QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE AND EFFECTIVENESS
QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE

Over the past two decades, the term 'Quality of Working life' (QWL) as well as the meaning attributed to it has undergone considerable change and development. Concerns about employees' well-being and satisfaction have expanded to include greater attention to organizational Effectiveness, particularly in today’s highly competitive, global environment. QWL research and practice have given rise to current attention to employee involvement and empowerment, reflecting the need to make organizations more decentralized and responsive to customer demands (Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management, 1997).

Kopelman et al. (1990) suggested that an organization’s cultural values influence its human resource strategies, including selection and placement policies, promotion and development procedures and reward systems. They further stated that towards the turn of the last decade psychologists got seriously interested in the concept of Quality of Working Life as a result of which improvement of QWL is becoming a catch slogan of today’s employers and employees.

Quality of Working Life can be said to be both a goal and an on-going process for achieving it. As a goal, it is the commitment of any organization to work improvement, to the creation of more satisfying, more involving and effective job as well as work environments. As a process, Quality of Working Life calls for efforts to realise this goal through active involvement of the people throughout the organization (Carlson, 1981).

Nadler and Lawler (1983) describe QWL as "(a) a concern about the impact of work on people as well as organizational effectiveness, and (b) the idea of participation in organizational problem solving and decision making.” Wyatt (1988) said that quality of working Life is qualitative concept. It is a sense of overall well-being with the work process from the perspective of both employer and employee. In a very important way, Quality of Working Life involves the notion of a quality working experience. The very experience of working as well as the consequence of working may be desirable. Quality of Working Life means, at the upper end, a working experience that is physically and spiritually life enhancing. This life enhancing characteristic is from the perspective of both the employee and the organization.
Importance of the concept of QWL


Further research revealed Quality of Working Life to influence greater worker participation, improved work quality, improved working conditions, overall employees’ satisfaction and lower absenteeism rate (Ferries and Wagner, 1985 ; Williamson, 1985 ; Marks et al., 1986 and Bocialetti, 1987).

Evolution of the Concept of QWL

Though the concept of Quality of Working Life is not so new, lately it has emerged to attain new connotations, a clearer meaning and appreciable importance. The quest for search as to what motivates people resulted in the development of the concept of quality of working life out of the research carried out for this purpose.

The term ‘Quality of working life’ (QWL) appeared in the early seventies through application of various concepts like job enlargement, job enrichment, organizational structure and climate, organizational effectiveness, job design, worker participation, organizational development etc. The concept of QWL has finally arrived to occupy an important place in the study of organizational psychology.

According to Mali (1981), QWL now commands the attention of every effective supervisor and manager. Pomonis and Baumgartel (1980) attribute the QWL movement to three major problems experienced by the industrialized societies over the past about one decade. The first was a widespread and possibly growing dissatisfaction and/or alienation of 'blue-collar' and 'white-collar' employees as well as managerial personnel from their work. The second was the declining rate of growth in labour productivity in the face of scarce resources. The third was the growing recognition of the paramount role of the individual's “quality of working life” in physical and mental health and family besides community spheres.
It was also found that satisfaction with work led to factors enhancing a longer life. Wilensky (1969) and Runcie (1980) confirmed a relationship between quality of working life and non-work life. Thus, a poor work situation could actually have a deleterious effect upon the individual's physical, psychological and social well-being.

Initial work in the area of QWL was marked by important contribution of Herrick and Maccoby (1972), Taylor et al. (1974), Cherns and Davis (1975), De (1975), Emery and Emery (1976), Miller (1977) and Carlson (1978).

Definitions of QWL

According to Schlesinger (1982), there are probably as many definitions of quality of work life as there are authors writing about it. Glaser (1976) attempted to knead the various definitions into a coherent whole and outlined quality of work life activities as follows:

- Establishing a work environment that encourages continuous learning, training, and active interest regarding both the job and the product or service to which the job contributes. (Such an environment enables an employee to use and develop his personal skills and knowledge, which in turn affects involvement, self-esteem, and the challenge obtained from work itself).
- Making the job itself more challenging by structuring it so that an individual (or work team) can self-manage and feel responsible for a significant, identifiable output, if that kind of responsibility is desired.
- Affording opportunities for continued growth, that is, opportunities to advance in organizational or career terms.

Again, Spink (1975) defined QWL as "the degree of excellence in working conditions, which contribute to the overall satisfaction of the individual and enhance the individual as well as the organizational effectiveness." According to Nadler and Lawler (1983) QWL is a way of thinking about people, work and organizations. Thus, the focus of QWL is not only how people can do work better but on how work may cause people to be better.

Brown and Leigh (1996) gave an operational definition which incorporates dimensions of climate (i.e. clarity, supportive management, and challenge) that are
conceptually similar to the first three of James et al.'s (1990) higher order factors. This operational definition also includes potentially important aspects of climate, such as self-expression, perceived contribution, and recognition, which are likely to be importantly related to job involvement, efforts, and performance but have not previously been considered as elements of psychological climate.

This operational definition by Brown and Leigh (1996) was developed specifically in an attempt to capture the psychological safety and meaningfulness dimensions described by Kahn (1990) as important elements of psychological climate that enhance employee involvement. The safety and meaningfulness dimensions represent a higher order level of meaning indicating an employee's interpretation of the significance of the organizational environment for personal well-being. These two dimensions described by Kahn can be explained as follows:

- Kahn (1990) defined psychological meaningfulness as "a feeling that one is receiving a return on investment of one's self in a currency of physical, cognitive, or emotional energy". People experience their work as meaningful when they perceive it to be challenging, worthwhile, and rewarding. Dimensions of psychological climate that are indicative of psychological meaningfulness include the extent to which employees feel that:
  (a) they make a significant contribution toward achievement of organizational goals,
  (b) the organization adequately recognizes their contributions, and
  (c) their work is challenging and conducive to personal growth.

- Kahn (1990) defined psychological safety as the employee's "sense of being able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career" (p. 708). Dimensions of climate that are likely to be indicative of psychological safety include the extent to which:
  (a) management is perceived as flexible and supportive while the employees feel that they have control over their work and the methods used to accomplish it,
  (b) organizational roles and norms are perceived as clear, and
  (c) employees feel free to express their true feelings and core aspects of their self-concepts in their work roles.
Quality of Working Life in India

The study of QWL in developing countries like India encompasses a greater dimension to it. In a country where basic living conditions for most citizens are questionable, it seems ridiculous to even think about QWL. However, as stated by Reddy (1985), QWL can be used as a launching pad for the improvement of QWL of citizens by way of higher productivity and thus greater prosperity of such countries. Quality of Working Life also has a direct linkage with the quality of life in any society. De (1975) stated that "Quality of Working Life is an indicator of how free the society is from exploitation, injustice, inequality, oppression and restrictions on the continuity of growth of man, leading to his development to the fullest."

Sinha and Sayeed (1980) reported that in the Indian setting work has already been initiated on quality of working life by many, but a major headway is yet to be made. Here, initially the orientation to quality of working life remained sociological, but lately there has been a gradual switch over to psychological aspects of quality of working life. Ganguli and Joseph (1971), De (1977 a,b) and Sinha (1977) were amongst the few who tried to approach quality of working life from a psychological perspective.

Dimension of QWL

Thus, it can be seen that in Indian settings many researchers have contributed to the ongoing research in the area of QWL throughout the world. Their views have added various dimensions to this concept. Joseph (1978) gave four dimensions viz., growth, mastery, involvement and self - control. Ganguli (1979) presented a somewhat different list. Ghosh and Kalra (1982) delineated fifteen dimensions. Sinha and Sayeed (1980) put forth seventeen dimensions in their scale of QWL. These dimensions are:

Physical Working Conditions; Mental State; Career Orientation; Advancement on Merit; Effect on Personal Life; Union Management Relations; Self - Respect; Supervisory Relations; Intra-Group Relations; Sense of Achievement versus Apathy; Confidence in Management ; Meaningful Development; Control, Influence and Participation ; Employee Commitment; General Life Satisfaction and Organizational Climate.
The present study has used Sinha and Sayeed's (1980) scale as a measure of QWL.

Delamotte and Takezawa (1984) gave the following dimensions as QWL problems in international perspective: Occupational safety and health, working time, job security, (i.e., protection against dismissal for economic reasons), fair treatment at work for individuals and groups, influences on decision making, workers' representation at company board meetings, good opportunities for advancement in career etc.

According to Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Management (1997), an assumption underlying QWL research is that there is a positive linkage between QWL and productivity. This derives from the idea that increased satisfaction with work will motivate employees to perform at higher levels. A more realistic explanation for how QWL can affect productivity is that QWL innovations, such as job enrichment and participative management, can improve employee communication, co-ordination, and capability. These improvements in turn can enhance work performance (Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Management, 1997).

Brown and Leigh (1996) said that although anecdotal evidence suggests that favourable employee-perceptions of organizational environments lead to superior performance, empirical research has not shown how (or whether) psychological climate and job involvement translate it into higher performance. They investigated whether employee-effort constitutes the mediating link relating psychological climate and job involvement to work performance in order to present a hypothesize model of this relationship (Fig. H).

Brown and Leigh (1996) evaluated the premise that favorable employee perceptions of the organizational environment are positively related to job involvement, effort, and performance. They investigated specific perceptions of the organizational environment that constitute important aspects of psychological climate as well as the process by which these are related to performance. Studying dimensions of psychological climate may reveal important aspects of the relationship between the employees and the organization that are related to greater involvement, effort, and performance.
FIG. H: HYPOTHESESED MODEL SHOWING THE MEDIATING LINK RELATING PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE AND JOB INVOLVEMENT TO WORK PERFORMANCE

Source: Brown and Leigh 1996
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Unleashing the power of human potential at work-place through creation of an involving and motivating organizational environment has been acclaimed as a key source of competitive advantage for business organizations (Lawler, 1992).

A prominent stream of literature has urged that when employees perceive the potential for the workplace, they engage themselves more completely and invest greater time and effort in the organizations' work (Kahn, 1990; Pfeffer, 1994). Such an attitude on the part of the employee helps to make him more efficient and effective.

Sinha (1980) has explored the relationship between organizational climate and effective managerial styles. With the help of factor analysis, he identified certain important climate factors, viz., authoritarian task-orientation, status acceptance, working conditions, efficiency, involvement, interpersonal relationships, work relationship and bureaucratic climate. He concluded that the organizational efficiency and executive job-satisfaction were influenced primarily by the organizational climate and only moderately by the socio-cultural values and union strength. Besides, whatever effect the leadership styles have on organizational efficiency is through the organizational climate.

Solomon (1986) reported that management practices that address improvements of methods and efficiency, task-autonomy and significance, reward systems and task clarity - are of direct relevance to efficiency. Others, such as participation, openness, and task variety - are indirectly related to efficiency.

Beer and Walton (1987) stated that organisational development has long recognized the importance of culture and considered culture management to be within its purview. Much of it asserts a positive correlation between type of organizational culture and organizational effectiveness (Ouchi, 1981; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; and Denison, 1984). Not surprisingly, these cultures look much like Beckhard's (1969) definition of a healthy organisation, i.e. delegating, result-oriented, information-sharing, developmental, egalitarian, employee-centred cultures are believed to enhance adaptiveness, productivity, innovation and performance (Kanter, 1983; Denison, 1984 and Walton, 1985).

Hart et al. (1995) found that positive work experience leads to more satisfaction and a more positive perception of QWL and hence more effectiveness.
They explored the positive and negative work experiences which contribute most to police officers' psychological well-being. The latest structure of the Police Daily Hassles and Uplifts scales was examined to establish the positive and negative work experiences which contributed most to police officers' psychological well-being. Using principal component analysis, Hart et al. (1993, 1994a) have previously shown that the 19 dimensions of Police hassles and 12 dimensions of Police uplifts (first order factors) could be grouped into four global domains (second-order factors): (a) organizational hassles, (b) operational hassles, (c) organizational uplifts, and (d) operational uplifts. A series of confirmatory factor analysis was conducted with LISREL VIII in an attempt to replicate these exploratory findings.

Recent research evidence indicates that when employees have a participatory, problem-solving approach to QWL, they are both more committed to their organization and, if union members, to their union (Fields and Thacker, 1992).

A number of studies have been conducted in the area of Effectiveness among teachers in relation to their Quality of Working Life. A review of these studies may be revealing in throwing light on the nature of the relationship between Effectiveness and Quality of Working life in Judicial officers.

Stressing the importance of Physical Working Conditions, Anand (1983) opined that the physical provision are needed to provide the infrastructure for the working teachers. These are facilities required to be provided to the teachers to make the best use of their knowledge and skills. He specified that the physical conditions, i.e. the school building, laboratories, library, sports fields, proper seating arrangement for students and availability of appropriate amount of funds - are definitely realted to teacher effectiveness. Besides the physical structure and components, the school organization in its own way also influences the effectiveness of teachers. Not only this, but also the relationship of the society and school thereby with teachers accounts for the quality of teachers' work. The respect enjoyed by teacher as persons for being in the teaching profession cannot be isolated in the discussion of their effectiveness.

Anand (1983) further highlighted the role of QWL dimensions of Control, Influence and Participation (CIP). He said that it may be because of their non-participation in the curriculum decisions, that the teachers have always been found to be very critical of whatsoever curriculum they are asked to cover.
Ashton et al. (1983) recently completed a study and supported Armor et al.'s (1977) conclusions regarding the relationship of teacher efficacy to student achievement. In addition, from intensive interviews with the teachers, it was learnt that current conditions in the schools, the isolation, the difficulty in assessing one's effectiveness as a teacher, the lack of collegial and administrative support, and the sense of powerlessness that comes from limited collegial decision-making - make it difficult for teachers to maintain a strong sense of efficacy.

Highlighting the importance of a congenial QWL environment, Venkataiah and Naidu (1984) found that if the teacher is satisfied with his environment, he will perform his duties perfectly. Thus, effectiveness is a function of the nature of Quality of Working Life.

Ostroff (1993) investigated the relative, combined, and interactive effects of organizational climates and personal orientations on individuals' attitudes and behaviours in organizations. Results indicated that work responses could be explained by a joint, additive function of organizational climates and personal orientations. However, multiplicative climate-person interactions did not significantly explain variance in subjects' behaviour and attitudes beyond that explained by the main effects of climate and personal orientations.

Schuster et al. (1997) studied the effect of employee-centered management in improving organization performance over a five-year period. The results of the study indicated that employee-centered management is compatible with high performance and competitive advantage. There is also evidence that in some instances, organization performance can be significantly enhanced through the participation and contribution of employees in problem-solving and decision-making processes.

Exploration of the exact role of different QWL dimensions in Self-Rated Effectiveness is the subject of the present investigation.