

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND JOB PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF A SELECTED COMPANY IN THE APPAREL SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify how quality of work life effects job performance in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. The apparel industry is the biggest industry in Sri Lanka and its success largely depends on the contribution of its employees. Therefore, job performance is an essential factor to be considered in achieving their target productivity and profitability. Therefore, it is the most suitable industry to investigate the concept of job performance. This survey was carried out using 100 executive level employees in Brandix and the questionnaire was consisted of 35 questions which were used to measure the indicators of independent and dependent variables. Primary and secondary data collection types are used to investigate this study. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were provided. When considering quality of work life of employees, companies should examine all the determinants considered in the study. Moreover, management of the companies should take actions to improve the quality of work life of employees from the level of neutral to strong .

Keywords: Job Performance, Quality of work life, Flexible working timings, Career growth plans, Open communication, Job Enrichment

Introduction

Quality of work life (QWL) = The sum of physical (work conditions), psychological and economic factors which affect the job. (May, Lau and Johnson (1999). QWL does not only affect job performance but also satisfaction in other life domains such as family life, leisure life, social life, financial life, and so on. Happy employee is a productive employee; a happy employee is a dedicated and loyal employee. Much research has shown that QWL may have a significant impact on employee behavioral responses, such as organizational identification, job satisfaction, job involvement, job effort, job performance, intention to quit, organizational turnover, personal alienation (e.g., Carter et al., 1990; Efraty and Sirgy, 1990; Efraty et al., 1991; Lewellyn and Wibker, 1990) Danna and Griffin (1999).

Success of an organization in accomplishing its strategic objectives relies on the level of job performance of employees. As per the Ashley Donohoe (Ashley p .1133, 2009), job performance refers to how your workers behave in the workplace and how well they perform their duties at the workplace that have been assigned to them. Job performance is impacted by workplace environment factors including physically demanding tasks, employee morale, stress levels, and working extended hours. The apparel industry in Sri Lanka employs about 15% of the country's workforce. Accordingly, there's a considerable contribution of employees in this industry and the apparel industry is the biggest industry in Sri Lanka and the success this largely depends on the contribution of its employees. Therefore, job performance is an essential factor to be considered in order to achieve target productivity and profitability of the firms operating in the industry. Therefore, it is the most suitable industry to investigate the concept of job performance. Accordingly, only the apparel industry in Sri Lanka was considered for this study.

Factory scale production of readymade garments in Sri Lanka had its beginnings in the early 1950s. With the Industrial Revolution taking root in Europe and later spreading to the rest of the world, Sri Lanka too had to act towards securing its place globally. Factory scale production of readymade garments in Sri Lanka had its beginnings in the early 1950s and of late it became the largest industry in the Sri Lankan economy. All external and internal finished common clothing items such as shirts, T' shirts, pants, dresses, sports clothing, fashion garments, under garments considered as garments. The apparel sector had grown tremendously after the introduction of the open economy. Now it has become the leading export industry replacing the traditional tea and rubber. It is the most significant and dynamic contributor of Sri Lankan economy.

Research Problem

Organizations should keep their employee job performance at a higher level in order to achieve their targets and goals. To maintain a higher level of employee job performance, it is essential to identify the major factors that affect the job performance. Some people work long hours a day, receive relatively little pay, and yet love their work because it is interesting or it provides mental satisfaction. Quality of work life in an organization is essential for the smooth running and success of its employees. Quality of work life is more important towards enhancing job performance.

The purpose of this study was to determine a set of factors that can adequately represent the concept of quality in work life. Studies related to relationship between quality of work life and job performance were scrutinized for defining the problem. There is various research evidence to test the relationship between quality of work life and job performance. QWL helps the employees feel secure and it makes them think that they are being thought of and cared for by the organization in which they work (Sadique 2003). According to Luthans (1980) the working environment in the organization favorable or unfavorable for the people. "QWL is a way of thinking about people, work and organizations, its distinctive elements are, a concern about the impact of work on people as well as on organizational effectiveness, and the idea of participation in organizational problem-solving and decision making". (Nadler and Lawler. 2001). According to Beinum (1979) general approach and an organization approach are two kinds of approaches in QWL.

A study of quality of work life is a paramount importance, the nature being different for each category of employees depending upon their needs. A good quality of work life reduces absenteeism, accidents & attrition. Quality of work life is useful to improve production, organizational effectiveness, morale of an employees and economic development of the country.

Different scholars have studied QWL and its relationship to JP. However, the review of past literature highlighted the fact that none of the local or international studies considered the impact of dimensions of QWL that this study has considered on employee performance in the apparel industry in SRI Lanka.

Literature Review

The word “Quality of work life” can be defined in several ways; it’s difficult to identify common definition. Determinants of the quality of work life explains why people at work behave in the way they behave in terms of their efforts and the directions they’re taking.

Quality of Work Life (QWL)

The quality of work life (QWL) as a human asset intercession has gained much attention within the USA and Scandinavia during 1960s -1970s. The effect of computer innovation and expanded robotization has made the working environment more de-skilled, dehumanized, and estranged. Although created economies and their mechanical organizations have become affluent, the good thing about such riches has not flowed making the working environment conducive. Instead, measures like outsourcing were adopted to reduce the dependence on household labor and costs with a view to enhancing competitiveness. Quality of Work Life (QWL) refers to the degree to which an employee’s work meets their proficient needs. As a worker they have a few desires from their work, like a sense of fulfillment or accomplishment, security, self-esteem etc. The quality of work life improves when these needs are increasingly satisfied.

Quality of Work Life (QWL) refers to the degree to which an employee’s work meets their proficient needs. As a worker they have a few desires from their work, like a sense of fulfillment or accomplishment, security, self-esteem etc. Organizations in today’s world are ceaselessly endeavoring to make strides in the quality of work life for their representatives by making work more fulfilling, with a view to reducing employee’s tensions, empowering worker support in work and employment-related choices, and team building. The changes in QWL have a positive effect on organizational execution and offer assistance to organizations in competing in the global marketplace. The Japanese, who are staunch supporters of the QWL approach, plan work around groups and lay stretch on a solid organizational culture.

Quality of Work Life (QWL) refers to the degree to which an employee’s work meets their proficient needs. As a worker they have a few desires from their work, like a sense of fulfillment or accomplishment, security, a tall self-esteem etc. Every organization seeks to maintain its valuable assets in order to increase its productivity. Money and

equipment may have been considered important at first, but gradually it has become clear that the most valuable of these are the employees of organizations.

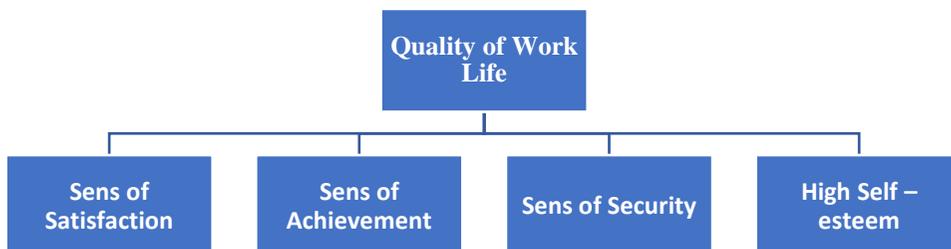


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Quality of work life is used by different people in different ways; it is very difficult to find a common definition of quality of work life. The worker recognitions of their physical and mental wellbeing at work. (The w Lawler, 2007). Quality of Work Life is a condition of the outcome of an interaction between individuals and job. Satisfaction of needs through organizational membership is associated with assertiveness and self-expression, while the failure to have needs satisfied may lead to alienation (Efraty & Sirgy, 1990; Kerce & Booth-Kewley, 1993). According to Havlovic (1991), Scobel (1975) and Straw et al., (1984), the key concepts captured in QWL include job security, better reward systems, higher pay, opportunity for growth, and participative groups among others. Each employee's emotional intelligence has an effect on behavior which ultimately affects performance in the workplace.

- **Flexible working timings** - Many employees are finding more time to spend with their loved ones. Less commuting time in coming to the work enables the employee to spend more time with the family individuals. Flexible working hours imply that employees are free to come and work at hours where they are more comfortable. Any organization takes measures not to permit members of the female workforce encounter difficulties, particularly those who do the night shifts, special emphasis is given to the welfare and security of ladies.
- **Career growth plans** - A Career Development Arrangements may be a composed list of the short and long-term objectives that workers relate to their current and future occupations, and this focuses on a planned sequence of formal and casual encounters to help the workers in accomplishing their objectives. These objectives ought to be connected to each person's qualities and potential. Career Development Plans are more often than not discretionary, but they ought to be prescribed to all workers, so that their short-term development and advancement targets are adjusted and upheld by their supervisors or bosses and their long-term career desires are practical.

- **Open communication** - On the off chance that organization is planning to lead a fruitful commerce, organization must make an environment with open communication and believe. Open communication permits representatives to be more engaged and get it that what they do things within the victory of the business. Making beyond any doubt representatives get it the enormous picture and the portion they play within the victory of the organization will offer assistance them get it why choices are made and how those choices affect them particularly and the company as an entirety. Successful communication will lead everybody to be on the same page; moving within the same heading toward the same objective.
- **Job Enrichment** - Job enrichment is a common motivational technique used by organizations to give an employee greater satisfaction in his/her work. It means giving an employee additional responsibility previously reserved for his/her manager or other higher-ranking positions. In essence, an enriched job gives the employee more self-management in his/her duties.
- **Job Satisfaction** - The term "*job satisfaction*" refers to how satisfied an employee is at the organization. Factors such as working environment, people at work, job security, and work responsibilities have a major impact on an individual's job dissatisfaction levels. With better job satisfaction comes an improved quality of work life. An employee satisfied with his/her position at the company is more likely to do good work. Consequently, job dissatisfaction is more likely to lower employee engagement and increase the turnover rates.
- **Workplace stress** - Stress is a silent killer. This is especially true for most working individuals. With the added pressure to manage their work-life, employees feel extreme levels of stress. Not only does it impact their physical health, but it affects their emotional wellbeing as well.

The concept of quality of work life exhibits positive emotional reactions and attitudes an individual has towards his/her job. It has been conceptualized as a general attitude towards the job. Job performance is often viewed as the degree to which employees execute their job tasks, responsibilities and assignments adequately. The study utilizes desk research to review literature on quality of work life that informs organization performance. The importance of considering these factors is demonstrated in the strong relationship between employee's well-being at work and performance of such organizations.

Job Performance

Job performance is the dependent variable in the present study. In past 15 to 20 years the concept and definition of job performance has received considerable scholarly research attention. A definition for job performance has been provided by for e.g., Campbell 1990; Murphy 1989. In this research work execution refers to adaptable activities, behavior and results that employees lock in or bring that are linked with and contribute to

organizational goals. Job performance is characterized as the entire anticipated esteem to the organization of the discrete behavioral scenes that a person carries out over a standard period of time. This definition could be a somewhat changed from of the definition of execution displayed in a past distribution in association with a hypothesis of person contrasts in errand and relevant execution (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997).

Job performance was measured from the point of view of the organization, the employee as well as, the job itself. Organizational objective, employee objective, performance development and employee satisfaction are used as measures of employee performance and this makes it more wide-ranging. Job performance, hence, gives room for innovativeness among employees and firm's general performance and innovativeness, in a manner that prosperous work of accomplished, inspired and zealous human resources yield ground breaking concepts for newer goods or services and also upsurge performance quality and satisfaction of the clients (Sadikoglu & Cemal, 2010).

A considerable number of researchers have engaged in work related to Quality of work life and job performance representing different sectors all over the world. Lau and May (1998) indicated that QWL is a significant factor in determining Job performance. Based on this view, Havlovic (1991) explained that QWL enhances the performance of employees and found that QWL significantly reduces absenteeism, minor accidents, grievances and turnover of employees in an organization. Positive QWL is a favorable condition and this refers to an environment of the workplace that address the welfare and well-being of employees. In 2008, Korunka et al. as cited in Nayak (2015), mentioned that "there is a plethora of literature stating that organizations providing desirable QWL for its employees can achieve better human resource productivity and performance". Rose et al. (2006), under the topic 'Linking Quality of Work Life and Job Performance: Implications for Organizations', found that there is a significantly strong positive relationship between QWL and Job Performance.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify the impact of quality of work life on job performance in selected apparel industry and to generalize the findings towards determining the potential link between quality of work life and job performance. The factors that influence the problem are called Independent variables. Determinants of quality of work life namely open communication, flexible working timings, career growth plans and job enrichment are identified as the independent variable for the study because they have an impact on the job performance. The independent variables were measured by establishing indicators for each sub variable when building up the questionnaire. The open communication measured through the indicators like, providing opportunity for feedback, expressing ideas with managers and supervisors, using technology, connectivity of departments and awareness of guidelines. The sub variable of Flexible working timings is measured or indicated through the leave approvals, flexi time, work schedule flexibility and work hours. Indicators such as career development,

self-efficacy beliefs, career stage and organizational support for career development in career growth plans. The job enrichment measured through the indicators of skill variety, task identity, feedback and task significance.

The target population is 1100 Executive level employees consisting all the executives level employees of Brandix in Gampaha district. There are 28 Brandix factories in Sri Lanka and the study is focused on the factories established in Gampaha district and professionals serve in various departments such as HR, IT, Finance, Supply chain and Operations. The sample of the study consists of 100 Executive level employees selected out of the population. The simple random sampling method was used to select the sample of the study. A simple random sample is a subset of a statistical population in which each member of the subset has an equal probability of being chosen. A simple random sample is meant to be an unbiased representation of a group. There are four Brandix plants in Gampaha district having 1100 executive level employees, overall. Therefore, researcher selected a sample of 25 employees from each plant. This sample should truly represent the characteristics of the population. Furthermore, the sample neither too large nor small but could be considered adequate, given the size of the population. 100 sample data was gathered to evaluate the impact of quality of work life and employee performance. Questionnaire was prepared by focusing sample group. They were developed by including closed ended questions to emphasize the techniques that used in the organization. After selecting an unbiased sample, the questionnaire was given to all employees with the instructions on how to fill it. Questionnaire was designed to cover and measure all variables and dimensions.

Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between quality of work life and job performance at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypotheses

H₁. There is a positive relationship between Open Communication & Job performance.

H₂. There is a positive relationship between Flexible working timing & Job performance.

H₃. There is a positive relationship between Career growth plans & Job performance.

H₄. There is a positive relationship between Job Enrichment & Job Performance.

Results and Discussion

Considering the mean score of the responses given for each question under each variable, the analysis of the study was performed. Table 1 shows the mean values for each variable calculated using the codes for the responses given by employees.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for variables.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
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Open Communication	2.365	0.451
Flexible working timing	3.001	0.518
Career growth plans	3.712	0.533
Job Enrichment	3.412	0.655

According to the table 1, responses that are more positive were given to the questions related to career growth plans. Looking at the standard deviations, highest standard deviation value (0.655) was shown in relation to job enrichment and this implies that the employees have vastly different ideas on job enrichment. Looking at the mean, highest mean value (3.712) was shown in career growth plans.

Hypothesis Testing

Variable	Pearson's Coefficient	Correlation p – Value
Open Communication	0.271	0.01
Flexible working timing	-0.015	0.831
Career growth plans	0.171	0.016
Job Enrichment	0.271	0.01

*** Significant at 5% level**

The correlation between the variables is at significant level of 0.01. The hypothesis “There is relationship between Open communication & Job performance” is accepted. Although the correlation between flexible working timing and job performance shows a negative correlation (-0.015), it is not statistically significant (p-value = 0.831). The correlation between Job enrichment and Job performance gives a positive coefficient (0.271) with low p-value (0.01), which implies that the higher the job enrichment the better is the performance. Also, the correlation between career growth plans and Job performance shows a positive value (0.171), this means enrichment leads to higher job performance

According to Kloogiannidis,S(2020), effective communication in any business venture has a great influence on employee performance. Therefore, it is important to maintain effective flow of information in the organization to enhance employee performance. It was also found out by Alting E, & Siller,F(2014) that flexible working practices have positive effect on work life balance. It was also found out that employees with positive attitudes towards flexible working hours are more loyal to the organization and this in turn will lead to higher performance. According to the results of the study there is a positive relationship

between job enrichment and job performance. Similarly, smit et.al., (2007) found out that prospect of career advancement motivates employees to work hard.

Conclusions

Apparel industry is a vital industry which relies more on human resources compared to other industries. The employees make a vital contribution towards the development of the industry. Therefore, it is essential that the organizations maintain the employee's level of performance at a higher level in order to achieve the targets and goals as planned. It is necessary to identify the major aspects that affect the employee performance in order to enhance the performance level. This research emphasizes on the relationship between the work life and performance of the employees. Further, it elaborates the techniques needed in managing work in order to achieve better outcomes.

Through the open communication the management needs to maintain the proper balance with the employees. The employee needs to have liberty to express their ideas with the coworkers and the management and this confirms that they have significant role to be played within the organization. Findings show a standard deviation of 0.451 which emphasizes that workers having a stronger relationship with the organization will bring about positive outcomes. Yet, best outcome could be achieved, based on the technology the organization provides for communication with colleagues.

Flexible working hours mainly provide the employees job satisfaction. They will have relaxed mind to concentrate on work rather working on a tight schedule. Also, getting adequate leave and support from other employees, will encourage the employees to work well. Through that they tend to recognize the responsibility they have, and the workers will be motivated to do the task that they are assigned with, as best as they could.

According to Stephen & Mary, (2006), the work achievements encourage through quality of work life. Proving opportunity for career growth is significant fact in order to provide better impression of the organization. It provides win-win situation for both employee and the organization. The employee gets the opportunity to enhance the knowledge while organization gets experience and knowledgeable worker to the organization. Evaluating the collected data, it seems that it is better to increase the training programs to enhance their ability of work. Even though they have less opportunity in training they have higher level of trust with the organization which also increases the interaction of the employee and the organization.

Higher job enrichment enhances the interest level of the work and the workers. According to collected data it illustrates that performance of the employees has vital connection with job enrichment. Mainly, when the employees are satisfied with the leadership, they tend to show more interest regarding their work as they identify their responsibilities well.

Employees are always concerned about the quality of work life. Organizations which are concerned about employees' quality of work life. This study has the potential value for further research.

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