

CASE STUDY

The quality of working life among employees

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ABSTRACT

Human resources play a crucial role in the evolution of the organizations, and huge organizational developments caused by unlimited intellectual capacity of human resources. Therefore, of the priorities of any organization is to preserve these valuable resources. In this regard, an appropriate alternative is to improve the quality of work life in organizations. To this aim, the quality of work life was investigated among the staff employed in General Department of Human Resources of Municipality of Tehran (the study population was included of 3 types of employments one official and two contractual employments), during 2017-2019. The research method is descriptive-survey and the data were collected using the Walton work quality of life questionnaire (1973) and a researcher-made questionnaire on demographic characteristics. Data were analyzed using SPSS software and statistical Tests including frequency, mean and standard deviation, and inferential statistical test including one-way T, Pearson correlation and analysis of F variance. The results indicated that the status of quality of work life in the studied area is 3.03 and above mean from the staff point of view. Also, the mean scores of life quality amongst Hadianshahr (one of the tow contractual employments) were lower than official (fixed) staffs and Khadamate Edearie Shahr (one of the two contractual type of employments). In terms of demographic variables, an adverse relationship was observed between quality of work life and age.

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, amongst the four management influence resources, namely, capital, information, equipment and human resources, the last one is paid attention as the most valuable asset of the organization (Yang, and Lin, 2009). So that, almost all related experts consider human resources to be

the most important factor. Human resources play a crucial role in the evolution of the organizations, and huge organizational developments caused by unlimited intellectual capacity of human resources. Every organization is looking for ways to provide an environment for staffs for achieving optimal job performance, efficiency and productivity so that make greater influence on their work (Ehnert and Harry, 2012). Hence, protecting these valuable

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resources along with ensuring appropriate physical and mental life conditions is to be in high priority of the organizations. On the other hand, in the present complicated world, the professional and private life is so interlocked that professional life has dominated private life and created a new term, namely "quality of work life" (Bowles and Gintis, 2011). A term that has been widespread in recent years, but there is little agreement on the meaning of the term. However, it can be said that there are at least three common uses of it:

- Quality of work life refers to a set of outcomes for staffs such as job satisfaction, growth opportunities, psychological issues, job security, human relationships of employer, staffs, and low levels of accidents;
- Quality of work life also refers to a set of organizational tasks or functions, such as participatory management, job enrichment, and secure working conditions;
- Quality of work life often refers to a type of organizational change plan (Osabiya, 2015).

Overall, the concept of quality of work life has been introduced in all its aspects in terms of the efficiency and productivity of organizations to achieve desired organizational outcomes. So that, Rabins and black (2007) believes that the quality of work life includes many programs designed to lead changes in the organization. Griffin (2007) also declare that quality of work life is a pyramid with life satisfaction (at the top of the pyramid), job satisfaction (in the middle), and satisfaction with other specific aspects of work such as salary satisfaction, co-workers and supervisor; as a result, the quality of work life goes beyond job satisfaction (Rozbehani et al., 2016). Therefore, the quality of work life index can provide management with valuable and productive information about staff principal issues that ultimately results in increased staffs' productivity (Wynne-Jones et al., 2011). Beliefs and attitudes of the other functions of quality of work life is enhancement of staffs satisfaction and learning, and helps changes and evolution. In general, staffs' dissatisfaction with the quality of work life adversely affects almost all staffs regardless of their status (Griffin, 2007). The concept of quality of work life is increasingly linked to the philosophies of organizations that want to increase the likelihood of staffs, organizational culture changes, and the creation of physical and organizational skills. In some

organizations, related programs aim to increase trust, engagement, and ability to work effectively as a result of organizational productivity. On the other hand, the quality of work life programs requires the support of organizational culture (George et al., 2005). Another factor that can influence the success of these programs is the temporary or permanent structure of these programs. The longer a program lasts, the more likely it will succeed (Seyoum, 2012). However, many obstacles are towards implementing quality of work life programs, including the difference between the goals of managers and staffs, lack of experience in solving problems in a broad partnership, the desire of managers and staffs to maintain traditional management, the risk of danger change due to hierarchy relationships that empowers individuals and managers in traditional management (Doyle et al., 2000). The quality of work life can be defined in terms of the objective and the mentality of the organization. The objective is the set of conditions, the actual and real procedures of the organization, such as salaries, facilities, health and safety, participation in decision makings, democracy, safe working conditions, diversity of jobs, etc. The purpose of mental aspect is imagination, perception of staffs regard to their physical desirability of workplace and work condition. In other words, the quality of work life for each individual group reflects the specific concept (Leblebici, 2012). Today's workplaces seem to be more confused than ever, and staffs' dissatisfaction with quality of life is a problem that affects almost all of them regardless of their status. However, the goal of many organizations is to increase staff satisfaction at all levels of the organization including managerial levels (Asegid et al., 2014). Also, during present days, any organization demands more output (Staffs) versus less input (Data) which will be oriented whenever staffs feel comfortable in their work environment. Therefore, it is very substantial for the organizations to create a flexible work relationship between staffs and the workplace. But it is clear that today, due to occupational pressure and conflicting interests and excessive need to socialization, there is no equilibrium between a family lives with work life (Felstead et al., 2003). So one of the questions frequently asked is that how much a job is worth for the staff? Every employed person or job seeker, whether male or female, ignoring specialty or skill category has a specific interpretation of the work

competence level. Due to inevitable importance of job in human life in terms of social presence and job satisfaction, it worth to mention that decent work is an essential element of the quality of work life (Blustein, 2016). For many communities, productive work is also a major source of income and the driving force behind the world's sustainable development. As Quality of work life is very different amongst societies due to the differences in human societies, income and welfare level, and many other factors and, although even in Iran, it is difficult to assess the quality of work life due to the differences in workplaces (differences between public and private organizations, cooperatives, large and small industries, etc.); On the other hand, even if done, it seems unlikely to achieve useful and generalizable results. On this basis, a dynamic approach is needed to take into account the different dimensions of the issue while also analyzing the impact of various factors and their variations. In today's changing world, staffs have to adapt to environmental changes to ensure their survival, and this will not occur only by improving the quality of work life (Stiglitz, 2017). Because focusing on improving the quality of work life leads to increased staffs vitality and satisfaction and as a result success for staffs, organizations and customers. Therefore, the attention now given to the quality of work life is a reflection of the importance that everyone paid it as staffs want to make changes in the economic and non-economic consequences of their work. Some experts believe that productivity downturns and product quality declines in some organizations are due to shortcomings in quality of work life and changes in staffs' preferences (Evans and Lindsay, 2013) Staffs want more supervision and involvement in their work. They do not want to be counted as a bead in a system. They will respond more appropriately when they are treated with respect and are able to express their opinions and participate in decisions. Thus, the primary goal of the quality of work life programs is to create organizations that are both more effective in delivering community-based programs and services and provide a more rewarding context for staffs. Other goals include improving workflow methods to satisfy the client; workforce and manager; generate revenue or reduce costs; improve client service; improve teamwork; increase organizational effectiveness; create more incentives for staffs; and provide effective services at the community level.

But the overall goal is that everyone wants to have a dynamic and human organizational structure while at the same time making the organization a more attractive place to work (Alizadeh et al., 2017).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Studies of the quality of work life was first began in Europe in the 1950s by Eric Trist and colleagues. Their studies were related to the approach of social techniques in the organization to reduce the negative effects of work on staffs (Goodarzi et al., 2013). During the 1960s, studies of the quality of work life reached the United States, employing more sophisticated and varied approaches and attitudes. In this regard, Robert Ford's work on US Post and Telegraph enrichment jobs led to the creation and deployment of public and private sector enrichment activities. The main purpose of such activities was to develop staff motivation through the provision of challenging jobs. Thus, in occupations that were at a higher level of job dignity and feedback, quality of work life was higher than that of solitary occupations. It also included diver's group work and work environment specifications, payroll, management styles, and the physical environment. This has expanded the quality of work life, and has focused solely on individual staffs in broader workgroups. On the other hand, such a development in quality of work life programs has added the efficiency dimension of organization to what was previously considered as a fundamental dimension of human relations. In the United States, today, job design covers most of the quality of work life measures. Perhaps, the most striking feature of the quality of work life was the emergence and development of PAs as a new form of work design. These groups consisted of highly skilled staff with the information and independence to design and run their own operations (Salmani, 2005). Based on research conducted in 1978 by thousands of successful organizations and corporations in the United States, it was found that their staffs are extraordinarily good at increasing their performance and doing well because their organizations value them more than their competitors. A study conducted among 3,000 staffs of these organizations found that 93% of staffs attributed the increase in their quality of work life to their increased performance in the organization (Vlachos, 2008). In 1991, Japan published the results of its research in several large companies on the

quality of work life, and then continued the research (Wright and Boswell, 2002). In 1996, Brazil assessed the quality of work life in its best companies using the Walton questionnaire (1973) (Borges, 2013). Also Mirvis and Lawler (1984) in the UK, Levine *et al.*, (1984) in Europe, Lau and may (1998) in the United States, Wyatt and Wah (2001) in Singapore, Rose, Beh, Uli, and Idris (2006) in Malaysia, Nasl Seraji, Dargahi (2006) in Iran, Chan and Wyatt (2007) in China, Rethinam and Maimunah (2008) Rethinam and Ismail (2008) in Malaysia, Muftah and Lafi (2011) in Qatar, Sojka (2014) in Slovakia also addressed the components and indicators of quality of work life. Also Bolhari, *et al.*, (2012) and also Arab, *et al.*, (2015) examined the mediating role of quality of work life between psychological capital and life satisfaction; Nafi (2015) in Greece examined the impact of psychological capacity on quality of work life and organizational behavior. Korde tamini and Chadha (2018) using an intercultural compared emotional intelligence and quality of work life in Iranian and Indian academics. Results showed higher quality of work life for Iranians. Ahvanuiee *et al.*, (2018) studied the quality of work life in nurses. Thakur and Sharma (2019) also studied the relationship between Relationship between Quality of Work Life and Work Performance of Employees. Results of the study show that all the eight dimensions of QWL taken in the study contributed to the overall QWL of employees. Results also show that overall QWL and its dimensions have a positive relation with the work performance of employees. What is certain is that the process of researching the quality of work life in the world is increasing and there is extensive research annually to evaluate its impact on organization development, productivity, effectiveness and efficiency, staff performance, satisfaction and attitudes. Walton (1973) is among the first who proposed a quality approach to work life. His theory is more favorably for well categorization among the previous theories has been more frequently cited. Meanwhile, Walton's eight-part classification also encompasses the theories and concepts of other theorists. In the present study, Walton's (1973) model is the theoretical basis of research. The main components and indicators that Walton considers as the goal of improving the quality of work life, and all of these indicators and components are interconnected and listed as follows:

Fair and adequate Payment

It means equal pay for equal work, as well as proportionality of payments to staff standards and proportionality to other types of work. Examples such as how much benefit or other compensation payments are sufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of life, especially compared to other similar jobs?

Safe and healthy work environment

It is intended to create physically safe work conditions as well as reasonable work hours. Questions are: Are the working conditions really safe? Is it reasonable the work hours? The physical and mental environment at work is appropriate? Which conditions affect the health and comfort of staffs during their work?

Supply the Opportunity for Sustainable Growth and Security

It means Supply the opportunities for improving one's individual capabilities, opportunities for development, and opportunities for applying the skills acquired and providing security, income and employment. For instance, how effective would be the tasks in maintenance and growth of individual capacity? How can achieve new knowledge and skills to perform tasks assigned to staffs in future? What are the opportunities to increase and profit individual potential and progress in organization and to be recognized from other companions and members?

Legalism in the Organization

Provide freedom of expression without fear of revenge, and the dominance of law over human domination. For instance: What are staffs' rights and how are they protected? To what extent does organizational culture respect individuals' privacy, acceptance of ideas, adherence to equity standards in the distribution of rewards, and provision of its processes? To what extent are dignity respected? Can staffs be honest and fair in dealing with them?

Social dependency of work life

It refers to how staffs perceive about the organization's social responsibility. For instance: Does organization do corporate for production, cost reduction, recruitment, marketing techniques and other activities from staffs point of view?

Organizations without commitment and social responsibility can cause staffs to lose sight of their work value and background.

Overall work life environment

This component is concerned with balancing work life with other parts of staffs, including leisure, education and family life. For instance, is there a balance between work and non-work life? Are there non-tangible and intangible job pressures? How is the staffs' mental state? Is it possible to get rid of anxiety and depression at work or outside?

Integrity and cohesion in the work organization

This includes eliminating value, maintaining the integrity of the interests of individuals in the organization, and encouraging the formation of teams and social groups. For instance: Is there a chance to connect with others? Is there any freedom from discrimination? Is there perspicuity between individuals and support from each other among staffs? Are there fairness and the possibility of moving upwards? Is progress worthy?

Human Resource Development

This includes supply some opportunities such as the use of independence and self-control in the workplace, profiting diverse skills, access to work-related information and planning for staffs. For instance, how simple and distinguished are tasks and how strict are controls? To what extent does the job enable staffs to improve and apply their skills and do meaningful and important tasks?

The current study has been carried out in Tehran in 2019.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research tools include, Walton Standard Questionnaire (Walton, 1973) in a 32-item Likert scale, 8 quality of work life components and Demographic questionnaire. The reliability of Walton questionnaire based on Cronbach's alpha was estimated to be 0.92 (Ardalan and Yousefi, 2014). The research questions are:

How is the status of the quality of work life in the General Department of Human Resources (GDHR) of the Tehran Municipality from the staff's point of view?

Is there a difference between staffs perceptions of

quality of work life based on demographic variables?

Research design

From the purpose view point, the research is functional was carried out using descriptive data collection and survey group. The statistical population of the study consisted of all the 120 personnel working in the GDHR of Municipality of Tehran. Out of 120 distributed questionnaires, 77 completed questionnaires were collected. The Municipality of Tehran operates through three types of personnel recruitment, including official or fixed, contracted personnel of the Khadamate Edarie Shahr Company, and contracted personnel of the Hadianshahr Company. Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, were applied in statistical data analysis and T test, Pearson correlation and F variance analysis in SPSS software were used for inferential analysis.

RESULT AND CONCLUSION

Among the respondents, 22.2% were female and 40.7% were male. In terms of marital status, 14.8% were single and 44.4% were married. Also, 7.4% of diplomas, 3.7% of associates, 17.3% of undergraduates, 26.6% of postgraduates and 2.5% of PhD students. Regarding the type of employment, 33.3% were official (fixed) employment, 12.3% were Khadamate Edarie Shahr, and 12.3% Hadianshahe (the two contractual employees). It is worth noting that the difference in frequency of responses up to the maximum (100%) was related to questionnaires that the respondent did not complete the demographic information. The mean work experience among respondents was 12.89 years, ranging from 2 to 30 years' of experiences.

Question 1:

What is the status of the quality of work life in (GDHR) from the staffs' point of view?

The results of one-way t-test in Table 1 show that the mean quality of work life in the studied area was 3.03 with a standard deviation of 0.46 which is greater than the statistical mean of 3. Beside, this difference was meaningful at the level of 0.0. So it is concluded with 99% certainty that the quality of work life is above mean (3).

The mean and standard deviation of each components of quality of work can be summarized as:

Table 1: Assessment of quality of work life in GDHR from the Perspective of Staffs Using One-Way T-Test

Index Variable	Observed mean	Standard deviation	Statistical means	T-Statistic value	Degree of freedom	Significance level	
Quality of work life	3.03	0.46	3	53.76	76	**0.000	
Components	Fair and adequate payment	2.97	0.72	3	37.14	80	**0.000
	Safe and Healthy environment	2.73	0.86	3	28.42	79	**0.000
	Providing opportunities for growth and continued security	3.12	0.82	3	33.78	79	**0.000
	Legalization in the Job Organization	3.09	0.92	3	29.64	78	**0.000
	Social dependency of work life	3.44	0.87	3	34.97	78	**0.000
	Overall work life	3.55	0.79	3	39.197	78	**0.000
	Integrity and social cohesion	3.22	0.85	3	33.74	78	**0.000
	Capability development	2.97	0.83	3	31.66	78	**0.000

*Significant at the 0.05 level. ** Significant at the 0.01 level.

- The mean fair and adequate pay component was 2.97 with a standard deviation of 0.72 which was lower than the statistical mean (3). So it could be concluded with 99% confidence that the quality of work life in the GDHR of Tehran Municipality from staffs point of view in the component of fair and adequate pay is below mean (3).
- The mean safe work environment component was 2.72 with a standard deviation of 0.86 which was lower than the statistical mean (3). So it could be concluded with 99% confidence that the quality of work life in the GDHR of Tehran Municipality from a staff point of view, in the component of safe work environment is below mean (3)
- The mean opportunity for sustainable growth and security was 3.12 with a standard deviation of 0.82 which was greater than the statistical mean (3). So it could be concluded with 99% confidence that the quality of work life in the overall resource management from staff point of view, in the component of supply the opportunity for sustainable growth and security is greater than the statistical mean (3).
- The mean legalization component in the Labor Organization was 3.09 with a standard deviation of 0.92, which was higher than the statistical mean (3). So it could be concluded with 99% confidence that the quality of work life in the GDHR of Tehran Municipality is higher than the mean. Staffs' perceptions of the legality component of a job organization are greater than the statistical mean (3).
- The mean social dependency component of work life was 3.44 with a standard deviation of 0.87 which is greater than the statistical mean (3). So it could be concluded that the quality of work life in GDHR of Tehran Municipality from staffs' point of view in the social dependency of work life component is above mean (3).
- The mean overall work life space component was 3.51 with a standard deviation of 0.79, which is higher than the statistical mean (3). So it could be concluded with 99% confidence that the quality of work life in GDHR of Tehran Municipality from staffs point of view in overall work environment component are above mean (3).
- The mean integration and social cohesion component was 3.22 with a standard deviation of 0.85 which was higher than the statistical mean (3). So it could be concluded with 99% confidence that the quality of work life in the GDHR of Tehran Municipality from staff point of view in integration and social cohesion component is higher than the mean (3).
- The mean capabilities development component was 2.97 with a standard deviation of 0.83 which was lower than the statistical mean (3). So, it could be concluded that the quality of work life in GDHR of Tehran Municipality from staffs' point of view in the capabilities development component is less than mean (3).

Question 2:

Is there a difference between staffs point of view regard to quality of work life based on demographic

variables? As shown in Table 2, there is an inverse correlation (-0.50) between age and quality of life. So that, the more age increases, the more quality of life of staff decreases. But the relationship between work experience and quality of life was not significant (-0.167) in the studied population.

According to Table 3, there is no difference between the components of workplace, safety and health, legalization in the organization, social dependence of work life, overall work life space, social

cohesion, development of human capabilities and quality of life. But between the components of fair and adequate payment and supply the opportunity for sustainable growth and security, differences were reported. LSD (a follow-up test) tests were used to determine between which of the official (fixed) groups, Khadamate Edarie Shahr and Hadianshahr (the tow temporary work contractual employees) the differences were observed.

Based on Table 4, there is a significant difference

Table 2: Correlation between quality of life, age, background in the municipality and outside the municipality

Index	The relationship between age and quality of work life	The relationship between work experience in the municipality and the quality of work life
Pearson correlation	-.050	-.167
Significance	.739	.279

Table 3: Inferential statistics of comparisons of means using F test based on type of employment

Component (mean)	Type of employment	sum of the squares	Degree of freedom	Mean squares	F*	Significance
Fair and adequate payment	Between groups	3.61	2	1.580	4.954	.011
	Within groups	14.036	22	.319		
	Total	17.197	46			
Safe and healthy work environment	Between groups	.975	2	.488	.578	.565
	Within groups	37.133	44	.844		
	Total	38.109	46			
Opportunity for sustainable growth and security	Between groups	4.801	2	2.401	3.587	.036
	Within groups	29.444	44	.669		
	Total	34.246	46			
Legalism in Organization	Between groups	.538	2	.269	.418	.661
	Within groups	28.281	44	.643		
	Total	28.819	46			
Social dependency of work life	Between groups	.090	2	.045	.074	.929
	Within group	26.572	44	.604		
	Total	26.662	46			
Overall work life space	Between groups	1.568	2	.487	1.196	.312
	Within groups	28.842	44	.655		
	Total	30.410	46			
Social cohesion	Between groups	.200	2	.100	.118	.889
	Within groups	37.300	44	.848		
	Total	37.500	46			
Development of human capabilities	Between groups	.697	2	.349	.353	.704
	Within groups	43.444	44	.987		
	Total	44.142	46			
Total Quality of Life Score	Between groups	361.982	2	180.991	.666	.519
	Within groups	11961.252	44	271.847		
	Total	12323.234	46			

*analysis of F variance

Table 4: Follow-up statistics of comparisons of means based on type of employment

Dependent variables (mean)	Employment (I)	Employment (J)	Mean difference	standard error	Significance
Fair and adequate payment	Official (fixed)	Khadamate Edarie Shahr	-.22593	0.20908	0.286
		Hadianshahr	.53407*	0.20908	0.014
	Khadamate Edarie Shahr	Official (fixed)	.22593	0.20908	0.286
		Hadianshahr	.76000*	0.25259	0.004
	Hadianshar	Official (fixed)	-.53407*	0.20908	0.14
		Khadamate Edarie Shahr	-.76000*	0.25259	0.004
Supply opportunities for sustainable growth and security	Official (fixed)	Khadamate Edarie Shahr	.21111	0.30283	0.489
		Hadianshahr	.81111*	0.30283	0.010
	Khadamate Edarie Shahr	Official (fixed)	-.21111	0.30283	0.489
		Hadianshahr	.60000	0.36584	0.108
	Hadianshahr	Official (fixed)	-.81111*	0.30283	0.010
		Khadamate Edarie Shahr	-.60000	0.36584	0.108

between the official (fixed) staffs and Hadianshahr staff, so that the mean quality of life score between these groups of employees are lower. There was also a difference between Hadianshahr staff and City administrative services staff, so that the mean quality of life score for Khadamate Edarie Shahr employees was lower. Therefore, Hadianshahr staff experiences a lower quality of life (Table 4).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the quality of work life of staffs in General Office of Human Resources. Results showed that the mean quality of work life score was above the average of 3. This research finding is in line with the studies of Khosravizadeh *et al.* (2013) and is inconsistent with the studies of Bolhari *et al.* (2012), Kansiden and Callus (2001), Heion and Sarima (2012), Nasl Seraji, Dargahi (2006). The quality of work life in the studied area in under-scales of fair and adequate pay, safe and healthy environment and capabilities development was below the average of 3. But in supplying the opportunity for sustainable growth and security, legislation in the work organization, the overall work life environment, social integration and cohesion, and in sub-scales of social dependency of work life and human capabilities development were above the average of 3. The low score in the fair and adequate pay component appears to be reduced by the correlation between staff scores with contractual employment relationship. Also the

low score in safe and healthy work environment component was probably due to insufficient physical safety, healthy and relative comfort in workplace due to the expansive building of GDHR adjacent to the highway, presence of air and noise pollution, building's exhaustion, inappropriate work spaces with low ceilings and the huge volume of personnel in the office building space. Moreover, the low score in capability development component may be due to the high workload of the staff and the high sensitivity of the work at the office. Regarding research hypothesis, there was no significant difference between the mean staffs' opinions about the quality of work life based on years of service. Results of the present study is in line with Chubineh *et al.*, (2013), Arab *et al.*, (2015), Sheikh Bardsiri *et al.*, (2013). But there was a significant inverse relationship between age and quality of work life. Hence, the quality of life decreases with age. Another finding which relates to the low quality of work life between contractual employees of Hadianshahr, was predictable due to low job security and salaries. If the organizations can enhance all aspects of their employees' quality of life and provide the suitable conditions in the workplace, employees can be empowered to develop their abilities and creativity if they have fair, progressive, successful, secure, growing emotions. Use themselves and their satisfaction as a whole. Therefore, due to the job as well as the performance, the growth and dynamics of the employees in the organization will increase.

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CONFLICT OF INTREST

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues; including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy have been completely observed by the author.

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