

RESEARCH ARTICLE	Enhancing the Quality of Work Life
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Abstract

This theoretical study aims to shed light on the subject of improving the quality of work life, which has been addressed by many studies and previous research related to work, human resources, and mental health, its indicators, and the mechanisms for achieving it in reality. Accordingly, we find in this article the importance of improving the quality of work life and highlighting the role of the work environment in achieving that, in addition to the obstacles that hinder the improvement of the quality of work life and proposing the most appropriate solutions to enhance the effectiveness and stability of organizations, and what is required in terms of organizational interventions at various levels of work. The quality of work life is considered one of the highly important topics in management and organizational sciences and organizational psychology, which is concerned with the human resource and values it in the workplace in order to meet human needs in the professional field and achieve well-being and professional prosperity through improving the work environment, motivating workers, and positively influencing their mental state, behavior, and performance to ensure good work management and improve the quality of work life.

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Introduction:

The concept of quality of life has recently witnessed wide interest from researchers concerned with the fields of psychology, and positive psychology has included it among the modern terms. The concept of quality of life essentially includes everything related to an individual's self-well-being and their level of satisfaction with the environment to which they belong, whether it is their social or professional environment, as this is reflected in their thoughts, behaviors, and especially their reactions.

Despite the numerous studies conducted on quality of life, there is no specific theoretical framework in which we can confine it, due to the differences in its indicators and the tools used to measure quality of life. Accordingly, in this study we will address the subject of the contribution of quality of life in enhancing job performance, highlighting how employee performance is affected through improving quality of life—i.e., improving its components which in turn enhances job performance, creates a suitable work atmosphere with job satisfaction, improves the worker's quality of life, and thus yields good results at work by raising their performance level in the organization.

Organizations have recently paid attention to the human resource, which is considered one of the most valuable assets a company possesses and the most important element for achieving set objectives. Therefore, this resource must be cared for in order to achieve effective and sound performance, by providing a set of factors, whether material or moral, to create a comfortable and suitable environment for carrying out work to produce the best results. Many scientific studies have proven that the work environment plays an effective role in enhancing job performance, as the latter is the result of several factors and the professional environment.

Quality of life is known as a set of subjective and social interactions that determine the level at which a person lives within their surrounding environmental context, whether material, professional, social, etc., and their satisfaction and happiness with it. Quality of life includes various objective indicators such as income, available services, health, transportation, fulfillment of human needs, job satisfaction, etc. The level of quality of life ranges from high to low depending on the degree of satisfaction with these objective indicators.

Quality of life is also affected by the environmental and social factors surrounding the individual. Quality of work life includes all interactions in the professional context such as work relations, interpersonal relationships, internal and external stimuli, physical conditions, effort, fatigue, conflicts, etc. This is reflected in the worker and in their behavior and job performance, as performance is one of the concepts that has received considerable attention and research from thinkers and researchers, as it refers to the degree of achieving and completing the tasks that constitute an individual's job.

❖ Problem Statement:

The human being is a product of their environment—they are influenced by it and influence it in turn, through a series of interactions with the surrounding environmental factors, whether social or professional. Since the working individual spends the majority of their time at work, the professional environment greatly affects the individual's psychological and physical health. This is reflected in the quality of work life, as the worker interacts with their professional environment and working conditions, whether internal or external, such as: noise, heat, lighting, lack of equipment, disorder, etc., whether material or moral, like low salary, lack of incentives, long working hours, absence of enrichment and moral encouragement, etc.

All of this negatively affects employee satisfaction and performance, and this appears in behaviors such as: complaining, loss of passion for work, lack of job satisfaction, and difficulty adapting to professional colleagues, which leads to a decline in productivity and frequent absences. Conversely, in the case of a suitable and motivating work environment, the worker develops mixed feelings of comfort and happiness toward their work and professional environment, as it becomes a psychological feeling that reflects the extent to which their needs and desires at work are fulfilled. Accordingly, job satisfaction is a set of emotions that the worker feels toward their job, and it is dependent on the work environment that is, the quality of work life.

Despite the numerous studies conducted on quality of life, there is no specific theoretical framework in which we can confine it due to its indicators and the tools used to measure quality of life. Therefore, in this study, we will address the role of quality of work life in achieving job satisfaction. We will highlight the role of the professional environment in achieving satisfaction among employees and the extent of its impact on psychology and human behavior at work.

- According to Erich Fromm (1900–1980), the quality of life of a working individual arises from their sense of tangible reality within the work environment. He emphasized the necessity of strengthening the social aspect of work and the relationship with colleagues.
- Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), leader of the humanistic school and author of the hierarchy of needs theory, took a different path in psychology, emphasizing the importance of professional life for the worker. He asserted that quality of life and its level are primarily based on fulfilling the higher needs of the individual and that feeling secure and satisfied at work leads to occupational happiness.

❖ Significance of the Study:

- It is a theoretical study through which we aim to highlight ways to improve quality of work life and how it contributes to enhancing employee job performance in order to control the organization's strengths by providing an effective work environment to enhance performance in a way that serves the organization's interests.
- A general commentary on the most important recent contemporary studies on the subject of professional quality of life and summarizing the results in research that benefits the labor sector and keeps pace with current development.

❖ Study Objectives:

- To understand the concept of quality of work life and determine its importance in enhancing job performance and increasing productivity.
- To highlight the most important methods of improving quality of work life.
- To demonstrate the importance of the work environment in improving professional quality of life and to identify the most prominent obstacles that hinder its improvement.

❖ Methodology of the Study:

- After reviewing some previous studies on the topic of quality of work life, also known by some researchers as the quality of professional life, we adopted the descriptive approach as well as the meta-analysis method, i.e., by referring to available scientific references such as university theses, research papers, and scientific articles that addressed the same topic.

Previous Studies:

- Study by Walton (1973): This study reinforced and developed the concept of quality of work life by exploring the controlling factors. Walton's study is considered a reference in the field of work and professional quality of life.

- Study by Sirgy et al. (2001): This study showed the extent of the impact of social life on individuals' professional lives by clarifying the relationship between general quality of life and quality of work life.
- Study by Rethinam & Ismail (2008): Their results showed the importance of enhancing the work environment and its impact on employee performance and job behavior. They also considered the work environment to be the determining factor for quality of work life and the key to satisfaction level.
- Study by Jean Cottraux (2012): This study showed that time and working hours spent by individuals on their jobs have an impact on well-being and happiness, as they are linked to the satisfaction of needs and the overall improvement of quality of life.
- Study by Ben Abbo (2019), Algeria: This study revealed the necessity of improving work relationships and adopting supportive organizational strategies for individuals and the extent of their contribution to improving quality of work life.

1. The Concept of Quality of Life:

The origin of the concept of quality of life dates back to the eighteenth century, when societies were recognized as tools that provide citizens with the basic needs for a good life. This concept was reinforced in the nineteenth century through the idea that the best society is the one in which the greatest number of people enjoy the highest possible level of happiness.

Based on this concept, and with the beginning of the twentieth century, efforts were strengthened to empower societies economically and socially to reach a state of prosperity by combating ignorance, poverty, and disease.

Psychology was the first to understand and identify the variables affecting human quality of life by expressing the self-perception of that quality. On the other hand, a theoretical framework for the concept of quality of life was developed by economists in Western countries, mainly based on income level to measure the level of social development and standard of living at that time. In an attempt to build a system of social indicators during the 1960s, subjective measures of well-being related to quality of life were developed. The concept also became associated with ideas such as development, progress, improvement, and the fulfillment of needs... as well as the various concepts of poverty.

The American Psychological Association defined quality of life as the extent to which an individual achieves life satisfaction. To attain a good quality of life, several elements must be achieved, including quality of living conditions, psychological, material, and physical well-being, personal relationships, and the presence of opportunities for personal development such as skills, the exercise of rights, making lifestyle choices and determining them independently, and participating in society.

2- Quality of Work Life:

The concept of quality of work life has been defined in various ways, among them: it is all the interactions within the professional framework between the worker and their work environment, such as work relationships, physical stimuli, job performance, effort exerted, etc.

As for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2002), it defined quality of work life as a multidimensional construct consisting of a set of interrelated factors related to job satisfaction, participation, tasks, motivation, productivity, health and safety, well-being, job security, competence development, and work-life balance.

Al-Hutaibi (2003) linked quality of work life to the social, natural, and psychological working conditions and defined it as the high quality of work life that is achieved through a suitable work environment and the use of procedures, systems, and work rituals that make the working individual feel their importance in the organization and motivate them towards better performance.

As for Saraji & Dargahi (2006), they referred to it as the actions taken which include some implicit and tangible and intangible benefits that make the work environment good.

Serey (2006), in his definition, was decisive and linked it to a satisfying work and work environment, which includes the opportunity for the worker to exercise their various talents and abilities to face challenges and situations requiring independent and self-driven initiative. It is an activity believed to be beneficial for individuals within a workgroup, and is considered work in which every worker understands their role in order to accomplish general goals, and generates a sense of pride in each worker regarding their job.

Quality of work life is subject to several factors that influence its levels, which are as follows:

- Organizational factors
- Material and physical factors
- Psychological and moral factors
- Health and physical factors

3- Determinants of Improving Quality of Work Life:

1. **Work system:** Working hours, work schedules, holidays, and breaks are important in determining comfort and fatigue at work.
2. **Work tools and equipment:** These are the tools used at work, their usability, durability, and how well they keep up with modern technology in order to facilitate the performance of professional activities.
3. **Physical conditions:** This refers to environmental working conditions such as noise, temperature, lighting, ventilation, dust, etc.
4. **Individual motivation:** This expresses the desire present in the worker, which can appear through their enthusiasm and approach to work, reflecting the alignment of the job with their inclinations and orientations.
5. **Professional relationships:** Teamwork and the spirit of cooperation among team members, exchange of ideas and mutual respect, and most importantly, the reduction of conflicts and disputes among individuals in the organization.
6. **Ability to achieve and perform:** This is the ability an individual can gain through education, training, and acquiring experience, skills, and specialized knowledge related to work.
7. **Development potential and professionalism:** This allows the worker to identify their strengths and weaknesses at work, enabling them to develop their abilities and improve their performance, along with promotion opportunities.
8. **Satisfaction of professional needs:** Meeting the worker's needs in the workplace in terms of material and moral requirements, such as good wages, incentives, equipment, and modern work tools.
9. **Feeling of satisfaction and appreciation:** This expresses the fulfillment provided by the internal work environment and the feeling of satisfaction with one's job after achieving their desires, goals, and satisfying all their needs.
10. **Occupational health and safety:** Observing professional safety and security conditions and using safe equipment at work in order to reduce work accidents and minimize occupational diseases.

4- The Work Environment and Its Role in Improving Quality of Work Life:

It is said that a person is a product of their environment—they influence it and are influenced by it. Accordingly, the work environment is defined as the place individuals use to perform their jobs. It includes the geographic location, social factors, and physical conditions in which the employee carries out their work. It significantly affects their job performance and productivity, such as: office location, lighting, equipment, and furniture, in addition to organizational culture, communication style, coworker relationships, and the level of support and appreciation provided to employees.

The work environment also plays a fundamental role in improving the quality of work life, as it includes the essential aspects of work, namely:

- The **organizational aspect** (the institution's internal regulations, work system, organizational culture, task and staff distribution...),
- The **material aspect** (work equipment, usability of tools and equipment, the integration of technology and the internet to facilitate work...),
- The **physical aspect** (noise, temperature, humidity, ventilation, lighting...).

These aspects are considered components of the work environment, and positively managing them provides suitable conditions for work and professional activities.

The work environment is also defined as a set of physical, social, psychological, and organizational conditions that surround the employee during the performance of their tasks. These conditions include infrastructure, workplace relationships, leadership styles, and organizational culture. These combined factors affect job performance, satisfaction, and the psychological health of employees, making the improvement of the work environment a critical factor in the success of organizations (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The work environment is considered a key element in shaping employee experiences within organizations, as it directly influences levels of performance, job satisfaction, motivation, and professional stability. The work environment includes all the conditions surrounding the employee while carrying out their tasks—whether **material** (such as office and lighting), **social** (such as relationships between colleagues and supervisors), **organizational** (such as rules and policies), or **psychological** (such as feelings of security and appreciation).

❖ Elements of the Work Environment:

The components of the work environment vary, and among the most prominent are:

1. **Physical environment:** This includes interior design, equipment quality, lighting, ventilation, and temperature. These factors affect the employee's comfort and ability to concentrate.
2. **Social environment:** This relates to the quality of relationships among colleagues, leadership style, and the level of cooperation within the team.
3. **Organizational culture:** This refers to the values, beliefs, and behaviors that prevail within the organization.
4. **Psychological and administrative support:** This includes the availability of open communication channels, recognition of employee efforts, and the provision of opportunities for growth and development.

Studies indicate that a positive work environment is closely linked to increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, and lower employee turnover. Moreover, employees who feel comfortable and supported at work tend to show higher levels of commitment and job loyalty (Danna & Griffin, 1999).

In addition, the availability of appropriate resources and fairness in the workplace reduces burnout and enhances professional engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Recent research confirms that the quality of the work environment is a direct indicator of organizational performance (Bakotić, 2016).

A positive work environment helps improve employees' moods, increases their performance capacities, and allows them to identify and improve their weaknesses. Among the key features of a positive work environment are teamwork, effective communication within the team, reduced conflicts within the organization, and lower rates of occupational accidents and illnesses. All of this increases productivity and strengthens individuals' sense of belonging, which indicates an improvement in quality of work life.

❖ Ways to Develop the Work Environment:

Companies seek to develop their work environment by launching a set of programs, initiatives, and services aimed at improving employees' psychological and physical health, due to its importance in enhancing their job performance and increasing productivity. This positively reflects on their comfort and sense of loyalty toward the organization.

The importance of the work environment and its role in improving quality of work life lies in its impact on the worker's psychological state and professional satisfaction through:

1. **Providing a Comfortable Work Environment:**

It gives employees the ability to focus better on their tasks and perform them efficiently. Therefore, when designing the workspace, it is necessary to consider the inclusion of green spaces, which help employees relax and clear their minds, as well as provide a quiet area for work away from noise, such as building soundproof rooms.

2. **Ensuring Employee Satisfaction:**

When an employee feels that their efforts are appreciated, their productivity increases. Therefore, employees should be motivated through promotions, bonuses, and salary increases.

3. **Providing Effective Communication Methods:**

Effective communication in the workplace helps avoid problems and misunderstandings among team members. It also encourages the exchange of ideas and helps identify and resolve any issues quickly.

4. **Investing in Employees:**

This can be done by providing training courses aimed at improving personal skills such as teamwork and time management, in addition to specialized skills like marketing.

5. **Achieving Diversity in the Workplace:**

The greater the diversity among team members, the higher the ability to solve problems and produce new ideas that contribute to increasing productivity and generating profits.

6. **Workplace Flexibility:**

Work flexibility can reflect employee well-being through the benefits and services provided by the company, as it allows them to achieve work-life balance. This includes offering flexible working hours, remote work options, and more.

5- Indicators of Improving Quality of Work Life:

Improving quality of work life affects the employee's psychological and physical health, and this is reflected in their behaviors within the organization, which express their satisfaction with their job and performance. Accordingly, we mention the most important indicators of improved quality of work life, as identified by some researchers in the field of work. They concluded that employee performance is the result of interactions between three main determinants: individual motivation, working conditions, and the ability to perform the work (Suleiman, Hanfi Mohamed, previously cited reference, pp. 222-223).

Among the indicators of improved quality of work life are:

- Continuous enthusiasm for work and punctuality
- Reduced absenteeism and tardiness
- Improvement in employee performance and pursuit of excellence and professionalism
- The employee's sense of responsibility toward the organization and completing their work to the fullest
- Creating a pleasant atmosphere in the work environment filled with respect and harmony
- Success in teamwork and respect among colleagues

- Feeling of security and psychological stability at work
- Increased levels of commitment
- Decrease in conflicts and problems within the organization
- Smooth exchange of ideas and experiences among employees
- Preservation and care for tools and equipment without damaging them
- Employees' behavior positively reflecting on the workflow
- Employees feeling a sense of belonging to the organization
- Prosperity of the organization, achievement of its goals, and its development
- Fewer workplace accidents and reduced occupational hazards
- A feeling of appreciation and pride
- Increased productivity and progress at work

6- Obstacles to Improving Quality of Work Life:

By "obstacles," we mean all the factors that hinder the smooth workflow and make the employee dissatisfied with their job, thereby preventing the improvement of quality of work life. These may result from poor management or natural conditions that negatively affect the quality of professional life and prevent the feeling of well-being and self-fulfillment. Accordingly, some researchers have categorized these obstacles into types based on their nature:

1 – Physical Obstacles:

- Severe fatigue and exhaustion during work
- Joint and muscle pain
- Poor eyesight and visual disturbances
- Physical illnesses
- Persistent headaches
- Weak physical capacity and physical strain during work

2 – Psychological Obstacles:

- Working with nervousness and anxiety
- Mental stress due to excessive duties
- Inability to concentrate during work
- Lack of job satisfaction
- Not feeling appreciated within the organization
- Loss of passion and low motivation for work

3 – Professional Obstacles:

- A poor work environment characterized by disorder
- Absence of organization and planning in work
- Lack of safety at work

- Use of old and unfit tools and equipment
- Continuous noise and disturbance within the organization
- Excessive workload and working without breaks

4 – Social Obstacles:

- Long distance between workplace and residence and lack of transportation
- Wages that do not cover all the needs and requirements of workers' lives
- Personal problems experienced by the employee
- Family obligations and ongoing social demands
- Spending salary quickly and inability to save
- Rarely seeing friends or going out with them due to working hours

7- Strategies for Improving Quality of Work Life:

According to what researchers in the field of work, professional well-being, and mental health have concluded especially regarding quality of professional life achieving this quality requires primarily improving the work environment, which is the foundation of work and the main factor influencing the employee's sense of job satisfaction and belonging. Accordingly, we mention some of the methods adopted by various studies and organizations, which have proven effective in different professional fields, yielding positive results, including:

1. Organizational Aspect:

Managers in institutions must adopt effective and well-studied strategies that align with the needs of the sector and adapt employees to keep pace with modernization and modern technology. Material incentives are also considered an effective way to enhance performance, such as giving gifts on occasions, increasing salaries, and offering financial bonuses, etc.

2. Moral Aspect:

Valuing employees' efforts and showing positive reactions to their performance, involving them in solving work problems, listening to their suggestions, and respecting their opinions lead to building trust between employees and managers, strengthening work relationships, promoting teamwork, and encouraging the exchange of experiences among colleagues.

Verbal violence against employees especially shouting or insulting should be avoided. Democratic communication and conflict resolution should be adopted.

3. Material Aspect:

Providing safety and security at work, ensuring the availability of necessary equipment and tools to facilitate performance and improve the quality of services offered, such as food quality, transportation means, etc.

It is also important to consider physical factors such as temperature variations, noise, lighting, humidity, especially the aspect of occupational health and safety, and to thoroughly address technical issues of devices and tools by seeking help from technical experts.

From these strategies, we can summarize the most important means that lead to improving the quality of work life in general, which include:

Providing a suitable work environment organizationally, materially, and morally and giving proper attention to the human resource in the institution, focusing on their needs, aligning their abilities with their position, and enhancing their emotions with positivity in words and actions. This is reflected in their behavior, performance, and job satisfaction, ultimately leading to good quality of work life.

Conclusion:

Creating a positive work atmosphere encourages employees to develop their performance, increase their productivity, and enhance their sense of satisfaction and security at work. This shows us that the ways to improve quality of life are determined by the work environment and the extent of the worker's satisfaction with it. This satisfaction is reflected in their behavior within the organization, the development of their performance, and their sense of belonging, which increases their motivation to produce.

Therefore, it is necessary to plan properly to improve quality of work life, avoid anything that may hinder the smooth workflow, and pay attention to the human resource by providing suitable working conditions. It is also important to reduce traditional strategies in organizational management and keep pace with everything modern in terms of technology and effective modern tools in the field of work. Through improving the basic components of the meaning of quality of work life on the ground, improving quality of work life is nothing but a reflection of a suitable work atmosphere, worker satisfaction, the performance of organizational duties, and the pursuit of performance development as an expression of one's belonging and appreciation for their work and institution.

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