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Association between the Quality of Life and Work Life Performance in the personnel of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences

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Introduction: **One of the most important goals of organizations and employees is to improve the quality of work life (QWL) in employees. Accentuating on QWL of staff is the basis for the improvement of performance. Therefore, such entities as medical science organizations and the affiliated personnel as the founders of public mental health should primarily have this mental priority. This research aims to evaluate QWL and its relationship with employee performance.** ***Methods:*** **This research was a descriptive survey carried out on 171 employees at Jahrom University of Medical Sciences in 2017. Data were collected using two questionnaires of Walton QWL and staff performance assessment.** ***Results:*** **The numbers of male and female participants in this research were 70 (41.7%) and 58.3%, respectively. The employees' QWL averaged 76.64 ± 16.56. The results also showed positive significant associations between the components of QWL (fair) and adequate compensation, safe and healthy work conditions, opportunity for continued growth and security, constitutionalism in the work organization, social relevance of work life, total life space, social integration in the work organization, development of human capabilities) and employee performance (P <0.05).** ***Conclusion:*** **According to the relationship between QWL components and employee performance, the organization can improve the performance of employees by promoting these components**.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources as the most valuable source for organizations determine organizational decisions and ultimately solve problems of the organization (1). In the complex today's world, one's professional and private life are so intertwined that professional life has dominated private life leading to the use of a novel term. This term is an index that can provide manager with valuable and constructive information about "QWL" as the main issues of employees, which ultimately results in an increase in employee efficiency (2).

Given that human resources are the most important and main element of each organization and that the success of any organization in achieving its goals depends on human resources, it is necessary to pay attention to the physical and psychological needs of employees to realize this goal necessitating increasing endeavor towards provision and care about the resources (3). QWL is intellectually defined as employees' perception and attitude towards QWL, which has a discrete and distinct concept depending on the culture and attitudes of employees in different countries (4). The objective definition of QWL is a series of activities and actions carried out in real work conditions in an organization to improve the quality of work (2). In fact, QWL is a comprehensive plan that encompasses a variety of needs and is not limited to changing work content, harmonizing rules and standards of work, organizational improvement, and job enrichment. While QWL considers all of the above factors, it further humanizes work and its environment aiming at creating interest and motivation in employees by addressing their needs, paving the ground for advancement and improvement of individuals' merit, respecting their personality, attracting participation and collaboration, and caring about physical and psychological factors in the workplace (1). Consequently, low quality of life (QOL) leads to demoralization, low sense of cooperation and accountability, increased physical pain, anxiety, depression and, ultimately, low performance, which in turn can affect one's QWL. A study on 500 firms showed that those with high QWLs could achieve a better profitability and higher growth compared to other ones. The results further showed a positive relationship between QWL and job performance (6).

Performance refers to the degree to which tasks are implemented to complete an employee's occupation and shows how the employee meets job requirements. Job performance and burnout may be reduced by assessment and improvement of QWL (7, 8). Studies show that employees who are satisfied with QWL can not only improve their performance, but also reduce absenteeism, workplace accidents, and work turnover, which increase satisfaction with job and other aspects of their lives (9-13). Satisfied employees work more interestedly and are more committed to the organization and its productivity (14, 15).

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a cross-sectional study conducted on 171 employees at Jahrom University of Medical Sciences in 2016. A sample size of 171 subjects was estimated using the formula with $\alpha = 0.05$, $R = 0.24$, and power = 90% (16). This project was approved by Jahrom University of Medical Sciences with the ethics code number IR.JUMS.REC.1396.108. The participants were sampled by easy method with observing all ethical issues, obtaining oral consent, and assuring them of information confidentiality. In this research, data were collected by a questionnaire consisting of three questionnaires, namely demographic characteristics of the subjects (age, education, occupation, etc.), QWL questionnaire, and staff performance questionnaire.

Walton's QWL questionnaire with 32 items was developed based on Walton's components (Walton, 1937) and used by many researchers. The components of this questionnaire include: adequate and fair compensation (five Q), safe and healthy working conditions (three Q), opportunity for continued growth and security (three Q), constitutionalism in the work organization (six Q), social relevance of work life (three Q), total life space (five Q), social integration in the work organization (four Q), and development of human capabilities (three Q). Prepared by Need space is scored based on the Likert scale from very low (1 point) to very high (5 points) with minimum and maximum scores of 32 and 160, respectively. Low, moderate, and high QWLs are scored 32-64, 64-96, and > 96, respectively. Validity of the questionnaire was evaluated to be good based on the comments of the supervisor and advisor. Walton reported a reliability coefficient of 0.88 for the questionnaire (Virem, 2001). Also, a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was presented by Rahimi (2006).

Employee performance evaluation questionnaire was prepared by Syed Mohammad Moghimi and Majid Ramezan (2011) with the aim of evaluating staff performance in an organization. To fill in this questionnaire, the option that best describes an opinion is checked after reading each sentence with respect to the scale. This questionnaire includes demographic variables and demographic characteristics (gender, educational level, age, marital status, employment status).It also contains the domains of reliability (five Q), attitude (four Q), work quality (five Q), initiative (three Q), judgment (two Q) cooperation (four Q),work quantity (two Q), security (three Q), learning (two Q), personal development personality (two Q), and leadership (seven Q) (18).

Statistical analysis

After collection, data were analyzed by SPSS 16. The frequency and distribution of variables as well as mean values of all domains with sub categories were examined by descriptive statistics. Relationships between data were determined with Pearson correlation test.

RESULTS

The age of research subject have ranged 34.45 ± 6.06 years. Male participants' comprised 40.9% of the samples and the rest were females. The majority (56.1%) of subjects had a bachelor's degree, and 70.9% had a work experience of less than 10 years. Single participants included 79.5% of the samples. And nearly 38.6% of the staffs were working contractually (Table 1).

The staff at the University of Medical Sciences achieved a mean QWL score of 76.64 ± 16.56. Table 2 shows strong correlations among QWL and employee performance dimensions ($P < 0.01$). The highest correlation was found between the attitude domain of staff performance ($P < 0.001$).The reliability domain of staff performance showed the least correlation to QWL ($P < 0.05$), (Chart 1).

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the participants (n= 171)

Characteristics	Mean ± SD or N (%)
Age	34.45±6.06
Sex	
Male	70(40,9)
Female	101(59.1)
Educational level	
Diploma	5(2.9)
Advanced Diploma	17(9.9)
licensee	96(56.1)
Master's degree	53(31)
Work experience	
<10	121(70.9)
10-20	45(26.3)
>20	5(2.9)
Marital status	
Single	136(79.5)
Married	35(20.5)
Employment status	
official recruitment	49(28.7)
Employment contract	56(32.7)
Daily worker	66(38.6)

DISCUSSION

High levels of QWL are essential to maintain employees in organizations reflecting the relationships between employees and their work environment (19). QWL is a process affecting work environment of all members of an organization and somehow contributes to their decision making in the work place. As a result, accentuating on QWL enhances job participation and satisfaction of staff and reduces the severity of stress, ultimately leading to improved performance (20-25) and increased manpower efficiency as the ultimate goal of organizational leaders. Table 2 implies that fair compensation is correlated to the attitude, quality of work, initiative and overall performance of the staff, which is in line with Rastgari and Farhangi, who remarked rewards and incentives to be always considered as boosting factors (26).

A safe and healthy work environment was also strongly correlated to the dimensions of employee performance such as reliability, attitude, work quality, initiative, judgment, and cooperation, which is in accordance with those of Dawoody (27), Eiman (28) and GhaemPanah (29).

There were positive significant relationships between the opportunity for continued growth and security with the domains of attitude, work quality, initiative, work quantity, learning, personal development, and overall performance, with personal development domain showing an uppermost relationship, as was similarly reported by Chipel (30), Azizi Nejad (31), and Kamdideh (32). The social relevance of work life and development of human capabilities were also positively correlated to all dimensions of employee performance, which is consistent with that reported by Aziz Nejad et al. (31). Overall, our results indicate positive significant relationships between all dimensions of QWL and all domains of employee performance.

Dawoody studied the impact of QWL on job satisfaction and occupational accidents in employees and found that autonomous decision regarding work conditions had a significant relationship with job satisfaction (27). Rastgari also assessed the effect of QWL on the performance of employees in the health care network and demonstrated that there was a correlation between QWL and employee performance, and that application of Walton's QOL components could improve

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Table 2 Relationship between sub-scales quality of work life and work performance in participants

QWL domains / Staff performance domains	Adequate and fair compensation	Opportunity for continued growth and security	Safe and healthy working conditions	Constitutionalism in the work organization	Social relevance of work life	Total life space	Social integration in the work organization	Development of human capabilities	Overall QOL
Reliability	0.14	0.05	0.18*	0.14	0.17*	0.07	0.10	0.19*	0.19*
Attitude	0.26**	0.27**	0.26**	0.22**	0.29**	0.05	0.18*	0.24**	0.32**
work quality	0.21**	0.18*	0.26**	0.21**	0.19*	0.02	0.13	0.16*	0.25**
Initiative	0.16*	0.20**	0.22**	019*	0.21**	0.10	0.16*	0.25**	0.26**
Judgment	0.08	0.13	0.20**	0.13	0.12	0.05	0.10	0.27**	0.18*
Cooperation	0.17*	0.21**	0.22**	0.13	0.20**	0.02	0.05	0.23**	0.22**
Work quantity	0.04	0.19*	0.08	0.19*	0.26**	0.25**	0.04	0.18*	0.22**
Security	0.07	0.13	0.07	0.13	0.22**	0.27**	0.08	0.16*	0.22**
Learning	0.15	0.27**	0.17	0.23**	0.26**	0.12	0.13	0.16	0.29**
Personal development	0.07	0.29**	0.25**	0.31**	0.27**	0.19*	0.19*	0.19*	0.35**
Leadership	0.06	0.13	0.12	0.26**	0.22**	0.25**	0.05	0.18	0.27**
Total performance	0.16*	0.18*	0.23**	0.21**	0.24**	0.12	0.10	0.21**	0.28**

P value**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
P value *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

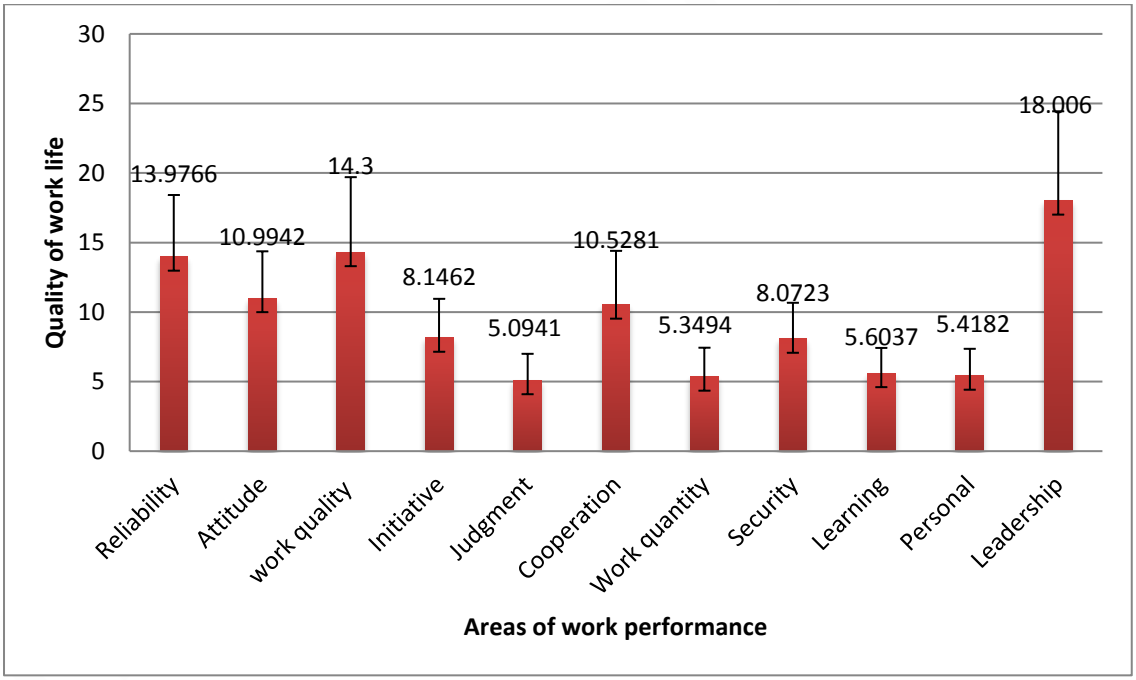

Chart 1 Correlation between Areas of work performance and quality of work life in participants

employee performance (26). Mahdavi zadeh Ashrafi et al. investigated the relationship between QWL and employee performance based on Dalton's model at Islamic Azad University, Firoozkooh Branch, and concluded that there was a relationship between QWL and work performance (33).

The efficiency of human resources, which is considered to be necessary for the growth and development of any society, is not merely achieved through increasing salaries and welfare facilities, but making efficient humans requires an increase in QWL. Our results demonstrate that employee performance can be increased by improving QWL.

CONCLUSION

There is a significant relationship between QWL and employee performance, that is, the higher the employees' perception of QWL, the greater their compatibility and association with intra-organizational values, attitudes and behaviors. Accordingly, based on a positive correlation between different dimensions of QWL and employee performance, the organization studied herein is recommended to pay more attention to QWL of employees and attempt to improve its level, thereby, creating more efficient and effective process of employee socialization in the organization.

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Article Keywords

Quality of work life, Dimensions of employee performance, Personnel

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper

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