevertheless, there is not much study about the various factors which actually affect the QWL of workers in manufacturing, as well as service industries in Karnataka.

A constant effort has been made to improve the work life ever since industrial revolution. A study conducted by the U.S. Congress, Robert F. Hozie reported the fight for scientific management techniques by unions, especially the mechanists. Thus, the Labor Union activities in 1930s and 1940s brought about improvement in work conditions through collective bargaining and legislation. In the 1950s, several theories were proposed by psychologists to create a positive link between morale and productivity that improved human relations. During the same period, job enrichment schemes and equal employment opportunity were introduced (Walton R. E., 1974). The term QWL was first used in the late 1960s, originating with General Motors and the United Auto Workers, to describe the workers' level of job satisfaction. In 1960's, Eric Trist and his colleagues developed work designs which were aimed for better integration of technology with people (Trist & Bamforth, 1951). Later in the mid-1970s, QWL was considered not only to enhance bottom-line productivity, but also to increase employee identification and a sense of belongingness and pride in their work (Davis & Cherns, 1975; Sashkin & Burke, 1987). Cherns (1978, p. 39) stated that "QWL owes its origins to the marriage of the structural, systems perspective of organizational behaviour with the interpersonal, human relations, supervisory-style perspective."

In contrast to identifying QWL as a specific program, Nadler and Lawler (1983) and Kotze (2005), approached it as a movement. Similarly, Thompson (1983) indicated, "QWL programs propose a movement toward greater engagement with the cooperation, knowledge and tacit skills of the work force." It is a continuing process, not something with a beginning, middle and an end that could be turned on today and turned off tomorrow (Brooks & Gawel, 2001). The focus was on utilizing all of the organization's resources, especially its human resources, better than what was done yesterday and even better tomorrow, developing awareness among all the members of an organization and understanding of the concerns and needs of others, and a willingness to respond to the concerns and needs.

At the same time, Nadler and Lawler (1983) frequently employed the terms "participative management" and "industrial democracy" to encompass the ideals of the QWL movement. Skrovan (1983) argues that the involvement and participation of employees in the creation of their work place is a central focus of every QWL process. Through this process, all members of the organization have some say about the design of their jobs and the work environment, in general (Bachner & Bentley, 1983). Similarly, according to Rubenstein (1983), QWL is defined "as the process used by an organization to unlock the creative potential of its people by involving them in decisions affecting their work lives." From this context, Ellinger and Nissen (1987, p.198) defined QWL as "an environment based on mutual respect, which supports and encourages individual participation and open communication in matters that affect our jobs, our business, our futures and

our feelings of self-worth.” Further, in order to acquire meaningful basis for the organization’s mission, active participation of employee is necessary for the integration of organizational needs with worker growth needs(Rubenstein, 1983).

However, in the past, many workers have not been consulted to contribute their knowledge and skills to the solution or organizational problems as they did not possess the required skills (Kotze, The nature and development of the construct quality of work life, 2005). But Kantsperger and Kuhnz (2005) argues that systematic and regular training programs would give power to employees for their participation in decision-making process.

Maccoby (1984) concurred that QWL grew out of the collective bargaining process. It is, therefore, a commitment of management and union to support localized activities and experiments to increase employee participation in determining how to improve their work. This perspective is somewhat similar to the movement approach. The growth of QWL projects requires a developing relationship between management and union built on mutual respect for institutional interests and values (Maccoby, 1984; Kotze, 2005). On the contrary, Bluestone (1980) emphasizes that a QWL program cannot be successful unless the local parties develop a collective bargaining environment of mutual respect, where solving problems supersedes beating the other party down. In line with this view, Deutsch and Schurman (1993) have shown that unions in the US have developed strategies to augment the employee participation in decision-making, especially in the areas of new technology, work environment and skill training and development.

Sirgy et al. (2001) highlighted out two dominant theoretical approaches from the QWL literature: need satisfaction and spill over. The need satisfaction approach to QWL is based on satisfaction of needs models developed by Maslow (1954), McClelland (1961), Herzberg (1966) and Alderfer (1972). The basic theory of this approach to QWL is that individuals want to fulfil their basic needs through their work and get satisfaction. Sirgy et al. (2001) goes on to explain about the spill-over approach to QWL as satisfaction in one area of life may influence satisfaction in another. For example, satisfaction with one’s job may influence other life domains, such as family, leisure, social, health, financial, etc. Spill-over can be either horizontal or vertical. Horizontal spill-over refers to the influence of one life domain on the neighbouring domains (e.g. job satisfaction, may influence feelings of satisfaction in the family life domain and vice versa). To understand the concept of vertical spill over, the concept of domain hierarchy must be understood. Life domains (job, family, leisure, community, etc.) are organized hierarchically in people’s minds. The most super-ordinate domain is “overall life” which is at the top in the domain hierarchy. Feelings in this top most domain reflect what quality of life researcher’s call as life satisfaction, subjective well-being and personal happiness. The sub-ordinate domain, such as family, job, leisure and community, follows the most super-ordinate life domain(Sirgy et al., 2001). Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with each of these major life domains “spills over” to the most super-ordinate domain, thus affecting life satisfaction. QWL does not only affect job satisfaction but also satisfaction in other life domains such as family life, social life, leisure life, financial life etc. Therefore the focus of QWL is beyond job satisfaction. It involves the satisfaction at workplace with the job, satisfaction in personal life and satisfaction with overall life and subjective well-being.

Furthermore, Van Der Doef and Maes (1999) and Hade, et al. (2007) also regards job satisfaction as an outcome variable of QWL. Brooks and Gawel (2001) distinguish between job satisfaction and QWL by stating that conventional job satisfaction research focuses on the employee’s likes and dislikes, and sees the solution to problems as something for management to “fix”. QWL also focuses on the provision of opportunities for employees to make meaningful contributions to their organizations (Rauduan Che Rose, L.S, Uli, & Idris, 2006).

II. Definitions of QWL

Keith Davis (1981)	Favourableness or unfavourableness of job environment for people.
Flanagan (1982), Zeffane (1994)Rose et al. (2006)	Focusing on a person’s job satisfaction as the key determinant.
Stepp (1985), Havlovic (1991)	Increasing worker participation and control of the work environment.
Sashkin & Burke (1987), Kongkiti Phusvant (2010)	Stressing the interaction of individual needs with the organizational and social dynamics of the workplace.
Robbins (1989)	Organization response to employee needs by developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their lives at work.
Kiernan & Knutson (1990)	Incorporating the worker’s personal needs with company role expectations.
Sangeetha Jain (1991)	Conscious efforts that are aimed at improving working conditions, work content and its attendant conditional like safety, security wages and benefits can legitimately qualify as QWL activity.

III. QWL in Manufacturing Sector

Adhikari (1992) states that most of the jobs in manufacturing sectors are simple to perform, routine, repetitive in nature, involve conventional technology, lack of innovation and do not require a high level of

mental efforts. He further observed that jobs are less creative and innovative in their respective field and therefore workers have less challenges in the work.

Manufacturing industries face a number of problems, such as high cost for raw materials, absence of corporate cultures, weak enforcement of rules and regulations, a little access to international markets, insecurity among investors, poor financial management, overstaffing, operational inefficiencies, dissatisfied employees, increasing quality complaints, government interference, and lack of control mechanism and efforts (Adhikari, 1992; 2000; 2005; IIDS, 1996; Pant and Pradhan, 2002). Some of these problems are created by increasing employees' dissatisfaction which leads to low capacity utilization in the manufacturing industries.

The QWL in the manufacturing sector have been studied by the researchers trying to understand the satisfaction level of the employees with respect to their workplace. Hawthorne (1963) studied out how employers and government can help the worker to improve productivity and how can worker themselves contribute to improve the QWL. According to him, the productivity improvement occurs best with respect to economic growth. He demonstrated that many workers face the problems of change and insecurity. Training can play an important part to help ease the situation and help the workers to move within the industry. In addition, teamwork can help achieve increased productivity; however, the benefits reaped from it should be shared fairly among employers, workers and the public generally.

Kavoussi et al. (1978) studied the absenteeism in two textile factories in Iran. Poor working conditions in the factories led to the high absenteeism rate, which the authors say could be improved by improving the quality of working life as absenteeism have widespread consequences across the factory. A similar study conducted on absenteeism by Haque (1992) revealed that QWL is positively related to performance and negatively correlated to absenteeism. At the same time, there was no correlation between perceived QWL and workers' age, education and job experience.

Sinha and Sayeed (1980) investigated the relationship between QWL, job stress and performance. Through their results they have demonstrated that higher QWL leads to greater job satisfaction. A contrasting view between low and high educational industrial workers in India was studied by Rahman (1984). He found that subjects having low educational background and lower income had a better perception of QWL than those having higher education and higher income. Suri, et al. (1991) conducted a study on the quality of work life practices among the manufacturing and service sector workers. Several trends that have implication on the QWL practices and their outcomes were shown through their study. They showed that public as well as private sector organisations did not have a preference for the job and workplace redesign programmes. On the contrary, organisations prefer system-wide practices rather than isolated experiments that are limited to certain sections or departments.

QWL among women working in public and private sectors was studied by Wadud (1996). The results of the study indicated a significantly higher QWL among the private sector women employees than their counterparts in the public sector. Further, in comparison with the older and the lower experienced groups, younger group and the higher experienced group had significantly higher perception of QWL.

Hoque and Rahman (1999) conducted a comparative study on the public and private industrial sector workers in Bangladesh (Dhaka) to assess the QWL. They studied the relationship among QWL, job behaviour and demographic variables of the workers. The results of the study established that the private sector workers have significantly higher perception of QWL than their public sector counterparts. Similarly, QWL had significant positive correlation with performance and negative correlation with absenteeism and accident. The study conducted by Adhikari (1992) shows that most of the union leaders are seeking new opportunities in the work in order to get higher satisfaction and thus improve their QWL. Some companies have formal system of performance check and few of the union leaders indicated that their promotion is done on the basis of work performed. In the manufacturing sector, physical conditions at workplace plays an important role in worker's QWL. The study indicates that enterprises need to increase safety measures like fire-exits, fire alarms, and safe drinking water to improve the QWL. Additionally, skill development of workers can be addressed through on-the-job training.

The union leaders believe that QWL in Nepal is primarily related to adequate pay and benefits. The extrinsic character of jobs like wages and salaries, incentives and benefits, physical conditions of work place and facilities are still more essential to maintain QWL than the intrinsic features of jobs like meaningful jobs and work autonomy in the work sites. Other important factors are job security and good working environments which were felt necessary and prioritized by leaders to enhance the quality of work life. As the extrinsic rewards are important for the better QWL, the intrinsic factors like, challenges at work, autonomy are necessary for better productivity and efficiency.

Mankidy (2000) posted that "the more positive the industrial relations processes, the greater the possibility of improved QWL." He proposed that positive industrial relations should make sure those flexible hours of work, better wages, employment benefits, conducive work environment, job satisfaction, career prospects, and meaningful employee involvement in decision making etc. are available to workers in order to

construct better QWL. The study concluded that the progressive QWL will help to improve the family life of the employees, which in turn will result in improved performance of the organisation. Organization culture has to be built around work culture. A study was conducted among 282 executives from automobile companies by Singh (2001). The results indicated that most of the dimensions of the organization culture were positively correlated with the work culture.

The correlation of group cohesiveness in sugar industry in Bangladesh by Sengupta and Sadique (2001). They showed that there was a positive correlation between QWL and group cohesiveness and the dimensions of the QWL contributed towards group cohesiveness. Kanagalakshmi and Nirmala Devei (2003) attempted to assess if the QWL had any relationship with work related factors and with demographic factors. Their results showed that workers perceive significantly higher QWL according to the demographic factors of age, income, and education. Beh and Rose (2007) tested the relationship between QWL and job performance by conducting a survey among 475 managers in a manufacturing industry. They observed a significant positive relationship between QWL and Job performance.

Layer, et al. (2009, p. 413) set out to find the relationship between human performance in manufacturing sector and the cognitive demands of the worker and the perceived quality of work life attributes. The results of the study showed that human performance was the result of the combined and uncorrelated effect of cognitive demands and quality of work attributes experienced by workers. The main implication of this research was that a worker's perceived QWL attributes can be paired with the cognitive demand related to a particular manufacturing task to optimize the worker's performance.

On studying the textile and engineering workers in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, Subramaniam and Anjani (2010) found that the major factors affecting the QWL in the textile and engineering industries workers was the nature of the job, economic package, better opportunities in the job circle, relationships with co-workers and higher ups, role in decision making process, good job environment, pressures from home and job, work time management, presence of counselling facilities or grievance cell and opportunities for growth. This was no different from any of the other industries.

Another survey conducted by Indumathy and Kamalraj (2012) among the textile industry worker to understand the level of QWL. They found that the workers are most satisfied with work environment and safety measures in the company. Workers are not much satisfied with the relation and cooperation with co-workers and job security and they are least satisfied with salary.

Jagatheesh (2013) assessed the quality of work life of employees in the industrial estates of Kerala by interviewing 322 respondents. He reported that the socio-economic background of the employees in the industrial estate is not satisfactory for economic development. Moreover, he observed that the employees are not satisfied with their compensation, opportunity to use and develop their capacities, opportunities for continued growth and security, constitutionalism in the work organisation, and their work and total life space.

Rubel and Kee (2014) studied the relationship between QWL, job satisfaction and performance in the readymade garment companies in Bangladesh. They found that compensation and benefits, behaviour of supervisor, and work life balance had a significant influence on job satisfaction, while job satisfaction was significantly correlated to an employee's job performance.

In 2012, Aggarwal investigated the 'work life balance' amongst the workers in the Gujarat refinery, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Vadodara, Gujarat. The major constructs used in the study were perception of life by the employees, effect of stressors in work place and at home, effect of constructs which are related to professional and personal life, mind-set of the employees toward the regulations of the organization. The employees wanted the organization to be more worker-friendly and understanding to the problems of the employees' needs and support them with good work-life balance (WLB) and relaxing atmosphere. A good WLB can bring a positive attitude in the minds of the employees towards the company. From this result, it is understood that organizations can benefit by adopting WLB, wherein the employees become more responsive to the support provided which adds to their performance.

Adhikari and Gautam (2010) conducted a study of Nepalese firms to investigate the extent to which these firms comply with labour laws on QWL and to evaluate the expectations of union leaders on different dimensions of QWL. Unfortunately, the results revealed that the QWL conditions in the workplaces are deteriorating in Nepal. In order to create an effective and harmonious industrial relations environment, the government, employers, and union leaders should be committed to work on QWL initiatives.

Sankar and Mohanraj (2013) conducted the studies on QWL of workers in the industries of sago and starch manufacturing from tapioca in Tamil Nadu, India. Tamil Nadu is the highest producer of sago in India and thus sago production is a major industry in this region. The existing work life conditions and the relationship between QWL and the wellness and work environment of the workers in this industry have been evaluated in the study. It was noted that the workers exhibited a high work culture and had a good QWL in these industries.

Based on the study we can conclude that in the manufacturing sector, the employees give more importance to job satisfaction. Therefore, the company will have to ensure that they provide new opportunities to work to increase the level of satisfaction. Increasing job satisfaction can reduce turnover rate, absenteeism, coming late for work and negative feelings. Past studies have highlighted the repetitive nature of the job in the manufacturing sector resulting in dissatisfaction with the job. Firms should provide employees with an opportunity to think creatively and innovatively with respect to their work, in order to overcome the routine working procedures and making the work challenging. This study clearly shows the lack of continuous training being given to the employees. Training is an important aspect that could provide a sense of confidence and a clear view and knowledge about the procedures and the expected standards of the organization. Therefore, manufacturing companies should focus on training its employees, not only to develop the skill set, but also instill confidence in them to make decisions pertaining to their role. Safe and healthy working condition is one of the factors that scored the least loadings. This is an area of concern in most of the manufacturing companies, as working in these companies often involves physical risk factors, such as procedure causing injuries and exposure to harmful radiations and chemicals, which is a threat to the very sustenance of life. Therefore, manufacturing companies should make efforts not only to install safety measures inclusive of fire extinguishers, fire alarms, first aid, but also to train the employees on how to use them.

Manufacturing firms should revamp the HR strategy for the employees introducing unbiased performance appraisal systems that would have built in performance linked incentives and rewards and recognition system to motivate the employees to perform better. Organizations should provide equal employment opportunities without discrimination against gender, age, ethnic, or minority. Working environment should be conducive to the employees with adequate appropriate equipment, work breaks, and division of labour. Ombudsman should be available to address the grievances of the employees and disciplinary procedures.

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