

Employees' Motivation and Valued Rewards as a Key to Effective QWL- from the Perspective of Expectancy Theory

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Abstract

Employees around the world are motivated to work and perform effectively based on the kind of positive rewards they expect to earn as a result of their performance. This paper is an attempt to relate quality of work life with the Expectancy theory proposed by Victor Vroom. The three factors of the theory are associated and viewed from the perspective of various work related components such as working environment, amenities and resources with reference to an educational institution in Oman. The paper supports the idea that employees' efforts propelled by positive behavior and valued goals are instrumental in increasing the QWL.

Key Words: Quality of Work life, expectancy theory, motivation, rewards

1. Introduction

Quality of Work Life (QWL) has gained the attention of people worldwide, particularly in the last two decades and has been an interesting area of study for researchers, academicians, managers and experts who have looked at it as a core indicator for job satisfaction, employee motivation, performance management and enhanced productivity. Numerous studies have reported that QWL is an important factor for employee retention and improving the productivity of the organization. It is indeed true that work – life balance is imperative for an organization to be successful. Employees need to be provided the right kind of work atmosphere and facilities to enhance the effectiveness of the organization. This has made organizations worldwide to look into the finer aspects of developing healthy QWL for the employees.

It is generally believed that it is the organisation's responsibility to take initiatives for improving the QWL for their employees. Several studies have reported that the organization need to provide job security, safe and healthy working conditions, fair

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compensation, career opportunities and welfare facilities for the employees in order to improve the QWL. While this is largely necessary, it also takes initiatives from the employees themselves to enhance the QWL. In this paper the authors have taken efforts to show how employees' efforts propelled by positive behavior and valued goals are instrumental in increasing the QWL. The authors have presented a model showing effectiveness of QWL among staff in an educational institution in Oman by adapting the Victor Vroom's Expectancy theory.

2. Definitions

According to J. Richard and J. Loy, "QWL is the degree to which members of a work organization are able to satisfy important personal needs through their experiences in the organization". Society for Training and Development defined QWL as "a process of work organization which enables its members at all levels to actively participate in shaping the organization's environments, methods and outcomes.

Robbins (1989) defined QWL as "a process by which an organization responds to employee needs by developing mechanisms to allow them to share fully in making the decisions that design their *lives at work*". Furthermore, Guest (Saklani, 2004) has referred to QWL as the measure of the quality of human experience in the organization. Similarly, Skinner and Ivancevich (2008) urged that QWL is associated with adequate and fair compensation, safe & healthy working conditions, opportunities to develop human capacities, opportunities for continuous growth and job security, more flexible work scheduling and job assignment, careful attention to job design and workflow, better union-management cooperation, and less structural supervision and development of effective work teams. From the above definitions, it can be inferred that quality of work life is a concept driven by factors associated with organizational inputs as well as something which is intrinsic in a person; something that relates to a person's attitudes and experiences (Ayesha Tabassum, 2011).

3. Literature Review

Numerous studies have been made by different authors and experts on QWL. Many studies have focused on the components of QWL and the factors adding up to positive quality of work life. To quote few of these studies- Mirvis and Lawler (1984) found in their study that quality of working life was related with satisfaction with wages, hours and working conditions, describing the "essentials of a good quality of work life" as; safe work environment, equitable wages, equal employment opportunities and opportunities for advancement. Quality of working life is a holistic concept, which not only considers work-based factors such as job satisfaction, satisfaction with pay and relationships with work colleagues, but also includes factors that predict life satisfaction and general feelings of well-being (Danna & Griffin, 1999).

Gnanayudam and Dharmasiri (2007) have viewed QWL as the employee's overall satisfaction with work life leading to develop work-life balance. A meta-analysis study concerning nurses and QWL conducted by Knox and Irving (Lewis, 2001) indicated that autonomy is significantly associated with QWL. The feeling of career achievement is reflected in the willingness to spend extra time at job. It was observed that positive QWL acts as a motivation behind willingly working for long hours that was enjoyed by the executives (Cannings & Montmarquette, 1991).

Ellis and Pompili (2002) in their study on nurses identified numerous factors resulting in job dissatisfaction and quality of working life, including: Poor working environments, resident aggression, workload, unable to deliver quality of care expected, balance of work and family, shift work, non-involvement in decision making, professional isolation, non-recognition of work, unhealthy relationships with supervisor/peers, role conflict, absence opportunity to learn new skills. It has also been observed that, work-related stress and balancing work and non-work life domains (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991) affect QWL significantly and should conceptually be considered as determinant of quality of working life. However a general conception is that quality of working life fundamentally relates to well-being of employees but it is differentiated from job satisfaction which solely represents the workplace domain (Lawler, 1982).

Royuela *et al.* (2007), European Commission (EC) proposed ten dimensions for QWL, which are (1) intrinsic job quality, (2) skills, life-long learning and career development, (3) gender equality (4) health and safety at work, (5) flexibility and security, (6) inclusion and access to the labor market, (7) work organization and work-life balance, (8) social dialogue and worker involvement, (9) diversity and non-discrimination, and (10) overall work performance (Tabassum, 2011).

Hend Al Muftah and HananLafi (2011) in their paper titled, "Impact of QWL on employee satisfaction case of oil and gas industry in Qatar" report that the physical, psychological and social factors' centrality has a significant relationship with QWL which indirectly influence employees' satisfaction. It was also indicated that individual's family life correlated significantly with his/her level of QWL.

Chaudhary (2014) observed that there was an increase in level of performance of employees when the more motivational environment was established. He also reported that there was an increase in the self-confidence of employees when the supervision was directed and Facilities provided by the work place like education, training, welfare, wages and bonus time increased the morale of employee.

Ukaejiofo Rex Uzonna (2013) in his study reported that majority of respondents agreed that recognition and authority were the most important of expected non-monetary rewards. When it comes to bringing out the best performance of employees, growth

opportunities and challenges, recognition and non-cash rewards are more effective motivators than money.

Tripathy (2006) is of the view that employee reward covers how people are rewarded in accordance with their value to an organization, which is a both financial and non-financial reward.

Monis H and Sreedhara TN (2011) in their study have reported interesting findings such as the statement "If I do good work, I can count on making more money" has obtained 64.86 per cent in the Indian MNCs and 64.79 per cent in foreign MNCs. Similarly the statement "If I do good work, I can count on being promoted" has secured 71.77 percent in the Indian MNCs and 72.02 percent in the foreign MNCs

Taylor (1979) more pragmatically identified the essential components of quality of working life as basic extrinsic job factors of wages, hours and working conditions, and the intrinsic job notions of the nature of the work itself. He suggested that a number of other aspects could be added, including: individual power, employee participation in the management, fairness and equity, social support, use of one's present skills, self-development, a meaningful future at work, social relevance of the work or product, effect on extra work activities. Taylor suggests that relevant quality of working life concepts may vary according to organisation and employee group.

To sum up, it stands to reason that with the diversified workforce, different people are motivated differently and the terms 'happy' employee, 'motivated' employee, 'satisfied' employee are more figurative than a proven fact. Job satisfaction, motivation, quality of work life etc. are largely dependent on the individual himself than on organizational or environmental factors. It is the individual employee himself / herself who has to be motivated to work towards attaining a healthy QWL.

An employee's performance is tied to the rewards expected as an outcome of doing the work and the value placed on the rewards. Therefore, a better performer and an achiever will enjoy a healthy QWL.

4. Objectives

- To show the link between personal motivation and perceived rewards for deriving QWL
- To present the factors that lead to quality of work life among employees in an educational institution from the perspective of expectancy theory.

5. Methodology

This is a descriptive study based on secondary data. The paper looks into the factors that lead to quality of work life among staff members in an engineering college in Oman. The paper is based on the assumption that personal motivation is imperative for improved efforts and better performance which will lead to expected perceived rewards. Secondary data such as reports, feedback from staff, survey results from quality office and e-mails have been taken as inputs for the study.

6. Application of Expectancy Theory

The three components of Victor Vroom's expectancy theory are Expectancy, Instrumentality and Valence. Expectancy refers to the probability perceived by the individual that exerting a given amount of effort will lead to performance (Robbins, 2003). It is the belief that one's effort will affect performance (Greenberg, 2005). Instrumentality refers to the belief that one's performance will be rewarded. Valence refers to the perceived value of the expected rewards (Greenberg, 2005).

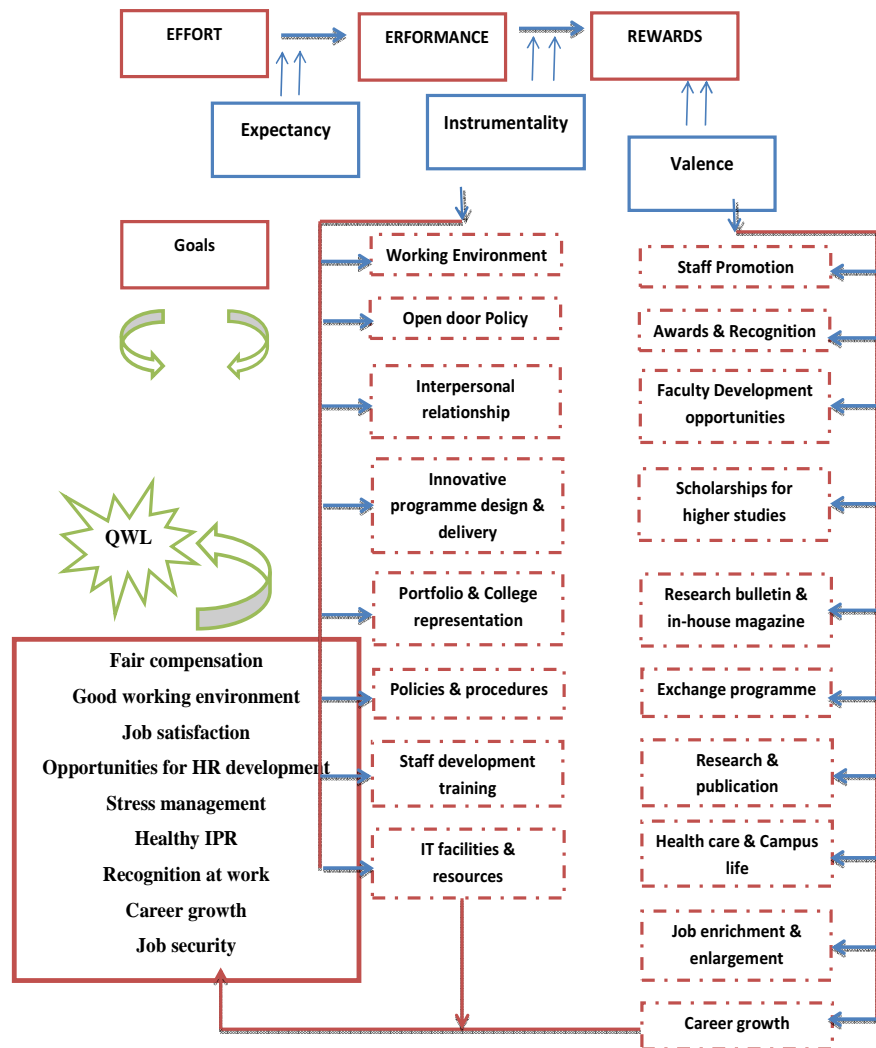
The following model (Figure- 1) explains how quality of work life is attained among the staff in the institution in light of the expectant theory.

The Expectancy theory suggests that people put in their efforts on the perception that their efforts will lead to performance and that effective performance will result in obtaining positive rewards. Taking this as a basis, figure1 depicts that efforts lead to performance which in turn is believed to be rewarded and that these rewards are valued by the employees. The authors believe and suggest that efforts are largely based on goals. The goals could be both individual goals as well as organizational goals. Both these goals will have to be balanced and pursued upon so that an individual is able to put in the required efforts. These efforts lead to performance by the individuals.

In the above figure, the factors that enable performance by the individuals (staff members) to be effective at work place are depicted under performance. That is, these factors are instrumental for effective performance by the employees who perceive that their performance will be rewarded. These factors include working environment – in terms of office atmosphere, availability of resources, smart classrooms, communication strategies, protocol and ergonomics, open door policy – the staff have easy access to heads of the respective departments to discuss issues and share opinions; problems are heard and solutions are given quickly, interpersonal relationship – strong bond is promoted among staff through working groups, team work in research and departmental activities, common lunch and celebrations, innovative programme design & delivery – the institution is constantly committed to improving the teaching and learning strategies, introducing new initiatives in teaching methods, introducing new programmes and modules, revamping existing modules and taking up challenges in academic areas,

portfolio & college representation – staff members are encouraged to contribute to college wide activities through their representation in various committees, departmental boards & specialized centers, individual portfolio and performance evaluation systems, involvement in funded projects, extra-curricular activities and events of the college, policies & procedures – the educational institution has clear and transparent systems and policies, standardized procedures by the central quality office, online forms and formats and online processing systems that make it easier for the staff, regular staff development

Figure – 1 Application of expectancy theory to QWL



training and workshops are organized within and outside the campus by both in-house and external experts that are aimed at providing the best opportunities for staff development, IT facilities & resources – staff have unlimited access to internet facilities, latest software, library resources and learning aids.

Since the above factors are conducive for effective performance, it is believed that this performance leads to positive rewards (Instrumentality), which further results in placing high value on the rewards (Valence). The institution under discussion provides various reward mechanisms for its employees in recognition of their performance. It is believed that the rewards provided by the institution propel individuals to deliver effective performance. These rewards include staff promotion – there is a clear system for promotion which is transparent and well utilized by the staff, awards & recognition – the college has awards such as the best researcher award, best teacher award and recognition of staff with long years of experience in the institution, faculty development opportunities – members of staff are encouraged to pursue higher studies through extending tie-up with other institutions & supervisory support and are encouraged to take up funding projects, scholarship for higher studies – the college provides monetary support and scholarships for both nationals and expatriates to take up further studies, research bulletin & in-house magazine – staff members are motivated to contribute to in-house magazine and their achievements/ research endeavours are published in the research bulletin which boosts the profile of the staff., exchange programme – staff members are sent to other countries to have an exposure on latest state-of-art and to learn in their respective fields. They are also encouraged to share and apply the rich experiences gained outside in the college, research & publication – the college has research centre and the staff are encouraged to take up research and laboratory experiments in varied fields of interest; they are also encouraged to publish papers in the journal published by the college, health care & campus life – staff members have access to health care facilities and other campus facilities like canteen, playground, relaxation room, learning resource centre, etc., job enrichment & enlargement – The staff are given ample opportunities to exhibit their abilities and aptitudes through involving them in academic support activities. They are encouraged to extend their services to community programmes, corporate social responsibility programmes and other college-wide activities, career growth – employees are given freedom to plan their career and the management supports them through extending funds, provision of resources and leave. Employees work towards better performance, since they know that the institution will reward the best performers and further, the employees' performance is boosted based on their perceived value placed on the rewards.

All the rewards mentioned above enable the employees to enjoy job satisfaction, job security, fair compensation and good working environment, opportunities for continued HR development, stress management, healthy interpersonal relationship, career growth and recognition at work. These things essentially lead to increased quality of work life.

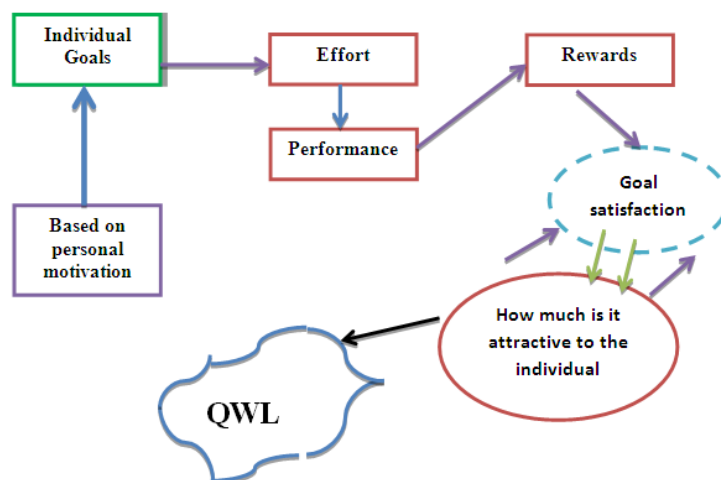
Hence, it is believed that in the work place under study, the employees enjoy quality of work life since their performance are rewarded, which are essentially valued rewards. This is backed by positive feedback from employees, long and continuous service in the institution and prevalent healthy work culture. Therefore, the relationship between performance and reward factors & QWL is established.

It can be rightly stated that the employees are able to enjoy healthy quality of work life in the institution. To refer to the expectancy theory, it essentially requires that an employee has goals which driven by efforts lead to effective performance, which ultimately results in rewards.

7. Conclusion

The authors believe that an individual should have personal motivation to work. This motivation leads the person to have specific goals to be accomplished. It is imperative that a person is highly motivated enough to set goals to be accomplished. If goals are to be attained, the person should put in committed efforts with the perception that these efforts will lead to effectual performance. Performance then leads to rewards as expected by the individual. Attainment of the rewards leads to goal satisfaction by the employee. This is however linked to the value placed by the individual on the rewards. A person will be satisfied with the rewards to the extent that they are attractive and valued by him/her. Enjoyment the expected and valued reward ultimately leads to good quality of work life (Figure - 2).

Figure - 2 QWL and value of rewards chain



The authors would like to stress the fact that QWL is a resultant of a motivated employee having specific goals, which is put into action for getting the benefits.

Therefore $QWL = M \times G \times E \times P \times R$

Where M is *motivation*, G is *goals*, E is *expectancy*, P is *performance* and R is *rewards*.

Quality of work life can be achieved only if the employee is motivated to set goals that are to be accomplished. He / she must further have the expectancy that the efforts put in for achieving the goals lead to effective performance, and this perceived performance leads to positive rewards. It therefore rests with the employee to derive maximum quality of work life through putting in commendable efforts and setting perceived valued rewards.

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