

# A Study on Quality of Work Life (QWL) in PSPCL

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**Abstract:** This research paper explains the concept of quality of work life (QWL) through various definitions of QWL by eminent researchers. It also examines different models of QWL and various components of quality of work life (QWL) based on earlier studies on QWL in various sectors in India and abroad. It aims to ascertain the major components of quality of work life (QWL) through summarizing various components of QWL to assess the level of QWL of employees of PSPCL.

**Keywords:** QWL, PSPCL, Definition of QWL, Models of QWL, Components of QWL.

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## I. DEFINING THE QUALITY OF WORK LIFE (QWL)

The term quality of work life (QWL) may be conceptualized as a subset of the quality of life as both are closely related to each other, life at work is an integral part of total life space of any person (Lawler E.E, 1982). In a simple form, the concept of quality of work life (QWL) is concerned with employee job satisfaction, particularly in relation to the tangible aspects of work such as income and employment benefits (Lau and Bruce 1998). In a complex form, the concept of QWL is associated with an employee's subjective well being considering issues such as job security, chances of growth and occupational health and safety (Sirgy et al., 2001; Considine and Callus, 2001). However, the quality of work life (QWL) is widely accepted as a dynamic, multi dimensional construct that incorporates any number of measures relating to employment quality (Levine, 1983; Carayon, 1997; Prujit, 2002, Bhola 2006). A look into the various definitions of the term quality of work life (QWL) is as follows:

- Lawler (1982) has defined QWL in terms of job characteristics and work conditions. He has highlighted that the core dimensions of the entire QWL in the organization is to improve employees' well being and productivity.
- Lau and May (1998) has conceived QWL as the workplace strategies, operations and environment that promote and maintain employee satisfaction to improve working conditions for employees and organizational effectiveness for employers.
- Sirgy et al., (2001) has defined quality of work life (QWL) as employee satisfaction with variety of needs through resources, activities, and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace.
- Lau et al., (2001) equated quality of work life (QWL) to favorable working environment that supports and promotes satisfaction level of employees by providing employees with rewards, job security and career growth opportunities.
- Serey (2006) has explained quality of work life (QWL) as an opportunity to exercise one's talents and capacities, to face challenges and situations that require independence, initiative and self direction.
- Rethinam and Ismail (2008) have defined QWL as the effectiveness of the work environment that supports and promotes better health and well being, job security, job satisfaction, competency development and balance between work and non work life of employees.

The above mentioned discussion on the definitions of QWL clearly indicate that quality of work life (QWL) is a multi dimensional construct, made up of a number of interrelated components such as adequate and fair remuneration, safe and healthy working conditions that enables an individual to develop and use all his or her capacities.

### Various Models of Quality of Work Life (QWL)

#### 1. The Integration Model

The Integration model considered quality of work life (QWL) as a social movement with repercussions that extend beyond the strictly organizational framework of earlier concept of QWL (Kiernan and Knutson, 1990). Many authors have noted that workers are becoming better educated and that they consider work as a tool for personal growth and social support rather than merely a means of achieving financial independence (Kerce and Booth-Kewley, 1993). Therefore, the quality of work life (QWL) becomes an integral part of people's overall quality of life (QOL) according to the integration model.

#### 2. The Transfer Model (Spillover Effect)

According to the Transfer model, Job satisfaction affects a person's other areas of life and vice versa (George and Brief, 1990). Similarly, Schmitt and Bedian (1982) conclude that there is positive

correlation between work and areas of life outside the work. However, Staines (1980) concluded that only certain spheres of work life are positively correlated with other spheres outside the work. In support of this hypothesis, Leiter and Durup (1996) add that the spillover effect between job satisfaction and personal life may be either direct or indirect.

**3. The Compensation Model**

According to this model, when a person is not satisfied at work, he will try to correct it through other stimulating activities outside their work life (Rosseau, 1978; Schmitt & Bedian, 1982). Staines' (1980) analysis tends to confirm the compensation model in certain circumstances and shows that certain spheres of work life correlate negatively with areas outside work. For example, workers who have physically demanding jobs generally tend to seek out non tiring leisure activities so that they can recuperate better.

**4. The Segmentation Model**

According to the Segmentation model, life at work and life outside the work does not influence each other (Georges & Brief, 1990). Martin and Schermerhon (1983) in their stressor-health path analysis model projected that a clear separation of work and life dimensions creates balance, whereas a spillover of work related feelings detrimentally affects life satisfaction. Edwards and Rothbard (2000) described the uniqueness of work and non-work demands and need to maintain a separation between these roles.

**5. The Accommodation Model**

According to the Accommodation model, voluntarily reduction in one's investment of time and energy in one's sphere of activity results into adequate response to the demands of another sphere of life (Lambert, 1990). Due to the increased attention recently given to work life vs. family life conciliation, this model is probably suitable for more and more categories of workers, either men or women.

**Components/ Dimensions of Quality of Work Life (QWL)**

A detailed description of major components of quality of work life (QWL) according to various researches available in this area is given so as to identify the most important components of QWL for the purpose of present study:

**1. Adequate and Fair Compensation**

The compensation for work is always a fundamental driving force behind work so as to earn a living for one self and family (Walton, 1973; Nirenberg, 1993). Stein (1983) identified compensation as being one of five important components of QWL, although its categorical classification is somewhat different to Walton and Orpen. Similarly, Reid (1992) in a study on clothing workers confirmed Walton's proposition that compensation plays a critical role in determining the quality of work life (QWL).

**2. Safe and Healthy Working Conditions**

It has been found that safe and healthy work conditions have a significant impact on quality of work life (QWL) of employees (Walton 1973, Rousseau 1978, Nirenberg 1993). The employees should not be exposed to such working conditions that can adversely affect their physical and mental health resulting into a low level of quality of work life (QWL) of concerned employees (Orpen, 1981).

**3. Opportunity to use and develop competencies**

The structural approach proposed by Herman and Hulin (1972) and Loscocco (1990) explains the necessity of jobs to contain variety as a component of quality of work life (QWL). It is stated that employees' perception of the quality of work life (QWL) depends upon the extent to which jobs allow them not only to use but also to develop their competencies (Hackman and Oldham, 1980).

**4. Opportunity for continued growth**

The component of opportunity for continued growth is considered as a major motivator of employees working at any position or in any sector. This also relates to the idea of professional learning as a means for career development or succession possibilities for the employees in any organization (Walton, 1975, Bertrand, 1992).

**5. Work and total life space**

In work life literature the concept of work life is often coupled with the word balance, employees should be able to experience work and personal lives in an integrated form (Williams, 2000, Rapport *et al.*, 2002). Kotze (2005) asserts that work family balance enhances an individual's QWL, as involvement in multiple roles protects individuals from the effects of negative experiences in any one role.

**6. Organizational Climate**

Organizational climate can be defined as the patterns of social interactions which characterizes any organization, Walton (1973) and Orpen (1981) have identified five factors, namely, supportiveness, tolerance, equality, mobility and identification as essential for these interactions to have beneficial outcomes for employees. The communication channel and organizational atmosphere based on fairness and equity play a crucial role in QWL of any employee (Sharma, 1989; Srivastava, 1996).

**7. Stress control and employee burn out**

Stress control is most important for employees to work efficiently as continuous high level of stress leads to employee burnout which results into absenteeism and employee turnover. The incidence of high stress level and employee burnout reflects in a low quality of work life (QWL) of employees (Rethinam and Ismail, 2008).

**8. Constitutionalism in the work organization**

This component of quality of work life (QWL) is concerned with what rights employees should enjoy, whether they exercise them or not, whether the organization has set up formal procedures to protect the individual worker from arbitrary and capricious actions by employers. (Walton, 1975; Orpen, 1981).

**9. Job security**

Many organizations tend to employ workers on the basis of short or fixed term contracts rather than long term contracts to minimize employee costs, the uncertainty regarding task performance leading to a lower quality of work life (Sverke, *et al.*, 2006).

**10. Supervisor and Colleague support**

According to Michie and Williams (2003), poor supervisor support, long hours of work, and work overload factors are associated with psychological ill health. On the other hand, a good supervisor can also help one to use one's resources better and manage one's workload (Hawkins and Shohet, 2000). Social support colleagues refer to instrumental and emotional support provided by colleagues (Van Der Doef and Maes, 1999).

**11. Social relevance of work**

The employees who feel that their organization is acting in a socially responsible manner, in terms of its products and services, will tend to value their work and careers more highly, which in turn is likely to enhance the self esteem and well being leading to a higher quality of work life (QWL) (Walton, 1975; Orpen, 1981).

**12. Recognition for achievement**

This component of QWL is defined by Kotze (2008) as the recognition for achievements of the employees by management, colleagues and subordinates as feedback is closely related to task significance of employees. Hackman and Oldham (1979) suggested that feedback is a critical factor in reducing absenteeism and employee turnover.

**13. Autonomy**

The job should be designed in such a manner that it affords the employee a degree of independence and discretion (Orpen, 1981). Similarly, Newell (2002) opined that QWL involves providing employees with greater responsibility and autonomy. A lot of empirical results and theories about occupational stress have regarded job autonomy to be crucial for the health of employees (Jenkins, 1991; Karasek, 1998).

**14. Role clarity**

When the individual employee does not do certain tasks as the employer expects, stress develops which results into low quality of work life (QWL) of concerned employees (Pollard, 2001). Tubre and Collins (2000) observed that the clarity with which individuals perceive their work roles is linked to several important organizational outcomes including job performance, organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

**15. Creativity and innovation**

Creativity is the prerequisite for an organization's innovation, effectiveness and long-term survival (Oldham, 2002; Shalley *et al.*, 2004). The creativity and innovation at work is crucial for genuine psychological growth of the employees which can be achieved through new or novel exposure to the employees (Orpen, 1981, Warr, 1994).

**16. Well formulated and established goals**

It is most important to have a clear direction that specifies workers' purpose and orients them towards their objectives to be achieved in a given time period as deadlines and time pressures are important regulators (Nordqvist, Hovmark and Zika-Viktorsson, 2004). The activities and tasks are given a certain time frame as absence of time pressure can lead to indifference towards completion of given task (Gevers, Van Eerde and Rutte, 2001).

**17. Meaningfulness and significance of work**

Thomas (2000) identified the four critical intrinsic reward motivators in a job, namely, sense of meaning and purpose, sense of choice, sense of competence and sense of progress. Chalofsky (2003) believed that quality of work life (QWL) is higher in workers having duties and tasks that are meaningful to him and to others in the organization.

**18. Identification with and enjoyment of work**

Every employee wants to identify itself with its job profile so as to enjoy its work life which invariably leads to better quality of work life (QWL) of employees. The work becomes meaningful for employees

primarily by skill variety, task identity and task significance among others (Hackman and Oldham, 1980).

### **Growth of Punjab State Power Corp. Ltd. (PSPCL)**

The Punjab State Electricity Board (PSEB) was constituted as an integrated power utility under the Electricity (Supply) Act 1948 to perform the functions of generation, transmission and distribution of electricity in the state of Punjab. The Punjab State Electricity Board (PSEB) was unbundled on 16.04.2010 into two corporations namely Punjab State Power Corp. Ltd. (PSPCL) taking over the functions of power generation and distribution in the state and Punjab State Transmission Corp. Ltd. (PSTCL) taking over the function of power transmission in the state from the erstwhile Punjab State Electricity Board (PSEB) in reforms process carried out under Electricity Act, 2003. PSPCL carries out the generation and distribution of power throughout the state of Punjab through a work force of 40,370 employees belonging to different categories, it has sold 41,330 million units of power to 85.9 lakh consumers in the year 2015-16 (Annual Administrative Reports, PSPCL).

## **II. OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this study is to ascertain the major components of quality of work life (QWL) in order to carry out a study to assess the QWL of employees of PSPCL. To achieve this objective, various components of quality of work life (QWL) according to major research studies conducted on quality of work life (QWL) of employees working in various sectors in India and abroad over the years have been discussed in detail in the previous section. This research paper aims to summarize these various components into major components of QWL to assess the quality of work life (QWL) of employees working in Punjab State Power Corp. Ltd. (PSPCL).

## **III. FINDINGS**

After a detailed deliberation on each of the various components discussed in major studies on quality of work life (QWL) of employees working in different sectors over last many years, the following six major components of QWL have been summarized to form the basis for the research study on assessment of quality of work life (QWL) of employees of PSPCL: (i) Adequate compensation (ii) Working conditions (iii) Growth opportunities (iv) Organizational culture (v) Stress management and (vi) Work life balance. These six major components of quality of work life (QWL) are labeled in such a way as to represent various components of QWL used by different researchers in their studies on QWL of employees working in different sectors in India and Abroad.

## **IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It can be concluded from above that the quality of work life (QWL) of employees in PSPCL can be represented by these six major components of QWL which are summarized from various components of QWL considered in major research studies conducted over a long period of time in this area. Therefore, PSPCL should make policies to improve its performance on each of these individual components of QWL in order to improve the quality of work life (QWL) of its employees.

### **Future Course of Action**

The future research in this area should focus on assessment of employee satisfaction level on each of these major components of quality of work life (QWL) of employees of PSPCL. It can be achieved through drafting of a questionnaire to elicit employee responses on these major components of quality of work life (QWL) of employees of PSPCL. It can be of immense use for policy makers of PSPCL to know the employee satisfaction level on each of the major component of quality of work life (QWL) of employees of PSPCL in order to improve the weaknesses in individual components.

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