

Quality of Work-life in Changing Business Dynamism- A Study on Perceptual Difference in Public and Private Sector

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Key Words:

1. Quality of Work Life
2. Employee's Perception

Abstract

It's pertinent to discuss issues pertaining to Quality of Work Life (QWL) in organisations having implications not only professionally but also socially. The present effort propped up with a research intends to highlight employees' perception vis-à-vis factors constituting and influencing QWL and job satisfaction level in both public and private sector organisations. Research highlights areas that seek attention like work-culture, facilities like phone and food, compensation, work-load & timings, stress, etc. influencing employees' personal, professional and social life. Study tracks the way QWL influences the behavior (also performance) and employee's likelihood to change their sector, if given a choice in this dynamic scenario.

Introduction:

'Quality of Working Life' is that part of overall quality of life that is influenced by work. It's more than job satisfaction or work happiness, but the widest context in which an employee would evaluate their work life- professionally, personally and also socially. Quality of working life has always been important to employees, as expressed by studies done in the area. Today's organisations need to be more flexible so that they are equipped to develop their workforce- attract, recruit, motivate; and benefit from their commitment.

Organisations are required to adopt a strategy to improve the employees 'quality of work life' (QWL) to satisfy both the organisational objectives and employee needs, both personal and social. The Quality of Work life deals with the implementation of the programs and practices- like work-life balance, culture and climate, health promotion and wellness, reward and recognition, etc. that encourage a positive and productive work experience.

QWL incorporates a hierarchy of perspectives that include various factors, work-based factors or factors that affect the life of a person on whole, gives an employee a feeling of overall satisfaction and well being. This sense of well-being translates workforce which is committed and performance oriented.

The sustained vitality and profitability of any company is clearly linked to the satisfaction of its workforce. Employee satisfaction and the quality of work life directly affect a company's ability to properly serve its customers, and which when ignored can lead to increased turnover, declining productivity, and a limited ability to attract and retain qualified talents in a dynamic organisation.

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Insights: Studies in the Area

"Dissatisfaction with working life is a problem, which affects almost all workers at one time or another, regardless of position or status. The frustration, boredom, and anger common to employees, disenchanted with their work life, can be costly to both individual and organisation. Many managers seek to reduce job dissatisfaction at all organisational levels, including their own. This is a complex problem, however, because it is difficult to isolate and identify all of the attributes, which affect the quality of working life"- Richard E. Walton.

Quality of work-life in an organisation impinges the perception of an employee towards an organisation or the employer. This perception affects the degree of loyalty, commitment, and further translates into better and consistent performance.

A study (Bearfield, 2003) examined the quality of working life, and distinguished between causes of dissatisfaction in professionals, intermediate clerical, sales and service workers, indicating that different QWL concerns have to be addressed for different groups.

Quality of work-life plays an important role in affecting the in the satisfaction of employees at workplace. It influences personal, professional and social well-being of a person.

Quality of work life can also be explained as the degree to which an employee feels the job environment as favorable or unfavorable for them to work. Some factors identified as to the ones comprising the quality of work life as an infinite but various other concerns and therefore the quality of life entails all aspects of life and living.

According to the study on the industrial workers of India, (Rahman, 1984) found in the study that respondents from low educational background and lower income had better perception of QWL than those having higher education and higher income.

Some of the authors have emphasised Quality of working life in the

workplace aspects, others have identified the importance of personality factors, and psychological factors affecting quality of work life. Researchers have tried to trace the important factors that affect the quality of working life. Proposed (Walton R.E., 1975) eight major conceptual categories relating to QWL as 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 organisation, 6. constitutionalism in the work organisation, 7. work and total life space and 8. social relevance of work life.

Motivational need of an individual at a time-period also influences employee's take on the quality of life at the work place. Maslow's need-hierarchy factors like- health & safety, economic security, social needs, esteem, and self- actualization needs, are also the factors constituting QWL in an organisation, which need to be taken care of.

Satisfaction at the work place constructively affects the life of a person on whole. Studies showed significant associations among variables of work environment, job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be as close as it is likely to have got a close measure of job Benefits (Wooden & Warren, 2003). A positive viewpoint of employee regarding QWL can be said to have an impact on the satisfaction of an employee (Herzberg et al., 1959) in the work The Motivation to Work, who also identified the Job Content & Job Context factors having a bearing on the quality of work-life.

Another differing opinion (Lawler, E., 1982) regarding the relationship between the factors influencing job satisfaction and quality of working life is conceptually similar to well-being of employees.

Quality of working life is not a stand-alone phenomenon. There are various factors that constitute QWL. Scholars have offered a variety of definitions and suggestions of what constitutes QWL as mentioned in their studies. The key factors in quality of working life according to scholars who have worked in the area are: job requirements, work environment, supervisory behavior, and ancillary programs organisational commitment (Sirgy et al., 2001); social skills (Segrin & Taylor, 2007); wages, equitable wages, hours and working conditions, safe work environment, equal employment and advancement opportunities (Mirvis & Lawler, 1984); factors that reflect life satisfaction and general feelings of well-being (Danna & Griffin, 1999); work setting, occupation, work-stress and the degree of morale (Pelsma et al., 1989); work-stress, work and non-work aspects (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991) have a bearing on Quality of working Life.

Satisfaction of these key needs as mentioned above would help improve the perception regarding quality of working life. QWL is a comprehensive construct that includes an individual's job related well-being and the extent to which work experiences are rewarding, fulfilling and devoid of stress and other negative personal consequences.

The researches on the topic help to understand the need importance of catering to the QWL issues at workplace. Studies

have identified various constituting factors of QWL in an organisation and its impact i.e. committed consistent performers and productive employees.

About the Study:

In today's context it becomes important to recognise the factors that constitute and influence the QWL in an organisation, and employees' perception about it. The study is an attempt to assess viewpoint of employees with respect to QWL at the work-place especially in current context enfold by recession. The underline aim is to identify difference in the QWL, if any, between public and private sector and figure opportunities to identify and improve their quality of work life which is very much crucial in today's scenario governed by uncertainty, recession, and its consequential stress and outcome.

It must be remembered that the study is intended to highlight some emerging issues that need deliberation to improve and strengthen the QWL initiatives in the organisations.

A measure was designed to explain the extent to which factors of QWL parallel the needs of an employee. Some of the parameters of QWL were drawn. As learned from the literature above and after discussing with the subject matter experts, set of dimensions of QWL were identified like – work environment, health and safety and economic needs, medical and insurance, accommodations, food facility, travel benefits, working culture, collegial work environment, knowledge needs, growth and advancement opportunities, creativity at work, etc. The study attempts to realise how well QWL influences the behavior i.e. attitude, performance of an employee and employees' satisfaction level. Along with the satisfaction level, we can also trace their stance for the sector for which employees are working and the likelihood to change their sector if given a choice highlighting the changing organisational dynamics (current context) which is going to affect their personal, social and professional well-being.

Methodology:

In the context of today's scenario as described above objectives of the study were identified. The study attempts

1. To identify factors (mentioned above) both in public sector and private sector, affecting the level of job satisfaction in the organisations.
2. To find, given a choice would the employees like to change their present sector of work.
3. To understand whether the sector, public or private, of the respondents plays role in influencing the perception regarding quality of work life and their satisfaction level regarding the same.
4. To identify the difference, if any, between the benefits provided or made available to the employees belonging to public and private sector.
5. To decipher the difference, if any, between of employees' job satisfaction level in public and private sector.

Subsequently, three hypotheses were framed.

To test the hypothesis a questionnaire was administered on the

respondents which were working employees the area of study was Jasola Vihar, Sarita Vihar, Okhla Industrial area and the nearby areas like Mathura Road (areas of South Delhi Region) of New Delhi, India. Respondents were randomly chosen. Sample size was 200 (100 in both public and private sector), just adequate to explore and realise the current state of affairs with respect to the QWL in the areas mentioned. Since this project covers both the sectors – private and public, a deliberate attempt was made to cover various employees in different organisations as far as possible not just one.

The primary data was collected through questionnaire and personal interview (wherever needed). Various factors incorporated in the questionnaire affecting QWL were derived from the comprehensive literature review. A four-point scale is used to avoid the distortion caused from the middle option. Respondents were requested to rate their level of satisfaction with the statement in the questionnaire:

1. Highly Dissatisfied
2. Dissatisfied
3. Satisfied
4. Highly Satisfied

Hypotheses:

Null hypotheses framed were:

1. The sector, public or private of the respondents plays no role in influencing the perception regarding quality of work life and their satisfaction level regarding the same.
2. There is no difference in the benefits provided or made available to the employees belonging to public and private sector.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of job satisfaction between public and private sector employees.

Null hypotheses were formulated and Chi-square test was applied to test the hypotheses and analyse the data. Mean along with the Standard Deviation was also calculated for all the responses, so as to identify the variation from the mean of the responses of public sector and private sector employees respectively.

Limitation: Apart from the constraint of time, money and effort, a major limitation was that some of the employees did not understand English, were hesitant to answer the questions and hence were assisted in filling the questionnaires in Hindi language. Small sample size of 200 employees may not be a true

representative of the south Delhi region or New Delhi population. As a future research initiative, this limitation can be uncomplicated.

Data Analysis:

Exhibit 1 gives an idea about the gender-wise classification of the sample population. Exhibit 2 and 3 help us to see a comparative picture about the total work experience (TWEx) of the workforce and the number of years respondents are associated with their current position in the firm we can deduce that public sector respondents don't frequently change their jobs; the factor of job security could be the possible reason.

There is frequent job hopping tendency which can be seen in case of private sector employees. Employees in public sector can be found holding their current position since many years, than in case of private sector (Exhibit 4). But, this situation in public and private sector cannot be said to be completely due to good or bad quality of work-life but QWL can definitely be one of the strong factor.

Hypothesis 1: The null hypothesis - The sector, public or private of the respondents plays no role in influencing the perception regarding quality of work life and their satisfaction level regarding the same Chi-square analysis performed on the data to trace whether there is any significant difference between the responses of the respondents belonging to different sector- public and private.

The significant difference was traced at both 1% and 5 %level of significance.

Exhibit 5 depicts that employees from the two sectors have different opinion towards the above mentioned factors of quality of work-life. This helps us to comprehend the existence of significant difference in the Quality of work-life, and the approach of public and private sectors towards the quality of work-life.

Thus, we reject the null hypotheses in case of the above mentioned parameters (of quality of work-life), and accept the alternate hypothesis that perception regarding quality of work life and their satisfaction level regarding the same differs with the sectors- public or private to which respondents belong to.

Hypothesis 2: The null hypothesis - There is no difference in the benefits provided or made available to the employees belonging to public a private sector.

The chi-square analysis shown in exhibit 6 provides us an insight about the benefits that employees from public and private sector are provided with and therefore their opinion about the same.

The null hypothesis is rejected in this case except for in the case of Medical benefits (both at 1 and 5 percent level of significance) and Insurance (at 1 percent level of significance). It is clear from the exhibit 6 above that the benefits as mentioned do differ in the case of the two sectors, apart from in the case of benefits like Medical, Insurance and to some extent Accommodation benefits (as chi-square value is close to the Exhibit value at 1 % significance level). Rest of the other factors significantly differs in the two sectors.

Hypothesis 3: The null hypothesis- There is no significant difference in the level of job satisfaction between public and private sector employees.

Exhibit 1: Demographic Details

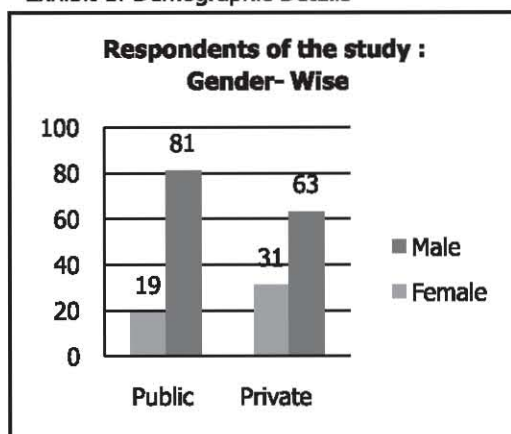


Exhibit 2: Years of Experience (Public Sector)

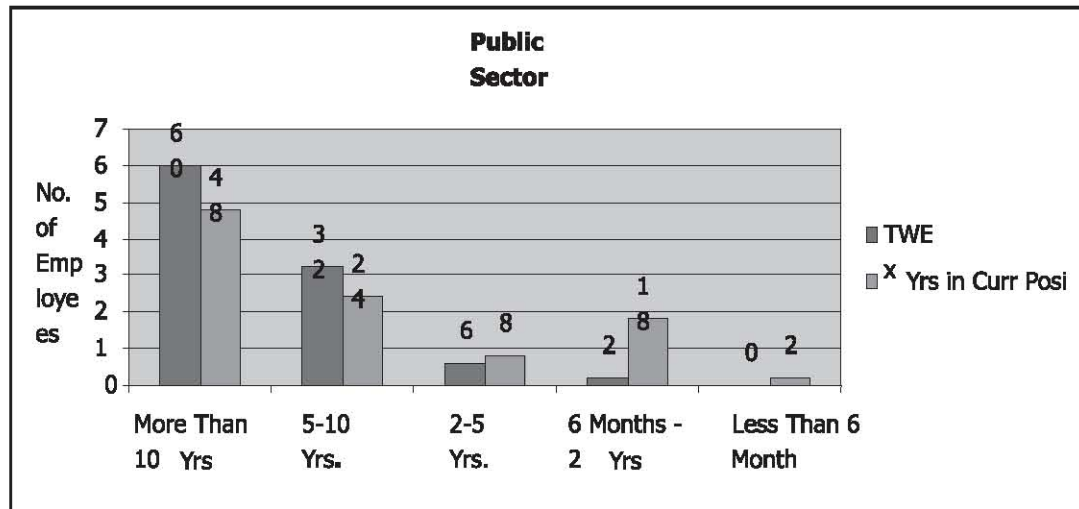


Exhibit 3: Years of Experience (Private Sector)

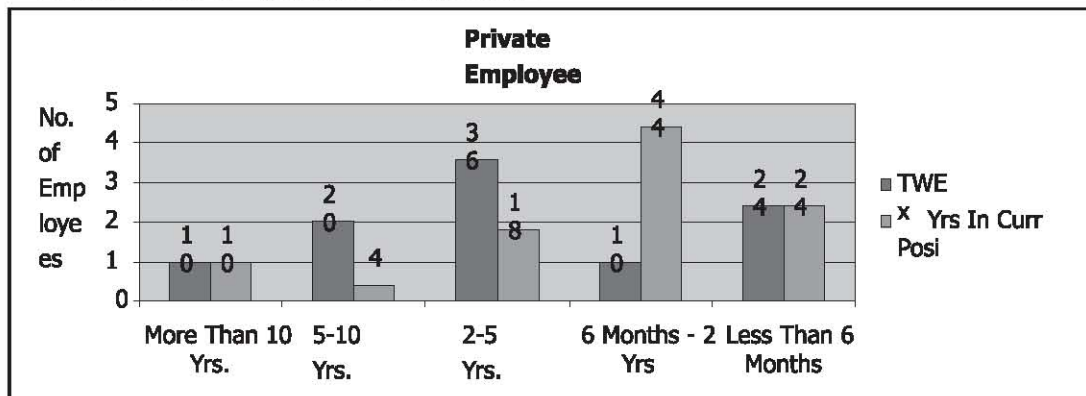


Exhibit 4: Job Hopping Tendency

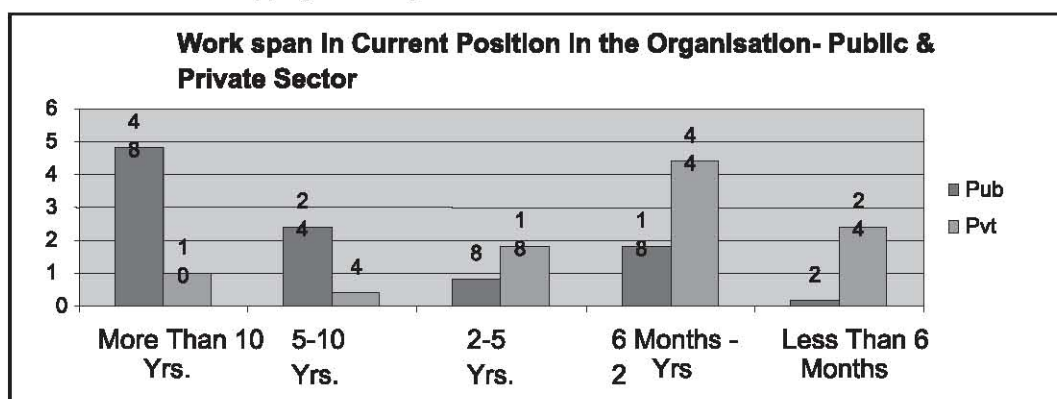


Exhibit 7 shows the chi-square analysis with respect to the difference if there any between the employees' level of job satisfaction in public and private sector

The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted, thus there is difference in the level of satisfaction among the employees of public and private sector employees.

Data compiled in the Exhibit 8 caters to one of the objectives identified (feeling to change their present sector ,if given a choice) help to understand mainly the level of satisfaction in

Exhibit 5: Chi - Square Analysis (Hypothesis 1)

S. No.	Statement	Df.	chi-square at 1 % level of Significance		
			1- High Dissatisfied 2- Dissatisfied 3- Satisfied 4- Highly Satisfied		
				At 1% (11.34) level of Sig.	At 5% (7.81) level of Sig.
1	Office timings	3	102.8	S	S
2	Work culture	3	37.7	S	S
3	General atmosphere	3	30.0	S	S
4	Physical conditions	3	135.7	S	S
5	Relationship with Colleagues	3	36.9	S	S
6	Relationship with Superiors	3	34.1	S	S
7	Training provided	3	22.7	S	S
8	Pay- package	3	37.7	S	S
9	Leave policy	3	79.2	S	S
10	Opportunities of personal growth & advancement	3	79.6	S	S
11	Not much work-load & stress	3	90.1	S	S

Df- Degree of Freedom; S- significant

Exhibit 6: Chi - Square Analysis (Hypothesis 2)

S. No.	Statement	Df.	chi-square at 1 % level of Significance		
			1- High Dissatisfied 2- Dissatisfied 3- Satisfied 4- Highly Satisfied		
				At 1% (11.34) level of Sig.	At 5% (7.81) level of Sig.
	Other Benefits				
1	Conveyance	3	62.8	S	S
2	Medical	3	1.6	NS	NS
3	Insurance	3	9.5	NS	S
4	Accommodation	3	11.4	S	S
5	Phone bills	3	83.9	S	S
6	Food facility	3	94.8	S	S
7	Travel benefits	3	48.8	S	S

Df- Degree of Freedom; S- significant; NS- Not significant

the organisations (public or private), and the factors related to quality of work-life. The number of respondents with respect to different factors must be taken in consideration with the feelings of the respondents regarding their intentions to change their current jobs. We can see that irrespective of the flexibility at the work-place and that quite reasonable numbers of respondents are satisfied with the jobs in private sector, but 94 percent feel to change their present jobs. Not the case with of public sector respondents, where employees are quite high on the job satisfaction and ease of work-life balance. Exhibit 9 further strengthens the significant difference between the job satisfaction level amongst public and private sector employees.

Mean & Standard Deviation:

The calculation of mean and standard deviation (Exhibit 9) help us to figure out how unanimous the responses are.

Discussion & Conclusion:

The study furnishes findings showing significant associations among variables of work environment, and job satisfaction.

The study supports that the issues related to quality of work life do affect the level of job satisfaction at the work place. In conformity with many studies and views by Wooden & Warren (2003), Sirgy et al. (2001), Danna & Griffin (1999), Pelsma et al, (1989), Loscocco & Roschelle, (1991), Mirvis & Lawler (1984) the present study

shows that factors like- wages, hours and working conditions, safe work environment, advancement opportunities, work setting, work-stress affect QWL and also have a bearing on the satisfaction and dissatisfaction level of the workforce. Paper supports the fact that psychological growth needs important for Quality of working life emphasised by Hackman & Oldham (1975).

From the paper we can understand that the public sector employees are relatively more satisfied with their working conditions, their job, relations with the peers, etc. and thus find it easy to balance their work-life than the private sector employees, and the same in the case of job satisfaction level which is more in public sector employees than private sector.

The study reveals that the employees who can manage their work life easily are satisfied at their workplace as in the case of public sector employees. But not the case with private sector employees who find it hard to manage their work-life (which can be seen in their lower level of satisfaction), translated into their intention or desire to leave their present (private) job.

The reason of the above situation can be attributed to the scenario of uncertainty both in the external and internal environment of the organisations affecting the perception of their workplace in employees especially in private sector employees. A feeling of insecurity, stress at workplace is quiet evident at private sector employees.

Exhibit 7: Chi - Square Analysis (Hypothesis 3)

S. No.	Statement	Df.	chi-square at 1 % level of Significance		
	1- High Dissatisfied 2- Dissatisfied 3- Satisfied 4- Highly Satisfied				
				At 1% (11.34) level of Sig.	At 5% (7.81) level of Sig.
	Satisfaction with job	3	120.5	S	S

Df- Degree of Freedom; S- significant; NS- Not significant

Exhibit 8: Factors of Quality Work Life (Public & Private)

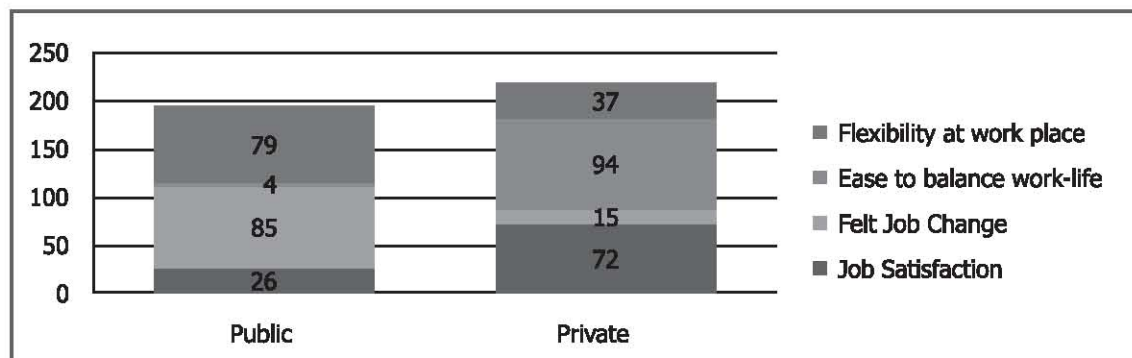


Exhibit 9: Mean and Standard Deviation

S No.	Statement	Public Mean	Private StdDev	Mean	Std Dev
1	Office timings	2.92	0.39	1.76	0.97
2	Work culture	2.08	0.74	2.64	0.87
3	General atmosphere	2.94	0.37	3.04	0.72
4	Physical conditions	2.18	0.68	3.78	0.58
5	Relationship with Colleagues	2.92	0.63	2.60	0.72
6	Relationship with Superiors	2.8	0.63	2.58	0.98
7	Training provided	2.54	1.15	3.02	0.79
8	Pay- package	1.78	0.92	2.22	0.70
9	Leave policy	3.6	0.80	1.98	1.17
10	Opportunities of personal growth & advancement	2.12	0.71	2.72	0.87
11	Not much work-load & stress	3.72	0.65	2.54	0.81
	Other Benefits				
12	Conveyance	2.45	0.65	3.00	0.66
13	Medical	3	0.66	3.10	0.64
14	Insurance	3.6	0.77	3.60	0.94
15	Accommodation	3.46	0.77	3.64	0.79
16	Phone bills	2.18	0.68	2.96	0.77
17	Food facility	2.12	0.82	3.00	0.77
18	Travel benefits	3.6	0.75	2.54	1.15
19	Satisfaction with job	3.62	0.69	2.22	0.58

The analysis done directs us to the findings that employees, here the respondents of public and private sector are having a different point of view regarding their organisations as far as the quality of work-life and level of job satisfaction is concerned. Also, the exhibits 9 help us decipher various aspects of QWL at the workplace, and compare the same between two different sectors. The underline meaning is that QWL scenario in public and private sector is not the same.

The finding gains more relevance in the era of competition that irrespective of the sector, demands cutting edge over the competitors where QWL plays a very important. We can infer from the chi-square analysis that there is significant difference between the perception of employees about the QWL in their respective sectors- public and private. Chi-square along with the mean score and standard deviation for each question, help us understand that public sector employees are very much satisfied unanimously with the Office Timings, Work Culture, Relationship with Colleagues, Relationship with Superiors, Opportunities of Personal Growth & Advancement.

Some areas where private sector's satisfaction level scores more

over the public sector are Work-culture, General Atmosphere Physical Conditions, Training Provided, Pay- package, Opportunities of Personal Growth & Advancement. For a bigger picture this inference can be seen in the context of insecure and stressed employees in private sector as discussed above regarding private sector work-life balance and intentions to change the sector.

Though looking at the perspectives about training in public sector, employees do not seem to be unanimous. This gives a practical implication as far as the efforts are required to look into the respective areas of improvement in their respective sectors.

The mean values give us an idea about the satisfaction level towards the factors under consideration. The mean value closer to 2 or less indicate the dissatisfaction and value closer to 3 or more, satisfaction for that concern in question. Leave policies, timings of office are not the areas public sector employees are that contented with.

Employees in public sector feel less stress and less load of work than private sector. Private sector scores significantly more than

public regarding some other benefits and facilities like phone and food. Thus, are some the issues that public sector need to be concerned about to improve QWL.

The differences in the level of job satisfaction level if we relate and compare between the two sectors, give an insight about how the elements of QWL would influence the degree of satisfaction of employees in the organisations.

The above made analysis also give scope to comprehend various aspects of QWL or the areas where both public and private sector can work upon so as to cater to these parameters to improve QWL- a doable suggestion for professional, personal and social well-being of employees.

The employees in public sector find themselves quiet comfortable and at ease despite of some of the factors with which they seem to be dissatisfied with, but find QWL quiet helpful. Private sector employees hold opposing views to that of public sector wherein (public) the flexibility, ease to balance work-life, less work-load and reduced stress at the work influence and increase their satisfaction and commitment with the organisation

To acquire and maintain the workforce is of strategic importance to the organisations especially in the prevailing scenario whether public or private sector and QWL play a very important role in the same. Understandings from the study help to draw attention to the factors of QWL that affect the strategies to attract, maintain and retain talent necessary attributed gain competitive edge through satisfied and performing workforce.

Practical Implication:

The findings of the study can help the practitioners in the area of HRM and General Management in public and private sector and as a whole.

Efforts in the direction of QWL cannot be ignored as it does play a very important role in improving the job satisfaction level of the employees and in improving the performance of the human resources in the organisation and thus to gain leverage. Especially in the case of satisfaction with job, public sector scores more over the private sector and the feelings of job change in case of public sector are very less.

We can deduce from the study that public sector employees rated the following factors low like- Work Culture, General Atmosphere, Physical Conditions, Training Provided, Pay- Package, Opportunities of Personal Growth & Advancement, and Food Facility. In the case of private sector, employees seem to be relatively more dissatisfied with the factors- Opportunities of personal growth & advancement, compensation, Office timings, work-load & stress, Relationship with Colleagues, Leave policy, and are the areas where managers in each sector must look into to harvest satisfied and performing human resources and gain leverage in today's scenario.

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