Chapter 3

Research Design & Methodology
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RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

With the growing importance of human resources as a significant factor of production, new areas of Human Resource Development are attracting the attention of academicians, researchers, administrators and practitioners equally. The philosophy of management towards enhancing the effectiveness of human resources is changing fast. This ever-increasing importance of human resources in an organization has led to the study of the various attributes, which are helpful in enhancing the Quality of Work Life (QWL) of employees in an organization. QWL is an initiative where organizations support the demands of work, personal commitment and individual needs of employees.

According to Runcie (1980), if an employee has a positive perception of the QWL in the company, he or she will probably strive to further improve the working conditions, increase production and improve the quality of the products.

Different persons have viewed QWL differently. Carlson (1980) has conceptualized QWL in a variety of ways - (a) as a movement, (b) as a set of organizational interventions, and (c) as a type of working life felt by employees. In the present study, we are concerned with how the employees perceive their quality of working life experience. The comprehensiveness of the concept of QWL is reflected in the definition given by Guest (1979). For him, the quality of working life is a generic phrase that covers a person’s feelings about every dimension of work including economic rewards, benefits, security, working conditions, organizational and interpersonal relations and their intrinsic meaning. So with these as the frame of action, our main concern is in finding out what comprises a quality of work life experience among employees in public and private sector organizations.
After having studied the theoretical perspectives on Quality of Work Life in detail, a methodology was formulated for designing and conducting the research. Research is the application of science to the art of management. Research minimizes the degree of uncertainty involved in the management decision and it reduces the probability of making a wrong choice amongst alternative courses of action. Research is characterized by being systematic, objective, reproducible, relevant and controllable. A systematic approach is essential for good research and each step must be so planned that it leads to the next step. The undertaking of any kind of data based research always presupposes the careful choice and design of appropriate research methodology. Research Methodology is a systematic method of discovering new facts or verifying old facts, their sequences, interrelationships, causal relationships and the natural laws that govern them.

The primary objective of research is to get true and intimate knowledge of human society, the organization and its functioning and to know and understand the laws that are operating behind various social activities of man. The research process consists of the following steps:

1. Statement of the problem
2. Research design
3. Data collection
4. Data analysis
5. Interpretation of data

With this backdrop we are presenting the need, objectives and scope of study and methodology adopted to carry out this research.

3.1 Need of the Study

The strength of an organization is its human resources. The focus of HRD personnel is to develop the individual for his own growth while helping him to contribute to the fulfillment of organizational objectives. So, the thrust of HRD is not only in terms of increasing the competencies of the individual, but
also in terms of creating an environment at the work place where the employee has an assurance of being cared for in the most personalized manner. The employee spends a major portion of his active hours of the day at the work place, and therefore the need of the importance of introducing improvements in the quality of working life arises. The factors, which are relevant to an individual’s quality of work life, include the task, the physical work environment and the social environment within the organization, the administrative systems and relationship between his life on and off the job. QWL consists of the existence of opportunities for active involvement in group working arrangements or problem solving that is of mutual benefit to the employer and the employee. It is also well known that a regular assessment of quality of working life can potentially provide organizations with important information about the welfare of their employees, such as job satisfaction, general well being, work-related stress and the home-work interface. It has been recently reported “that a low level of well-being at work is estimated to cost about 5-10 per cent of GDP per annum” (Worrall and Cooper, 2006) yet quality of working life as an aspect remains relatively unexplored and unexplained within the organizational behaviour research literature. It is with this aim of analyzing the factors which affect QWL and how to measure the QWL in an organization that this study has been designed.

Another reason for undertaking this study is that the review of literature presented in the previous chapter has revealed that traditional approaches for organizing and increasing efficiency have often failed to achieve the needed improvements in employee motivation, performance and productivity. While increased specialization, deskilling of jobs, more centralized management control are felt necessary for increased efficiency, they often result in more boring and monotonous work, a lack of sense of responsibility and involvement, leading sometimes to indifference or alienation from work. Our failure to adequately match the needs of the organization from an efficiency point of view with the needs of the employees on whom the organization
depends gets reflected in low motivation, poor performance, absenteeism, labour turnover and sometimes in strikes. In view of such limitations to the approaches adopted traditionally to design and organize work, there is a strong case for a need to look at what may be more effective alternatives. This study is an attempt to match the needs of the organization with the needs of the employees and to bridge those gaps which have been observed while reviewing the literature. Thus the study attempts to fill this gap.

Further, the need of this study assumes greater importance in the present changing economic scenario coupled with the implementation of new economic policies in the country. Through this study an attempt has been made to look at methods that can be used for improving the quality of working life so that there is a holistic approach in utilizing a variety of employee skills and redesigning of jobs with more feedback and meaningfulness to the work process.

### 3.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The present study focuses on the study of quality of work life of the employees within the organization in general and public and private sector organization in particular. Keeping this in view we have defined the problem as “Factors Affecting Quality of Work Life: A Case Study of a Public Sector and Private Sector Organization.”

### 3.3 Objectives of the Study

To enable a focused study of the effect of various dimensions of Quality of Work Life in a public and a private sector organization, it was decided to first define the objectives of this study. Thus the present study has been carried out with the following objectives;

- To study the factors affecting quality of work life in a private sector organization and a public sector organization.
To find out how quality of work life influences employee’s job satisfaction and employee’s commitment

To explain how quality of work life affects the workplace morale and motivation.

To present the state of the prevailing quality of work life scenario existing in the two organizations under study.

To compare the quality of work life existing in both the organizations.

To suggest how the quality of work life can be improved.

3.4 Hypothesis

A hypothesis is an assumption or a supposition to be proved or disproved. A hypothesis may be defined as a proposition or a set of propositions set forth as an explanation for the occurrence of some specified group of phenomena either asserted merely as a provisional conjecture to guide some investigation or accepted as highly probable in the light of established facts (Kothari, 2004). Quite often a research hypothesis is a predictive statement, capable of being tested by scientific methods, that relates an independent variable to some dependent variable. A hypothesis has been defined by Shajahan (2005) as “a tentative proposition whose validity remains to be tested.” It may also be explained as an unproven proposition or supposition that tentatively explains certain facts or phenomena; a proposition that is empirically testable (Zikmund, 2003). With the help of appropriate statistical techniques, it is possible to decide whether the empirical evidence confirms the theoretical assumptions or not.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated for this study:

H1 Quality of Work Life is positively affected by the job satisfaction, morale and motivation of employees in Public and Private Sector organizations.
H2 Quality of Work Life positively affects the involvement and commitment of employees and encourages employees to contribute effectively in achieving the organization's performance goals.

H3 Quality of Work Life initiatives of building employee knowledge and capabilities through education and training contribute to improved employee performance.

3.5 Scope of the Study

With the advent of the LPG Concept (Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization) the industrial sector has assumed an important role in the economy. This has necessitated the synchronization of both private as well as the public sectors. Both the sectors are the drivers of the economy and today the success of these sectors is judged both in terms of financial performance and also the conduciveness of the work environment. The public as well as the private sector units are also being judged on the basis of Quality of Work Life they provide to their employees and how their HR practices affect their performance.

For the purpose of this study the researcher has selected two organizations, i.e., BHEL (Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited) and HEG (Hindustan Electro-Graphite Limited), both situated at Bhopal. As mentioned earlier we have taken one organization from public sector which is larger in size and has been one of the Navrattan of the public sector and the other from the private sector performing similar kind of activities. Thus the scope of the present study is limited to these two organizations. The respondents have also been selected from these two organizations. The present study was conducted only on the managerial staff of both the organizations.

Thus the present study deals with the perception of the level of Quality of Work Life at the work place and also determines the relationship between it and the factors, which affect it. The evaluation of data has been done on the
basis of behavioural science aspects and therefore, the results are basically a reflection of employees’ perceptions.

3.6 Methodology

The present study is based on Primary as well as Secondary data. According to Kothari (2004) primary data are original information collected fresh for the first time and thus happen to be original in character. Secondary data are the information that have been collected previously and have been put through the statistical process.

The Secondary data have been collected from the available literature on the subject whereas the Primary data have been collected with the help of well designed questionnaire. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the selected respondents of both the organizations, personally. (The copy of the questionnaire has been appended as Annexure-I).

3.7 Collection of Data

It may be mentioned here that the concept of quality of work life appeared predominantly in various research journals, business magazines, articles and books after 1970s. Therefore, a lot of literature is available on this concept and hence, extensive literature on the concepts of quality of work life was collected and studied to capture the essence of the domain and theoretical definition of the measures to be used for this research.

The researcher has scanned the work of various scholars, practitioners and academicians pertaining to QWL. The books and research journals are good source for obtaining the secondary data. In this age of information technology, the websites are emerging as an important source of obtaining secondary data relating to the subject. Therefore, the researcher has made every effort to collect the available literature on the subject as well as scholarly articles through websites, etc.
The literature study was based on the following sources:

- Relevant publications and subject policy documents.
- Scholarly articles from books, journals and periodicals available at various libraries.
- Employee survey reports and human resource MIS (Management Information System) documents.
- Relevant extracts from newspapers and web sites.

The data related to the organizations under study were collected from the available published literature and personal interviews and discussions with the HR managers.

3.7.1 Case Study

This research project used the case study method for an in-depth analysis of the private and public sector units being studied. A case study is a comprehensive study of a social unit, be that unit a person, a group, a social institution, a district or a community, according to Young (1966)\(^9\). Both Kothari (2004)\(^{10}\) and Shajahan (2005)\(^{11}\) regard the case study method as the most important means of collection of data. According to Kothari “the case study method is a form of qualitative analysis where in careful and complete observation of an individual or a situation or an institution is done; efforts are made to study each and every aspect of the concerning unit in minute detail and then from case data generalizations and inferences are drawn.” The advantage of using the case-study approach is that the entity under study can be investigated in depth with meticulous attention to detail. This highly focused attention enables the researchers to carefully study the order of events as they occur or concentrate on identifying the relationships among functions, individuals or entities. The case study method is a widely used systematic field research technique in management and social research. Management experts use case study methods for getting clues to several organizational problems.
The case study method has the following advantages:

- It enables the observer to understand fully the behaviour pattern of the concerned unit.
- It helps in formulating relevant hypothesis along with the data which may be helpful in testing them.
- It helps in constructing the appropriate questionnaire because it requires a thorough knowledge of the operating conditions.
- It allows the researcher to use several research methods e.g., in-depth interview, questionnaire, documents, previous research data and historical analysis.

Case study technique is indispensable for therapeutic and administrative purposes. It is of immense value in taking decisions regarding several management problems. The case study method was preferred as it could be used to locate the factors that account for the behaviour pattern of perception of QWL of the given unit under study in an integrated manner and in detail.

Since the present study is a case study, the stress has been on the qualitative analysis of the collected data. The survey and questionnaire methods were used as the tools for collection of primary data. Detailed discussions and interactions were held with subject matter experts and practicing managers to better understand the research problem and its perspectives. Based on these discussions, it was decided to use the survey method to select two organizations, one each in the public and private sector in Bhopal. The survey method allows for a broad coverage, flexibility and convenience with the inputs from the related populations. Also the questionnaire method has been adopted for collection of data regarding the factors affecting the quality of work life from the respondents, in the form of primary data.
3.7.2 **Survey for Selection of Organizations**

The capital city of Madhya Pradesh - Bhopal, is the city of lakes and is situated in the heart of the country. It is culturally rich, having people of various States, religions and cultures interacting with each other at various occasions. There are a large number of private and public sector organizations in the city.

A survey of the industrial establishments was carried out in and around Bhopal to select one organization each in the private and public sector that could effectively represent each of the sectors. A list of the private and public sector establishments having a large number of employees, i.e. more than 100 employees was prepared. Subsequent to a detailed survey based on personal visits and discussion with the concerned officers and managers of the establishments, Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited, Bhopal, a public sector undertaking and Hindustan Electro Graphite, Bhopal, a private sector organization were selected for undertaking the research work. The brief profiles of both the establishments are given in Chapter 4. Both organizations are at a similar location i.e. Bhopal: the Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited (BHEL) plant is located at Bhopal and the Hindustan Electro-Graphite Limited (HEG) plant is located at Mandideep, near Bhopal. Both these organizations are profit-making and utilizing latest and best available technology, having a large number of technically qualified personnel. These organizations also use the Balanced Score Card method for employee and process assessment and improvement. The target population for the collection of responses towards the perception of quality of work life through the structured questionnaire was the managerial staff of these two organizations.

3.7.3 **Selection of the Sample**

The process of making a selection of sampling elements from a defined set of elements called a population, is sampling. Since the number of employees working in the selected organizations was too large to cover through the census methods, it was decided to use the method of random
sampling to identify the respondents. As the population was variable with each unit having its own different characteristics, a disproportionate stratified random sampling method was utilized for decision of the sample size (Nargundkar 2002)\(^1\). 

While designing the sample, following characteristics were kept in mind by the researcher:

- That the sample should be representative of the population
- That the sample must result in small sampling errors
- That the sample must be viable in the context of funds available for the research study
- That the sample must be such that systemic bias can be controlled in a better way
- That it should be such that the results of the sample study can be applied, in general, for the entire population or universe with a reasonable degree of confidence

The target population covered under this research project included the executives in these organizations and the sample size was 10.00 per cent of the total manpower. We have solicited the opinions from the managerial staff from among the employees of both BHEL and HEG who are the prime focus of this intervention. Additionally, all the managerial staff was highly educated and technically qualified and we have tried to be as representative as possible in terms of getting the respondents from as many diverse departments as possible during the selection of the sample. The sample size of both the organization is given in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Sample sizes of respondents from BHEL and HEG**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Total manpower</th>
<th>Employees covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BHEL</td>
<td>1162</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEG</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both these organizations have a long history of profit making and of having introduced innovative HR practices from time to time.

3.7.4 Design of Questionnaire

Development of a questionnaire is always a major question before the researchers in situations where we do not have any well designed questionnaire to extract the relevant information from the respondents. So, the researcher developed a structured questionnaire, for being used as the measuring instrument to get the in-depth responses from the selected unit's employees. Both Kothari (2004)\textsuperscript{13} and Shahjahan (2005)\textsuperscript{14} regard the questionnaires and interviews as the most important means of data collection in social sciences research. The questionnaire is regarded as 'a purposeful structured set of questions that can be used to obtain the opinions of a large number of respondents in writing without necessarily making contact with the target group.'

According to Kothari (2004)\textsuperscript{15} questionnaires are the most common method applied to diagnose the functioning of private and public sector organizations. Although constructing a questionnaire seems to be quite simple, yet it is a complex and taxing process. The information sought for (items, statements or questions) must be formulated and selected carefully and the aim of the research must constantly be borne in mind. The prerequisites for a successful and reliable questionnaire were examined, before the designing and development of the questionnaire. Further, the contents and the process of distribution to be followed in getting the questionnaire completed were also decided before hand.

So, in the present study we have kept in mind the following three main characteristics of a good questionnaire:

- The statements proceeded in logical sequence moving from easy to more difficult questions.
- Statements affecting the sentiments of the respondents were avoided
Adequate space for choice/answers was provided to help editing and tabulation.

In this study we have used the structured questionnaire, the aim of which was to determine how individuals experienced QWL at the time of the survey.

For the purpose of the present study, the questionnaire was designed and compiled by the researcher with the help of experts in the field of Human Resource Management and Human Psychology. Since this research was not a replication of any previous study, a pool of questionnaire items was first obtained from literature and the instrument was reviewed for its content validity. On going through the literature it became clear that a number of factors concerning the measurement of quality of work life must be taken into consideration while designing this questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed in such a manner that it directly supported the aspects being covered under the present research project. All aspects included in it are linked to the research study.

According to Bailey (1978) while computing a questionnaire attention should be paid to:

- The relevance of the questions to the objectives of the study,
- The relevance of the questions to the individual respondent.

The information to be elicited from the respondents was through the use of well-structured statements, as these tend to simplify the statistical process. The provision of alternate replies helped to understand the meaning of each statement question clearly.

Further, structured statements force respondents to choose from a list of alternatives. The most significant advantage of using structured statements is that it is a time and cost effective method and it facilitates wider coverage and respondents can complete it at their own pace.
Furthermore, most respondents are familiar with questionnaires and their administration. Questionnaires also ensure anonymity and as a result respondents are more inclined to be honest in replying. It is also more probable that respondents will be willing to complete a structured form rather than answering open questions, owing to the time and mental exhaustion of the latter. This enables more accurate and valid research information. The chances of the researcher creating a bias are also lessened as a result of the impersonal nature of statements. Responses obtained in this manner are easily quantified, which make statistical analysis quick and accurate by means of computer.

The questionnaire was compiled in simple English so that all respondents were able to understand and respond to it without any assistance. All respondents who completed the questionnaire received the same questionnaire in the same format and with the same instructions, whether at top management, middle management or lower management level.

The structured questionnaire so developed was pre-tested prior to its final administration on a full-scale distribution with four HR practitioners, two each from the organizations selected and two from allied industries. The purpose of this pre-test was to ensure the correct understanding and consistent interpretation of the terminologies used in the questionnaire. The HR practitioners assisted in assessing face validity and also content validity of the questionnaire.

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument/tool measures what it is supposed to measure. According to Berdie and Andersen (1974)\(^\text{17}\), “the validity of a questionnaire item is concerned with whether or not the term actually elicits the intended information. Questionnaire items are valid if they are successful in eliciting true responses relevant to the information desired.” In other words, it is essential that respondents attach the same meaning to the set questions that the compliers thought of.
Further a pilot test was conducted with 20 employees (10 from each of the organizations) from the target organizations. A pilot study is a small-scale exploratory research technique that collects data from subjects of the research project to serve as a guide for the larger study (Zikmund 2003). The main objective of this pilot test was to investigate the potential weaknesses in the research instrument due to lack of clarity, ambiguous wording, the format of the questionnaire and the average time taken to complete it.

Following the pilot surveys, copies of questionnaire were got printed from a printing press to have uniform setting and easy readability for the respondents.

3.7.4.1 Contents of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire used for eliciting the required information was divided into two parts.

Part I of the questionnaire mainly focused on demographic information of the respondents whereas part II of the questionnaire was devoted to the statements which were considered relevant for getting required information.

3.7.4.2 Details of QWL Variables

Due to the diverse nature of the perceptions of QWL, focus has been on the correlates of a healthy quality of work life. We could have included a large number of statements in the questionnaire, but for the sake of conciseness and relevance, eight (factors) which we have found significant through the review of literature were selected.

These eight factors are:

1. Job satisfaction, morale and motivation
2. Employee commitment and involvement
3. Equitable compensation and benefits
4. Immediate opportunities for using abilities at work
5. Opportunities for training, development and continued growth
6. Communication and relationship with supervisors
7. Work load and working conditions
8. Work and family life

Table 3.2 shows the number of statements for each factor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>NO OF STATEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Job satisfaction, morale and motivation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Employee commitment and involvement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Equitable compensation and benefits</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Immediate opportunities to use &amp; develop abilities at work</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Opportunities for training, development &amp; continued growth</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Communication and relationship with supervisors</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Work load and working conditions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Work and family life</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of statements: 50

These items were adapted from studies of various researchers. The respondents in this study reported their perceptual scores by indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each item on a scale of 1-5 for 1-5 50 statements based on their perceptions of the eight attributes of Quality of Working Life.

3.7.4.3 Rating Scale

A summated scale consists of a number of statements, which express either a favourable or unfavorable attitude towards the given object to which the respondent is asked to react (Kothari, 2004). By using this scale the same answering categories could be used continuously. For the purpose of this study and the type of questionnaire used, the Likert Summated Scale was considered to be the most appropriate scale. The five point Likert Summated...
Scale, had options which ranged from strongly agree (5), agree (4), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1), and can't say (3), in order to evaluate the respondents perceptions on the current QWL practices in their organization. Numerical values varying from 1 to 5 were linked to the scale codes. The respondents' understanding of the aim and contents of the questionnaire was improved as an explanatory letter accompanied it. The respondents provided the information by checking appropriate boxes. All the statements were “true keyed”. There was no “false key” statements in the questionnaire.

The advantages of using the 5-point scale were the effective utilization of space, quick assessment of questionnaire and the facilitation of comparisons between answers.

3.7.4.4 Administration of the Questionnaire

The researcher contacted the HR function heads of the targeted organizations via telephone and a personal visit to explain the purpose of the study and requested for permission to conduct the survey. The formal letter, a request for permission to conduct the research (along with a copy of the questionnaire) was submitted directly to the HR function heads immediately after the telephone call with a note explaining the objectives of the study. Once permission for conduct of research was granted, the prepared questionnaires for the participating organizations with a covering letter describing the purpose of the study as well as the key instructions to the respondents were made ready for the organizations. The HR department of both the participating organizations provided administrative assistance, such as a central point of contact, and the coordination, distribution and collection of the questionnaires, to give assurance to the participating organizations and the respondents that their feedback was strictly confidential and to be used only for academic purpose.

In addition, each questionnaire was addressed to the person concerned and the researcher visited the site a number of times to ensure maximum
return rate of the submitted questionnaires. Completing the questionnaire was also facilitated by the fact that the researcher gave presentations of approximately 10 minutes each to all respondents on how to complete the questionnaire. The researcher was also continuously present during the process of completion of the questionnaire by the participants. The advantage of this method was that the researcher was able to answer any questions and queries that could come up and could eliminate any misunderstandings or misinterpretations. In this manner, a response rate of 100 per cent was obtained. The high response rate was probably achieved because both the organizations are conscious of exposing staff to excessive in house surveys and because of the endorsement provided by the head of the HR function.

3.8 Data Processing

On receiving the completed questionnaires from the respondents the data were coded on to a master table, which was prepared for each of the two organizations. The data were initially classified on the basis of age, educational qualifications and tenure of service in the organization. Subsequently, the data regarding the responses for the QWL perception was coded. The suggestions and comments given by the respondents were later on analyzed separately.

The information obtained in this manner was also discussed with a statistician, who provided advice on the use of statistical analysis methods to be used so that the correct interpretation could be worked out.

3.8.1 Statistical Analysis

Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, the data has been presented through figures, tables and diagrams. Simple statistical methods like averages and percentages have been applied. Interpretation of data has been on the following statistical analysis techniques.
a) **Simple Descriptive Statistical Techniques**

By this method, percentages were calculated to draw the inferences. Other simple statistical techniques like bar diagram and histograms, graphical presentation and averages have been used. In addition the ranking method has been used to infer the most important factor.

b) **Inferential Statistics and Testing of Hypothesis**

The significance of factors of QWL and total QWL of both the organizations were compared and analyzed.

The data and its analysis along with the interpretation of results are presented in Chapter 5.

### 3.9 Limitations of the Study

The present study has been conducted at two organizations situated at Bhopal and so the findings of this research cannot be generalized. However, they throw some light on the current state of QWL in these organizations.

The methodology adopted in this study is the case study method; hence the limitations of the case study method are the limitations of this research. The reason for using the case study method was to prove that many factors influence the aspect of Quality of Work Life and productivity and this would not have been possible with other methods of research.

This study has been conducted by using the survey method along with a well designed questionnaire for eliciting the required information from the managers of both the organizations. We have tried to draw a representative sample of respondents covering all levels of the management staff within the organization, but the sample size may not have been as large as we wanted it to be. The results interpreted on the basis of this research are limited to these two organizations and they can be generalized to the population of the two organizations.
References


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* Indicates original not seen