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An empirical investigation on factors influencing on quality of work life

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ABSTRACT

During the past few years, quality of work life has received significant attention among both academic and business environments due to its vital role on the success of organizations. Rise in the quality of work life would help employees' well-being thereby the well-being of the whole organization. This is an attempt to capitalize the human assets of the organization. These days, for an organization to be successful and achieve its organizational objectives it is imperative that its employees are satisfied with their work, since work occupies an important place in many people's lives, such conditions are likely to affect not only their physical but also a high level of social, psychological and spiritual well-being. The proposed study designed a questionnaire and distributed among 192 experts in the largest automotive producer in Iran called Iran Khodro and managed to collect 175 filled ones. The questionnaire consists of 24 questions and Cronbach alpha was calculated as 0.81, which is well above the minimum acceptable limit and validates the results. The results of our survey indicate that four major factors including job characteristics, working conditions, organizational characteristics and human relations influence quality of work conditions.

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1. Introduction

It is safe to describe our age as the age of organizations. Organizations of various types and sizes have become a dominant type of institution everywhere (Al-Qutop & Harrim, 2011). During the past few years, quality of work life has received significant attention from both academic and business environments due to its vital role on the success of organizations. Quality of work life (QWL) is quick phrase that encompasses a lot, because it refers to virtually anything an employer does that contributes to employees' lives (Nasl Saraji & Dargahi, 2006). Quality of work life is one of the most important issues in every organization (Muhamad Noor & Adli Abdullah, 2012). A perfect quality of work life would help most organizations. Rise in the quality of work life would help employees' well-being thereby the well-being of the whole organization. This is an attempt to capitalize the human assets of the organization (Bharathi et al., 2011). These days, for an organization to be successful and achieve its organizational objectives it is imperative that its employees are satisfied with their works, since work

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occupies an important place in many people's lives, such conditions are likely to affect not only their physical but also a high level of social, psychological and spiritual well-being (Sinha, 2012).

Historically, work has been an important part in the life of human beings (Nadler & Lawler, 1984; Kanten & Sadullah, 2012). QWL has been originated from an international labor relations conference in 1972 at Arden House, Columbia University, New York (Davis & Cherns, 1975; Guest, 1979; Sinha, 2012; Cascio & Thacker, 1992). The evolution of QWL began in late 1960s emphasizing the human dimensions of work by concentrating on the quality of the relationship between the worker and the working environment (Che Rose et al., 2004).

Ever since the concept of QWL was first used over 30 years ago, ranges of definitions and theoretical constructs have succeeded each other with the aim of mitigating the many problems facing the concept (Martel & Dupuis, 2006; Mirkamali & Narenji Thani, 2011). Straw and Heksher (1984) and Tabassum et al. (2011), QWL is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution and they should be treated with dignity and respect.

It is a complex, multidimensional, generic concept (Hsu & Kernohan, 2006; Gayathiri & Ramakrishnan, 2013). Quality of work life also refers to the favorableness or unfavorableness of a job environment for people. It is a generic phase that covers person's feelings about every dimension of work including economic rewards and benefits, security, working conditions, organization and interpersonal relationship and its intrinsic meaning in a person's life (Kraut et al., 1989; Rathamani & Ramchandra, 2013). QWL has also been viewed in a variety of ways including as a movement, as a set of organizational interventions and a type of work life by employees (Saraji & Dargahi, 2006). QWL is defined as "employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities, and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace" (Sirgy et al., 2001; Marta et al., 2013).

According to Suttle and Hackman (1977), "quality of work life is the degree to which members of a work organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experiences in the organization". More specifically, quality of work life may be set into operation in terms of employee's perceptions of their physical and psychological well-being at work (Priyadarshani & Bhagat, 2014).

Some people stated that the quality of work life had an effect on employees' life and working environment. QWL provides for the balanced relationship among work, non- work and family aspects of life. Others stated that quality of working life enables members at all levels to actively participate in shaping the organization environment, methods and outcomes (Rathamani & Ramchandra, 2013).

Quality of work life is often considered in two directions, one is to removal of negative aspects of work and working conditions and other direction is the modification of work and working conditions to enhance the capability of employees and to promote behavior which important for individual and Society (Cohen et al., 1997; Kotzé, 2005; Ford & Kotzé, 2005).

Focusing on improving QWL to increase the happiness and satisfaction of employees can result in many advantages for the employee, organization and consumers (Almalki et al., 2012; Islam, 2012), due to this advantages quality of work life in one of the most significant issues in every modern organization.

2. Proposed Study

This paper presents a study to find important factors influencing on quality of work life using factor analysis. The proposed study of this paper designs a questionnaire, which consists of 24 questions in Likert scale and distributes it among 194 employees who work for the largest automotive producer in Iran called Iran Khodro and managed to collect 175 filled ones.

Cronbach alpha, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity approximation Chi-Square are 0.81, 0.679 and 844.475, respectively and they are within acceptable

limit. The four influencing factors are job characteristics, working conditions, organizational characteristics and human relations which are presented in details in next section.

3. The results

In this section, we present details of four factor extracted from factor analysis.

3.1. The first factor: Job characteristics

The first factor, job characteristics, consists of four factors including responsibility, adequate payment, division of labor and autonomy. Table 1 demonstrates the summary of our findings.

Table 1

Factors associated with job characteristics

Option	Factor weight	Eigen values	% of variance	Accumulated
Responsibility	0.869			
Adequate payment	0.852			
Division of labor	0.541			
Autonomy	0.883	1.976	49.407	49.407

As we can observe from the results of Table 1, the last factor, autonomy, maintains the highest factor weight, 0.883, followed by responsibility, adequate payment and division of labor and it could explain 49.407% of variance.

3.2. The second factor: Working condition

Working condition is the second factor of this survey, which includes health hazard issues, alternative work schedule, and shift working regulations and working hours. Table 2 demonstrates the summary of our findings.

Table 2

The summary of factors associated with working conditions

Option	Factor weight	Eigen values	% of variance	Accumulated
Health hazard issues	0.624			
Alternative work schedule	0.838			
Shift working regulations	0.846	2.259	44.483	44.483
Working hours	0.342			

As we can observe from the results of Table 2, the impact of shift working regulations, maintains the highest factor weight, 0.846, followed by alternative work schedule, health hazard issues and working hours and it could explain 44.483% of variance.

3.3. The third factor: Organizational characteristics

Organizational characteristics is the third factor of this survey, which includes stress, growth in the profession path, organizational conflict, evaluation methods, organizational justice, opportunities to learn and financial and non-financial benefits. Table 3 demonstrates the summary of our findings. As we can see from the results of Table 3, the impact of growth in the profession path maintains the highest factor weight, 0.762, followed by organizational justice, financial and non-financial benefits, organizational conflict, evaluation methods, opportunities to learn and stress, and it could explain 38.061% of variance.

Table 3

The summary of factors associated with organizational characteristics

Option	Factor weight	Eigen values	% of variance	Accumulated
Stress	0.586			
Growth in the profession path	0.762	1.526	38.061	38.061
Organizational conflict	0.674			
Evaluation methods	0.634			
Organizational justice	0.750			
Opportunities to learn	0.593			
Financial and non-financial benefits	0.712			

3.4. The fourth factor: Human relations

Human relations is the fourth factor of this survey, which includes teamwork, Superior-subordinate relations and organizational structure. Table 4 demonstrates the summary of our findings.

Table 4

The summary of factors associated with human relations

Option	Factor weight	Eigen value	% of variance	accumulated
Teamwork	0.579			
Superior-subordinate relations	0.695	1.539	51.302	51.302
Organizational structure	0.636			

According to the results of Table 4, the impact of superior-subordinate relations maintains the highest factor weight, 0.695, followed by organizational structure and teamwork.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented an empirical investigation to study important factors influencing on quality of work life in Iranian automotive industry. The proposed model of this paper used factor analysis and detected four important factors including job characteristics, working condition, organizational characteristics and human relations.

In terms of job characteristics, autonomy is number one priority followed by responsibility, adequate payment and division of labor. In terms of working conditions, shift working regulations is the most important factor followed by alternative work schedule, health hazard issues and working time.

In terms of organizational characteristics, growth in the profession path is the most important factor followed by organizational justice, financial and non-financial benefits, organizational conflict, evaluation methods, and opportunities to learn and finally, stress was the last important one. In terms of human relations, superior-subordinate relations followed by organizational structure and teamwork.

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