

A STUDY OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE PREVAILING IN TINY, SMALL AND MEDIUM INDUSTRIES IN AMBATTUR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE – AN ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

An industrial organisation is a large and ever growing family. Human Resources are seen to be central, vital and integral to any organization: concern for people and human values find expression in working environment that fosters and rewards individual achievement. A person who enjoys the work and derives satisfaction alone can perform in the best manner. But how far and how long the individual can be satisfied in the profession, which is full of work related stress and strain, is a moot question. For this reason, one needs to be sensitive to factors related to performance, recognition, work content, responsibility, promotion & pay, organisational policies, working conditions etc.

Keywords: SSI, EDP, QWL

Introduction

Industrialisation has played a very important role in the process of economic development of all countries of the world including India. The problem of industrialisation and its role in economic transformation has attracted the attention of policy makers in India too. Indian economy is on the threshold of change today consequent upon the economic reforms initiated since 1991. Reforms in different spheres of economic activity have led to changes on different fronts. Currently the Country's industrial plans lay emphasis on the development of important heavy industries and of those in the small-scale sector.

Small scale industries play a key role in the industrialization of developing countries. This is because they provide immediate large quantum of employment and have a comparatively higher labour-capital ratio. They offer a method of ensuring a more equitable distribution of national income and facilitate an effective mobilization of capital and skill which might otherwise remain unutilized.

Small scale industries stimulate the growth of industrial entrepreneurship and promote a more diffused pattern of ownership and location. Empirical studies have shown that small scale enterprises are an important vehicle for meeting the growth and equity with social justice objectives of developing economies. In the Indian context they play a key role in the economic development of the country. They also act as a breeding ground for entrepreneurs.

Quality of Work Life

The term quality of work life appeared in research journals only in 1970s. As observed by N. Ahamed 1981^[1], it is not only the monetary aspects that a modern employee concerns him with but also conditions of employment, interpersonal conflicts, role conflicts, job pressure, lack of freedom of work and absence of challenging work etc.

Ajit Singh (1989)^[2] Productivity and efficiency of an organization largely depend upon the quality of work life provided by the organization. Extensive research on quality of work life made significant contribution for the conceptualization of the term quality of work life. According to Bandyopadhyay (1990)^[5], "*Quality of Work Life is the work culture that serves as the corner stone*". In fact, measuring the quality of work life has become easy and practicable with the factors/elements that he propounded.

Measurement of Quality of Work Life

He proposed eight major conceptual variables relative to quality of work life, namely;

1. Adequate and fair compensation,
2. Safe and healthy working conditions,
3. Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities,
4. Opportunity for continued growth and security,
5. Social integration in the work organization,
6. Constitutionalism in the work organization,
7. Work and total life space, and
8. The social relevance of the work life

Review of Literature

Alice, G. Sargent and Ronald, J, Stupak (1989)^[3], a study was conducted in the Service Division of Fortune 500 Companies referred to as "Infocorp", for evaluating the impact of the work redesign programme. The study indicated that quantity and quality of work improved in relation to an internally established norm.

Augenblick, Lynn (1990)^[4], The problem of the study conducted to establish reliability, content, construct, concurrent, known group and predictive validity of two QWL Indices. The sample included 734 salary and 4277 hourly workers for testing 35 specific and 10 general hypothesis has examined the Quality of Work Life in the Indian (Nationalized) banking industry as perceived by organisational members at different organisational levels and in different job positions. They found that Quality of Work Life in the banking profession is not high.

According to BeUman, Geoffrey M (1990)^[6], The recruitment of overqualified personnel for rather routine job, inequitable reward system which demotivate the better performing employees, frustration experienced due to lack of alternative job avenues, scarce chance of promotion, alienation from work etc. are pointed out as the reasons for poor Quality of Work Life in banks. The study suggests that

greater decentralization, more autonomy, power and control will facilitate the individual banks to recruit the right people, design the jobs as best, and reward employees based on performance and thus enhance the Quality of Work Life in banks.

Theoretical Background of the Study

An industrial organization is a large and ever growing family. Belcher, John G. Jr (1992)^[7], Human Resources are seen to be central, vital and integral to any organisation, concern for people and human values find expression in working environment that fosters and rewards individual achievement. An implication of Taylor's work on Scientific Management was that the workers acted as they did due to the way they were managed.

According to Herzberg, the meaning of work to the individual is important in the overall context of human relations, because it is the only factor contributing to one's satisfactory adjustment with the work place. Again, since work is an activity, one needs to remember that every one approaches the work with a different attitude and with varied expectations out of it.

According to Cantor, Jeffrey A. (1988)^[9], Employees at the grass root level experience a sense of frustration because of low level of wages, poor working conditions, unfavorable terms of employment, inhuman treatment by their superiors and the like - whereas the managerial personnel feel frustrated because of alienation over their conditions of employment, interpersonal conflicts, role conflicts, job pressures, lack of freedom or challenge in the work etc.

William J. Walsh (1990)^[10] says that a person who enjoys the work and derives satisfaction alone can perform in the best perfect manner. The fulfillment of personal needs and goals lead to satisfaction, well being and happiness. But how far and how long the individual can be satisfied in the profession, which is full of work related stress and strain. For this reason, one needs to be sensitive to factors related to performance, recognition, work content, responsibility, promotion and pay, organisational policies, working conditions etc.

Statement of the Problem

The large and small scale industrial sectors are complementary and they are considered to be the two wheels of the vehicle of industrialisation. But the growth and modernization of the SSIs in India are constrained by a multitude of factors. So, for the development of small scale industries in India, the government has brought about a series of measures and programmes. An important programme among these was the industrial estate programme started in the year 1955.

Industrialisation of the country by the development of small industries is the most important objective of the industrial estates programme in India. Industrial estates, a device for promoting dispersed industrial development, play a significant role in promoting small scale industries. Industrial estates are organized with the objectives of promoting small scale industries by providing facilities, assistance and guidance to small industries in establishing, operating and managing their units. Industrial estates provide a powerful

instrument of industrial growth. But, in practice their effectiveness depends largely upon the planning, execution and operation of the programme. The commonly accepted characteristics of underdeveloped countries are administrative inefficiency, inadequacy of infrastructure, lack of entrepreneurial and technical skill and of capital.

Wilson, F (1989)^[11], for achieving the objectives of the industrial estates proper man power management and suitable quality of work life programmes are essential. Quality of work life covers all aspects of worker's life with special reference to his interaction with his work and his working environment.

Quality of work life is the degree by which members of a work organization are able to satisfy their personal needs through their experience in the organization. Its focus is on the problem of creating a human work environment where employees work cooperatively and contribute to organizational objectives. Quality of work life is reflected by job involvement, job satisfaction and productivity.

Objectives of the Study

Based on the perceptions of selected middle-level executives, the present study, examines the prevailing QWL and the related variables like performance and satisfaction along with Quality of work.

The objectives of the study, in specific terms are:

1. To identify the overall level of QWL of a cross section of middle-level executives and the significance of the set of variables constituting their QWL
2. To find out the relationship between certain personal variables and the levels of overall QWL
3. To explain the association between the levels of QWL with performance and the association between the performance of executives and their satisfaction in a given QWL environment and
4. To find out the significance, if any, of the quality of work of the executives in the prevailing QWL.

Methodology

Sampling Design: A Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample respondents

Data Collection Method

Primary Data

The study is mainly based on primary data, obtained from a well designed interview schedule and open discussion with entrepreneurs, employees and workers in the selected industrial estates. For this purpose

an interview schedule was prepared, covering all aspects of quality of work life. This interview schedule has been finalized after conducting a pilot study among a sample of 20 employees.

Secondary Data

The secondary data have been drawn from various publications and also from personal discussions with the officials of various organizations and websites.

Sample

The study is based on primary data collected from small scale industries, the perceptions of the middle-level executives, belonging to selected public and private sector enterprises within Ambattur Industrial Estate in Chennai. The above data were collected through structured questionnaire.

Of the 31 organizations, 6 belong to the public sector and the remaining 25 to the private sector. Totally, 500 questionnaires were distributed, out of which only 430 were received back. 18 questionnaires which were incomplete were not included for analysis and interpretation.

Sample Size for this study is 412.

Out of 6 Public Sector 2 – Small scale & 4 – Medium

Out of 31 Private sector 9 – Tiny, 5 – Small & 11 – Medium

Pre – Testing

Pre-testing of the draft questionnaire was undertaken to know the adequacy, relevance and clarity of the contents of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was personally administered to 20 executives belonging to two companies. In the light of the suggestions given by the respondents, a few modifications were made and the final questionnaire was then drafted.

Instrument Reliability

The Spearman Brown formula of the theory of Domain Sampling has been used to compute the reliability of a K - item test. A reliability coefficient of 0.6 and above is generally considered to be acceptable. The reliability test results show that the questionnaire designed for the present study is highly reliable with respect to all the 6 sections and in its totality.

Hypotheses of the Study

The significant problem is to know the quality of work life pattern of executives, in terms of different QWL dimensions and further extending the study to find its relation to performance and satisfaction and also the quality of work performed by executives.

- a. There is no significant association among the executives belonging to different age groups in their perception towards QWL.
- b. There is no significant association among the executives having different work experiences and their perceptions to QWL.
- c. The relationship between perceptions of the executives towards QWL and their work experience with the present organisation is not significant.
- d. There is no significant association between functional area or the job of the executives and their perceptions to different levels of QWL.
- e. There is no significant association between different levels of QWL as) perceived by the executives and the sector to which they belong.
- f. There is no significant association among the executives belonging to different age groups and their levels of performance

Techniques used for data analysis

The following techniques were used for statistical analysis of data.

- i. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance
- ii. Chi-Square Goodness of Fit Test

Analysis of Data

Personal Profiles of the Executives

Several personality factors are believed to constitute to shape one's perception. In particular - age, experience and functional areas are the most basic aspects of a managers' personal profile. Hence these variables are taken up for the study, for their influence on QWL.

Table 1: Age-Wise Classification of the Sample

Ages in years	Frequency	Percentage
Below 35 (Young)	142	35
35 – 40 (Prime)	119	29
41 – 60 (Mature)	151	37
Total	412	100.00

The classification reveals that 35% of the executives belong to the age group of "below 35 years"; 29% of the executives belong to the age group of "35 - 40 years" and in the "41 - 60 age group", there are 37% of executives. It is evident from Table 6.1 that the respondents are almost evenly 'distributed age-wise.

Table 2: Experience-wise classification of the respondents

Experience in years	Total Experience		Experience in the present Organisation	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Below 5	41	9.95	137	33.25
5 – 10	104	25.24	102	24.76
11 – 15	102	24.76	63	15.29
16 & Above	165	40.05	110	26.70
Total	412	100	412	100

It may be seen from the table that only 10% of the executives of the sample have less than 5 years of total experience but 33.25% of the sample have put in not more than 5 years of service with the present organization.

Looking at the other , in all, about 40% of the executives have more than 16 years of experience in total; but only 26.7% of the samples have been working for their present organization for 16 years and above. Campagna, Franco (1990)^[8] are of the view that "experiencing the environment is an active process in which people try to make sense of their environment. In this active process, individuals selectively notice different aspects of the environment, appraise what they see in terms of their own experience, and evaluate what they experience in terms of their perceptions of the environment". In order to group the executives' perceptions of their working environment, their work group and the management policy, the above classification of executives according to their experience is significant. Having grouped the executives according to their age and experience, it is relevant to group the executives according to their functional area.

Table 3: Perceptions towards the Different Dimensions of QWL

Dimensions of QWL	Respondent's Proportion (n = 412)							
	High		Medium		Low		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Work Environment	51	12.38	282	68.45	79	19.18	412	100
Management Policy	52	12.62	243	58.98	117	28.40	412	100

Immediate Work Group	96	23.30	259	62.96	57	13.84	412	100
Overall QWL	55	13.35	303	73.54	54	13.11	412	100

The table indicates the differences in the perceptions of executives in terms of work environment, immediate work group and management policy, which together explain QWL in three dimensions. While analysing these dimensions, according to their perceptions, it indicates that only 51 executives (12.38%) perceive a highly favourable work environment; 52 executives (12.62%) perceive a highly conducive management policy and 96 executives (23.3%) perceive highly supportive (immediate) work group.

Similarly, the medium perceptions depict a moderately favourable work environment for 282 executives (68.45%); moderately favourable management policy for 243 executives (58.98%) and for 259 executives (62.86%) towards immediate work group. 'Low*' perception is computed against 79 executives (19.18%) towards work environment; 117 executives (28.4%) towards management policy and 57 executives (13.84%) towards immediate work group. In all, the dimension viz. management policy indicates a 'low*' perception from more number of executives, while team building characteristics have low perception only from 57 executives*. It indicates that to add more quality in the executives' work life, management policy which is an important component of QWL should be more specific. It is clear that for the majority of the executives the immediate work group relationship is conducive.

At the same time, the overall QWL points out that only 55 executives (13.35%) perceive an overall High QWL; 303 executives (73.54%) perceive Medium level of QWL and the rest 54 executives (13.11%) perceive a Low level of QWL. These rankings viz. High, Medium and Low are assigned according to the scores given by the executives for different dimensions of QWL. For a further understanding of the QWL, the executives are grouped according to the personal factors such as Age, Experience, the Functional area and Sector (public/private) and their overall perceptions towards QWL are examined in next part of Analysis.

QWL Based on age

Individuals enter into an organisation with many expectations and prepare themselves to contribute equally to the achievement of organisational goals. These expectations are seldom compatible. In each work situation, the response of the executive may not be the same. His level of tolerance to 'environmental stress may be high, as he advances in his age, having wider knowledge about the environment in which he is working.

Table 4: QWL Perceptions Vs Age

QWL	AGE IN YEARS						Total
	Below 35		35 – 40		41 – 60		
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
High	16	11.27	21	17.65	18	11.92	55
Medium	104	73.24	83	69.75	116	76.82	303
Low	22	15.49	15	12.60	17	11.26	54
Total	142	100	119	100	151	100	412

Chi-Square value = 3.8272

Table value at 5% significance level = 9.49

There is no significant association among the executives belonging to different age groups in their perception towards QWL.

From the table 4, taking all age groups together, it may be seen that of the 142 executives who are in the age group of below 35 years, 11.27% (16 executives), perceive a High QWL, 73.24% (104 executives) perceive a Medium level of QWL and 15.49% (22 executives) perceive only a Low level of QWL. In the age group of 35-40years, of the 119 executives, 17.65% (21 executives) perceive a High QWL; 69.75% (83 executives) perceive a Medium level of QWL and 12.6% (15 executives) perceive a Low QWL. In the age group of 41-60 years, 11.92% (18 executives) perceive a High QWL; 76.82% (116 executives) perceive a Medium QWL and 11.26% (17 executives) perceive a Low level of QWL. Thus, different levels of perception toward QWL are found in all age group.

QWL based on total experience

In a competitive economy, social mobility was relatively great, if one "delivered the goods" one could get ahead. Today the opportunities for the one individual who can make a fortune all by himself are greatly diminished. He who wants to get ahead has to fit into large organisations and his ability to play the expected role is one of his main assets. Thus, the rational, productive people fall into two categories – one to who work is work and fun is fun; another group to whom work and fun are much the same. An individual had to make numerous adjustments with respect to the work he performs, the group to which he is a member, the treatment he receives from his peers, superiors and subordinates.

Table 5: QWL Perceptions Vs Total Work Experience

QWL	EXPERIENCE IN YEARS								TOTAL
	BELOW 5		5 – 10		11 – 15		ABOVE 16		
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
High	6	14.6	19	18.3	14	13.7	16	9.7	55
Medium	33	80.5	67	64.4	73	71.6	130	78.8	303
Low	2	4.9	18	17.3	15	14.7	19	11.5	54
Total	41	100	104	100	102	100	165	100	412

Chi-Square value = 9.7487

Table value at 5% significance level =12.6

There is no significant association among the executives having different work experiences and their perceptions to QWL.

QWL based on experience with present employer

The perceptions of the executives towards QWL classified according to their work experience with the present employer.

Table 6: QWL Perceptions Vs Experience with Present Employer

QWL	EXPERIENCE IN YEARS								TOTAL
	BELOW 5		5 – 10		11 – 15		ABOVE 16		
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
High	21	15.33	18	17.65	9	14.29	7	6.4	55
Medium	95	69.34	74	72.55	44	69.84	90	81.8	303
Low	21	15.33	10	9.80	10	15.87	13	11.8	54
Total	137	100	102	100	63	100	110	100	412

Chi-Square value = 9.2317

Table value at 5% level of significance = 12.6

There is no significant association between perceptions of the executives towards QWL and their work experience with the present organization.

QWL Based On Sector

If an organisation has to develop itself, it could be done only through its work force, may it be private or public enterprise. Desirable changes, actions and improvements that are workable should be brought about in order to ensure greater effectiveness, not only in terms of productivity, but in terms of QWL. The QWL practices in public and private sector may not be the same. Even if they are the same, the priorities that are given to such QWL practices may differ from one another.

The National Productivity Council, undertook a survey in 1990, of the Quality of Work Life (QWL) practices in the Indian Industry¹. The study was conducted in 47 units comprising 13 public sector undertakings and 34 private sector undertakings. The results indicated that the most preferred practices in the public sector undertakings were,

- ❖ Human resource development through training,
- ❖ Safety and Occupational Hazards,
- ❖ Welfare schemes
- ❖ Participative and consultative mechanism

Table 7: Qwl Perceptions Based On Sector

Qwl	Perceptions Based On Sector				Total
	Private		Public		
	No	%	No	%	
High	40	13.9	15	12.1	55
Medium	213	73.9	90	72.6	303
Low	35	12.2	19	15.3	54
Total	288	100	124	100	412

Chi-Square value = 0.8954

Table value at 5% level of significance = 5.99

There is no significant association between different levels of QWL as perceived by the executives and the sector to which they belong.

It can be seen from Table 6.16 that 288 executives in the sample belong to the private sector. Out of them, 13.9% (40 executives), perceive a High QWL; 73.9% (213 executives) perceive a Medium QWL and the remaining 12.2% (35 executives) perceive a Low QWL. Likewise, taking the 124 executives belonging to the public sector, 12% (16 executives) perceive a High QWL; 72.6% (90 executives) perceive a Medium QWL and 15.3% (19 executives) perceive a Low QWL.

Summary of Findings & Conclusion

The major findings of the study are given below:

1. Three dimensions viz., Work environment, Management practices and immediate work group behavior were taken for measuring the levels of QWL. These three dimensions together indicate a moderate level of QWL for the executive cadre in the selected industrial organizations. All the three dimensions contribute almost equally to QWL. Hence, there seems to be a similarity in the pattern of agreement, among the executives in their perceptions towards the different dimensions contributing to QWL. These inferences are evident from the overall average scores obtained for each of the three dimensions.
2. On an analysis of job category and the level of QWL, it was found that executives who perceived 'Medium' level of QWL were in charge of Finance, Marketing/Sales, Purchase/Stores and R & D/Quality Control. The executives whose functional area being General Administration perceived 'High' level of QWL. But a 'Low' level of QWL was perceived by executives who were in charge of Personnel/Labour welfare. The analysis exhibits that the perception of executives varies when grouped according to their personal profiles.
3. The association between job categories and performance indicated that executives in charge of production and General Administration perceived themselves to be 'High' performers. At the same time, 'Medium' level of performance could be associated With executive whose job categories were Finance, Marketing/Sales, Purchase/Stores and R&D and Quality Control, The executives who were in charge of Personnel/Labour welfare characterized themselves to be 'Low' performers.
4. The executives who perceived high performance exhibited 'High' level of satisfaction in job categories such as Production, Finance and General Administration. Likewise 'Medium' level of satisfaction was perceived by executives who were in charge of Marketing/Sales and Purchase/Stores. However low level Of Satisfaction was the perception of executives whose portfolio being Personnel/Labour welfare.
5. The overall QWL when associated with the quality of work also reiterated the fact that there is significant association between the two. The results exhibited an almost total agreement among most of the executives which was obvious from the rankings they had attributed to the different facets of managerial work.

Conclusion

The study focused on aspects like Work Environment, Management Policy and Immediate Work Group behavior as the major dimensions of Quality of Work Life, and found that it was only moderate and all the dimensions were equally important in the prevailing level of QWL as perceived by a cross section of middle-level executives working in selected industrial organizations of Chennai. There seems to be a need

for increasing organizational performance. This may be achieved only through a high QWL. Efforts to nurture a quality culture therefore are imperative.

Suggestions

- The Ministry of Small Scale Industries, Government of India is running Small Entrepreneurs Promotion and Training Institute at Guindy Industrial Estate. This institute is providing excellent Entrepreneurial Development Programmes. It is suggested that there is a need for conducting EDPs in all the industrial estates either by the Central Government or by the State Government.
- To add more quality in the executives' work life, management policy which is an important component of QWL should be more supportive. It is clear that for the majority of the executives of the immediate work group relationship is conducive.
- Employees of industrial estates are not getting adequate and fair compensation. Incentive schemes, fair overtime policy and reasonable social security measures like pension schemes; group insurance etc. can increase the satisfaction of employees with their compensation and thereby it can increase the level of quality of work life.
- In industrial estates labour participation in management is very poor. Employees' representatives should give proper facilities to participate in operational decision making process.

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