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LITERATURE REVIEW ARTICLE

URL of this article: <http://heanoti.com/index.php/hn/article/view/hn20615>

A Literature Review of Quality of Work Life

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to explore the consequences of quality of work life. It systematically searched and collected studies related to quality of work life and its consequences. QWL is useful for improving and reducing job stress, employers can also make more effective efforts in combating workload and job demands, companies need to carry out job training, communication, reward systems, inter-worker relations and a good working environment. QWL affects organizational commitment and loyalty, improving employee's positive attitudes, increasing employee's intrinsic productivity and motivation, improving corporate effectiveness and competitive in the face of global business as well as the quality of employee life. These variables may affect performance of individual as well as organizational performance.

Keywords: Quality of work life, Human resources, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Background

Historically, work has been an essential component in human life. It is undebatable that work affects the physiological states, well-being and competency. Nowadays, Quality of Work Life (QWL) is seen as crucial component in work life or in organization. QWL becomes important because it will have a positive impact that improves working conditions and organizational effectiveness to be better or higher. A balanced situation between employers and employees can improve job satisfaction and productivity. The original of QWL famously comes from the 1972 international labour conference at Arden House, Columbia, New York. Quality of work life has various definitions according to experts. Quality of work life means the existence of a certain set of organizational conditions or practices⁽¹⁾. In addition, QWL witnessed the good feeling perceived from the interaction between the individuals and their work environment⁽²⁾.

Walton (1975) stated that quality of work life (QWL) was an essential approach to save human and environmental values which have been ignored due to technological advancement of the economic growth and productivity⁽³⁾. In addition, QWL could be defined as a wide-ranging concept that included sufficient and fair remuneration, social integration and safe and healthy working conditions in the work organization that enables an individual to improve and use all their skills⁽⁴⁾. Generally, the essence of the definition is to explain that the guaranteed condition of workers in carrying out their work in an organization because the climate created in the work environment also supports the growth of workers so that workers can create the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. QWL is one of the factors that can affect job performance in organization.

Quality of work life describe satisfaction of employee in seven major needs which consists: (1) Health and safety needs, (2) Economic and family needs, (3) Social needs, (4) Esteem needs, (5) Actualization needs, (6) Knowledge needs and (7) Aesthetic needs⁽⁵⁾. Furthermore, Walton (1975) defines quality of work life through 8 conceptual category including: (1) Adequate and fair compensation, (2) Safe and healthy environment, (3) Growth and security, (4) Development of human capabilities, (5) The total life space, (6) Social integration, (7) Constitutionalism, and (8) Social relevance.

Several studies commonly correlate Quality of Work life with some variables in human resources field, such as work engagement, career advancement, Quality of Life (QOL), Life Satisfaction, Service Quality and Organizational Commitment. There are many studies and emphasis on QWL in various sectors, private

companies, multinational companies, and healthcare sector. This paper is trying to explore the consequences or effects of Quality of Work Life in different kind of organization based on literature review.

Literature Review

The original of QWL famously comes from the 1972 international labour conference at Arden House, Columbia, New York. QWL is a combination of strategies, procedures and ambiance related to a workplace that altogether, enhance and sustain the employee satisfaction by aiming at improving work conditions for the employees of the organizations. Walton (1975) defines quality of work life through 8 conceptual categories including: (1) Adequate and fair compensation, (2) Safe and healthy environment, (3) Growth and security, (4) Development of human capabilities, (5) The total life space, (6) Social integration, (7) Constitutionalism, and (8) Social relevance.

According to Wayne there are four main dimensions of QWL: (1) Work restructuring, often referred to as downsizing or delayering, involves reducing firms in labour, work units or divisions, or reducing levels of position within the organizational structure of the organization. Reduced company scale is needed to improve efficiency and effectiveness, (2) Reward system is a present given to employees which enables them to satisfy various needs in accordance with the standard of living of the employees concerned and in accordance with wage and payroll standards applicable in the labour market, (3) A conducive working environment enabling work hours, applicable regulations, leadership, and physical environment and (4) Participation in problem solving⁽⁶⁾.

Another definition states that QWL is a process by which the organization responds to the needs of employees by developing mechanisms to allow employees to contribute their full suggestions and take decisions and manage their working lives within a company⁽⁷⁾. In addition, QWL can also be interpreted as a situation of a good work environment for workers and in accordance with the economic welfare of the organization⁽⁸⁾. The quality of working life is basically the quality of the relationship between the workers and the environment as a whole⁽⁹⁾.

According to Lau & May, QWL is a workplace strategy that supports and maintains employee satisfaction with the aim of improving employee and organizational working conditions and employer benefits⁽¹⁰⁾. According to Luthan QWL is more concerned with the overall climate of work. One QWL analyst describes it as (1) anxiety about the impact of work on people as well as on organizational effectiveness, and (2) the idea of participation in organizational problem solving and decision-making⁽¹¹⁾.

METHODS

This paper was a descriptive-qualitative study which explores studies related to quality of work life, commitment and job performance. First, authors collected the studies related to quality of work life and its possible impacts on improvement of human resources. Secondly, it sums up the related studies and explains the dimension of quality of work life and how it can be used in organization and gaining some achievement. The last step was revealing the author views regarding the consequences of quality of work life. In the end, the result could be a great deal in order to raise job performance in organization.

RESULTS

QWL is useful for improving and reducing job stress, employers can also make more effective efforts in combating workload and job demands, companies need to carry out job training, communication, reward systems, inter-worker relations and a good working environment. For example, if workers are given the freedom to choose a work schedule, the quality and productivity of work will improve. This opportunity is given to employees who also have the responsibility to complete their work within a certain time.

The existence of eight conceptual categories about QWL according to Walton has a strong influence on organizational commitment and loyalty⁽³⁾. The results of research by Mehta, *et al* (2010) show that career development factors are the most important factor to build employee loyalty. Career development is one of the elements in QWL according to Walton Development of human capacities⁽²⁾.

The results of the study supported the idea that higher quality of work life lead to higher career advancement⁽⁹⁾. On the other hand, there was a positive and significant relationship between quality of work life (QWL) programs and quality of life (QOL) among employees at multinational companies in Sarawak, Malaysia. All the elements of quality of work life (QWL), that are work environment and job facets significantly correlated with quality of life (QOL)⁽⁵⁾.

To sum up, QWL is a very useful for improving some essential things inside the organization and variable related to human resources, for instance, commitment, loyalty, satisfaction, motivation, involvement and positive attitude. These variables may affect performance of individual as well as organizational performance.

DISCUSSION

The main elements that are distributed within this factor are responsible for shaping a work culture, an opportunity to gain experience, providing information for making good decisions, providing training, commitment to employee development, organization demonstrating professionalism, and committed employees from before. Focus on employee development, as well as care about employees' efforts to improve their performance⁽²⁾.

QWL means the level of satisfaction, motivation, involvement and individual commitment in carrying out their work. QWL is a part where every individual can feel inner satisfaction over the importance of their role to engage in a particular task. QWL reveals the importance of respect for human beings in their working environment. QWL is an effort to change the organizational climate to technically and humanely bring to a better QWL⁽¹⁾.

In addition, Rhonen experienced that the creation of QWL will have an impact on improving employee's positive attitudes toward work and to the company, increasing employee's intrinsic productivity and motivation as well as improving corporate effectiveness and competitive in the face of global business⁽¹²⁾. QWL affects the quality of employee life. QWL is an activity undertaken by human resource management to enact employees in a work environment⁽¹³⁾. An employee who has built relationships with an organization tends to demonstrate loyalty and work with the goal of achieving overall organizational goals⁽¹⁴⁾. Employee loyalty cannot be measured by the length or length of time they work for the company alone, should include the number of committed employees when they are in a job⁽¹⁵⁾.

Results of research by Khoung and Tien⁽¹⁶⁾ show that there was a significant relationship between employee loyalty with work environment, supervisor support, teamwork, and training implementation. This significant relationship shows a strongly positive relationship between leadership support and loyalty. This means, the better the relationship between employees and management, the higher the loyalty of employees. In addition, the most influential variable then is the relationship between teamwork and work environment with employee loyalty.

However, a study by Sajjad & Abbasi⁽¹⁷⁾ revealed that there is no meaningful relationship between fair and adequate compensation with organizational commitment. This result is a bit unpredictable, since salary is usually an important factor in increasing individual motivation and commitment.

On the other hand, the study found that there is a significant positive relationship between safe and healthy environments and organizational commitment among the employees in the province of Guilan, while a safe and healthy environment includes the establishment of reasonable working hours and working conditions with minimum physical risk and age limits for work. In other words safer and a healthier work environment within the organization apply more employees' commitment to the organization will emerge. While other QWL variables which are human resource capacity development, development and security, social integration, constitutionalism, life balance and social relevance show a positive relationship with organizational commitment⁽¹⁷⁾.

CONCLUSION

Quality of Work Life is the condition of guaranteed condition of workers in carrying out their work on an organization because the climate created in the work environment also supports the growth of workers so that workers can create the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. In short, studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between QWL and organizational commitment. Thus, the organization can enhance one's organizational commitment by utilizing strategies such as adequate and fair pay compensation, the establishment of a safe and healthy environment, creating opportunities for the development of human capabilities, creating security, social integration and relevance, undertaking for constitutionalism within the organization and creating a balance between work employees and home environment. Furthermore, some aspects inside organization and related to human resources may be affected by quality of work life. Then, this condition might influence the performance.

Acknowledgment

Author would like to thank Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) which has provided financial support.

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