

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND DEMOGRAPHICS- A STUDY OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, an attempt has been made to study the perception of teaching staff towards QWL on the basis of demographics namely gender, age and experience. The respondents of the study comprise of 156 faculty members selected from five colleges in Srinagar district. The data whatsoever collected was analyzed using SPSS 20 Version. The findings of the study revealed that gender has no significant effect towards QWL. However, it was found from the findings that experience and age influences the perception of teaching personnel towards QWL. The study suggests that QWL needs to be further enriched in order to improve the performance of teaching personnel in sample study institutions.

Keywords: Quality of work life, academic Staff, higher educational institutions,

INTRODUCTION

The performance of higher academic institutions lies in their ability to encourage and motivate their faculty members to excel and enrich their capabilities. Faculty members can perform and deliver effectively if their motives and needs are being addressed. They attribute their satisfaction level in terms of monetary benefits being derived from the institutions, working environment, a culture of growth and development, and in the extent to which they are being involved in contributing towards their institutional vision. However, institutions cannot sustain their relevance if they do not pay desired focus towards improving the skills and competencies of their workforce through favourable work environment. In this respect, the effectiveness of educational institutions in this competitive and knowledge-driven environment can be made better if they value and recognize their faculty members by providing them with conducive atmosphere at their workplaces which drives better performance and higher productivity. It can be achieved if educational institutions bring qualitative changes through promotion of sound quality of work life (QWL). QWL is vital not only for improving employee performance, but it also helps in enhancing institutional progress. The internal environment at their places determines how much happy and satisfied they are towards their institutions. The internal environment can be developed and improved by bringing positive changes at individual and group work levels. In this endeavour, quality of work life (QWL) can have a significant effect on the overall working of the institutions. A sound QWL will help in increasing the morale and commitment of individuals towards their organizations and help in enhancing their professional growth and development. QWL facilitates organizational members to actively take part in decision making at individual, group, and organizational levels. It enables individuals in organization to continuously develop their competencies by providing them with favourable environment to work and improve. Institutions irrespective of their nature and control need to focus on improving QWL which would lead to better and motivated workforce.

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Quality of Work Life- A Theoretical Perspective

The subject of QWL is gaining more acceptability and relevance among organizations irrespective of their nature of work. Past research evidences have highlighted that numerous studies have been conducted in the area of QWL; however, this area is yet to be explored to its fullest. Edwards et al., (2009) and Sashkin and Burke (1987) viewed that QWL is a growing area of management science and people perceive it differently as per their needs and requirements. There is no widely accepted and comprehensive definition of QWL. Various researches have tried to study the dynamics of QWL as per their understanding and knowledge. QWL includes many facets ranging from good work culture to safe working conditions. Sirgy et al., (2008) defined QWL as a combination of various factors, which include: (i) salary/compensation, (ii) work load and stress at work, (iii) promotion and professional growth, and (iv) sound psychological working environment. It constitutes all the facilities that are provided by an employer and needed by an employee to perform his/her assigned duties and tasks. QWL programs help both employees and management by building cooperation, solving problems, promoting sound work culture, and managing the resources (Rose et al., 2006).

Over the years, many authors and researchers have made an attempt to give a framework about the variables, which QWL constitutes. Swapna and Gomathi (2013) maintained that QWL could be measured through: (i) working conditions, (ii) well-being of individual, (iii) compensation, (iv) training and development, (v) work-life balance, and (vi) career and job satisfaction. Connell and Haneef (2009) pointed out that QWL comprises: (i) job content, (ii) working hours and work life balance, and (iii) managerial/supervisory style and strategies. QWL as such effects in determining how well employees perceive their emotional connection with their organization in terms of their economic situation, physical health, psychological behaviour, and working conditions.

Research Objectives

Based on past research studies, the following objectives have been set for the present study:

- i) to study the perception of respondents towards QWL across gender, ii) to study the perception of respondents towards QWL across age and
- iii) to study the perception of respondents towards QWL across experience.

Hypotheses

- 1) The perception of academic staff towards QWL significantly varies across age
- 2) The QWL significantly differs across gender
- 3) QWL significantly differs across experience

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To measure QWL a 33-item scale was adapted from Walton's model on QWL. It consisted of eight factors namely compensation, growth and security, development of human capability, social

integration, social relevance, constitutionalism, safe and healthy work environment, and work and total life space. A questionnaire was distributed among 200 faculty members selected from five constituent colleges of Cluster University Srinagar out of which only 167 questionnaires were received back. Out of the 167 questionnaires returned, 11 responses were found either incomplete or not fit for analysis. Therefore, only 156 questionnaires were used for final analysis representing usable response rate of 78.00%. The questionnaire also gathered information on demographic variables such as gender, experience and age. Male staff comprised of 92 (58.97%). Academic staff having more than 50 years of age consisted of 69 (44.23%), those having age between 40 and 50 years represented 49 (31.41%), and academic staff having age between 30 and 40 years represented 38 (24.35%). Simple random sampling technique was used to gather responses from the respondents of the present study. The data whatsoever collected were analyzed using SPSS 20.0Version.

Reliability and Validity Test

The reliability of the questionnaire during pilot study was examined by using Cronbach’s Alpha. The overall cronbach value was found to be at 0.796 which is higher than acceptable level in social science research (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Further Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed in order to check the consistency and discrimination among study factors. The suitability of data was examined through two tests namely Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity which was found to be higher than 0.50 and 0.000 respectively.

The fit indices of the specified model have yielded good results (CMIN/DF=1.888; GFI=0.920; CFI=.918; RMSEA=0.065; RMR=0.044). Moreover, it was found from the model, that all the factor loadings are well above 0.70 thresholds and hence support EFA findings (Hair *et al.*, 1988).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

In the table 1, the perception of teaching personnel towards QW was examined on the basis of demographic variable gender. Accordingly, it was found from the results that the male staff showed higher satisfaction with mean score of (3.23) towards QWL as compared to female staff with mean score of (3.17) in sample select institutions.

Table 1: Quality of Work Life and Gender

Construct	Gender	Mean Score	Std. Dev
QWL	Male	3.23	0.68
	Female	3.17	0.76

Note: Higher the mean score, higher the level of satisfaction

To know whether the difference in respondent group ‘gender’ is statistically significant or not, an independent samples test was employed. The results showed that the difference in the perception of female and male staff toward QWL is statistically insignificant as the p value is more than .05 (Table 2). Therefore hypotheses 1 is empirically not supported and hence rejected.

Table 2: Independent Samples Test (Gender)

Construct	Levene's Test for Equality of		t- test for Equality of Means			
	F	SIG	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
QWL	.522	.576	1.321		.059	

The Table 3 examines the difference in the perception of employees regarding QWL on the basis of variable age. It is revealed from the above table 3 that employees who are above 50 years age are having highest perception towards QWL with mean score of (3.24) while as employees in between 30-40 age group showed least satisfaction towards QWL with mean score of (3.16).

The perceptual differences of respondent employees regarding QWL is statistically significant when the differences were examined on the basis of age factor (ANNOVA=3.455; p<.05). Hence hypothesis 2 is accepted, indicating that there exists a significant difference among academic staff across age.

Table 3: Quality of Work Life and Age

Factor	Dependant Variable	Group	Mean Score	ANOVA (F value)	Sig*
Age	QWL	30-40	3.16	3.566	.038*
		40-50	3.20		
		50 Above	3.24		

Note: *P< .05

The Table 4 examines the difference in the perception of teaching personnel regarding QWL on the basis of variable experience. It is revealed from the above Table 4 that teaching personnel who have more than 20 years of teaching experience are having highest perception towards QWL with mean score of (3.27) while as teaching personnel have experience of less than 10 years showed least satisfaction towards IB practices with overall mean score of (3.14).

Table 4: Quality of Work Life and Experience

Factor	Dependant Variable	Group	Mean Score	ANOVA (F value)	Sig*
Experience	QWL	> 20 Years	3.27	3.922	.029*
		10-20 years	3.19		
		Less than 10	3.13		

Note: *P< .05; higher the mean score, higher the level of satisfaction

The perceptual differences of respondent employees regarding QWL is statistically significant when the differences were examined on the basis of experience factor (ANNOVA=3.922; p<.05). Hence hypothesis 3 is accepted, indicating that there exists a significant difference among teaching staff across experience (sig=.029*).

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study was aimed to examine the perception of teaching personnel regarding quality of work life on the basis of demographic variables namely age, experience and gender. From the study findings, it was revealed that gender has no significant effect on perception level of teaching personnel as male staff did not showed any significant difference towards quality of work life as compared to female teaching staff. Moreover, perception of teaching personnel towards quality of work life varied significantly across age indicating higher age group teaching personnel have higher satisfaction level towards quality of work life as compared to lower age group teaching personnel. Lastly, it was also revealed from the data results that experience level of teaching personnel has significant effect on perception level towards quality of work life. It depicted that teaching personnel having higher teaching experience showed highest satisfaction level as compared to teaching personnel having less teaching experience.

The results obtained from the present study have certain significant policy implications which, if properly addressed, can help institutions to focus their resources in an effective manner in order to achieve desired outcomes and yield better results. The findings of the study suggest that the study institutions need to continuously facilitate and encourage their faculty members and must strive hard in promoting an enabling culture and sound work environment, which will foster innovation and improve service delivery and performance of faculty members in general and enhance institutional effectiveness in particular.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This Study is faced with some limitations. Firstly, the present paper selected only five colleges from Srinagar district therefore findings of the study cannot be generalized to whole population. Future research can gather information from other colleges and can include universities as well in order to cover wider geographical representation. Secondly, the present study gathered information from respondents at only one point time therefore future research can be longitudinal in nature that will provide more holistic picture about the study institutions. Thirdly, the present research only targeted teaching personnel from select universities, therefore future research can study perception of non-teaching personnel in order to have more holistic picture about the study variables.

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