CHAPTER 2

PHASE I: A QUALITATIVE STUDY FOR EXPLORING EXPECTED QWL ATTRIBUTES

2.1 Introduction

Hotels are labour-intensive and employees form the core for delivering quality services. But, high employee turnover is witnessed in this industry (Mehra, 2006). Besides this even the hospitality graduates have an aversion towards entering the hospitality industry (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000), due to the poor working conditions (Kang and Gould, 2002). Such dissatisfaction have been found to have a negative influence on service quality (Varca, 1999) and is known to augment turnover intention among employees (Yu, 1999).

In the light of the foregoing concerns in the hotel industry, inducting quality into the work lives of hospitality employees is essential and inevitable. As employees have certain expectations when they join an organization (Woods, 1993), exploring individuals' perspectives of work and life issues before they enter the workforce can provide insights into factors that affect them (Cleveland et al, 2007).

Hence, this study focuses on exploring the expectation of QWL dimensions for a hotel work place. In this first phase of the research study, 84 students and 64 employees from three hospitality institutes and three hospitality organizations from Mangalore city in
India participated through a purposeful sampling frame. A qualitative methodology was adopted for this study in order to net-in all probable attributes that very evidently or even remotely influenced the work life.

2.2 Literature review

Employee expectations

Basically, expectation is a belief about the probabilities associated with a future state of affairs (Geers et al., 2005) and the anticipation of what will happen (Webster's, 1995). Generally, employees start jobs with expectations based on their life experiences, career aspirations, and personal characteristics (Woods, 1993). As such, expectation has been linked to satisfaction, by expectation-confirmation theory (Oliver, 1980). Nevertheless, studies have confirmed expectations to be an important factor influencing employee turnover (Pearson, 1995), and their satisfaction would lead to commitment in providing service quality (Bishay 1996; Bournes, Ferguson-Paré 2006). Consequently, this study explores employee expectation as a means to determine the attributes of QWL.

Employee Perception

The perceptions held by employees play an important role in their decisions to enter, stay or leave an organization (Krueger, Brazil, Lohfeld, Edward, Lewis and Tjam, 2002). Hence it is important that the gap between expectation and perceptions be included
when assessing qwl. The results in terms of the significant gaps would assist the management in focusing their efforts on improving the key areas of work life attributes.

Quality of Work Life (QWL)

The term "quality of work life" (QWL) was first introduced in 1972 during an International Labor Relations conference (Hian and Einstein, 1990) and has since been viewed in a variety of ways including (a) as a movement; (b) as a set of organizational interventions, and (c) as a type of work life by employees (Carlson, 1980).

It has been observed that the method of defining QWL stands varied, encompassing several different perspectives (Loscocco and Roschelle, 1991). In the past, some researchers have adhered to a broad scope for defining the QWL concept, whereas some have defined it based on specific facets of work life. Stjernberg (1977), for example, emphasized that QWL be linked to the wider notion of 'quality of life', thereby covering factors such as general life satisfaction, leisure and well being beyond the workplace. Whereas, qwl was defined as the workplace strategies, operations and environment that promote and maintain employee satisfaction with an aim to improve the working conditions for employees and organizational effectiveness for employees (Lau & Bruce, 1998, p213). In another study, Davis (1983) defined QWL as, 'the quality of the relationship between employees and the total working environment with human dimensions added to the usual technical and economic consideration'. According to Nadler and Lawler (1983), definitions of QWL tend to change focus continuously and have been used at different times to refer to different variables and may also mean
different things to different people in different roles (Sashkin and Burke, 1987). Further, Carayon (1997) defined it as a complex interaction of the elements of the work system; namely individual task, organizational factors, environment, tools and technology. Apart from this even the method used for defining QWL attributes varied, for example, Sirgy et. al. (2001) studied QWL based on need satisfaction and spillover theories, whereas, Delphi technique was used by Levine et. al. (1984) to define the attributes of QWL.

Some definitions have identified the attributes comprising QWL, without being industry specific. For example, Walton (1975) listed out the following dimensions of QWL: adequate and fair compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, opportunities for personal growth and development, satisfaction of social needs at work, protection of employee rights, compatibility between work and non-work responsibilities, and the social relevance of work-life. As per another study, elements that are relevant to an individuals' QWL included; task, physical work environment, social environment within the organization, administrative system and relationship between life on and off the job (Cunningham and Eberle, 1990). Later, Lau and Bruce (1998), in their study presaged that QWL construct is dynamic; enveloping attributes like job security, reward system, training and career advancement opportunities, and participation in decision making as dimensions for QWL.

In the past, some studies have focused only on certain attributes or a particular context, for defining QWL. For instance, based on the attitudinal response to the prevailing work environment, Nachmias (1988) inferred five distinct dimensions of QWL for the federal
employees namely: supervision, relations with co-workers, job task, relations among work groups and economic well-being. Later, Ghosh (1992) identified work environment, monetary compensations for work, hours of work, scope of progression, benefits, and welfare services as elements of QWL based on work activities. Lewis et. al.(2001) measured QWL in terms of extrinsic (salaries and other tangible benefits), intrinsic (skills levels, authority and challenges) and prior traits. In recent studies, Rose et. al. (2006) studied QWL in terms of career aspects and organizational climate.

In the Indian context, Ghosh (1975) attempted to measure the QWL in private and public sector companies in India to measure the QWL, by adopting a broad concept based on Waltons’s definition. Later, Sekaran (1985), studied the quality of work life among bank employee from the perspective of job involvement; sense of competence; satisfaction with - work, supervisor, co-workers, pay, promotion etc. Further a study on QWL in small scale industries was carried out by Kumar and Ganesh (1996) using the dimensions proposed by Walton. A study of the impact of organizational climate on the qwl of the bank employees was carried out by Triveni and Aminabhavi (2000). In the Indian context, the academic interest in the field of QWL is reflected only in the form of articles and books touching upon the theoretical aspects of the concept (Saklani 2003).

From the above analysis of the QWL literature, it can be convincingly reiterated that different people have different perspectives on defining QWL (Davis and Chens, 1975). According to Guest (1979), QWL is a construct that is multifaceted and context based, and there is still a lack of an universally accepted definition of the QWL concept (Kruger
et al., 2002) with doubtful adaptability of prior definitions to a hotel work environment. Therefore understanding the attributes of each dimension of QWL, presented a unique challenge. It is observed that despite acknowledging that employees' start job with expectations that has been found to influence their QWL, a definition founded and formulated on the basis of employee expectation is conspicuously lacking, for the hotel employees. The present study attempts to address this gap by exploring the stakeholders' expectations of QWL and its attributes relevant in this context.

2.3 Method

This study adopts the strategy of using phenomenology, because of its appropriateness afforded in understanding the lived experiences of the respondents (Creswell, 2003), to examine the QWL expectations from the undergraduates of the hospitality management course and the hotel employees. The steps followed for this study is graphically presented in Fig. 2.1.

![Methodological steps for the phase I study.](image-url)
2.3.1 Sampling and data collection

The sample for the study comprised of hotel employees and final semester hospitality management students. These were the students who have undergone one semester of internship during their degree course. Apart from this, most of them take up employment in various hotels during their vacations. This experience of working in the industry facilitates better insight into their expectation of QWL. The student respondents' belonged to the age group 19-21. These respondents were selected on the basis of the maximum exposure they had, working in various departments and hotels. The percentage of male respondents was 51.9 % and that of female respondents being 48.1 %. From among the employees involved in the survey, 61.8 % were male and 38.2 % were female. Of the total respondents, 26.5 % belonged to the food and beverage service department, 29.4 % belonged to the food and beverage production department, 17.6 % belonged to the housekeeping department, and 26.5 % were from the front office department. At the time of the study 44.1 % of the respondents belonged to the less than 31 years of age, 32.4 % were between 31-40 years of age, and finally 23.5 % were more than 40 years of age. All of them were either diploma holders or graduates in hospitality management and their work experience in this industry ranged from 8 to 30 years.

The researcher secured permission from 2 hotels belonging to the four star category and one boutique hotel for collecting responses from their employees on roll. Bryman (1989) recommends that between one and five organizations are appropriate in cases where the primary focus is on qualitative interviews. Similarly, three hotel management institutes conducting an eight semester course in hospitality management was chosen for collecting
responses from their final semester hospitality graduates. The study espouses purposeful sampling technique for contracting maximum variations in sampling and capturing maximum attributes pertaining to QWL framework, assisting the basic research purpose (Erlandson et al., 1993). Participation was voluntary, confidentiality was guaranteed, and the organization fully endorsed their participation. It is seen that, there are several ways to increase the likelihood of a credible and trustworthy findings and interpretations from qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Aply, Triangulation, which involves using multiple sources and method of data collection to verify or justify a theme, is one way of enhancing trustworthiness and credibility (Creswell, 2003). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), triangulation (deploying different methods) can be seen as an alternative to validation. Hence, for this study data was collected by means of interviews, open-ended questionnaires and focus group discussions.

Interviews

Interviews provide an opportunity for detailed investigation into each individuals' personal perspective providing an in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomenon is found (Creswell, 2003). This method of data collection was chosen as it allowed the collection of more complex and detailed data than was possible with the questionnaire and gave greater latitude in the issues that could be explored. And, as felt comfortable by the employees, the interviews were conducted in the staff cafeteria. Besides this, in order that the participants have the opportunity to wholly explain their experiences, interviews started off with open-ended queries like,
"Can you think of any aspects that contributes to a good work life"; and alternatively, 
"Can you think of some aspects that made your work life experience bad...". The 
respondents were allowed to narrate incident after incident, regarding those aspects of the 
'work life' influencing their QWL positively or adversely, afford a critical insight for 
this study. The interviews were taped, transcribed, and then coded following the process 
described by Strauss and Corbin (1990). To start with, the interviewees were briefed on 
the subject matter prior to interviews, thereby facilitating validity and reliability by 
enabling them to gain an understanding of the information being requested (Saunders et 
al., 2000). Interviews generally lasted 20 to 30 minutes which were recorded and 
transcribed verbatim. Participants' consent was obtained prior to the interview. Once the 
interview was over, a brief summary of what it meant to the researcher was discussed 
with the respondent as a way to ensure content validity.

Open-ended questionnaire

Those respondents contemptuous of expressing orally to the queries put forth for this 
study opted to respond to the open-ended questionnaire. According to Neuman (1997), 
open-ended comments are often the best way to learn, 'how a respondent thinks [and] to 
discover what is really important to him or her'. Open-ended responses are thus a rich 
and relatively unique source of data that privilege respondent's own accounts and 
representations of their work experiences. The open-ended questionnaire comprised of 
two incomplete sentences, they being;
a) I would like a workplace that has ..... 
b) I would dislike a workplace that has ..... 

These statements were framed after intense debate and discussion with practicing managers and academicians regarding its merit on shelling out every possible view. The above two statements was followed by a request to list out 1 (minimum) to 10 (maximum) attributes which according to the respondent is decisive in facilitating a good QWL for the employees in this industry. The open-ended interactions have several other benefits. First, the employee can provide his or her own views without any constrains. Second, respondents' words can be evaluated for embedded emotions and integral ideas pertaining to the construct under study. This questionnaire was pilot tested on eleven respondents and on being convinced of the response quality, it was then finalized as a tool for data collection.

Focus group discussion

In general, focus groups allow researchers to concentrate on a single topic in depth, and gain a better understanding of the participants' responses. The group members are more likely to challenge each others' views, argue for or change their own views, and bring forward issues that are important to them (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Themes were constructed by triangulating the participants' stories and experiences. Focus groups thus reflect the process through which meaning is constructed in everyday life (Bryman and
Bell, 2003) and is therefore deemed as especially informative for the purpose of theory development in this study.

2.3.2 Data coding

To ensure that sufficient data was collected, the author followed the argument that data collection should continue until theoretical saturation takes place (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Table 2.1 depicts the composition of data and the number of responses collected using various tools.

Table 2.1 Phase I data collection details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample category</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Open-ended questionnaire</th>
<th>Focus group</th>
<th>Total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential employees</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3 (each group comprising of 4 members)=12</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Employees</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3 (each group comprising of 3 members)=9</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses of the interview with the students were coded as S1, S2, ..., S15; wherein S1 represents the response from the first student; S2, the response from the second student and so on. The responses from the employees were coded as E1, E2, ..., E25, wherein E1 represents the response from the first employee; E2 the response from the second employee and so on.
The institutes were coded as I1, I2, I3 and the hotels are identified in this study as H1, H2 and H3. For the focus group discussion, group members from the first institute were coded as I1-a, I1-b, I1-c, I1-d; where a, b, c, d were the codes assigned to each of the participant from this institute. Similarly the codes for second and third institute group members were I2-a, I2-b, I2-c, I2-d and I3-a, I3-b, I3-c, I3-d. Parallel coding procedure was adopted for the focus group members from the hotels; the first hotel group members were labeled as H1-a, H1-b, H1-c and the responses from the second and third hotel were coded as H2-a, H2-b, H2-c; H3-a, H3-b, H3-c respectively.

2.3.3 Classification of QWL attributes

A grounded theory approach that can be derived inductively through the systematic collection and analysis of data pertaining to a phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) is adopted for this study. Grounded theory methods (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) were used to evolve codes and develop theory. The data analysis phase of this study involved the researcher, and an expert, specialized in HR (human resources) and well-versed with the grounded theory methodology. Data collection and item classification was carried out simultaneously. The early coding phase was intentionally kept flexible and reflexive allowing the data to stimulate thinking about themes and their relationships, focusing on the emerging theory and the need for subsequent data collection. Although there are many text analysis software, Microsoft Excel software was employed for critical reasons as follows:
(a) The intention of this study was not to calculate the frequency of occurrence of a theme, rather to list and classify the emerging themes.

(b) As the analysis and comparison of themes were taking place, the spreadsheet provided a glimpse of the various categories and themes within each category.

(c) Insertion of categories, themes into the existing spreadsheet and alphabetic sorting was possible using this software.

(d) Participants offered rich in-depth narratives of their experiences and its essence could be captured only by human psyche and human analysis.

Items were classified based on the understanding of its content in the circumstantial context. As new items emerged, the strategy for classification was; a) in case, this related to an existing dimension, then it was sub-classified under this dimension, else, if it was agreed upon as entirely unrelated to the existing dimension, then it was labeled as a new dimension. The classification for the theme followed the same logic. Fig. 2.2 provides a graphical representation of the classification process.
The data were categorized based on 'commonalities and differences' across emerging themes (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002). The QWL dimensions and themes that emerged is summarized in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Summary of the QWL dimensions and related attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Sub dimensions (attributes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | Job characteristics  | a. Challenging task  
b. Interesting and satisfying work  
c. Workload that is manageable  
d. Long and unpredictable work hours  
e. Autonomy                      |
| 2  | Person-job fit       | a. Matching qualification/skill  
b. Matching individual interest                                    |
| 3  | Company image        | a. Growth of the company  
b. Performance of the company  
c. Adherence to safety and hygiene standards  
d. Image of the organization in the society                        |
| 4  | HR policies          | a. Adequate and fair compensation  
b. Opportunities for training and development                         |
| 5  | Work group relationship (Co-worker and supervisor) | a. Team spirit  b. Cooperation & support  
c. Friendly relation  d. Trust  
e. Responsibility  f. Communication  
g. Respect |
| 6  | Physical working conditions | a. Enough working space, better lighting, and good air circulation  
b. Ergonomically designed work station and equipments  
c. Use of latest technology |
| 7  | Work-life balance | a. Time for social life  
b. Time for family life |
| 8  | Interaction with customers | a. Customer behaviour and usage of harsh words towards hospitality employees  
b. Customer praising the employee for a good service/food |

2.4 Analysis and discussion of the QWL construct

1. Job characteristics

During the interview sessions, majority of the respondents emphasized their preference for taking up ‘challenging task’ and ‘interesting work’. These responses aligns with the observation by Jenkins(1991) in a study relating job satisfaction for occupational therapist.

The open-ended questionnaire, had majority reporting that ‘extended shift’ and ‘routine over load of work’, lowered their enthusiasm. Though most of the respondents do not
mind working for a 9-10 hr shift, they experienced physical and mental fatigue after prolonged shifts, impinging on their efficiency and well being, the next day. Since work overload is a salient feature in this industry, response confers with the conclusion drawn by Shelley and Andrea (2007), that employees’ perception of work overload has negative implications for mental and physical health, affecting their work life. In contrast to this, a large number of respondents felt that they can work efficiently and experienced a sense of fulfillment, when they have the liberty to solve their guest complaints, instead of approaching the duty manager. The importance of having autonomy is reflected in the response from an employee in the service department:

"... a guest was complaining about a dish that was served. . . . I decided to serve him a complementary dessert, he was taken by surprise and appreciated the gesture. . . . I felt happy, that I had the freedom to take remedial measures by myself. . . ." (H2-b: autonomy)

2. Person-job fit

Another potential area that impinges on the work life of the hospitality employees was the fit between the person performing the job and the job to be done. Primarily the related themes that emerged in this category was that, employees’ would like to be placed in a job matching his/her qualification and interest. An apprehension of misfit seemed to
bother a majority of the potential employees and also a few recent recruits. An excerpt of the response echoes this.

"...actually I had applied for a position in front office for which I am qualified and am interested in, but I am placed in the housekeeping department, with an excuse that there is a shortage of staff in housekeeping, and I would be soon transferred to the front office. I feel I am a total misfit for the housekeeping department. . . would have enjoyed my job as a front office staff. . . this is demeaning. . ." (E24: Person-job misfit).

Such emotions corroborates with the job fit theory that; each individual possesses unique dispositions, abilities, and experiences that determine the type of job she or he is drawn to and most suited for (Starks, 2007).

3. Company image

The image associated with an organization also emerged as a potent influencer on the quality of work life. The themes captured that were characteristic of an organization that respondent’s happily connected and related were:

(a) respondents would like to work for an organization that is growing
(b) respondents are happy when their organization is performing well in the industry
(c) organization adheres to safety standards and hygiene policies
(d) respondents are happy to work in an organization that is well known and has a brand image of repute.
These responses substantiate the finding of the study by Cable and Turban (2003), that a firms' reputation is a source of pride for its members. Apart from such attributes, there also emerged certain factors that were a source of frustration. For example, some respondent cited that, '... practices in their hotel were contrary to the industry norms and it is frustrating...'. Also, expression such as, '... we are unhappy with the ad hoc safety and hygiene practices followed in our organization...', highlight the employees unhappiness and displeasure in working with such organization.

4. HR policies

a. Adequate and fair compensation.

Invariably all the respondents viewed salary as a major concern in the hospitality industry as compared to other service industry. This seemed to worry the potential employees concerning a career in this industry. The following comments are illustrative of this genuine concern:

"... our parents spend a lot for our education and the situation will be no good when we join the industry... our parents have to still keep supporting us financially... I would feel odd to burden my parents even when I am working..." (I2-b: low salary).

A number of respondents affirmed that they are ready to work for longer hours and even work harder, but the impediment being the absence of 'performance-based incentives or
recognition’. Nevertheless, contrary to this scenario was the riposte of employees from the first hotel;

"... yeah! we work extra... at times we work for 11-12 hours... but none of us mind, we are appropriately compensated. ... so, that keeps us going and we enjoy our work."

(E3: importance of compensation).

Apparently, gestures of recognition or some sort of compensation for an extra-ordinary effort in the day-to-day activities, work as a real motivator according to the respondents. The open-ended query, "I would dislike a workplace...", had majority responding like; 'no recognition', 'no reward' and 'low salary' as a source of dissatisfaction at work.

b. Opportunities for training and development.

This industry has an image of slow career growth for their employees which was also evident from the congregated responses in this study. The responses to the open-ended query, "I would dislike a workplace that has...", drew responses like 'no career growth', 'no professional future' and 'no training programs'. Besides this, respondents correlated their satisfaction at work to adequate training programs and opportunity to participate in relevant seminars and workshops. These responses purports that the provision of training and development imparts a feeling to the employees that their organization cares and supports them (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This belief, was evident in the statements that emerged during the focus group discussion and interviews that;
'organization should provide more training', 'company should have ongoing training program' and 'there should be opportunity for skill development'. The employees interviewed stated that when organization takes effort to periodically upgrade their skills, they feel happy and committed to their organization.

c. Orientation

An enquiry into issues that would contribute to a good work life at the start of a career in the hospitality industry had almost all the student respondents and employees, insisting that orientation is extremely essential. One of the respondents described the importance of orientation, thus;

"... I reported for the first day. ... fully aware that I may not continue with this organization for long. ... I was not very serious about working here. ... but as I sat through the orientation and became familiar with the various achievements of the organization and the people around. ... I sensed a change in my views. ... I felt quite comfortable and started liking this organization. ... 6 years have passed. ... I am glad that the organization had an orientation for the new comers..." (E1: orientation)

Also the responses to the open-ended query, "I would like a workplace. ...", had responses like 'offers orientation', 'introduces the new recruits to the department and staff', 'ensures familiarity with the workplace'. These responses are in consistence with
the findings of Waters (2003) that, orientation programs provide new hires with the information they need to reduce stress and gain foothold in their new job environment.

d. Performance appraisal.

This was a theme that was commonly voiced by most of the respondents and they seemed eager to be appraised. The responses to the open-ended query, "I would like a workplace. . .", drew responses like ‘fair appraisal’, ‘systematic appraisal’, ‘periodic feedback’. On the other hand responses to the statement; “I would dislike a workplace. . .”, had responses like, ‘absence of a system to monitor performance’ and ‘absence of a fair feedback’. The members of the first two focus group were satisfied with the appraisal, that is apparently evident from a response like, ‘. . . our manager discusses the appraisal outcome with each one of us. . . and corrective actions are taken jointly. . .’. This contention concurs with the observation that an effective appraisal and timely positive feedback has been shown to reduce occupational stress (Clegg, 2001).

e. Fringe benefits.

Fringe benefits like ‘good staff cafeteria’ and ‘recreation facility’ was directly tied to the quality of work life as aired by all the participants in this study, that they have to endure prolonged physical and mental stress, necessitating a need for de-stressing. The interviewees from the hotel H1 pointed out to their cafeteria and the recreation room as a ‘fun place’ and a ‘rejuvenating area’. Interestingly they revealed that their work
atmosphere improved after they started engaging in indoor games. This notion is apparent in the excerpt from an interview with a service staff.

“. . . our cold war with the production staff dissolved from the time we had a recreation room and a carom board,. . . all the nitty-gritty conflicts at the workplace seemed silly all through. . .” (E5)

Indeed this response aligns with the findings of Iwasaki et al (2002), that leisure enhances the mood and facilitates companionship, which can significantly reduce work related stress. The other fringe benefits that the respondents mentioned among the “Attributes that contributes to a good QWL:” were, ‘retirement benefits’, ‘medicare facilities’, ‘transportation facilities’, ‘good staff cafeteria’, and ‘staff quarters’. Respondents from hotel H3, aired their discontent about the poor quality of the staff cafeteria and staff accommodation.

5. Workgroup relationship

Attributes of the subordinates were quoted by almost all the respondents in this study as impacting their work life. Some of the below mentioned excerpts substantiates this;

“. . . most irritating is,. . . (ooh uh). . . after my night shift, I am desperate to get back home. . . but my fellow worker turns up late, I am held back. . . I miss my bus, I cannot get back home before my children leave for school. . . and this has become a habit with
my colleague, despite my several request to come on time. . .” (H3-c: responsibility, cooperation in a co-worker).

“. . . the other day I hurry back from the cafeteria, only to find that my colleague has kept all the check-out bills pending and as I was completing this task, there comes few walk-in guest. . . so there was a mess. . . you know, the check-outs’ waiting for the settlement and dealing with the check-in formalities. . . after all this, I find my colleague happily walking in without a sign of botheration. . .” (E21: no team spirit, no co-operation).

“. . . I hated this industry from the first day of my industrial training, people around just didn’t treat us like humans. . . nobody cooperated. . .” (I1-d: no respect, no cooperation).

Associated with such experiences, studies have demonstrated the impact of the co-worker support on reducing burnout among the employees (Eastburg et al., 1994; Jackson et al., 1986). An employee in the front office revealed that, ‘most problems occur when co-workers do not communicate to the next shift members about certain important task that has to be handled by successive shift employees’. Furthermore the responses to open-ended statement, “I like a workplace. . .”, had phrases such as ‘friendly atmosphere’, ‘team spirit’, ‘supportive co-workers’, ‘responsible subordinates’, ‘good communication’, ‘mutual respect’, ‘supportive co-workers and supervisors’, ‘team spirit’. Conversely the responses to the statement, “I dislike a workplace that has: . . ”, elicited responses like; ‘unequal treatment’, ‘back biting’, ‘use of abusing language’, ‘disrespect for others’.
Such intimidating responses brought to the forefront attributes that were expected from the co-workers.

6. Physical working conditions

During the interview session, almost all the respondents concurred that the physical working conditions (e.g., working space, lighting, air circulation) must be good. Besides this, the open-ended query, "Attributes that contribute to a good QWL...", drew responses like 'ergonomically designed workplace', 'using equipment that do not strain', 'use of latest technology'. These responses are in accordance with the expectation of the employees that their employers need to ameliorate the physical environment and comfort at the workplace in order to prevent discomfort and dissatisfaction among their employees (Gavhed and Toomingas, 2007).

7. Work-life balance

Almost all the respondents agreed and divulged that imbalance in their work and social life is pervasive among employees in this industry. The responses to the open-ended section of the questionnaire, "I would dislike a workplace", had majority of the students expressing their frustration with respect to working hours like, 'this industry spares no time for family life', 'no life' and expressed their desire to maintain a balance of work-life. In concordance with this response was the experience shared by the employees from the hotel H3 during the interview, that;
“... we work for prolonged hours even during week-ends, and it is frustrating when we are not permitted to take an off, to attend some family commitment. . .” (E22).

Almost all the student respondents believed that an opportunity to balance work/family life would greatly enhance their QWL as purported by Kotze’ (2005).

8. Interaction with customers

For most respondents, difficult customers contributed to stress at work. The respondents in all the focus group aired similar sentiments about instances when they have to deal with rude customers, which affected their work and caused frustration. The participants of the focus group invariably pointed out that the interaction with their customers has a significant impact on their mood which affected their work performance. A front office staff retorted, ‘... in spite of my manager not being appreciative of my efforts, yet when guest’s praises my prompt service, it boosts my morale and this provides a sense of happiness and satisfaction in doing my work. . .’. Nonetheless, respondents narrated instances where the customer behavior frustrated them, which is best exemplified in the following narratives;

“...sometimes with all the standardized services... the guest keeps fussing... so our mood is off for the rest of the day...’ (S2).
"... in some cases, for silly reasons, the guest complaints to our manager and makes a
mountain out of trivial incidents..." (H2-c).

Respondents invariably felt that the 'experience of interacting with guest' affected their
mental well being, impacting their work life. This observations draws consistence with
earlier findings in studies by Macdonald (1999), Louis and Smith (1990); wherein
students as customers and physical educators as service providers, found dissatisfaction
with their work as a result of 'unfulfilling interactions with students', under a broader
conceptual framework for examining teachers' QWL.

2.5 Summary of the findings

The objective of the phase I of this study was to answer the question, "What are the
expected dimensions of QWL for the hotel employees?" To uncover the pertinent
dimensions of QWL, this study adhered to Portes's (1998) recommendation that HRD
scholars and practitioners take a measured approach to incorporate social capital into the
research and practice of HRD. Drawing upon the essence of grounded theory, this study
investigated the expected attributes that were indicative of a good work life quality from
the stakeholders. The content analysis yielded 42 attributes or sub dimensions items
under eight broad dimensions of QWL. The dimensions being job characteristics, person-
job fit, company image, HR policies, physical working conditions, work-life balance,
work group relationship and interaction with customers. Subsequently, it was observed
that despite speculation of high workloads and dissatisfaction the findings demonstrate
that a challenging and interesting job enhanced the respondents' work life experience. Almost all the respondents were willing to work for a 9–10 hour shift. But on the other hand, low salary, lack of appreciation and heavy workload seemed to repulse the potential employees. The participants of this study reported their keenness to be placed in a position matching their qualification and area of interest. It also emerged that respondents were happy and motivated to stay and serve an organization that is growing and has a reputation in the industry. A serious deficiency pointed out by the respondents was the lack of a clear career growth plan and the absence of an objective appraisal system in this industry. Majority of the student respondent and some employees viewed orientation program as instrumental in enhancing the early stages of the work life. This may be probably attributed to the future anxiety that the students have in familiarizing themselves with a new work environment. Thus, a well-planned orientation program to relieve the initial anxiety and help them get off to a good start was viewed important by the respondents. Further, employees conceptualized an ergonomically designed workstation and advanced technology at workplace as augmenting their efficiency and work life. Respondents expected that, they be regularly trained to upgrade their skills and knowledge which motivated them to remain with the organization. There was an emphasis on friendly, supportive atmosphere with recreation facilities to relax their nerves during breaks, vital to endure prolonged work hours. Regarding the expected attributes of the co-workers, the findings aligns with the inferences drawn by Cohen and Prusak (2001) and Requena (2003), wherein Cohen and Prusak (2001) surmised that a working environment that foster cooperative relationships and bring employees together to connect, share stories and build trust facilitates the building of social capital, that
enhance QWL (Requena, 2003). Additionally, respondents deemed fringe benefits like good cafeteria, staff quarters, transportation, healthcare facilities and pension schemes as supportive of a good work life. Although the respondents were aware of the prolonged shifts in the hospitality industry, they keenly desired for a balance in their work-life. Subsequently, the employees’ experience of the interaction with customers influenced their well being at the workplace. Respondents consented that a gesture of appreciation from the customers livened up their spirit despite strenuous work hours. Contrary to this, some respondents felt that the customers’ disrespect towards the hospitality employees hurt them emotionally resulting in a sense of frustration at the work place. Thus this attribute emerged as relevant and appropriate in the context of this study, as it would be inappropriate to assume that work life quality is not affected by the customer, with whom the hotel employees’ interacts with.