

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AMONG IT SECTOR EMPLOYEES

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Introduction

Robbins (1989) defines quality of work life 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". In a nutshell QWL may be defined as the favourable conditions of a workplace that support and promote employees satisfaction by providing them rewards, job security, and growth opportunities (Udal Pareek and T.Venkateshwara Rao, 1985). The core of this concept is the value of treating the workers as human being and emphasizing their development and involvement in work decisions.

ITES Firms in India

ITES services have proved to be growth engine for the Indian economy. According to NASSCOM (2008), the revenues of the Indian IT-BPO industry (including the domestic market) grew by 28 per cent, touching USD 52 billion in FY 2007-08, up from USD 39.6 billion in the previous year. Software and services export increased by 29 per cent during the same period, with revenue, crossing the USD 40.4 billion mark. Within this segment, services export touched USD 23.1 billion, while engineering services and product export revenue grew to USD 6.4 billion during FY 07-08, a jump of 29 per cent. BPO export, meanwhile were up by 30 per cent during the year. By maintaining its export momentum, the IT-BPO industry indicated that it was on track on reach USD 60 billion in exports and USD 73-75 billion in overall software and services revenues by 2010. Direct employment reached nearly 2 million - with 1.5 million in the exports segment, a YOY increase of 26 per cent in 2008. The indirect employment multiplier suggested that the industry created between 6-8 million additional jobs. (Geetika and Singh, 2010).

ITES firms in India have strategic HR advantage of huge army of English speaking Indian Workforce. The work force is well trained and available on low pay in comparison to other countries like China, Germany etc. Being a knowledge driven industry, the knowledge, skills and efficiency of employees would have significant bearing to the overall efficiency of organizations. With rising levels of education and consequent aspirations and growing employees' consciousness of their rights, it has become imperative for Indian organizations to take care of the quality of work life. All they demand for a high level of motivation and commitment to the job and organizational goals on the part of employees rest on quality of work life

Need for the Study

The winds of liberalization, privatization and globalization are blowing in our country. Competencies and proficiencies of a person that were essential yesterday may lose significance today and may become extinct tomorrow. So the message of the day is “If you lag behind, you will be left behind”. To sustain and progress in such an environment, skills and competencies of the employees should be multifaceted, upgraded and attuned to specific needs. The development of HRD practices at the organisation is the need of the hour for better performance. In order to attain the organizational performance, the quality of work life at the organisation has to be properly and periodically reviewed by the HR department or the owner of the organisation.

Quality of work life is a multifaceted concept, implying the concern for the members of the organisation irrespective of the level they belong to. It covers the employees' perception or feeling above every dimension of work including economic rewards and benefits, security, working conditions, organizational and inter-personal relationships and intrinsic meaning in the people's life. Only the organisation with the high perception on QWL among the employees can achieve the organizational performance by two ways. One is related to increase in the productivity of the employees and another one is to avail the economies of expertise among the existing employees. QWL trend is triggered by the number of projects and programmes initiated with the primary aim of getting employees and management work collaboratively to improve the QWL. In the case of IT companies, majority of the companies suffer by high labour turnover and absenteeism among the employees. Even though the economic development of our nation rests on the development of industries, only few companies are focusing on the QWL at their companies. It is the time to understand the need of QWL, evaluation of existing QWL practices and employees' perception on QWL at the IT companies.

Literature Reviews

Lawler (2014) defines QWL in terms of job characteristics and work conditions. He highlights that the core dimension of the entire QWL in the organization is to improve employees' well-being and productivity. The most common interaction that relates to improvement of employees well-being and productivity is the design of the job. Job design that is able to provide higher employee satisfaction is expected to be more productive.

Beukema (2014) described QWL as the degree to which employees are able to shape their jobs activity, in accordance with their options, interests and needs. It is the degree of power an organization gives to its employees to design their work. This means that the individual employee has the full freedom to design his job functions to meet his personal needs and interests. This definition emphasizes the individual's choice of interest in carrying out the task.

Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger (2014) defined QWL as the feelings that employees have towards their jobs, colleagues and organizations that ignite a chain leading to the organizations' growth and profitability. A good feeling towards their job means the employees feel happy doing work which will lead to a productive work environment.

Lau, et al., (2012) defined QWL as the favourable working environment that supports and promotes satisfaction by providing employees with rewards, job security and career growth opportunities. Indirectly the definition indicates that an individual who is not satisfied with reward may be satisfied with the job security and to some extent would enjoy the career opportunity provided by the organization for their personal as well as professional's growth.

Employee satisfaction is essential for implementing high-performance or high-commitment work systems (Osterman, 2010), which often lead to high financial and market performance.

Objectives of the Study

- i) To discuss the profile of the employees at the IT companies;
- ii) To exhibit the level of quality of work life (QWL) at IT companies;

Research Design

Since the present study has made an attempt to explain the existence of QWL at the IT companies and also the consequences of QWL among their employees, it is descriptive in nature.

Sampling Procedure

The present study has followed the purposive sampling technique to identify the sample employees. All the 47 IT companies registered at IT Association, Coimbatore have been included in the present study. In total, 4 each employees from each IT company had been selected as the sample of the present study. Hence, the sample size came to 188 employees. All the samples are purposively identified by the researcher with the help of the General Manager of each IT company at Coimbatore.

Collection of Data

Since the study highly depends on the primary data, a special care was taken to prepare an interview schedule. The schedule is divided into four important parts. The first part covers the background of the employees whereas the second part includes the existence of quality of work life in the IT companies. The third part covers the consequences of QWL in IT companies. A pre-test was conducted among the 20 IT employees working at 5 different IT companies. Based on their feedback, modifications and additions were carried out to prepare a final schedule.

Dimensions of QWL

The term quality of work life (QWL) has become well known not only to social scientists, but to lay men as well. Klatt, Murdick and Schuster have identified eleven dimensions of QWL in the year 1985. They are: pay and stubbles of employment, occupational stress, organisational health programmes, alternative work schedule, participative management and control of work, recognition, superior-subordinate relations, grievance procedure, and adequacy of resources, seniority and merit in promotion and development and employment on permanent basis. Walton [1974] identified eight major conceptual areas of QWL namely adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, opportunities to develop human capabilities, opportunity to for career growth, social integration in the work force, constitutionalism, work and quality of life and social relevance work.

Walton (1980) listed eight conceptual categories of QWL namely adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy environment, development of human capacities, growth and safety, social integration and constitutionalism total life space and social relevance and responsibility.

Mosharraf (2000) analysed the security of employment, job/role clarity, understanding supervisors, work not stressful, access to relevant information and social and welfare facilities to measure the QWL in banks. Winter et al., (2000) viewed QWL for attitudinal response among the employees which includes role stress, job characteristics, supervisory, structural and social characteristics to directly and in directly shape academicians experiences, attitudes and behaviours. Sirgy et al., (2001) examined the quality of work life in terms of how their work lives satisfy eight basic needs of employees.

In the present study the QWL in the I.T. companies have been measured with the help of 10 important factors namely wages and salary, training and development, career development, recognition, security, safety measures, work schedule, inter-personal relationship, job content and working environment. The variables used to measure the above said 10 important QWL factors are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Variables related to QWL

Sl. No.	Variables	Sl. No.	Variables
I.	Wages and salary (WS)	III.	Career development
1.	Wages and salary is equal or better than in other industry	1.	Career planning and development
2.	Wages and salary based on education	2.	Inside promotional chances
3.	Wages and salary based on responsibility and duties	3.	Autonomy
4.	Wages and salary based on experience	4.	Self-improvement opportunities

5.	Reasonable wages and salary	IV.	Recognition
6.	Wide range of fringe benefits	1.	Rules are common to all
II.	Training and Development (T&D)	2.	Recognition of work
1.	Provision of innovative T & D	3.	Appreciation of suggestion
2.	Provision to take independent decisions	4.	Equal treatment to all
3.	Provision of training in technical development	V.	Security
4.	Wages based on training	1.	Lot of formalities to terminate a worker
5.	Higher number of training programmes	2.	No worry about termination
6.	Training and development	3.	No termination of employees on flimsy ground
		4.	Technology changes never lead to unemployment
VI.	Safety measures	IX.	Job content
1.	Comfortable tools	1.	Job freedom
2.	Provision of safety measure	2.	Role clarity in the job
3.	Free handling of tools	3.	Interesting job
VII.	Work Schedule	X.	Work environment
1.	Apt work load as per the agreement	1.	Better basic amenities at work place
2.	Flexible work schedule	2.	Spacious place
3.	No continuous work without rest	3.	Noise free environment
4.	Work scheme is similar with government organisation		
VIII.	Inter-personal Relationship		
1.	Better relation with top management		
2.	Better work group relations		
3.	Inter-personal openers		
4.	Better relation with boss		

Findings

Descriptive Statistics of the Employees

The important gender among the employees is male. The dominant age group among the employees is 31 to 35 and 36 to 40 years. The most important age group among the male employees is 36 to 40 years. In the case of female respondents, it is 41 to 45 years. The important level of education among the male and female employees is professional education.

The important marital status among the male and female employees is 'married with children'. The dominant family system among the male and female employees is 'nuclear family system'. The important family size among the male and female employees is 3 to 4.

The important personal income per month among the male and female employees is Rs.20000 to 40000. The personal income of the male employees is higher than that among the female respondents. The important family income among the male and female employees is Rs.30000 to Rs.50000 and Rs.70001 to 90000 respectively. The family income per month among the male is higher than that among the female employees.

The important years of experience among the employees are less than 3 years and 3 to 6 years. The important natures of employment among the employees are permanent and temporary.

The dominant number of working hours per day among the male and female employees is 10.01 to 11.00 and above 11.00 hours.

Quality of Work life among the Employees

The important quality of work life factors (QWLF) are drawn from 41 variables. It is narrated into 10 important QWLFs namely salary, training and development, career development, recognition, security, safety measures, work schedule, inter-personal relationship, job content and working environment. The included variables in each factor explain it to a reliable extent.

The salary consists of six variables. It is the most important QWL factor since its Eigen value is highest compared to other factors. The perception on salary among the male employees is moderate whereas level of perception on this factor among the female employees is lesser. The second important QWL factor is training and development. The perception on training and development is noticed as higher among the female employees than that among male employees.

The third and fourth important QWL factor narrated by the factor analysis is career development and recognition. These two QWL consists of 4 variables each in it. The level of perception on career development and recognition among the male employees is higher than that among the female employees. The next QWL factor identified by factor analysis is security which consists of 4 variables. The level of perception on security among the female employees is higher than that among the male employees.

The next two QWL factors identified by factor analysis is safety measures and work schedule. These two factors consist of 3 and 4 variables respectively. The level of perception on above two QWL factors is higher among the female employees than among the male employees. The next QWL factor noticed by the factor analysis is inter-personal relationship. It consists of 4 variables. The employees' perception on inter-personal relationship among the female employees is higher than that among the male employees.

The last two QWL factors identified by the factor analysis are job content and working environment. These factors consist of 3 variables each. The rate of perception on the above said two factors are identified as higher among the female than that among the male employees.

The highly perceived QWL factors among the male employees are salary; and safety measures whereas among the female employees these QWL factors are safety measures and job content. Regarding the perception on the QWL factors, the significant difference among the male and female employees have been identified in the case of security, safety measures, work schedule, job content and working environment. The important discriminant QWL factors among the two groups of employees are job content and work schedule.

Discussions:

Quality of Work Life in IT companies

The employees perception on the quality of work life in IT companies have been measured with the help of variables related to quality of work life factors. The variables included to measure the QWL factors are 41 variables. The employees are asked to rate the above said variables in each important QWL factors at five point scale from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied. The assigned scores on these scales are from 5 to 1 respectively. The score of the variables related to QWL have been included for Exploratory Factor Analysis in order to narrate the variables into QWL factors for further discussion.

Initially, the validity of data for factor analysis has been examined with the help of KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Since the KMO measure of sampling adequacy is greater than 0.50 and the chi-square value is significant at zero per cent level, the validity of data have been confirmed. The EFA has accepted all 41 variables and resulted in the 10 QWLs. The Eigen value, per cent of variation explained by each QWL and the number of variables included in each QWL factor has been shown in Table 2

Table 2 Important QWL factors at the Unit

Sl.No.	IQWLF	Number of Variables in	Eigen Value	Per cent of Variation explained	Cumulative Per cent of Variation Explained
1.	Salary	6	5.0845	13.83	13.83
2.	Training and development	6	4.7711	12.11	25.94
3.	Career development	4	3.0886	8.44	34.38
4.	Recognition	4	2.9917	8.09	42.47
5.	Security	4	2.7345	7.93	50.40
6.	Safety measures	3	2.6082	7.08	57.48
7.	Work schedule	4	2.5881	6.91	64.39
8.	Inter-personal relationship	4	2.0865	6.18	70.57
9.	Job content	3	1.7332	5.33	75.90
10.	Working environment	3	1.4891	5.09	80.99
KMO measure of sampling adequacy: 0.8142			Bartlett's test of sphericity chi-square value: 121.83*		

*Significant at zero per cent level.

The important QWL factors narrated by the EFA are 'salary' and 'training and development' since their Eigen values are 5.0845 and 4.771 respectively. The per cent of variation explained by these two QWL factors are 13.83 and 12.11 per cent respectively. The next three QWL factors are career development, recognition and security since their respective Eigen values are 3.0886, 2.9917 and 2.7345. The per cent of variation explained by these three QWL factors are 8.44, 8.09 and 7.93 respectively.

The next three QWL factors identified by the EFA are safety measures, work schedule and inter-personal relationships since their Eigen values are 2.6082, 2.5881 and 2.0865 respectively. The per cent of variation explained by these three QWL factors are 7.08, 6.91 and 6.18 per cent respectively. The last two QWL factors narrated by the EFA is job content and working environment since their Eigen values are 1.7332 and 1.4891 respectively. The per cent of variation explained by these two factors are 5.33 and 5.09 per cent respectively.

Employees View on QWL Factors in IT Companies

The employees' perception on QWL factors at their companies have been analysed with the help of their perception score on ten QWL factors. In order to analyse the significant difference among the male and female employees regarding their perception on QWL factors, the 't' test have been executed. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 3

Table 3 Employees View on QWL factors at the IT Companies

Sl.No.	QWL factors	Mean Score among the employees		't' statistics
		Male	Female	
1.	Salary	3.0983	3.0675	0.8568
2.	Training and development	2.3560	2.7953	-1.0984
3.	Career development	2.4231	2.6946	-1.9665*
4.	Recognition	2.7051	3.1242	-2.8443*
5.	Security	2.8589	3.2383	-2.9969*
6.	Safety measures	2.9786	3.7081	-3.8584*
7.	Work schedule	2.7137	3.2114	-2.4043*
8.	Inter-personal relationship	2.9017	3.0973	-1.9697
9.	Job content	2.7136	3.3859	-2.5142*
10.	Working environment	2.6881	3.2584	-2.9094

*Significant at five per cent level.

The highly perceived QWL factors among the male employees are salary; and safety measures since their respective mean scores are 3.0983 and 2.9786. The highly perceived QWL factors among the female employees are safety measures and job content since their respective mean scores are 3.7081 and 3.3859. Regarding the employees perception on QWL factors, the significant difference among the two group of employees have been seen in the case of training and development, security, safety measures, work schedule, job

content and working environment since their respective 't' statistics are significant at five per cent level.

Employees' Perception on Quality of Work Life

The employees' perception on quality of work has been measured with the help of the mean scores of 41 variables related to quality of work life. It is denoted by SQWL. The SQWL among the employees is confined to less than 2.00; 2.00 to 3.00; 3.01 to 4.00 and above 4.00. The distribution of employees on the basis of their SQWL is given in Table 4

Table 4 SQWL among the Employees

Sl.No.	SQWL	Number of employees		Total
		Male	Female	
1.	Less than 2.00	22	24	46
2.	2.00-3.00	42	23	65
3.	3.01-4.00	27	29	56
4.	Above 4.00	15	6	21
	Total	106	82	188

The important SQWL among the employees is 2.00 to 3.00 and 3.01 to 4.00 which constitutes 34.57 and 29.78 per cent to the total respectively. The employees with the SQWL of above 4.00 constitute 11.17 per cent to the total. The important SQWL among the male employees is 2.00 to 3.00 and 3.01 to 4.00 which constitutes 39.62 and 25.47 per cent to its total respectively. Among the supervisors, these two are 3.01 to 4.00 and less than 2.00 which constitutes 35.37 and 10.34 per cent to its total respectively. The analysis infers that the view on quality of work life among the female employees is higher than that among the male employees.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that the quality of work among the employees in IT companies is not at the appreciable level especially among the male employees.

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