

Study of Quality of Work Life (QWL) In Unionized and Non Unionized Organizations

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Introduction

'Quality of Work life' (QWL) of employees means the quality of relationship between employees and working environment (Rao. S. P, 2006). The concept of quality of work life brings out favorableness or otherwise of employees towards their working life. But most of the time due to commodity approach towards labour and machine, management concentrate only on their goal i.e. profit maximization by exploiting labour. It leads to formation of trade unions to make management aware of their responsibilities towards the most important resource of the organization i.e. human resource.

From the professional point of view QWL refers to industrial democracy, increased worker participation in corporate decision making etc. and while according to unions, it is more equitable sharing of the income and resource of the organization and more humane and healthier working conditions (Suttle, 1977). Improvement in QWL results into team work and smoothening industrial relations which ultimately leading to attain organizational goals effectively.

Concept of QWL

In 1972 Louis Davis has coined the concept QWL which gained attention of researchers in the recent past. In India the studies have been conducted from different perspective.

American Center for the Quality of Working Life (1977) define 'Quality of work life improvements as "any activity which takes place at every level of an organization which seeks greater organizational effectiveness through the enhancement of human dignity and growtha process through which the stakeholders in the organization management, unions and employees – learn how to work together better ...to determine for themselves what actions, changes and improvements are desirable and workable in order to achieve the twin and simultaneous goals of an improved quality of life at work for all members of the organization and greater effectiveness for both the company and the unions" (Flippo, 1984, p.412).

(Balch, 1989), defines QWL as "it is the state or condition of work life that employees experience within their company". In the article ' Measuring the Quality of Work Life' he mentioned evidence of high QWL as; increased productivity and loyalty, increased levels of morale, frequent participation in cost saving suggestions, and employees who feel they do not need union representation to achieve their goal of having a good place to work

(Walton R. E., 1985) stated much broader concept of QWL encompassing it in eight categories viz. Adequate and Fair Compensation, Safe and Healthy Working Conditions, Opportunity to Use and Develop Human Capacities, Opportunity for Continued Career Growth and Security, Social Integration in Work Place, Constitutionalism in the Work Organization, Balanced Role of Work in Total Life Space, Social Relevance of Work etc. Thus from the above it can be said that "Any specific improvement in and around workplace is often included under the term of QWL. It is a process by which an organization responds to employee needs for developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making decision that design their lives at work (Walton).

The thrust of present paper is to analyze QWL in unionized and non-unionized organizations.

Review of Literature

The QWL is a step forward to classical job design. Leaders considered human element in organization as a human capital and not merely a factor of production. Driving and restraining forces existing in an organization leads to allegation. The allegation is between employer and employees are that, employers feel that employees are more conscious about their rights and not the responsibilities. This allegation profoundly find at the time of collective bargaining. Employees feel that employer is only concern with the yield and profits and not the benefit of employees.

Such allegation grows suspicion and bickering in the work environment. This suspicious environment is not only found in unionized organizations but also in non-unionized organization. The intensity of suspicion differs from organization to organization and situation to situation. It also depends on the previous experiences of union management relations and the implementation of terms of agreement signed. All these aspects develop the attitude of management and union to look at each other in hostile way leading to complexity in the work environment.

An anonymous (1979) expressed the fear that, 'If unions and companies do not meet their needs, they will have to cope with alienated workers.'

New reform into organization bicker suspicion into the mind of employees and the suspicion also prevails with management as to acceptance of reforms by workers. The reforms through which management intends to attain efficiency. Employees and unions are expected to march hand-in-hand to attain organizational goals. Cohen et.al (1979) argued that, QWL is a process of joint decision making, collaboration, and building mutual respect between management and employees, which seems to cause a change in how people feel about their work and each other. It is this change in the human climate that QWL advocates maintain increases satisfaction and facilitates better solutions to management and production problems." He further state that "managers and supervisors are sometimes threatened by a loss of control; union members are often suspicious that QWL is just a work speed-up in disguise or a threat to their adversary solidarity. For these reasons, and others,

all QWL efforts involve extensive education and training. Having a higher degree of QWL indicates that more effective and democratic ways of using people in work.

The success of management reforms is depending on mutual faith and collective work. QWL should be treated as a joint venture of management and unions via the collective bargaining process Lewin, David (1981). So that both the representatives can manifest adversarial as well as integrative attitudes when dealing with QWL issues which contributes more integration among experts of organizational behavior and industrial relations. Organization must accept the unions involvement in its operation, and management and unions must work together to assure that new programs are undertaken with good planning to improve the QWL of it (Beck Al, 1988). Both union and management have equal credit for the success of QWL in the organization (Thacker et.al 1987). Labor-management relations are improved through joint union-management QWL projects (Bushe, Gervase R 1988). Decisions on implementations taken in joint union-management committee should diffuse down to lower levels of the organization but union leadership may send mixed messages to the rank-and-file about the extent of union support for QWL (Gilbert, Beth 1989).

QWL programs in unionized organization leads to several expectations as,

1. The two goals of an effective QWL program should be improved working conditions and greater organizational effectiveness. The changing aspirations and needs of today's employees require unions to adapt and adjust or face the prospect of extinction (Hian et.al 1990).
2. QWL involvement in and of itself should improve employee's job satisfaction; their reactions to the employer i.e. company commitment and also union commitment because it fulfills a need of the membership. The specific behaviors of union officials associated with participation in a QWL intervention result in improved attitudes. Members react positively when union officials show an active interest in work-related issues. Participation in a QWL process does not in and of itself influences reactions, but the perceived success of the endeavor does do so, (Mitchell W Fields, 1992)

3. In unionized organizations, QWL refers to a cooperative effort on the part of union and management representatives to involve employees in the day-to-day decision-making process at work which can affect both the company-and union-related attitudes of participants. In a company context, it is participation in work decisions, but in a union context, a member interaction with union officers and the latter's responsiveness to member demands are key (Fields et.al 1992).
4. Cooperation between labour and management in the workplace is favourable to implement the QWL programs effectively and have been successful in meeting their varied goals of better working conditions, job security, employee satisfaction, employee participation in decision-making which reveal a pattern of steady improvement in productivity, profitability etc. QWL is a vehicle for gaining managerial, employee, and union commitment that would result in long-term benefits for both the Company and its employees (Peterson et.al 1992).

The expectations are fetching benefits to both management and unions and the diffusion of experience of QWL program may create an environment in the industry to adopt QWL programs.

Eaton, Adrienne and et.al (1992) argued that, unions have viewed the increasing use of QWL programs in unionized workplaces with a great deal of caution and concern because reduced member identification, commitment, and activity stemming from QWL might make it more difficult for the union to conduct a work stoppage and therefore reduce its bargaining power. Finally, to the extent that union commitment and bargaining power are weakened by participative programs, the very existence of the union may be threatened. Both union and company commitment increased after employee's involvement in a joint QWL process.

Several researches focused attention towards benefits of QWL program in unionized organizations.

1. Porter, Nelson D (1984) in their article, 'Union Endorses Quality of Working Life' states that, the QWL program has led to create mutual trust between labor and management and also strengthened union

members' attitudes toward the union. Workers become more self-confident, committed, and freer from job-related stresses. Workers of relatively low seniority benefited more than, and sometimes at the expense of workers with relatively high seniority. Senior workers suffered negative effects (i.e., lost ground), whereas junior workers remained unchanged (Gene Bocioletti 1987).

2. One anonymous (1981) focused on benefits like smoother and less adversarial collective bargaining for entire company as well as all participants in a QWL program.

Unlike advantages of any management reforms QWL programs is not free from disadvantages. QWL programs have to introduce work changes that would decrease dissatisfaction in the work area (Rubinstein, Saul 1984), and need to increase workers participation in problem solving with QWL program. One anonymous (1981) expressed the fear of some unions about exploitation of the rank and file membership, after management has won union cooperation in a QWL program. Martin D Hanlon, David A Nadler (1986) noted that, organized labour can not be benefited from union participation in QWL programs until such programs have spread rapidly.

Many scholars focused their attention to the micro relationship between management and union on the magnitude of QWL. The focus seem shifted from narrow to broad categories of working conditions and environment. There is paucity of research on QWL addressing to the relationship between management and unions in Indian scenario. Hence, researchers have addressed this issue with the help of present research. Researchers have attempted to gauge the relationship of management and union on the broad parameters of QWL.

Research Methodology

Present research used diagnostic research methodology and required quantitative data is collected using inferential approach. The study of QWL and trade union is undertaken to test following hypothesis.

H₀ – there is no significant difference in QWL in unionized organization and QWL in non unionized organization. Researchers have constructed the structured schedules to collect primary data.

The schedules were based on the parameters stated by Walton R. E., 1985, which are broad in nature and suitable for the units in developing nation. Seventy Seven variables representing the eight structures were developed by researcher in an effort to assess the level of QWL in sample units, selected for study. Two medium scale engineering units situated in MIDC Satara were selected for research using random sampling. Twenty five workers were selected to form samples from each organization using random sampling lottery method to execute schedule. Data was collected using five point scale to assess the satisfaction for each variable from every sample. Analysis was done by using mean and standard deviation and hypothesis is tested using independent sample 't' test.

Data Analysis

Since the variables representing each category of Walton's QWL are selected by researcher the test of reliability is done.

Table 1 : Test of reliability of schedule for samples in unionized organization

Sr.	Structure	Unionized Alpha	Number of items
1.	A	.370	7
2.	B	.794	25
3.	C	.545	10
4.	D	.716	10
5.	E	.674	9
6.	F	*	-
7.	G	.523	11
8.	H	*	-

(Source: Compiled by Researcher, Note : *reliability cannot be calculated.)

Table reveals the Cronbach's alpha scores of schedule prepared for samples. The schedule is executed on few samples working in unionized organization. The alpha score for unionized organization is satisfactory for structures B, D and E. The alpha is moderator with structure C and G and poor with structure A.

Table 2 : Group Statistics for unionized and non-unionized organization

Group statistics of entire seventy seven variables for unionized and non-unionized samples as follows.

Group Statistics					
	Mean all Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mean	Unionized	25	3.7604	.14951	.02990
	Non - Unionized	25	3.0072	.13942	.02788

(Source: Complied by Researcher)

The satisfaction mean score for QWL in unionized organization is 3.76 with standard deviation 0.14 where as the satisfaction score for the samples in non unionized organization is 3.00 with a standard deviation 0.13. The mean satisfaction score reveals that samples in unionized organization are more satisfied as compared to samples in non-unionized organization.

Table 3 : Test of Hypothesis

The hypothesis for present study set to test is, 'there is no significance difference in QWL in unionized organization and QWL in non unionized organization'. Independent sample 't' test is used to test the hypothesis.

Sr.		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	99% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
1	Equal variances assumed	.045	.83	18.42	48	.00	.75	.040	.64	.86

(Source: Complied by Researcher)

The calculated 't' score is 18.42 which is significant at 0.00 p value. The test is significant hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant difference in QWL in unionized organization and QWL in non unionized organization.

Table 4 : Unionized and Non-Unionized Category wise Description

Eight structures were used for unionized and non-unionized samples to seek opinion about the QWL. Hence, the mean is calculated to find out the difference into satisfaction of samples towards the QWL with respect to every structure.

Sr.	Parameter Category	V1	N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error Mean
1	Adequate and fair compensation	Unionized	25	3.81	.30	.06
		Non-unionized	25	2.56	.35	.07
2	Safe and healthy working conditions.	Unionized	25	4.01	.26	.05
		Non-unionized	25	3.61	.15	.03
3	Opportunity to Develop Human Capability	Unionized	25	3.31	.34	.06
		Non-unionized	25	2.56	.33	.06
4	Continued Growth and Security	Unionized	25	3.89	.35	.07
		Non-unionized	25	2.74	.24	.04
5	Social Integration	Unionized	25	3.93	.37	.07
		Non-unionized	25	2.75	.29	.05
6	Constitution at Workplace	Unionized	25	3.52	.37	.07
		Non-unionized	25	3.00	.50	.10
7	Balanced Role of Work	Unionized	25	3.37	.26	.05
		Non-unionized	25	2.70	.25	.05
8	Social relevance of work	Unionized	25	3.76	.72	.14
		Non-unionized	25	3.56	.82	.16

(Source: Compiled by Researcher)

It reveals that the mean satisfaction score of samples in unionized organization towards entire QWL categories is high as compared to mean satisfaction score of samples in non-unionized organizations. The mean score of categories viz. Adequate and fair compensation, Opportunity to Develop Human Capability, Continued Growth and Security, Social Integration and Balanced Role of Work with non-unionized organization is less than 3 shows dissatisfaction. The samples in unionized organization are dissatisfied with availability of opportunities to develop human capabilities since its mean score is lowest i.e. 3.31 than other categories.

The higher mean score of 4.01 is calculated for safe and healthy working conditions in unionized organization which indicate highest satisfaction than other categories for unionized as well as non-unionized organization.

Table 5 : Hypothesis Testing Category wise

To have a categorical view on the significance of difference into QWL in unionized and non unionized organization, the responses are tested with the help of independent sample 't' test.

Sr.		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	99% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
1	Adequate and fair compensation	.561	.458	13.44	48	.00	1.25	.093	1.00	1.50
2	Safe and healthy working conditions.	3.27	.076	6.73	48	.00	.40	.060	.24	-.57
3	Opportunity to Develop Human Capability	.429	.516	7.77	48	.00	.74	.096	.49	1.00
4	Continued Growth and Security	2.05	.158	13.41	48	.00	1.14	.085	.91	1.37
5	Social Integration	.057	.813	12.31	48	.00	1.17	.095	.92	1.43
6	Constitution at Workplace	.365	.548	4.16	48	.00	.52	.124	.18	.85
7	Balanced Role of Work	.151	.700	9.11	48	.00	.67	.073	.47	.87
8	Social relevance of work	.659	.421	.914	48	.36	.20	.218	-.38	.78

(Source: Compiled by Researcher)

Note: the values of 't' are assuming equal variance.

The table of category wise hypothesis testing reveals that with adequate and fair compensation 't' score is 13.44 at 0.00 p value with 99% confidence interval states the test is significant.

The 't' score of Safe and healthy working conditions and Opportunity to Develop Human Capability are 6.73 and 7.77 at 0.00 'p' value with 99% confidence interval states. Thus test is significant for both the categories.

The 't' test is significant for Continued Growth and Security, Social Integration and Constitution at Workplace also, since their 't' score are 13.41, 12.31 and 4.16 respectively at 0.00 'p' value with 99% confidence interval states that there is significant difference into the existence and satisfaction with respect to these factors in unionized and non unionized organizations.

The 't' score of Balanced Role of Work is 9.11 at 0.00 'p' value with 99% confidence interval states the test is significant hence significant difference is existed in balanced role of work.

With the factor social relevance of work the 't' score is 0.914 at 0.36 'p' value with 99% confidence interval the test is insignificant.

The test is significant with almost all the categories except social relevance of work signifies that there is significant difference into QWL category wise as far as unionized and non unionized organizations are concern. The QWL parameters are reasonably existed in unionized organization as compared to non unionized organization.

Findings

QWL in unionized organization differ than QWL in Non-unionized organization. Amongst eight categories of QWL with seven categories null hypothesis is rejected. It has found that the samples are satisfied with social relevance of work in unionized and non unionized organizations.

1. Employees in unionized organization enjoy Safe and healthy working conditions social integration in work organization, career growth and security, adequate and fair compensation. The satisfaction towards compensation i.e. wages, bonus, overtime pay, incentives, P.F. and ESI is good in unionized organizations as compared to non unionized organization since the mean satisfaction score of unionized organization is 3.81 and of non unionized organization is 2.56. Employees yield benefits having bargaining power. Adequate and fair compensation is

prime parameter of working condition which is directly related with physiological needs. Unionized organizations provide more security and an opportunity for continuous growth since the mean score is 3.89 and 2.74 respectively with unionized and non unionized organizations. Social integration in the work place is more facilitated in unionized organizations. Social integration is meager in non unionized organization.

2. Employees in both unionized and non unionized organizations are provided with safe and healthy working conditions and have a balanced role of work. Safe and healthy working conditions are prerequisite and an important parameter of QWL program. Unionized and non unionized organization bear reasonably good safety conditions since the mean score is 4.01 and 3.61 respectively. Both organizations work well with balancing life which help enriches quality of personal life of employees.
3. Unionized and non unionized organizations are lacking in development of human capacity and constitutional provisions at workplace. Satisfaction of employees towards development of human capacity is low in both organizations as their mean score is 3.31 and 2.56 respectively. The mean satisfaction score of constitutionalisation in work place is low i.e. 3.52 and 3.00 respectively.

The level of QWL is significantly good in unionized organizations. Few QWL parameters viz. opportunity to develop human capability, balanced role of work provided by both the category organizations has not at all given reasonable cognizance. No parameter of QWL was found to be provided by non unionized organization which offered more satisfaction as compare to unionized organization.

Conclusions

Union is a reliable vehicle to drive QWL in an organization. The empirical data is the evidence of existence of good quality of work life in unionized organization. The practice of Joint management committee in unionized organization acts as balancing mechanism for Driving Forces and Restraining Forces to reach equilibrium point. This necessitates commitments from both the ends. Union's concern is to resolve workers'

problems and management embarks on issues of productivity, enhancement in quality of product and the like. Both the aspects lead to improvement in quality of work life and thereby pave the way to organizational development.

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