

QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND IT EMPLOYEES

INDUMATHY. J *

THENU. C T **

ABSTRACT

Quality of life in the workplace is the extent to which workers can satisfy important physical, psychological and social needs through their experiences in the organization. The quality of life of employees is in the best interest of communities and organizations as it focuses strongly on providing a work environment conducive to satisfy individual needs in this competitive digital era. There is a paradigm shift in the 9 to 5 job model, which is becoming obsolete as well. People are having a much harder time separating work from their lives so it is important that they love their work so much that it isn't work but it is their passion. Thus, the ability to promote quality of life rather than engender strains and mental illness is of considerable benefit not only to employees in the community but also to the employer's bottom line. It is assumed that if employees have more positive attitudes about the organization, their productivity increases. The present study examines whether the type of working sector (IT / government) have any relationship with the perception of quality of life at work and also to compare the relationship between quality of life among government (N=190) and IT (N= 155) workers. The WHOQOL-BREF instrument comprising of 26 items, which measures the following broad domains: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environment was used to collect data from the sample through Purposive Sampling Method. The results were thoroughly analysed and discussed. The results highlights that work related factors have significant and differential relationship with perception of quality of life at among the IT and Government sectors.

Keywords: *Quality of life, Workplace, IT Sector; Government employees.*

* **M.Phil in Psychology, Madras School of Social Work, Chennai**

** **PhD in Counselling Psychology, Avinashilingam University, Coimbatore**

INTRODUCTION

Quality of Life

The term Quality of Life (QOL) references the general well-being of individual and societies. The term is used in a wide range of contexts, including the fields of international development, health care and politics.

Domains of quality of life

- **Physical health Energy and fatigue**

Pain and discomfort

Sleep and rest

- **Psychological Bodily image and appearance**

Negative feelings

Positive feelings

Self-esteem

Thinking, learning, memory and

Concentration

- **Level of Independence Mobility**

Activities of daily living

Dependence on medicinal substances and medical aids

Work Capacity

- **Social relationships/Personal relationships**

Social support

Sexual activity

Financial resources

Freedom, physical safety and security

Health and social care: accessibility and quality

Home environment

Opportunities for acquiring new information and skills

Physical environment (pollution/noise/traffic/climate)

Transport

- **Environment**

- **Spirituality/Religion/Personal beliefs**

Factors Influencing Quality of life in professionals:

Taylor came up with components such as extrinsic job factors (e.g. wages, hours of work & working conditions) and intrinsic job factors. He states that quality of work life must have considerations such as:-

- Employee participation in management
- Fairness and equity
- Social support
- Self-development
- Meaningful future at work

It is also stated that Quality of Work Life is associated with:-

- Satisfaction of wages
- Hours and working conditions
- Safe working environment
- Equitable wages
- Equal employment opportunities
- Opportunities for advancement

Danna & Griffin argues that Quality of work life is a wider concept that incorporates not only work based factors as pay and relations at work but also reflect on life satisfaction and general feeling of well-being. Job and Career Satisfaction (JCS) of quality work life is said to reflect on employee's feelings and their satisfaction and contentment with their jobs and the training they receive to do it.

Alan Price states that empowering frontline employees and emphasis on team work helps to harness intelligence & energies of employees' thus creating potential for success and quality results. This is achieved through giving knowledge and competencies to handle high performance work, through team work, team briefings, interpersonal skills, appraisal and information sharing (Alan Price, 2007).

Reward and compensation systems must also be aligned to satisfy, motivate and retain employees. Several reward criteria proposed include rewards based on performance, effort, skill, seniority, job difficulty and discretion time. (DeCenzo and Robbin, 2004).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

As identified by Maslow in his Hierarchy of Needs theory, all the five needs must be attended to in order to achieve a quality working life. The basic needs with combination to workplace are:

- **Physiological:** These are basic physical comfort or bodily needs, food, sex, drink, and sleep. These needs translate into a safe, ergonomically designed work environment with appropriate base salary compensation.
- **Security/safety:** People want to feel safe, secure, and free from fear. They need stability, structure, and order. Job security and fringe benefits, along with an environment free of violence.
- **Belongingness and love:** This is a need for friends, family, and intimacy for social acceptance and affection from one's peers. This need is satisfied by participation in work groups with good relationships among co-workers and between workers and managers.
- **Esteem:** People want the esteem of others and they want to be regarded as useful, competent, and important. People also desire self-esteem and need a good self image. Increased responsibility, high status, and recognition for contributions satisfy these needs.
- **Self-Actualization:** This highest motivation level involves people striving to actualize their full potential, to become more of what they are capable of being. They seek to attain self-fulfilment. People satisfy this need by being creative, receiving training, or accepting challenging assignments (Claudia, 31 August 2013).

Government Employees

Government job is considered to be the most respected one in India weather it is of higher rank or lower. Being a government employee you are having all the comfort i.e. no stress in job, fixed working hours, no overload of work, job security, lots of leave, no pressure from higher authority as compared to private sector. A government employee is very well able to handle work and family affairs because he/she is having enough time to consider both as an important factor of life. It means government employee has good work life balance. Many times if there is any

function or festival in family or native village it is a government employee who will be there before a private one to attend/arrange everything and enjoy it the fullest. Giving time to their family/friends is the most important aspect in anyone's life and here government employee is on top. In many cases a government employee is enjoying the flexibility of working hours although it depends on the nature of job, like if there is a professor in a government college then he/she has less continuous working hours with fixed time. Money factor is also playing a big role in job satisfaction as after the approval of 6th pay scale by government to its employee, salaries of government employee becomes equal to private sector (not in all types of jobs). When it comes to individual respect it is a government employee who is getting the most, people are having a notion that getting a government job is tough and those who have it is skilled and having the ability to crack the exam and qualified for it. While for a private employee it is like normal thing to get any job. Then in marriage matter government employees are getting preference over private employees. While choosing a groom father of the bride is having more faith in government employee (and this is also the main cause of dowry in some states of India). Furthermore a government employee is having better facilities of Health insurance, life insurance and other medical benefits for them and their family members. It has been seen that a government employee is giving more time and care for the elderly member of their family than a private one. Then about social life, a government employee is very much social and lively person because he/she is having stress free work life and they are giving quality time to their friends/family/neighbors and ultimately to the society where they are living.

IT Employees

India is a top service provider country in the world and main industry which is dominating worldwide in providing workforce is IT industry. Indian software engineers are considered world class in in this industry. IT jobs has given a wide range of employment opportunities to Indian workforce. Especially to Indian middle class this industry has given a golden chance to improve their living standard and social status. After 90s when India has open its market for the world the most benefited sector was IT industry, because all the other industries were in a need of IT professionals to manage and modernize their area of working. Examples are TATA, Birla, Reliance,etc. IT sector has given boom to telecom industry in result it brings revolution in providing services. This sector is always considered to be the money basket compared to other

industries. But later as India became the leader in IT services it started outsourcing the work of many developed countries so it has changed the culture of cities and its youth, late night shifts and overtime became a part of IT professionals, result was work related stress, road rage, suicide, sexual harassment at workplace, idea theft, false credit, and a race to get promotion by any way. In short BPO culture has provided jobs as well as it started ruining our cultural (work) bond. IT professionals are working late night without getting paid for overtime (in many cases to complete the assigned work which has been taken from foreign client and promised to complete the work in less time than other competitors). Family members are enjoying the perks of being the IT professionals as their member but that member is not getting the time to spend some quality time with his/her family/friends, means an IT professional has no social life at all. His computer, work and company is his world.

Need for the Study:

Today, to be in a profession gives one a sense of satisfaction. It translates one to boost their self-worth and esteem. Nevertheless being engaged in a profession either out of choice or placed due to circumstances has its pros and cons. People from different professions undergo different levels and severity of stress. Several studies show that government employees are have better job satisfaction than private employees. The job nature, work environment and work life balance, pay structure is better in government jobs than private jobs. The present study is undertaken to identify the quality of life among government and IT employees.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lim, Hepworth and Bogossian(2011) researched on qualitative analysis of stress, uplifts and coping in the personal and professional lives of Singaporean nurses. A purposive sample of Singaporean hospital nurses (n = 23) identified using a snowball sampling technique. The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Three themes were identified as constituting daily hassles: (i) time pressures, (ii) nature of nursing work and (iii) multiple roles. The interaction between personal and professional life plays a major role in Singaporean nurses' experiences of stress and coping. However, stress may be ameliorated through effective management and strong familial support. Nurses and employers are recommended to use uplifts

and identify ways of coping to minimize attrition and contribute to the development of a healthy workforce.

Quinn , Wilcox , Orav, Bates and Simon (2011) researched on QI activities and quality of care, as well as their feelings of professional isolation, work-life stress, and practice dissatisfaction. They surveyed a random sample of 1884 physicians in Massachusetts by mail. Approximately one-third (33%) reported quality problems in their practice. The presence of quality problems was independently associated with increased professional isolation, work-life stress, and practice dissatisfaction. In contrast, physicians from practices that were involved in the evaluation of QI activities had significantly less isolation, stress, and dissatisfaction. Participation in QI activities was also independently associated with less dissatisfaction. Physicians who perceive quality problems in their practices are more likely to experience dissatisfaction, isolation, and stress.

Ravichandra and Dalvi (2012) conducted a study on Job Satisfaction and Professional Life Stress of Employees of IT and Manufacturing Industries. A sample of 200 employees (50 each from two manufacturing and 50 each from two IT organisations) has been chosen at random. Job-Satisfaction Instrument, developed by Mishra et al (1977) and Professional Life Stress Scale, developed by Fontana (1989) have been administered on all the two hundred employees in addition to a Performa for personal and job details. The results indicate that IT employees have expressed greater level of job satisfaction. Further, it is found that job satisfaction and professional life stress are negatively correlated.

Feizabadi, Hamidi, Khatibzadehand Ghamati (2012) studied the relationship between job stress and the quality of life in sport teachers in Mashhad city. This study used practical and correlation method for analysis. The sample was selected based on cluster random method from 3 Educational Organization using 348 out of 404 questionnaires. Research tools were personal data, quality of life questionnaire and stress questionnaire whose validity was determined by experts. The reliability for quality of life questionnaire was ($\alpha=0/76$) and for the stress questionnaire it was ($\alpha=0/81$). The result of this study indicated that, there were no significant difference in stress with fair pay, providing growth opportunities, legislation in organization, and

social dependence of work life, overall life space and Social integrity that help develop human ability. A significant difference existed between stresses with Safe & Healthiness workplace.

Ranjit and Mahespriya (2012) conducted a study on job stress and quality of life of women software employees. Descriptive research design was adopted. The researcher adopted snow ball sampling technique and sample size of was confirmed to 201. It was concluded that job stress influences the quality of life of software employees. It is also concluded that the demographic variables do influence the level of job stress and quality of life of software employees.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Objectives

- ❖ To assess the Quality of Life in government employees
- ❖ To assess the Quality of Life in IT employees
- ❖ To assess the gender difference in quality of life among employees
- ❖ To assess the occupation difference in quality of life among employees

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship among the sub-scales of Quality of Life.
2. There is a significant difference in the quality of life between the two different occupations.
3. There is no significant gender difference in the quality of life

Sample

The study was carried out among the professionals in Tamilnadu and Kerala from various districts. Three forty five samples from both professions namely IT and Government Employees in the age range of 35– 45 years were selected randomly using convenient sampling technique.

Tools

✓ **Case Study Schedule** constructed by the investigators was used to collect the general information of the sample.

✓

Quality of Life

Quality of Life Questionnaire constructed and standardized by The World Health Organisation (1998) was used to assess the level of Quality of Life of the sample. The WHOQoL – Bref is a

quality of life measure. It is an abbreviated form of the WHOQol – 100. The WHOQoL – Bref consists of 26 items that measure overall quality of life as well as four specific quality of life domains: Physical, Psychological, and Social Relationships & Environment. Using a 5-point scale for each item, the client circles the number that best represents their opinion, based on their life over the previous two weeks. The 5-point scale ranges from “Not at all” (a score of 1) through to “Completely” (a score of 5). Higher scores indicate a better quality of life. The validity of Quality of Life Questionnaire is 0.51-0.64 and the reliability is 0.91 the scoring norms provided by the author are used to score the 4 domains. Higher the score, Quality of Life is good.

Procedure

The individuals were selected from various districts from Tamil Nadu to serve as the sample through convenient sampling. They were explained the purpose of the study so as to seek cooperation from them. Respondents were assured that the information given by them would be kept strictly confidential and used for research.

Analysis of data

The following statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 20.0.

- ❖ Coefficient of correlation – Pearson Product Moment Method
- ❖ Independent Sample t - test – Gender and Occupation differences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table – 1: Relationship between dimensions of Quality of Life

Variables	Physical health	Psychological wellbeing	Social Relationship	Satisfaction with Environment
Physical health	1	.608**	.345**	.408**
Psychological wellbeing		1	.455**	.560**
Social relationship			1	.344**
Satisfaction with environment				1

** p> 0.01 level

In today's competitive business environment, an organizational environment conducive for human work requires the creation of work conditions that can enhance the quality of an employee's work life in the organization towards increased performance and productivity. In other words, the organizational environment must have the capacity to satisfy meaningfully an employee's organizational and personal needs, and also the ability to shape' organizational values that better support and promote employees' health and well-being, job security, job satisfaction, competency development and balance between work and non-work life.

From the Table 1, it is evident that there is a positive relationship among the various dimensions of Quality of Life among Government and IT employees. The correlation is significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that the variables are interdependent to each other and the increase or decrease in one area has an influence on the other areas.

Work life balance involves the ability of an employee to have a meaningful daily work life in a state of self-achievement, satisfaction, and enjoyment derived from the positive association between the employees' emotional-self and his/her work, friends, family. Work should be designed so that employees' work schedules, career demands, and travel requirements do not take up leisure and family time on a regular basis (**Balaji, 2013**).

Thus the hypothesis stating "There is a significant relationship among the sub-scales of Quality of Life" is accepted.

Table – 2: Occupation differences among the variables

Variables	Occupation	N	Mean	S.D	T value
Physical Health	Government	190	26.64	3.940	6.952**
	IT Employees	155	23.79	3.591	
Psychological Wellbeing	Government	190	22.85	3.939	5.075**
	IT Employees	155	20.74	3.720	
Social Relationship	Government	190	12.40	1.932	0.422
	IT Employees	155	12.49	2.030	

Satisfaction with Environment	Government	190	28.81	5.400	1.485
	IT Employees	155	28.00	4.487	
Overall	Government	190	102.20	21.523	5.706**
	IT Employees	155	91.13	12.132	

**** p > 0.01 level**

A safe work environment provides the basis for the person to enjoy working. Employees who are satisfied with pay, promotion achievement, relationship with co-workers, nature of the work and communication, organisational and job specific seemed to feel more emotionally attached to and involved with their respective organisations, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards (Lumley, Coetzee, tladinyane, & Ferreira, 2011)

Research published in November 2000 under the UK government's "work-life balance" initiative finds that long and inflexible working hours contribute to poor health, family life and productivity.

Table 2, shows the Occupation differences with respect to the dimensions of Quality of life computed using independent sample t - test. From the results it was found that Physical Health and Psychological Well-being were significant at 0.01 level. It also denoted that the overall scores of Quality of Life were highly significant at 0.01 level. From the mean scores it is interpreted that the Physical Health, Psychological Well-being and Overall Quality of Life of government employees is higher (Mean = 26.64, 22.85, 102.20) than IT employees (Mean = 23.79, 20.74, 91.13). In the other two dimensions namely, Social Relationship and Satisfaction with Environment, there were no significant differences.

Thus the hypothesis stating “There is a significant difference in the quality of life between the two different occupations” is accepted except for two dimensions namely, social relationship and satisfaction with environment.

Table – 3: Gender differences among the variables

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Physical Health	Female	151	25.85	3.991	2.001*
	Male	194	24.97	4.046	
Psychological Wellbeing	Female	151	22.34	4.165	1.819
	Male	194	21.56	3.802	
Social Relationship	Female	151	12.59	1.823	1.236
	Male	194	12.32	2.082	
Satisfaction with Environment	Female	151	28.83	5.532	1.278
	Male	194	28.14	4.573	
Overall	Female	151	99.89	18.885	2.350*
	Male	194	95.15	18.390	

* $p > 0.05$ level

Many women today are wearing multiple hats in their attempts to balance both career and home/family responsibilities. Concern about family can interfere with work to a great extent and worries about work issues can also be exhibited in the family front. The study by FranceneSussner Rodgers (1992) with the sample consisting of employees of 20 Fortune 500 companies; 28 percent of the men and 53 percent of the women reported that work-family stress affected their ability to concentrate at work hence revealing that more than half the women and almost a third of the men reported that work/family stress affected their ability to concentrate on the job. Life at work seems so difficult for working women. Pleck's (1977) research suggests that family-to-work spill-over is stronger for women and the work-to-family spill-over is stronger for men.

Independent sample t test was used to analyse the gender differences among the dimensions of Quality of life. From the results, Table 3 shows that physical health and overall scores in quality

of life was significant at 0.05 level. The mean scores elicited that the females (Mean = 25.85, 99.89) had a higher score than males (24.97, 95.15). The other three dimensions namely, Psychological Wellbeing, Social Relationship and Satisfaction with Environment did not have any significant gender difference.

Thus the hypothesis stating “There is no significant gender difference in the quality of life” is accepted except for physical health and overall score.

Implications of the study

Everyone in life strives for a better life and happiness. Work life is one of the most important aspects in every human’s life. It plays a vital role in the physical, social, interpersonal and mental health of an individual. To have a better quality of life all these factors are to be maintained in a good and balanced manner. The work environment, job role and relationship with the colleagues are very crucial to have a better work life. Job stress influences the well-being and quality of an individual to a greater extent. Thus the need for better work life balance among IT employees is evident. Though the work nature cannot be altered some healthy practices and policies can be introduced to enhance their quality of life and reduce work stress. Practices like job rotation, workshops for stress and time management, leisure activities, job shifting can be helpful in the long run. At a personal level, healthy diet intake, time with family and children, picnics and tours with friends can help the individual.

Limitations and Recommendations

- Only IT and Government employees are included in the study. Thus the representation from other occupation can also be studied.
- The sample size can be increased for generalization and to get reliable results.
- Interventional study can be done on a longitudinal time for better results in enhancement of quality of life.
- The companies or organizations can follow practices like job rotation, holidays at equal intervals and workshops for the employees. This would not only help the employees but also the efficiency of the work that they do.

- Team work and unpaid time off can help the employees to relax themselves and work with enthusiasm.
- Being consistent and sticking to the daily schedule without last minute rush is something that every person must follow irrespective of their job nature and age.

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